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contents OCTOBER 2024

- 6** Varicose Veins vs. Spider Veins
- 7** Breast Cancer Myths: What Seniors Need to Know
- 8** Breast Health Awareness Month: Exceeding the Standard of Care and Prevention
- 9** Revolutionizing Body Sculpting and Pelvic Health: The Remarkable Benefits of EmSculpt and Emsella
- 10** National Physical Therapy Month: Celebrating Movement and Healing
- 12** Safeguarding Your Sight: Essential Tips for Eye Injury Prevention
- 13** Recurrent UTIs: Addressing the Risk of Antibiotic Resistance
- 14** Breast Cancer Rehabilitation Program
- 16** FGCU Enhancing the Lives of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- 17** 2025 Annual Enrollment Coming Soon, What You Need to Watch for
- 18** New Technology to Resolve Symptoms from Pain Caused by Neuropathy and Chronic Joint Pain
- 19** De-Stress Your Finances
- 20** 3D Mammography
- 22** Advanced Urinary Incontinence Procedures
- 23** October is Audiology Awareness Month: Understanding the Role of Audiologists
- 24** Defeat Gum Disease
- 25** Settlement Agreements: Can They Affect Estate Administrations
- 26** Memory Matters
- 27** Spiritual Wellness: Hungry Heart

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Varicose Veins vs. Spider Veins

By Dr. TC Lackey II

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

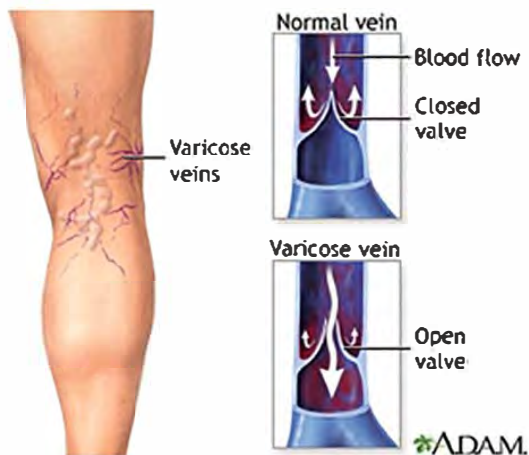
Several patients who suffer from varicose veins often complain of a cramping or aching sensation near the veins. Other typical symptoms include fatigue, itching, throbbing, cramping, burning, and tingling.

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

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

How Varicose and Spider Veins Develop

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



However, when veins don't function properly, it can cause blood to collect inside your veins. When this happens, the blood pushes up against the walls within your vein, creating pressure weakening the vessel wall.

Ultimately, this pressure is what causes veins to twist and bulge.

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

Treatment Options for Vein Disease

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

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

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

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

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

Florida Lakes Vein Center offers convenient appointments in our Lakewood Ranch office Tuesday & Thursday 8am-5pm. Call **941.866.8989** to schedule your *free vein screening*.



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Breast Cancer Myths: WHAT SENIORS NEED TO KNOW

Robert Hummer, M.D.

Breast cancer is a significant health concern, particularly for older women. As the second most common cancer among women, it's essential to understand the facts and dispel the myths that surround it. Read on to learn about common breast cancer myths so you know the facts.

Myth: If I Don't Have a Family History of Breast Cancer, I'm Safe

One of the most prevalent myths is that only women with a family history of breast cancer are at risk. While having a family history of breast cancer does increase the risk, most women diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease. According to the American Cancer Society, only about five to ten percent of breast cancer cases are linked to inherited genetic mutations. The truth is that every woman, especially as she ages, should be vigilant about breast cancer screening, regardless of family history.

Myth: Breast Cancer Only Affects Older Women

While age is a significant risk factor, breast cancer can occur at any age. However, the risk of breast cancer does increase with age. Women aged 40 and above should be particularly attentive to breast cancer screening recommendations. As women age, especially after 50, the frequency and necessity of screenings may increase due to the heightened risk.

Myth: Small Breasts Lower the Risk of Breast Cancer

The size of a woman's breasts does not determine her risk of developing breast cancer. This myth likely arises from the misconception that smaller breasts have less tissue to develop cancer. In reality, breast cancer occurs in the cells of the breast tissue, and all women, regardless of breast size, have breast tissue. Thus, the risk of breast cancer is present in all women.

Myth: Only Women Get Breast Cancer

While it's true that breast cancer is far more common in women, men can develop breast cancer too. Men have breast tissue, and although their risk is much lower, they are not immune.



Myth: A Lump is the Only Sign of Breast Cancer

A lump in the breast is one of the most common signs of breast cancer, but it's not the only one. Other symptoms can include changes in breast size or shape, dimpling of the skin, nipple discharge that isn't breast milk, and redness or scaling of the nipple or breast skin. Additionally, some women diagnosed with breast cancer may not have any noticeable symptoms, which is why regular breast cancer screening is so vital, especially as you age.

Myth: Mammograms Cause Cancer

Some fear that the radiation exposure from mammograms can increase the risk of breast cancer. However, the level of radiation used in a mammogram is extremely low. The American Cancer Society emphasizes that the small amount of radiation exposure from a mammogram does not significantly increase breast cancer risk.

Myth: If You've Been Diagnosed With Breast Cancer, It's a Death Sentence

Thanks to advances in medical technology, treatment options, and early detection, being diagnosed with breast cancer is not an automatic death sentence. Many women live long, healthy lives after breast cancer treatment. The survival rates for breast cancer have improved significantly over the years, especially when the cancer is caught early.

Myth: Antiperspirants and Bras Can Increase Breast Cancer Risk

There's no scientific evidence that antiperspirants or bras cause breast cancer. These myths have circulated widely, but extensive research has found no link between wearing a bra, especially underwire bras, or using antiperspirants and an increased risk of breast cancer.

Myth: Healthy Lifestyle Completely Eliminates the Risk of Breast Cancer

While maintaining a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk of breast cancer, it does not entirely eliminate it. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and limiting alcohol intake can indeed lower the risk, but they cannot guarantee immunity.

Myth: Breast Cancer Always Requires a Mastectomy

A mastectomy, or the removal of the entire breast, is not the only treatment option for breast cancer. Depending on the stage and type of cancer, many women may be eligible for a lumpectomy, which removes only the tumor and some surrounding tissue. This option is often followed by radiation therapy. The treatment plan for breast cancer is highly individualized and should be discussed thoroughly with a healthcare provider.

Understanding the facts about breast cancer is crucial, especially for seniors who are at an increased risk due to age. Dispelling common myths can help you make informed decisions about your health. Schedule an appointment with your local VIPcare provider to discuss your breast cancer risk and the proactive steps you should be taking. Call 941-541-4812.

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Breast Health Awareness Month: Exceeding the Standard of Care & Prevention

By Max MacCloud, DO, ND, PhD

The only way to support optimum breast health is to support overall health.

The concept of building & enhancing health is FINALLY starting to catch on. People are realizing that there's more to health than a yearly physical, basic blood work, and some imaging studies. The body is extremely complex, and we live in a very stressful & polluted environment. If you want to be truly healthy and disease proof your body, it requires an investment of time, effort, and money.

Revolutionizing Breast Health: Our innovative 4Ms approach to breast health represents a cutting-edge, comprehensive strategy that addresses the core foundations of cellular health and overall wellness. By focusing on the 4Ms of microcirculation, mitochondria, metabolism, and muscle/metabolic reserve, we're targeting the fundamental aspects of breast tissue health at the cellular level.

Microcirculation: The Foundation of Cellular Health

Recent research has highlighted the critical role of microcirculation in overall health and breast health. Damaged capillaries are now recognized as the starting point for many chronic conditions, including breast pathologies. By improving blood flow through the tiniest capillaries, we ensure optimal delivery of nutrients and oxygen to breast tissue, promoting cellular health and reducing the risk of tissue damage. The microvascular system constitutes 99% of the entire vascular system.

Mitochondrial Function: The Powerhouse of all cells, including Breast Cells

Dr. Otto Warburg's groundbreaking work, which earned him the Nobel Prize in 1931, identified damaged mitochondria as the only primary cause of cancer.

Our approach focuses on supporting mitochondrial health, which is crucial for maintaining cellular energy production and reducing the risk of cellular dysfunction in breast tissue. Recent studies have shown that mitochondrial dysfunction is a key factor in breast cancer development and progression.



Even more interesting, is that in the last 20 years virtually ALL chronic diseases have been causally linked with damaged mitochondria.

Metabolism: Balancing Hormones and Energy

Optimizing metabolic function is essential for maintaining hormonal balance and healthy body composition, both of which are critical factors in breast health. Our approach helps regulate & balance metabolism, promoting efficient energy use and supporting the body's natural detoxification processes. This is particularly important given the established link between metabolic syndrome and increased breast cancer risk.

