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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

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AWARENESS MONTH



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advocates that great care begins with a great plan and in doing so, the organization hopes to take those feelings of chaos out of a cancer diagnosis through its *mission-driven* approach to making these no cost services more accessible.



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OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Cristan Gensing
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
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Interview with Karen Hess: Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

Health and Wellness Magazine: Karen, can you tell us a little about your history with Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry and what led you to seek treatment from Dr. Campbell?



Karen Hess: Absolutely! I had braces as a child and always loved my smile. But over time, I noticed my teeth were yellowing, and because I grind my teeth, I started seeing damage to the exterior. I wanted to refresh my smile, so I decided to go with porcelain veneers. Dr. Campbell and his dental assistant, James Garcia, were wonderful throughout the process. I was beyond happy with the results.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That's great to hear! What happened next, and how did you come back to see Dr. Campbell for further treatment?

Karen Hess: A few years after the veneers, I started to have some pain in my back teeth, particularly near an old dental bridge that had been in place for about 25 years. Dr. Campbell told me I had some cavities and that the bridge needed to be removed. He explained the best course of treatment was to strengthen the bone base and replace the bridge with three dental implants.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That sounds like an involved procedure. How did you feel about it at first?

Karen Hess: Honestly, my dental phobia kicked in when I heard how long the procedure would take and all the steps involved. Even though I've always felt comfortable with Dr. Campbell and his team—they are so skilled—it was the complexity and duration of the treatment that worried me.

Health and Wellness Magazine: What helped you get past that fear?

Karen Hess: It was James Garcia, Dr. Campbell's assistant, who really convinced me. He took the time to talk to me and reassure me that I could make it through the process. Both Dr. Campbell and James were so empathetic and made sure I fully understood every step. They never rushed me, and that made a huge difference. Throughout the nearly year-long process, their patience and caring attitude made me feel like a VIP. I couldn't be more grateful to both.

Health and Wellness Magazine: It sounds like you had an incredibly positive experience, despite the challenges.

Karen Hess: Yes, without a doubt! Their level of care and communication was phenomenal. They truly made what could have been a scary experience into something manageable. I feel so fortunate to have had such a supportive team.

Understanding the Procedures: Porcelain Veneers and Dental Implants

Porcelain veneers are a popular cosmetic dental procedure designed to enhance the appearance of teeth. Thin shells made from porcelain are bonded to the front surface of the teeth, improving their shape, size, and color. Veneers are especially useful for patients with teeth that are discolored, chipped, or worn down due to habits like teeth grinding, as was the case with Karen.

The process typically involves a few appointments. Initially, the dentist will prepare the teeth by removing a small amount of enamel, allowing the veneers to fit seamlessly. After taking impressions, the veneers are custom-made in a lab to match the patient's desired look. During the final appointment, the veneers are carefully bonded to the teeth, giving the patient a refreshed and natural-looking smile.

In Karen's case, her veneers helped restore the youthful appearance of her smile, addressing the yellowing and wear caused by grinding. Porcelain veneers are known for their durability and can last many years with proper care.

Dental Implants - Dental implants are a long-term solution for replacing missing or damaged teeth. They are titanium posts surgically placed into the jawbone, acting as a replacement for the root of a missing tooth. Over time, the bone integrates with the implant, providing a strong foundation for a crown or bridge.

Karen's case was more complex due to the age of her dental bridge and the need for bone reinforcement before the implants could be placed. After removal of



the failing teeth, bone grafting was performed to reinforce the jawbone and provide a more ideal foundation for the dental implants. Once the bone was ready, Dr. Campbell planned a custom surgical guide to aid in precise placement of three dental implants, which were eventually completed with crowns to blend seamlessly with her other teeth.

Dental implants are a highly effective option for restoring function and aesthetics. They prevent bone loss, maintain facial structure, and offer the closest alternative to natural teeth in terms of strength and appearance. For Karen, the transition from a failing bridge to durable implants has given her a new level of comfort and confidence in her dental health.

Through the combination of Dr. Campbell's expertise and the empathetic care provided by his assistant, James Garcia, Karen's dental journey highlights the importance of trust, communication, and support in achieving successful outcomes. Whether it's cosmetic enhancement with porcelain veneers or a restorative procedure like dental implants, Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry continues to offer top-tier patient care.

Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry offers a wide range of services, including cosmetic dentistry, teeth replacement, orthodontics, dental implants, dentures, sedation dentistry, emergency dental treatments, pediatric treatments, and dental surgery.



Since becoming a dentist in 2009, **Dr. William Campbell** has cherished the opportunity to provide tangible, often immediate, benefits to the lives of his patients, whether by restoring their self-confidence through cosmetic work or by relieving their pain in their dental emergencies. Since graduating from dental school, Dr. Campbell has committed to continuing his education to provide the most informed care for his patients. He offers a wide range of specialized services, including gum recession treatment, bone grafting, dental implants, and cosmetic smile makeovers. He has been named a Top Dentist by *Naples Illustrated* twice so far.

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EMPOWERING LIVES:

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

Every year, October brings with it a vibrant sea of pink, reminding us of the crucial importance of breast health. National Breast Cancer

Awareness Month (NBCAM) is an annual campaign that aims to shed light on the significance of early detection, raise funds for research, and offer support to those affected by breast cancer. In this article, we will delve into the history, significance, and ongoing efforts surrounding NBCAM.

A Historical Perspective

The origins of NBCAM date back to 1985 when the American Cancer Society partnered with a pharmaceutical company to create a week-long campaign focused on promoting mammography as the most effective weapon against breast cancer. Over the years, this campaign grew into the month-long observance we recognize today. The primary goal has always been clear: to increase awareness about breast cancer and encourage women to take proactive steps in their breast health.

Raising Awareness through Pink

One of the most recognizable aspects of NBCAM is the color pink. The Pink Ribbon, now an international symbol of breast cancer awareness, was introduced in the early '90s. Today, pink ribbons and pink-themed events flood the world, unifying people in support of the cause. Beyond the symbolic color, NBCAM serves as a reminder for women to schedule mammograms, conduct self-examinations, and understand the risk factors associated with breast cancer.

The Impact of Early Detection

The significance of early detection cannot be overstated. Mammography, a simple and effective screening tool, can detect breast cancer at an early stage when it's most treatable. NBCAM emphasizes the importance of regular mammograms, particularly for women over 40, as they are at a higher risk. This emphasis on early detection has contributed to a significant reduction in breast cancer mortality rates over the past few decades.

Research and Progress

NBCAM also plays a vital role in funding research for breast cancer. Organizations like Susan G. Komen



and the National Breast Cancer Foundation channel donations towards groundbreaking research, exploring new treatments, and ultimately striving for a cure. Advances in genetics, targeted therapies, and personalized medicine have all been made possible, in part, through these fundraising efforts.

Support and Solidarity

Beyond education and fundraising, NBCAM provides a platform for those affected by breast cancer to share their stories and find support. The emotional and psychological toll of a breast cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and NBCAM ensures that individuals and their families don't face this journey alone. Support groups, survivor stories, and community events foster a sense of solidarity and hope.

Challenges and Ongoing Efforts

Despite remarkable progress, challenges persist. Health disparities, unequal access to screening and treatment, and the burden of metastatic breast cancer remain critical issues. NBCAM continues to address these challenges, advocating for equitable healthcare and amplifying the voices of those affected by breast cancer.

Your Role in NBCAM

As individuals, there are several ways we can actively participate in NBCAM:

- **Regular Screenings:** Schedule a mammogram if you're eligible, and encourage the women in your life to do the same.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about breast cancer risk factors, symptoms, and prevention strategies.
- **Donate and Volunteer:** Contribute to organizations supporting breast cancer research and support services.
- **Share Stories:** Share stories of hope, survival, and resilience to inspire and uplift others.
- **Wear Pink:** Show your support by wearing pink, the color of breast cancer awareness.

In conclusion, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a powerful reminder of the progress made in the fight against breast cancer and the work that still lies ahead. By raising awareness, promoting early detection, funding research, and providing support, NBCAM brings us closer to a world without breast cancer. Let's unite in the mission to empower lives and eradicate this devastating disease.