Muscle and Metabolic Reserve: Building Resilience

Building and maintaining muscle and metabolic reserve is crucial for long-term overall & breast health. Strong muscles not only support proper posture and breast positioning but also contribute to overall metabolic health and resilience. Recent research has shown that higher muscle mass is associated with better breast cancer outcomes.

Whole-Person Approach

Our 4Ms strategy is complemented by a whole-person approach that emphasizes proper nutrition, regular exercise, and optimal body structure. This comprehensive framework aligns with recent findings on the importance of lifestyle factors in breast cancer prevention and management.

By addressing these fundamental aspects of health, we're not just promoting breast health – we're fostering total body vitality. Our approach empowers individuals to take control of their health, starting at the cellular level and radiating outward to every aspect of their body & well-being. We help you to build health, not just fight disease or symptoms.

Embrace the power of the 4Ms and discover a new level of breast health and overall vitality. Your breasts – and your entire body – will thank you!

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Revolutionizing Body Sculpting and Pelvic Health: The Remarkable Benefits of EmSculpt and Emsella

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

In the ever-evolving world of aesthetic and medical treatments, two innovative technologies have emerged as game-changers: EmSculpt and Emsella. These non-invasive procedures are transforming the way we approach body sculpting and pelvic health, offering remarkable benefits without the need for surgery or extensive recovery time. Let's delve into the unique advantages of each treatment and explore how they're revolutionizing their respective fields.

EmSculpt: Redefining Body Contouring

EmSculpt is a groundbreaking technology that has taken the world of body contouring by storm. Unlike traditional methods that focus solely on fat reduction, EmSculpt targets both muscle building and fat elimination simultaneously. This dual-action approach sets it apart from other non-invasive body sculpting treatments.

How EmSculpt Works

EmSculpt utilizes High-Intensity Focused Electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology to induce powerful muscle contractions. These contractions are far more intense than what can be achieved through voluntary exercise, leading to rapid muscle building and toning. During a single 30-minute session, the targeted muscles undergo approximately 20,000 supramaximal contractions – equivalent to doing 20,000 perfect sit-ups or squats!

Key Benefits of EmSculpt

- 1. Muscle Building and Toning:** EmSculpt can increase muscle mass by up to 16% in the treated area, resulting in a more defined and toned appearance.
- 2. Fat Reduction:** The intense muscle contractions trigger a metabolic reaction that breaks down fat cells. Studies have shown an average of 19% fat reduction in the treated areas.
- 3. Non-Invasive:** Unlike surgical procedures, EmSculpt doesn't require incisions, anesthesia, or downtime.
- 4. Time-Efficient:** A typical EmSculpt treatment plan consists of four 30-minute sessions over two weeks, making it ideal for busy individuals.
- 5. Versatility:** EmSculpt can target various body areas, including the abdomen, buttocks, arms, and legs.

6. Enhanced Athletic Performance: The intense muscle stimulation can improve strength and endurance, benefiting athletes and fitness enthusiasts.

Emsella: Revolutionizing Pelvic Health

While EmSculpt focuses on external body contouring, Emsella addresses a crucial aspect of internal health – the pelvic floor. Emsella is a breakthrough treatment for urinary incontinence and pelvic floor weakness, conditions that affect millions of people worldwide, particularly women.

The Emsella Approach

Emsella uses the same HIFEM technology as EmSculpt but targets the pelvic floor muscles. The patient sits fully clothed on a specially designed chair that delivers electromagnetic energy to stimulate deep pelvic floor muscles. Each session induces thousands of supramaximal pelvic floor muscle contractions, effectively re-educating the muscles responsible for bladder control.

Remarkable Benefits of Emsella

- 1. Improved Bladder Control:** Emsella can significantly reduce or eliminate symptoms of stress, urge, and mixed urinary incontinence.
- 2. Non-Invasive and Comfortable:** The treatment is painless and doesn't require any preparation or recovery time.
- 3. Fully Clothed Procedure:** Unlike many pelvic floor treatments, Emsella allows patients to remain fully clothed during the procedure, ensuring comfort and dignity.
- 4. Time-Efficient:** A typical treatment plan consists of six 28-minute sessions over three weeks.
- 5. Comprehensive Pelvic Floor Strengthening:** Emsella targets 100% of the pelvic floor muscles, something that's difficult to achieve with voluntary Kegel exercises.
- 6. Improved Quality of Life:** By addressing urinary incontinence, Emsella can dramatically enhance a person's confidence and overall quality of life.

7. Benefits for Both Men and Women: While particularly beneficial for women, especially those who have experienced childbirth, Emsella can also help men dealing with prostate issues or urinary incontinence.

The Synergy of EmSculpt and Emsella

For many individuals, the combination of EmSculpt and Emsella can provide comprehensive body sculpting and pelvic health improvement. This synergistic approach allows for simultaneous enhancement of external appearance and internal function, leading to increased confidence and overall well-being.

A New Era in Aesthetic and Functional Health

EmSculpt and Emsella represent a significant leap forward in non-invasive body sculpting and pelvic health treatments. By harnessing the power of HIFEM technology, these innovative procedures offer remarkable benefits without the risks and downtime associated with surgical alternatives.

As we continue to prioritize both aesthetic goals and functional health, EmSculpt and Emsella stand out as versatile, efficient, and effective solutions. Whether you're looking to enhance your physique, improve athletic performance, address urinary incontinence, or strengthen your pelvic floor, these cutting-edge technologies offer a promising path forward.

As with any medical or aesthetic treatment, it's essential to consult with a qualified healthcare provider to determine if EmSculpt or Emsella is right for you. With their impressive track record and growing popularity, these treatments are undoubtedly shaping the future of body sculpting and pelvic health, empowering individuals to look and feel their best from the inside out. Call Dr. Calvino today to schedule your appointment.



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NATIONAL PHYSICAL THERAPY MONTH: CELEBRATING MOVEMENT AND HEALING

By Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

As we celebrate National Physical Therapy Month this October, the spotlight turns to an often underappreciated yet crucial aspect of healthcare: physical therapy. National Physical Therapy Month is a time to recognize the vital role physical therapists play in enhancing quality of life, promoting wellness, and supporting recovery. This is especially true for those physical therapists who specialize in foot and ankle care. The foot and ankle are complex structures, and issues in these areas can significantly impact overall mobility and quality of life. Physical therapists who specialize in foot and ankle care play a crucial role in diagnosing, treating, and rehabilitating a variety of conditions that affect these vital parts of the body. This month-long observance aims to raise awareness about the benefits of physical therapy and highlight the dedicated professionals who make a difference every day.

Understanding Physical Therapy

Physical therapy (PT) is a specialized form of healthcare that focuses on improving movement, managing pain, and restoring function. It involves a range of techniques including exercises, manual therapy, and patient education. Physical therapists work with individuals recovering from injuries, surgeries, or chronic conditions to help them regain their strength and mobility.

The scope of physical therapy is broad, addressing various issues such as:

- **Orthopedic Injuries:** Sprains, fractures, and joint replacements.
- **Neurological Conditions:** Stroke, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injuries.
- **Cardiopulmonary Conditions:** Heart disease and respiratory disorders.
- **Pediatric Conditions:** Developmental delays and congenital disorders.
- **Geriatric Care:** Age-related issues such as arthritis and balance disorders.

The Importance of Foot and Ankle Health

Our feet and ankles are foundational to our daily movement. They support our weight, absorb shock, and provide balance and stability. Given their essential role, problems in this area can lead to pain, reduced mobility, and even affect the entire musculoskeletal system.



Some common foot and ankle issues include:

- **Plantar Fasciitis:** Inflammation of the tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot, causing heel pain.
- **Achilles Tendinitis:** Inflammation of the Achilles tendon, leading to pain at the back of the heel.
- **Ankle Sprains:** Injury to the ligaments of the ankle, often caused by twisting or rolling the ankle.
- **Flat Feet:** A condition where the arches of the feet collapse, leading to pain and alignment issues.
- **Bunions:** Deformities of the joint at the base of the big toe, causing pain and misalignment.

The Role of Physical Therapy in Foot and Ankle Care

Physical therapists who specialize in foot and ankle care use a variety of techniques to help patients manage and recover from these conditions. Their approach is tailored to a person's individual needs, focusing on relieving pain, improving function, and preventing future injuries.

- 1. Diagnosis and Assessment:** Physical therapists conduct thorough evaluations to understand the underlying causes of foot and ankle pain. This may include gait analysis, range of motion assessments, and functional tests.
- 2. Customized Exercise Programs:** Based on the assessment, therapists design exercise programs to strengthen the muscles around the foot and ankle, improve flexibility, and correct imbalances. Exercises may include stretching routines, strengthening drills, and balance training.

3. Manual Therapy: Techniques such as joint mobilizations, soft tissue massage, and stretching can help alleviate pain and restore normal function.

4. Orthotic Management: Physical therapists often recommend or design custom orthotics (shoe inserts) to provide better support, correct alignment, and reduce pain.

5. Education and Prevention: Educating patients about proper footwear, activity modification, and injury prevention is a key component of therapy. This helps individuals make informed decisions about their health and prevent future issues.

The Impact of Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is more than just a treatment modality; it's a pathway to a better quality of life. Physical therapy for foot and ankle issues can lead to remarkable improvements in patients' lives. From athletes recovering from sports injuries to older adults managing chronic pain, the impact of specialized care is significant. Success stories often highlight:

1. Enhancing Mobility and Function: Physical therapists help individuals regain movement and strength after injury or illness, allowing them to return to daily activities and work.

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.

Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

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



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2. Pain Management: PT offers a non-pharmacological approach to managing pain, reducing the need for medications and minimizing side effects.

3. Preventing Future Injuries: Through education and customized exercise programs, physical therapists help prevent future injuries and promote long-term health.

4. Improving Quality of Life: By focusing on the holistic well-being of patients, PT enhances overall quality of life, aiding in everything from better sleep to improved mental health.

Celebrating National Physical Therapy Month

National Physical Therapy Month is an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the hard work of physical therapists and assistants. It's also a chance to educate the public about the benefits of physical therapy and encourage those who might need it to seek help. During this month, many organizations and clinics engage in various activities including:

- **Educational Events:** Workshops, webinars, and community talks to spread awareness about physical therapy.

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Sharing success stories, educational content, and tips on maintaining physical health.

- **Open Houses and Free Screenings:** Offering the public opportunities to learn more about physical therapy and assess their own physical health.

Getting Involved

You don't have to be a physical therapist to celebrate National Physical Therapy Month. Here are a few ways everyone can participate:

- **Seek Professional Advice:** If you're experiencing foot or ankle pain, consider consulting a professional for a referral to a physical therapist for focused evaluation and treatment.

- **Spread the Word:** Share information about foot and ankle health on social media or in your community.

- **Learn and Share:** Educate yourself about the benefits of physical therapy and share this information with others who might benefit.

- **Support Local Clinics:** Visit local physical therapy clinics or participate in community events to show support.

- **Advocate for PT:** Use your voice to highlight the importance of physical therapy in your community and support policies that promote access to these services.

National Physical Therapy Month serves as a reminder of the essential role physical therapists play in our health and well-being. Their expertise in managing foot and ankle conditions not only helps alleviate pain and restore function but also enhances overall well-being. As we celebrate this month, let's take the time to appreciate the impact of physical therapy on improving lives and enhancing mobility. Whether you're recovering from an injury, managing a chronic condition, or simply interested in maintaining your physical health, physical therapy offers valuable support and resources to help you move better and live well. By raising awareness and supporting these dedicated professionals, we can all contribute to better foot and ankle health and enjoy the freedom of movement that comes with it.



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Safeguarding Your Sight: Essential Tips for Eye Injury Prevention

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

Our eyes are truly remarkable organs, allowing us to navigate the world and experience its beauty. However, they are also vulnerable to various types of injuries that can compromise our vision and, in some cases, lead to permanent damage. Recognizing the importance of eye safety is crucial, as prevention is the best defense against these preventable occurrences.

One of the most common causes of eye injuries is exposure to hazardous materials or objects. This can include chemicals, debris, or even small particles that become airborne during certain activities. To mitigate these risks, it's essential to wear appropriate protective eyewear, such as safety glasses or goggles, whenever engaging in tasks that may pose a threat to your eyes. This applies not only in the workplace but also in the home, where household chores like yard work or DIY projects can present similar dangers.

Another significant threat to eye health is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can come from various sources, including the sun, tanning beds, and certain types of welding equipment. Prolonged or intense exposure to UV rays can lead to conditions like photokeratitis (also known as "welder's flash" or "arc eye"), which can cause painful inflammation of the cornea. To safeguard your eyes, always wear high-quality, UV-blocking sunglasses or specialized protective lenses when working in environments with elevated UV exposure.

Sports and recreational activities can also pose a risk of eye injuries, particularly in contact sports or those involving fast-moving objects like balls or projectiles. Protective eyewear designed for specific sports can significantly reduce the likelihood of sustaining an injury, so it's crucial to invest in appropriate gear and wear it consistently.

In addition to physical threats, eye health can also be compromised by certain medical conditions or treatments. For example, individuals with diabetes are at an increased risk of developing diabetic retinopathy, a condition that can lead to vision loss if left untreated. Regular eye exams and prompt medical intervention are essential for managing such conditions and preventing further complications.



Ultimately, safeguarding your eye health requires a multifaceted approach that combines awareness, preventive measures, and proactive healthcare. By incorporating the following tips into your daily routine, you can significantly reduce the risk of eye injuries and protect your precious sense of sight:

1. **Always wear appropriate protective eyewear for tasks that may pose a risk to your eyes.**
2. **Limit your exposure to UV radiation by wearing sunglasses or other UV-blocking lenses.**
3. **Use caution and wear protective gear when participating in sports or recreational activities.**
4. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle and schedule regular eye exams to address any underlying medical conditions.**
5. **Be vigilant about eye safety and encourage your family and friends to do the same.**

By prioritizing eye injury prevention, you can not only safeguard your own vision but also inspire those around you to take proactive steps toward preserving the health and well-being of their most valuable sense – sight.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Recurrent UTIs: Addressing the Risk of Antibiotic Resistance

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are common bacterial infections that affect millions of individuals worldwide each year. While typically treated with antibiotics, the rising prevalence of antibiotic resistance poses a significant challenge in managing recurrent UTIs effectively. In this article, we'll explore the importance of addressing recurrent UTIs and strategies to mitigate the risk of antibiotic resistance, focusing on Utiva Cranberry PACs as a clinically effective prevention.

1. Overview of Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs):

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) occur when bacteria enter the urinary tract and multiply, leading to frequent urination, burning sensation during urination, and pelvic discomfort. UTIs can affect various parts of the urinary tract, including the bladder (cystitis), urethra (urethritis), and kidneys (pyelonephritis).

2. Importance of Addressing Recurrent UTIs:

Recurrent UTIs, defined as two or more infections within six months or three or more within one year, pose significant health risks and can profoundly impact quality of life. Individuals who experience recurrent UTIs often face frequent discomfort, disruption of daily activities, and an increased risk of complications such as kidney damage and sepsis.

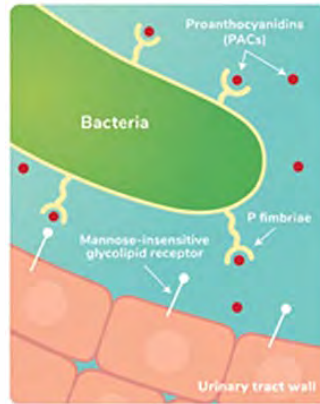
3. The Growing Concern of Antibiotic Resistance:

Antibiotic resistance has emerged as a global health threat, compromising the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating bacterial infections. Recurrent UTIs present a particularly challenging scenario, as they often result in repeated antibiotic courses, contributing to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. A 2019 study published in the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) found alarming rates of antibiotic resistance among UTI-causing bacteria, with more than 92 percent resistant to at least one common antibiotic and almost 80 percent to at least two.

(Source: NCBI Study)

4. UTI Prevention: Strategies to Avoid Unnecessary Antibiotic Use:

Given the risks associated with antibiotic resistance, it's essential to explore preventive strategies to reduce the reliance on antibiotics for recurrent UTIs. Healthcare providers emphasize the importance of adopting lifestyle modifications and hygiene practices, such as staying hydrated, urinating after intercourse, and



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

practicing proper genital hygiene to prevent UTIs. Additionally, avoiding unnecessary antibiotic use for non-severe UTIs and considering alternative approaches for prevention are crucial in combating antibiotic resistance.