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EMPOWERING HEALTH: The Role of Physical Activity in Reducing Breast Cancer Risk, Recurrence, and Mortality

By Ashley Lampkin, BS, CSCS

Breast cancer, a formidable adversary in the world of women's health, continues to affect millions of lives globally. While advancements in diagnosis and treatment have improved survival rates, the emphasis on prevention and lifestyle interventions remains paramount. Physical activity, long hailed for its multifaceted benefits, has emerged as a powerful ally in the fight against breast cancer. This article explores the compelling evidence that demonstrates how engaging in regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing breast cancer, decrease the likelihood of recurrence, and improve overall survival rates.

Breast Cancer: A Global Health Challenge

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, with approximately 2.3 million new cases diagnosed in 2020 alone (World Cancer Research Fund, 2020). It not only poses a substantial health burden but also exacts a significant emotional and economic toll on individuals, families, and health-care systems. Hence, strategies for prevention and improved outcomes are of paramount importance.

Reducing the Risk

Several comprehensive studies have investigated the relationship between physical activity and breast cancer risk. A meta-analysis published in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* in 2019, which included data from 63 studies, found compelling evidence that regular physical activity can lower the risk of breast cancer (Zheng et al., 2019). The analysis revealed that women with the highest levels of physical activity experienced a 12% reduced risk of breast cancer compared to those with the lowest levels of activity.

The mechanisms behind this risk reduction are multifaceted. Physical activity can help regulate hormonal profiles, including estrogen, which is known to influence breast cancer development. Additionally, regular exercise can enhance the body's immune function, reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, which are key factors in cancer development.

Preventing Recurrence

For those who have battled breast cancer and achieved remission, the fear of recurrence looms large. Encouragingly, research suggests that physical activity plays a pivotal role in reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

A landmark study published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* in 2005 followed 2,987 breast cancer survivors for an average of 91 months (Holmes et al., 2005). The study found that women who engaged in three to five hours of moderate-intensity physical activity per week had a 50% lower risk of breast cancer recurrence compared to those who were less active. Furthermore, the risk of death from any cause was also significantly reduced among physically active survivors.

The physiological benefits of exercise post-treatment are substantial. Physical activity can help control body weight, reduce insulin resistance, and improve cardiovascular health, all of which contribute to reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence. Furthermore, exercise has a positive impact on emotional well-being, which can be particularly vital for those in remission.

Enhancing Survival Rates

For those already diagnosed with breast cancer, the impact of physical activity extends beyond reducing recurrence risk; it can also improve survival rates. A study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in 2019 demonstrated that women diagnosed with breast cancer who engaged in higher levels of physical activity after diagnosis had a significantly lower risk of dying from breast cancer (Iyengar et al., 2019).

The study, which included data from over 6,000 women, found that those who engaged in at least 10 metabolic equivalent task (MET) hours per week of physical activity after diagnosis had a 27% lower risk of breast cancer-specific mortality compared to those who were less active. The association between physical activity and survival was particularly pronounced in women with hormone receptor-positive breast cancer.

The benefits of physical activity on survival extend beyond reducing the risk of cancer recurrence. Exercise helps maintain a healthy body weight, improve cardiovascular health, and enhance overall well-being, all of which contribute to better survival outcomes.

Conclusion

In the battle against breast cancer, prevention and lifestyle interventions are crucial components of a holistic approach to women's health. Regular physical activity has emerged as a powerful weapon in reducing breast cancer risk, decreasing the likelihood of recurrence, and improving survival rates. The evidence is clear: moving more and engaging in exercise not only promotes overall well-being but also plays a vital role in the fight against breast cancer.

While scientific literature strongly supports the benefits of physical activity, it is essential to remember that every woman's health journey is unique. Consulting with healthcare professionals and tailoring an exercise regimen to individual needs and abilities is paramount. Empowering women with the knowledge and tools to incorporate regular physical activity into their lives is a critical step towards a brighter, healthier future in the ongoing fight against breast cancer.

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Ashley Lampkin, BS, CSCS
Director of Exercise

Ashley is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist by the National Strength and Conditioning Association. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from Florida Gulf Coast University and has more than 16 years' experience training clients in SWFL. With a passion for helping others achieve their personal health and fitness goals, she managed and ran her own fitness company in Naples before becoming the Director at Inspire Exercise Medicine.