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

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

Sources:

- https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/antibiotics-resistance?_pos=1&_sid=51bf18b74&_ss=r
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6436442/>



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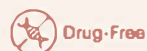
Recurrent UTIs can be a constant battle in the clinic. In an attempt to minimize the use of antibiotics, I always consider natural options to help reduce the frequency of UTIs in my patients. Utiva is a trusted brand which provides a great, clean cranberry product which has been very effective in preventing UTIs in many of my patients. ”

Dr. Yana Barbalet
Urologist, Lahey Health, Massachusetts



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Breast Cancer Rehabilitation Program

By James Ferrara - Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

At Functional Transformation Clinic, we offer a comprehensive Breast Cancer Rehabilitation Program designed to address the unique challenges faced by breast cancer survivors following surgery and medical treatments. Our team of specialized physical and occupational therapists, each with advanced training in breast cancer rehabilitation and lymphedema management, conducts thorough evaluations to create personalized care plans that cater to each patient's specific needs and goals.

Understanding Lymphedema in Breast Cancer Patients

Lymphedema is a chronic condition characterized by swelling in the affected area, often developing in breast cancer patients as a result of surgery or radiation therapy. Current research indicates that a significant portion of breast cancer survivors may develop lymphedema. Our program offers extensive education, prevention strategies, and treatment options for lymphedema, emphasizing its lifelong management.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Early signs of lymphedema may include swelling, heaviness, or tightness in the affected limb. Other symptoms can include aching or discomfort, decreased flexibility or range of motion, and recurring infections. We encourage breast cancer survivors to be vigilant about these symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if they occur.

Impact on Quality of Life

Lymphedema can significantly affect both the physical and emotional well-being of breast cancer survivors, impacting daily activities and body image. Our clinic is committed to addressing these concerns and providing comprehensive support.

Our Comprehensive Approach

We address a wide range of potential issues, including:

- Lymphedema prevention and treatment
- Radiation Fibrosis and Scar Management
- Reduced mobility and range of motion
- Difficulties with daily activities and independence
- Pain management and hypersensitivity
- Axillary web syndrome
- Chronic fatigue and decreased endurance



Rehabilitation Process

Our rehabilitation process spans from initial diagnosis through post-treatment recovery, incorporating:

- Pre-operative education and baseline assessments
- Post-operative care focusing on wound healing and gentle mobilization
- Ongoing support during radiation and chemotherapy
- Transition guidance for returning to pre-treatment activity levels

Lymphedema Treatment at Functional Transformation Clinic

We offer a range of conservative treatments for lymphedema management, working closely with your doctors to ensure personalized care. Our treatments include:

- Compression therapy
- Manual lymphatic drainage
- Targeted exercise programs
- Education on self-care techniques and lifestyle modifications

Compression Garments and Devices

We provide expert fitting and ordering of compression garments, which are crucial in lymphedema management. Our services include:

- Proper fitting for sleeves, gloves, and bandages
- Guidance on effective use of compression garments
- Assistance with Medicare coverage for compression garments as durable medical equipment

The Role of Exercise in Lymphedema Management
Our therapists design customized exercise programs to improve lymphatic flow and reduce swelling. These may include:

- Gentle movements like shoulder rolls or ankle pumps
- Targeted exercises for specific muscle groups
- Low-impact, full-body exercises such as walking, swimming, or cycling

Our Commitment

At Functional Transformation Clinic, we are dedicated to empowering breast cancer survivors with the knowledge, tools, and support needed for optimal recovery and long-term well-being. Our goal is to guide each patient on their journey back to their desired level of function and quality of life, providing personalized treatments, precise tracking, fitted garments, and compassionate care every step of the way.



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FGCU Enhancing the Lives of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Initiative Aims to Improve and Expand Resources Available

A new Florida Gulf Coast University initiative with a well-known name attached aims to help improve the quantity and quality of resources available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

The Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability Initiative (GIDDI) was established in FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services through funding by the Golisano Foundation. The foundation's other philanthropy in the region includes Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida and Golisano Children's Museum of Naples.

The Golisano initiative at FGCU positions the university as a regional conveyor of supports and services related to improving the lives of people with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) on campus and throughout Southwest Florida. It has already begun efforts to increase and amplify communication among the many regional agencies serving intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals of all ages.

The initiative also seeks to identify needs for supports and services for this population. The information gathering includes formal and informal conversations, "think tanks," community visits and surveys with caregivers as well as those living with IDD.

Once needs are identified, FGCU will work with area organizations to assist in building programming, services and infrastructure to improve the quality and amount of services and supports offered to those in need. These regional partners include LARC, God's Protected Harbor, STARability Foundation, Gigi's Playhouse and Special Olympics, as well as on-campus supports and student organizations such as FGCU R.I.S.E., Adaptive Services, Career Services, All Ability Sports and Recreation and Best Buddies.

Marieb College continues to build on its strong relationships with colleagues at Lee Health, as well as the expansive medical community found in Rochester, New York, where the headquarters of the Golisano Foundation is located.

What are intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Intellectual and developmental disabilities are usually present at birth and can affect an individual's physical, intellectual and/or emotional development. Many of these conditions affect multiple body systems, such as the nervous system, the senses and metabolism.

Developmental disabilities include diagnoses that result in impairments in physical, learning, language or behavior areas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recent estimates show that 1 in 6, or about 17%, of American children 3 to 17 years old have one or more developmental disabilities, such as autism or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. The CDC reports the incidence of children with IDD rose from 7.4% to 8.5% in recent years. Those with IDD are living longer, with many living well into older adulthood.

In Southwest Florida, 24,000 to 27,000 individuals live with IDD, based on 2023 census data, according to Ellen K. Donald, PT Ph.D. She is program director of Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability Initiative and assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences in FGCU's Marieb College.

Individuals with IDD and their families face many challenges, Donald says. Barriers to maximizing their independence and success can include affordable housing, appropriate healthcare, learning opportunities beyond K-12 programs, recreation, employment, transportation and, simply, acceptance from the communities in which they live, she says.

The most common reasons for unmet need in healthcare are cost, accessibility and lack of appropriate providers, according to Donald.

"There are excellent programs and services available. There are just not enough of these resources in our rapidly growing Southwest Florida region," she says. "While these issues exist nationally, Southwest Florida is challenged by its relative 'youth' as well as the staggering costs and growth."

Cultivating a welcoming culture

The purpose of FGCU's Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability is threefold, according to Donald.

The first is to create a campus community that welcomes and includes individuals with IDD. Existing supports for students with disabilities will be enhanced by offering additional training and support for faculty and staff, as well as developing a culture of inclusion in the student population through engagement activities.

Secondly, faculty within Marieb College and the broader university community will work toward improving students' exposure and training so they graduate better equipped to work with, care for, educate and live alongside individuals with IDD. Students in many academic fields may interact with the IDD community as they pursue careers including social work, occupational therapy, special education, nursing, counseling and physical therapy.

Lastly, GIDDI will partner with on- and off-campus groups and agencies to provide continuing professional and community education related to IDD, as well as partner to develop new programs and services for those with IDD.

"We hope to contribute to a culture, both on and off campus, where those with disabilities and their families find FGCU and Southwest Florida a desirable place to live, play and learn."

For more information about the Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability Initiative or how to support it, visit fgcu.edu/moriebcollege/giddi.



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2025 Annual Enrollment Coming Soon, What You Need to Watch for.

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

Medicare Annual Enrollment is October 15-December 7th for January 1st, 2025, effective. What can be changed at this time is Medicare Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. Approximately mid-month of September you will receive a Notification of Change from your current insurance plan. This outlines the current to the new change, as an example if your primary care provider cost \$10 now it might say \$15 in 2025 (no correlation just an example).

Big changes to Medicare Part D, stand alone drug plans as well as Advantage Plans won't have to pay more than \$2,000 in out-of-pocket costs, which include deductibles, co-pays, coinsurance. It is very important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. There is a lot of speculation still as to the cost of the plans & copays, deductibles will be capped at \$590.00. As a reminder the cost of the plan is not as important as the cost plus your medications, that's what you look at, the total cost. It is important to know what the medication is used for to determine if it is covered by the plan. Example Wycovy may be covered but in order to be covered it must be used for a Heart conditions or Diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time.

Medicare Part C / Advantage Plans annually Medicare Advantage Plans make changes. They must include all the same features as Original Medicare but not at the same cost share. They can have a premium, Medical and or Prescription deductible, copays and coinsurance can change. Extra Value such as Vision, Dental, Over the Counter, Part B Give Back, transportation, etc. can all change or be eliminated. Medicare set's the annual in-network out of pocket maximum, in 2024 it is \$8,850 and \$13,300 for in-network and out-of-network services combined. However, individual insurance plans may set lower limits. These limits apply to Part A and B services only, and do not apply to Part D cost share.

The old saying if it's not broken don't fix it DOES NOT apply to Annual Enrollment. Every year I see many people that have not checked/compared their current plan to what's new. I have saved so



many people hundreds and in many cases thousands of dollars. You should be working with a broker that represents many insurance companies. Make sure you check them out, especially if you are going to allow someone in your house. I recommend meeting in their office. For myself we represent most carriers in our area and to carry all their literature with me is almost impossible. We use 3 large screens so that our clients can clearly see and compare the differences between the plans. The minimum information always needed is all your doctors, medications: names, milligrams and dosage. We load your current plan and then compare it to all the other companies in your area. What companies have all your doctors, the price for your medication normally makes a big difference. Then the Extra Value what is most important to you. We do NOT CHARGE for our review and if warranted to change your insurance plan. Ethics is most important and if you are on the best plan we will tell you, plus you can see for yourself.

We start now by sending our clients notification to send us their doctors and medications. On October 1st we can see the new 2025 plans and we review with clients; on October 15th we can start making the changes for January 1st effective.

As a reminder it is illegal for an insurance agent to contact you unless you give them permission. There are specific forms that you should sign, such as a Scope of Appointment which outlines what you want to talk about. This form should be signed at least 48 hours prior to your meeting or if you walk into their office, prior to speaking about Medicare.

Medicare Seminar's they are good for general information. A one-to-one appointment where you can dive into your doctors and medication is best, plus you can then compare other companies in one place.

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

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Peripheral neuropathy is a neurological disorder characterized by damage to the peripheral nervous system, which connects the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body. This condition can result in a range of symptoms, including numbness, tingling, burning sensations, and weakness, typically affecting the hands and feet. Common causes include diabetes, chemotherapy, autoimmune diseases, and certain medications. The chronic pain associated with peripheral neuropathy can significantly impact a patient's quality of life, often proving challenging to treat effectively with conventional methods.

In recent years, innovative technologies have emerged to address the limitations of traditional treatments for neuropathic pain. One such advancement is the neoGEN-series system, a cutting-edge approach to managing peripheral neuropathy symptoms. This technology utilizes a form of electrical stimulation that goes beyond conventional transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) or electrical muscle stimulation (EMS) methods.

Initial clinical studies and patient reports suggest that the neoGEN-series system may offer significant pain relief and improved sensation for many individuals suffering from peripheral neuropathy. Some users have reported reduced reliance on pain medications and enhanced overall function in daily activities. However, as with any medical treatment, results can vary among individuals, and the effectiveness of the neoGEN-series system may depend on factors such as the underlying cause and severity of the neuropathy.

While promising, it's important to note that more extensive research is needed to fully establish the long-term efficacy and safety profile of the neoGEN-series system. Patients considering this treatment option should consult with their healthcare providers to determine if it's appropriate for their specific condition and to develop a comprehensive management plan.

I have been a patient of Dr. Larry Johnson for over ten years for different low back and various joint pains. However, last year I started to suffer with pain and tingling in both of my legs and feet that would keep me from sleeping. Dr. Johnson explained to me that I was dealing with neuropathy and he could help to resolve my pain with a new technology called E-NERVESTIM. He has used this therapy on several patients with great success. After six treatments, my pain was starting to go away and was finally gone after a few more treatments. I have always relied on Dr. Johnson to help me for any problems I have encountered over the years and I have always recommended him to my family and friends. - Shirley W.

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De-Stress Your Finances

Stress is literally a killer. It exacerbates any health issues that you have. Improve your health by de-stressing your finances. In a March 2024 Bank Rate survey, 47 percent of U.S. adults said money has a negative impact on their mental health, including causing stress. Interestingly enough, middle generations are more stressed about money than younger and older generations, with 54 percent of Generation X (ages 44 to 59) and 50 percent of millennials (ages 28 to 43) reporting that money is a source of stress.

The Financial Planning Association offers pro bono (free) planning services, which can be especially helpful for serious medical conditions. Start by scheduling a money "check-in" with your partner and see where you stand.

Meet with your financial representative or, better yet, a Certified Financial Planner, and review your situation with them. Here are some questions which might help:

There are several things you should have a handle on. How much money have you (or you two) saved, and whose name is it in? Am I the beneficiary on the IRA accounts? Another is: where should I be in retirement savings for my age? Will it last through my retirement?

Make a simple list of accounts with their current balances listed and whether it is a TOD (Transfer on Death) account or not. If the accounts are IRAs, are you the beneficiary if it's your partner's account?

A question for you to answer for your Financial Advisor is what income you will need in retirement; it can consist of Social Security and interest or dividend income from your investments. You can find out what you will get from Social Security on SSA.gov. Did you know that if you wait until you are 70 years old to "take" Social Security, you get 30% more?

Ask your advisor to show you how much income you could reasonably get from your investments. A quick and dirty way to calculate it can be to take your principal amount, let's say \$500,000.00, and multiply it by 0.04 (4%). That will yield \$20,000.00 per year or \$1,667 per month.

Sources:
*Bank Rate March 2024 Survey



Knowing these items should help you decide if you need more savings or a plan to downsize in the future.

Many feel that investing in the stock market with a historic return of 10% puts them in a better income situation. Using our example above at 10%, your return would be \$50,000 per year or \$4,167 per month.

Which brings us to our next set of questions, about RISK. To induce you to take a risk, you must demand a higher return. For example, companies with low credit ratings have to offer a higher interest rate to get people to buy their bonds.

The stock market (stock is an ownership share in the company) is a VERY risky investment. You can lose 100% of your money. Bonds are less risky. A bond is a loan to the company, and they pay interest to you on that loan.

Bonds are stable, and in case of bankruptcy, a bondholder may get some of their money back. Prices of bonds fluctuate with changes in interest rates.

Very generally, your portfolio balance between stocks and bonds will change over time as you age and your circumstances change. Young people generally invest the most in stocks and are looking for growth. They can take a loss as they have years ahead of them of earning power.

Middle-agers start to invest a portion in bonds or higher-quality stocks, and when you are at retirement, your portfolio will largely consist of bonds and high-quality dividend-paying stocks. There has been a historic allocation of 60% stock and 40% bonds over time. However, since the pandemic, there has been much discussion if that holds true any longer.

So, the first thing you must do is get an understanding of your risk tolerance. Your advisor has questions to help you understand where your comfort level is, and that will affect your portfolio. Where you are in your investment life stage will play a large role in helping you understand what risk you can tolerate.

If your husband, wife, or partner usually handles all of this, go with them to the next appointment and ask the questions. Advisors would MUCH rather answer questions than have an unhappy client.

An advisor can help mediate between partners with different risk appetites. Investing is a process. Get started and ask questions!

Are you concerned about your debt situation? Ask your advisor to guide you in this matter as well. There may be some options that you can take to better your net worth. Bank credit cards often offer no interest for several months when transferring balances.

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3D MAMMOGRAPHY

As technology advances, understanding medical exams and procedures becomes more complex. The quality of services provided is an important consideration.

The American Cancer Society endorses mammography, along with yearly physical examinations and monthly self-examinations, as the most effective means of detecting breast cancer at its earliest and most treatable stage. Generally, mammography can reveal benign and cancerous growths before you or your physician can feel them. If detected at the earliest stage, breast cancer has a five-year survival rate of over 95 percent, as small breast cancers are more treatable and can be removed before they spread to other parts of the body.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women. Unfortunately, 70% of women have no identifying risk factors. The American Cancer Society recommends mammography as a life saving tool for screening women without symptoms for breast cancer. And 3D Mammography specifically is becoming the preferred choice for physicians in Southwest Florida. With over 30 years of experience and 10 Board Certified Radiologists, Radiology Associates of Venice & Englewood (RAVE) is proud to offer 3D Mammography to our patients.

What is 3D Mammography?

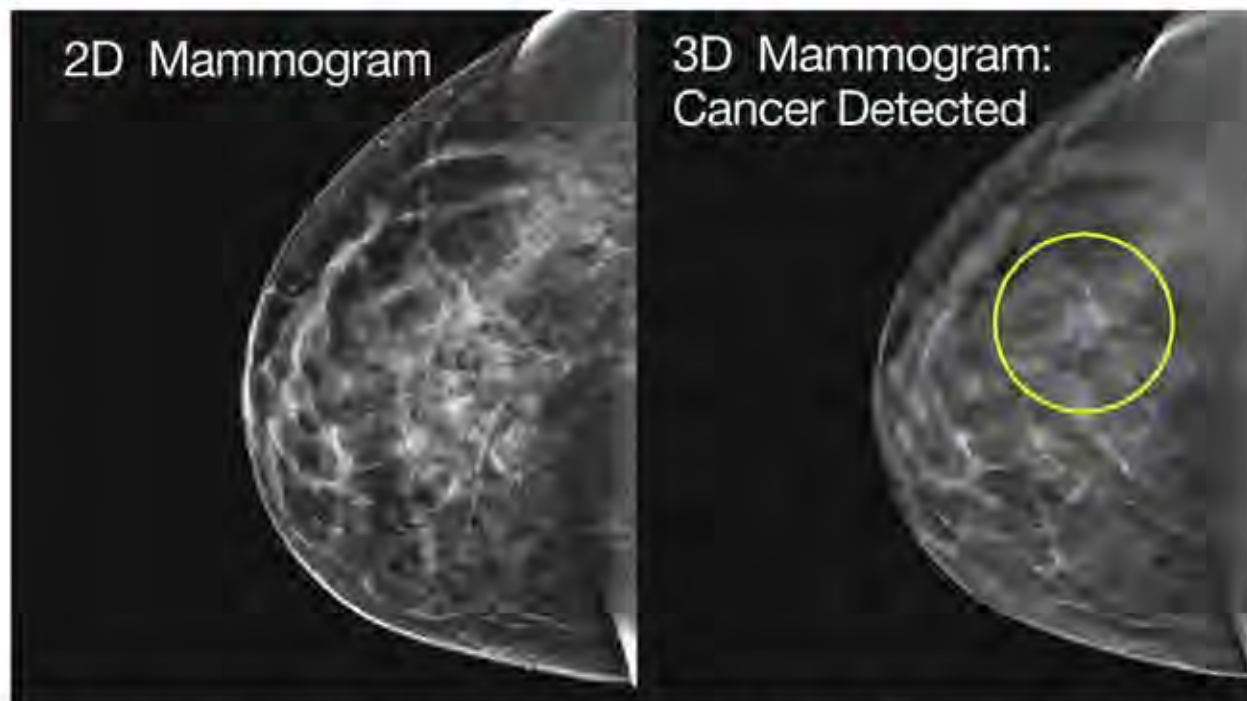
3D mammography is a revolutionary state of the art technology approved by the FDA in February 2011, which gives radiologists the ability to view inside the breast layer by layer, helping to see the fine details more clearly by minimizing overlapping tissue. During a 3D mammogram, multiple low-dose images known as "slices" of the breast are acquired at different angles. With 3D technology, the radiologist can view a mammogram in a way never before possible.

Is 3D a separate exam or part of my usual mammogram?

The 3D exam is a separate procedure that is performed at the same time as your regular mammogram.

What is the cost and will my insurance cover the 3D exam?

Medicare does cover 3D mammography. Even though 3D mammography is FDA approved and covered by Medicare, most private insurance companies are not yet reimbursing for this exam. However, RAVE has never charged the patient the additional 3D portion of the exam if their insurance doesn't cover it.



"The Radiologists of RAVE include the additional 3D imaging regardless of payment because it's in the best interest of patient care, so there is never an additional charge." (Philip Mihm, M.D. RAVE Radiologist)

What are the benefits?

FEWER MAMMOGRAM CALLBACKS for additional mammography – 3D mammography helps distinguish harmless abnormalities from real cancers, leading to fewer callbacks for additional mammography and less anxiety for women. With 3D mammography, RAVE radiologists have reduced patient callback rates by 20-30 percent.

Doctors and scientists agree that early detection is the best defense against breast cancer. 3D mammography has been shown in clinical studies to be more accurate than conventional mammography alone by detecting cancers earlier. This new technology increases breast cancer detection by 38%. It's truly an important component in the screening process.

After 3D Mammography, if continued tests and imaging are needed, RAVE uses state-of-the-art technology, including MRI guided breast biopsies and the Philips 3T wide bore MRI that allows our radiologists to view the breasts in a higher resolution, enabling us to have even more clarity within the breasts. RAVE has been performing MRI breast

imaging for over 15 years and with Wide Bore technology, it allows us to accommodate most any sized patient comfortably. With the Philips 3T wide bore MRI, we are able to cut down on the amount of time it takes for the patient to be scanned. Most Breast MRI's take 30 minutes or less, allowing the patient to go on with their day with little disruption.

How long will it take?

The exam will take about 4 seconds longer per view while in compression than the 2D mammography.

How much radiation will I be exposed to?

It varies from person to person and is roughly equivalent to film/screen mammography. The amount of radiation is below government safety standards.

What if my doctor did not mention 3D Mammography to me?

3D is an optional service at this time and elected by the patient. Many physicians know about our new 3D technology and the feedback we have received has been very positive. If you need additional information to help you make this decision, please visit www.RaveRad.com.

Why is RAVE Radiology offering 3D Mammography?

RAVE prides itself on offering the highest quality care for our patients. Our radiologists believe strongly that 3D mammography will benefit our patients.

We are approaching our 3rd Breast Cancer Awareness month since the COVID pandemic began. Breast Imaging, usually fairly insulated from worldly events, has shared in the challenges over the past few years. Initially concerns regarding post vaccination lymphadenopathy made its way to the nightly news. Confusion set in about whether and when to get a mammogram following vaccination. Luckily this was never a diagnostic dilemma for us at RAVE and we were able to encourage most women to stick to their annual screening schedule. Unfortunately, and for understandable reasons, several women have not come in for mammographic screening since the pandemic began. Because breast cancer detection and management are a primary mission at RAVE, we have risen to the challenge of ensuring safe access to breast cancer screening exams and any additional/follow-up care needed. Please be reassured that we are providing our standard high level of imaging care while maintaining/exceeding current CDC guidelines to ensure patient safety.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that RAVE offers the cutting edge in imaging technology unsurpassed in our region. We utilize the newest mammographic machines, each equipped with 3D Intelligent HD Clarity from Hologic. Tradename aside, the image quality is unparalleled, akin to the highest end Ultra HD television. This is important not only because it allows us to diagnose smaller cancers but also facilitate accurate characterization of benign findings other radiology groups mistake for malignancy.

Our ultrasound equipment is also the highest quality available in the industry which has implications for our breast cancer mission as well as our other imaging services. Finally, our 3 Tesla MRI also

generates extremely high-quality breast images which facilitate screening in our high-risk patients and important staging information in our women diagnosed with breast cancer. Equipped with these tools we recently identified a 3mm cancer via mammography! I would argue this tiny cancer is the earliest and smallest lesion a screening examination could hope to accurately identify.

We do not stop at the detection of breast cancer! Currently we are providing ultrasound breast biopsies at our Venice and Sarasota offices. At RAVE we know biopsy procedures are a scary process. We work hard to inform our patients beforehand regarding what to expect during the procedure. Professional, personalized, warm, and caring treatment is provided during the procedure. Lastly, follow up afterwards ensures nothing falls through the cracks. Most women leave our biopsy suite much more informed and prepared regarding their individual case and the forthcoming steps. For our referring physicians we provide critical radiology pathology concordance following all biopsies to help manage pathological results they may not be familiar with. This ensures suspicious lesions are pursued even if pathology results are not as expected and offers reassurance when benign results match less suspicious findings. In the not-too-distant future we will be offering the newest biopsy method which allows sampling of "3D" or tomosynthetic findings. This system is the final piece in the definitive management of the lesions we can detect and complements our current ability to perform MRI guided breast biopsies. I am very proud to be a part of the comprehensive breast program we offer at RAVE and am very grateful for the opportunity to serve our area's patients and referring physicians.

RAVE is excited to announce that we will be providing a more advanced DEXA Bone Density study at all three locations. DEXA with TBS.

What is the difference between DEXA scan and DEXA scan and TBS?

Bone mineral density measured by DEXA provides information regarding the quantity of the mineral bone only. TBS is a measurement of bone quality. Using both together gives the practitioner a better picture of the bone strength of an individual patient.

Ask your health care provider for DEXA with TBS for a better understanding of your bone fracture risk.

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Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood (RAVE) has provided the highest level of patient care over the past 50 years. Being first to adopt advanced life saving imaging, RAVE were the first to use 3D mammography in the area, prostate MRI, lung and bone screenings, and much more.

We are excited to now offer Cleerly Analysis (Artificial Intelligence assisted analysis and reporting) in conjunction with your CTA to assist in characterization of plaque buildup in each of the heart arteries. DEXA scans with TBS can assess bone microarchitecture and works collaboratively with BMD measurements for fracture risk prediction.



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ADVANCED URINARY INCONTINENCE PROCEDURES

Approximately 10 to 20 million people in the United States are suffering from urinary incontinence. If you have issues with leaking when coughing, jumping, or laughing, or if you have severe urgency to urinate day and night, you are not alone. Correct diagnosis of the type of incontinence is the first and most important step in developing an appropriate and effective treatment plan for incontinence.

There are several types of urinary incontinence:

- Stress incontinence
- Urge incontinence
- Mixed incontinence
- Overflow incontinence
- Functional incontinence

The good news is that you are not stuck with wearing pads or pull up for the rest of your life. There are viable treatment options from medications, Botox injections, nerve stimulators and implantable slings to name a few. Two of the more advance innovative procedures that are noninvasive are sacral neuromodulation and urethral bulking.

Sacral Neuromodulation

Sacral neuromodulation is an advanced procedure that uses a tiny wire that is placed on the glut muscle with a quarter-size impulse device that sends messages to the brain to regulate urination. This procedure takes around 30 minutes to perform, and if the procedure does not work, or if a patient decides they want it removed, we can take it out quite easily. Other similar devices can also be placed on the sacral nerve to induce sacral neuromodulation to send small impulses to the bladder.

Bulkamid—Urethral Bulking

Bulkamid is a soft, smooth hydrogel that consists of 97.5% water and 2.5% polyacrylamide. Once injected, Bulkamid provides additional volume to the urethra and acts as a scaffold for cells to grow through helping to provide long lasting relief of stress urinary incontinence symptoms. Bulkamid is noninvasive and requires no surgery. It is injected



directly into the closing mechanism of the urethra. More than 70,000 patients have been treated with Bulkamid.

What is urethral bulking?

Urethral bulking involves the injection of a soft hydrogel (the size of a pea) like Bulkamid, into 3 or 4 locations in the urethral wall using a small telescope. The total volume injected is around 2mls.

Bulkamid aims to restore the natural closing pressure of the urethra preventing urine from leaking out unintentionally during normal daily activities (e.g., when you cough, laugh, walk or exercise).

Short procedure

Urethral bulking takes around 10 – 15 minutes and is usually done in day surgery or out-patient clinic with a local anesthetic.

No Incisions

A series of small injections are used, you may feel a sting, however, no cuts are made.

Quick recovery

In most cases patients can get back to their normal activities within a day.

Source: <https://bulkamid.com/us/>

If you have pain, pressure, urgency, or frequent urination, don't put off seeing a urologist, as these conditions only progress with time. Getting a proper diagnosis and early treatment is critical.

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

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

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

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

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

For patient-centric care from an experienced physician with friendly and accommodating staff, call The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health, or request an appointment today. Please call 941-457-7700.

OCTOBER IS AUDIOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF AUDIOLOGISTS

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

As October ushers in Audiology Awareness Month, it's the perfect time to shine a spotlight on the crucial role audiologists play in our healthcare system. These specialized professionals are the unsung heroes working tirelessly to improve the quality of life for millions suffering from hearing and balance disorders.

What is an Audiologist?

An audiologist is a healthcare professional who specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disorders related to hearing, balance, and ear function. Their expertise spans a wide range of responsibilities, from conducting hearing tests and fitting hearing aids to developing auditory rehabilitation programs and managing complex ear-related conditions.

Key Responsibilities of Audiologists

Audiologists wear many hats in their day-to-day practice. They evaluate hearing and balance problems using a variety of tests, including pure-tone audiometry, speech audiometry, and tympanometry. They're also skilled in fitting and adjusting hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive listening devices.

Beyond the technical aspects, audiologists play a crucial role in counseling patients on communication strategies and developing personalized auditory rehabilitation programs. They're often at the forefront of diagnosing and managing conditions like tinnitus and earwax buildup, and many contribute to research efforts aimed at developing new treatments.



Specializations within Audiology

The field of audiology offers various specializations. Some audiologists focus on pediatric audiology, working exclusively with children. Others may specialize in neuroaudiology, cochlear implantation, auditory processing disorders, or balance and vestibular disorders.

Education and Training

Becoming an audiologist requires extensive education and training. Most audiologists hold a Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree, while some may have a Master's or Ph.D. in audiology or a related field. Additionally, many are certified by professional organizations such as the American Board of Audiology (ABA) or the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Where Audiologists Work

Audiologists can be found in a variety of settings. Many work in hospitals and clinics, while others operate private practices. Some audiologists work in schools, helping children with hearing impairments, while others contribute to research institutions, pushing the boundaries of audiological science.

Skills of a Successful Audiologist

Successful audiologists possess a unique blend of technical knowledge and interpersonal skills. They need excellent communication abilities to explain complex concepts to patients, analytical skills to interpret test results, and problem-solving abilities to develop effective treatment plans. Compassion and empathy are also crucial, as they often work with patients experiencing frustration or anxiety due to their hearing issues.

This Audiology Awareness Month, let's appreciate the dedicated professionals who help us hear the world more clearly and navigate it more confidently. Audiologists truly make a sound difference in our lives!

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Noël Crosby
Doctor of Audiology



Karen Draper
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Defeat Gum Disease

There is a silent oral disease affecting more than 80% of adults. Chances are you either have had or are currently battling periodontal (gum) disease. Unfortunately, in many cases, the disease goes undetected until painful symptoms begin occurring. At which time the disease and any adverse conditions have already set in. Because there are no early signs of periodontal disease, it often goes untreated until the physical symptoms surface and by then the concern is treatment not prevention. It is extremely important for everyone to have regular dental check ups at the recommended six month interval. Without these check ups and proper oral care, periodontal disease can silently cause not only oral health problems but can also contribute to other major health concerns.

Periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, is the chronic infection of the soft tissue around the teeth caused by plaque producing bacteria. The gums hold the teeth in place. As the gums become infected, they loosen their hold on the teeth and pockets are formed. These pockets collect debris and cause more infection and bone loss to the tooth. Gum disease is infectious and contagious. It can spread from tooth to tooth in the mouth and from one person's mouth to another through saliva.

As with other diseases, prevention is key to good oral health. It is important for everyone to practice diligent, thorough, and proper oral care by scheduling check ups every six months. At which time, your dentist will be able to detect and treat any signs of periodontal disease before symptoms begin to show and the damage is done. As mentioned earlier, most people do not know they have periodontal disease until they begin suffering from any combination of the following signs:

- Chronic bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums especially after tooth brushing
- Tender or sore gums
- Loose or shifting teeth
- Receding gums
- Sensitive teeth



If you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, there are various treatment plans your dentist may recommend depending on the severity of your case. The most important action is meticulous at home daily oral care. Teeth must be brushed twice or more times each day for at least two minutes and flossed at least once per day. Other treatments include oral rinses, periodontal cleanings, and sometimes surgery.

Traditional periodontal surgery involves cutting and suturing of the gums and recovery time can be long and painful. With the advancement of modern laser technology, there is an alternative. Joseph H. Farag, DMD offers a better alternative for patients battling periodontal disease. Dr. Farag offers patients laser-assisted new attachment procedure (LANAP™) which is a no-cut, no-sew procedure to treat mild to advanced periodontal disease. The advancements in laser surgery techniques, have made treating periodontal faster and less painful. LANAP™ is much less invasive than traditional surgery, allowing patients to return to work the next day if desired.

Even with the benefits of LANAP™ it is obviously best to practice good oral care. The most important preventative measure to avoid the insidious gum disease is to take excellent care of your teeth. Proper cleaning at least twice a day is imperative. The goal is to keep the bacteria that cause the plaque at very low levels.

If your gums are painful, red, or swollen don't ignore the signs; make an appointment today that may save your teeth and gums. Treating periodontal disease sooner is always better than later.

Benefits of LANAP™

EASY - LANAP™ is about as EASY as erasing a blackboard - unlike older techniques, there is no cutting and no suturing of the gums.

MINIMAL DISCOMFORT - Both during and post procedure, the patient experiences very minimal discomfort with LANAP™ than with prior standard surgery techniques.

SHORTER PROCEDURE TIME - It takes less time to complete LANAP™ than traditional surgery. Typically it takes is two 2-hour visits to the office and two follow up visits. Traditional surgery requires four sessions of about one hour each, with subsequent visits for suture removal and additional check-ups.

LESS GUM LOSS - LANAP™ minimizes the loss of gum tissue, traditional surgery often involves removing a significant amount of gum tissue. This tissue loss can lead to sensitive teeth since your roots are exposed. Also, if the treatment needs to be performed again in the future, you have not removed the bone and gums during the first LANAP™ treatment. Typically with LANAP™, any gum tissue shrinkage is actually due to reduced swelling of the area that was previously diseased and inflamed.

SHORT RECOVERY - Many patients fully recover from LANAP™ within 24 hours. In most cases, patients feel just fine post surgery and daily activities are not interrupted. On the other hand, recovery after traditional surgery can take up to 4 weeks during which patients can experience considerable pain and swelling.

SAFE - LANAP™ with the PerioLase is SAFE for patients with health concerns such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or those taking medications such as Coumadin or Cyclosporine.

Dr. Joseph Farag - Port Charlotte Dentalcare

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www.Drfarag.com

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS – CAN THEY AFFECT ESTATE ADMINISTRATIONS

By James W. Mallonee

In the case of *Merli v. Merli*, 2022, an interesting set of facts occurred involving a dissolution of marriage and the death of the husband prior to the final judgment of marriage dissolution. Ordinarily, if a final dissolution is not obtained prior to the death of one of the spouses, the assets will flow to the surviving spouse because no dissolution occurred making the distribution of assets follow the lines of an intestate probate action. In this case a partial settlement agreement was reached prior to the husband's death but not to its entirety. The question is, does the divorce terminate any agreement made prior to the death of one of the spouses become moot. Lacking a pre or post marital agreement, the general answer is yes.

Because no settlement agreement or final termination of the marriage was reached, the surviving spouse was not relieved of her right to serve as personal representative regardless of whether the deceased spouse's family sought preference in appointment. In essence, all the agreements made before the death of the spouse were thrown out and the laws concerning asset distribution would now be the controlling factor. This change in the situation gave the surviving spouse control over the assets of the estate. More importantly none of the estate protection laws were waived such as an elective share,



intestate share, pretermitted share, homestead property protection, family allowance or preference in appointment as personal representative.

Because there was no final agreement as to the termination of the marriage, the court reasoned that all the protection mechanisms applied following the death of the spouse still applied to the surviving spouse. The court determined that the partial settlement agreement was just that, not a complete settlement of all matters of the dispute between the parties. The court turned to Fla. Stat. 732.702, and reasoned that neither spouse explicitly waived their right to any of their marriage rights and thus they were maintained up until the date of the death of the husband.

Would the same outcome have occurred if the husband and wife had engaged in a pre-marriage or post marriage agreement concerning the distribution of their assets? The answer is a strong probability of yes provided that the agreement was fair and not based on intimidation or force. Had the deceased spouse engaged in some form of testamentary device (Will or Trust) the outcome of this estate would likely have been different as well.

So what is to be learned here: if you are terminating a marriage or any contractual obligation, you need to make certain that the dissolution of terms pertaining to the marriage or contractual obligations are complete and not whatever thoughts you can throw on the wall and see what sticks. The courts final words as to this dissolution were these: 1) the marriage was terminated by death and not by final judgment; 2) the partial settlement agreement's terms did not amount to a binding final decree; and, 3) nothing in the partial settlement agreement indicated an intent by the parties to waive their intestate rights. Had there been a Will or other testamentary document, the outcome would likely have been different.

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

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MEMORY MATTERS

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

Do you or someone you know experience times when you do not enjoy activities or interests as much as you have in the past? Have you had sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating or feelings of low energy and fatigue?

While it is important not to assume what is happening, sometimes these can be symptoms of depression or even early memory concerns. How do you know what is causing your feelings? What are some of the signs to look for?

If you are having some of the symptoms noted, it is very important for you to see your health care provider. Take notes on when you are having these concerns. There are many things that may need to be addressed from a health perspective, and consulting with your provider is step one. Sometimes the signs of depression can look like some of the early symptoms of Alzheimer's or another dementia. Guessing about what is going on or consulting "Dr. Google" is not the most effective approaches.

In 2024, October 10th is National Depression screening day. There are simple and quick tools your health care provider can use to identify if your symptoms are due to depression. As the National Institute of Aging notes, depression can impact the way you think, feel and act. While depression can occur as we age, it is not a normal part of aging. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) reports that between 1 – 5 % of adults in the general community may be depressed. The numbers rise for older adults who are hospitalized to around 11.5% and the impact is even greater for older adults who need home health care, or around 13.5%. There are a number of potential causes and risk factors for depression as we age. Chronic medical conditions, decreased mobility and functional ability, and chronic pain can all be contributing factors. Social isolation, loneliness, and stress, including caregiver stress, are also risk factors.

Here are some common signs of depression. Persistent sadness, feelings of guilt and/or worthlessness, changes in appetite and recurring thoughts of death are examples of symptoms that should be checked out. Additional signs include apathy, lack of interest in activities or events that were previously



enjoyed, fatigue, low energy, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and slower speech or movement. The last seven symptoms may also be early signs of Alzheimer's or another dementia. Since symptoms can overlap, it's essential to be screened to know the difference.

Can people with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, also have depression? According to the Alzheimer's Association, it is estimated that up to 40% of individuals with Alzheimer's disease also have depression. As you can imagine, identifying depression in someone with Alzheimer's disease can be difficult. As outlined earlier, there is some overlap in symptoms.

What are the reasons that people do not choose to get a screening for depression? Interestingly, those reasons are similar to why people choose not to get screened for memory issues. The perceived stigma of mental health issues, as well as memory issues, can prevent people from seeking out diagnostic testing. Addressing the stigma of depression and dementia have some common approaches.

- Talk openly about the topic, be it memory loss or depression. These are medical issues not shameful conditions
- Use person centered, positive language such as a person living with dementia or depression instead of someone "suffering" from dementia or a "depressive" or depressed person
- Respond to misperceptions and misunderstandings with facts and credible resources, such as The Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org and The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <https://www.nami.org/home>

Last month, I introduced you to Lee Belanger, who is currently living with Alzheimer's disease and is participating in a clinical trial at NPRC. I wanted to know her perspective on the barriers to getting screened, and this was her response:

"Denial and fear can get in the way. People can be afraid of receiving a diagnosis, and also may worry about possibly losing independence and control over personal decisions. Sometimes, people may know there is something wrong, but refuse to tell anyone, including their spouse or partner, their closest friend and/or their health care practitioner."

If you are worried about changes in your memory, mood and/or others are noticing changes, it's essential to contact your primary care provider for a health assessment. There are simple depression screenings that can be conducted in your health care provider's office. If you are concerned about your memory, connect with the experienced team at the Neuropsychiatric Research center at 239-939-7777. We have a proven track record of helping individuals and families navigate memory related challenges. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. **#MemoriesMatter.**



Contact NPRC at 239-939-7777
today for your free memory screen.

HUNGRY HEART

By Alex Anderson

The songwriter and performer Bruce Springsteen was right when he wrote,

"Everybody's got a hungry heart..."

Inside of every human is this need or hunger. Sometimes we try to fill it with love for another person, but for some reason...another person is not the answer.

Sometimes the hungry heart destroys the very things we love and want.

Springsteen goes on to sing,

"We fell in love, I knew it had to end...we took what we had and we ripped it apart...everybody's got a hungry heart...don't make no difference what nobody says...ain't nobody like to be alone...everybody's got a hungry heart."

I do believe our hungry heart is about loneliness, not for another human...but for God himself. We were created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26) but when man left *God*...man missed, and still misses, God. They had a bond that filled man with joy and satisfied his heart like nothing else.

C.S. Lewis calls this the, "Numinous Awe." It seems to be built into mankind, this *ravenous hungry heart to know God*. And it's so strong nothing can fill it but God himself.

Psalms 34:8 says, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

And the truth is... If you don't get that deep ravenous hunger in your heart satisfied by Jesus you will starve to death spiritually, while eating everything else.

So how do you do that? How do you find the true satisfaction that calms your hungry heart?

If you are a Christ-follower, then you know how to do this. You...'do again'...something that you have already experienced when you asked God to be your Lord and Savior. You "make up" with God and you're back to stay.



You are so glad to be back together. Glad that God owns you and your life. So you decide to be happy because God owns you and is your life partner (Philippians 4:4).

Feel the pleasure, the joy and the delight again about Jesus being your master. Let this fact cause you happiness, pleasure and delight.

Be full of joy because Jesus paid a high price for your life. (1Corinthians 6:19-20).

Let the reality of what He has done sink over you.

Not only are you in His family now, but you can live the life of a victorious and joyful person of God; with all the rights and privileges of a child of rich royalty.

"You are my child says the Lord...my very rich child says the Lord...let the riches of your heart begin to overflow into all of your life." (3 John 2)

You can, should, and must rejoice always in the Lord...way before anything changes physically in your life.

The seed of hope and joy is there if you have become one with Jesus Christ. His seed is within you. If your hope is nonexistent then find the seed once planted deep in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Like a precious pearl search for it (Matthew 13:45).

When you find it (that small seed), clean it up. Polish it and put it in the center room of your heart, shine the brightest light you can find on it and let its magnificent beauty captivate you. Stare at it with intentional focus as though you are searching and waiting for hope itself.

Its magnificent light will light up your life.

For it will change everything about you as you clearly see and feel the love that God has shed in your heart...that is for you (Romans 5:5).

It is so worthy of your time my friend to mediate and think about Jesus, again.

Whether things in your life are going well or not...you have the power of a Christ-follower to focus on Jesus...the author and finisher of your faith and the centerpiece of your heart.

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