MOMMY MAKEOVER:

Empowering Mothers to Reclaim Their Bodies and Confidence

Motherhood is a transformative journey filled with joy and love, but the physical toll of pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding can leave many women feeling disconnected from their pre-pregnancy bodies. The Mommy Makeover, a customized combination of plastic surgery procedures, offers a solution to address these concerns and help mothers regain their confidence and physical well-being.



Understanding the Mommy Makeover

Dr. Kiran Gill, a board-certified plastic surgeon serving Naples and Fort Myers, FL, specializes in creating personalized Mommy Makeover plans tailored to each patient's specific needs and goals. A typical Mommy Makeover may include a

combination of breast surgery (augmentation, lift, or reduction), tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), liposuction, labiaplasty, and facial rejuvenation treatments.

The versatility of the Mommy Makeover allows Dr. Gill to work closely with each patient, determining the most appropriate combination of procedures to achieve optimal results. This customized approach ensures that each mother's unique concerns are addressed effectively.

Benefits of a Mommy Makeover

The advantages of undergoing a Mommy Makeover extend far beyond physical appearance:

- Restored confidence and self-esteem
- Improved body contours and proportions
- Enhanced breast shape and position
- Tightened abdominal muscles and removal of excess skin
- Reduced stubborn fat deposits
- Rejuvenated facial appearance
- Improved fit in clothing and swimwear
- Long-lasting results with proper maintenance

Perhaps most importantly, a Mommy Makeover can help women feel like themselves again, reconnecting with their bodies and boosting their overall quality of life.



The Mommy Makeover Process

Consultation - The journey begins with a comprehensive consultation with Dr. Gill, where she assesses your overall health, discusses your concerns and aesthetic goals, explains procedure options, creates a customized treatment plan, and addresses any questions or concerns.

Preparation - Once you decide to proceed, Dr. Gill provides detailed pre-operative instructions, which may include adjusting medications, quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and arranging for post-operative care and support.

The Procedure - Mommy Makeover surgery is typically performed as an outpatient procedure under anesthesia. The duration depends on the combination of procedures but usually ranges from 3 to 6 hours. Dr. Gill employs advanced techniques to minimize scarring and optimize results, meticulously executing each procedure to address specific concerns.

Recovery - Recovery time varies depending on the extent of the procedures performed. Generally, patients can expect:

- 1-2 weeks of initial recovery with limited activity
- 4-6 weeks before returning to more strenuous activities
- Gradual improvement in swelling and final results over several months

Dr. Gill provides comprehensive post-operative care instructions and schedules regular follow-up appointments to ensure proper healing and optimal results.

Choosing the Right Surgeon

When considering a Mommy Makeover, selecting a qualified, experienced plastic surgeon is crucial. Dr. Kiran Gill stands out for several reasons:

- Board certification in plastic surgery
- Extensive experience in body contouring procedures
- A woman's perspective on the unique needs of mothers
- Commitment to personalized care and natural-looking results
- State-of-the-art surgical facilities in Naples, FL

Is a Mommy Makeover Right for You

Ideal candidates for a Mommy Makeover are in good overall health, at or near their ideal body weight, finished with childbearing, non-smokers or willing to quit, and realistic about potential outcomes. It's important to note that a Mommy Makeover is not a substitute for a healthy lifestyle but rather a way to address changes that diet and exercise alone cannot correct.

Embracing Your New Self

A Mommy Makeover can be a life-changing experience, allowing mothers to feel comfortable and confident in their bodies once again. While the physical transformations can be dramatic, the emotional and psychological benefits often prove even more profound.

If you're considering a Mommy Makeover, take the first step by scheduling a consultation with Dr. Kiran Gill. With her expertise, compassionate approach, and commitment to excellence, you can embark on a journey to rediscover your pre-pregnancy body and embrace a renewed sense of self-confidence.

Remember, motherhood is a beautiful journey, and feeling good about yourself is an essential part of being the best mother you can be. A Mommy Makeover might just be the key to unlocking a more confident, revitalized you. Dr. Gill and her team are dedicated to helping you achieve your aesthetic goals while prioritizing your safety and well-being throughout the entire process.



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Is Losing Weight Good for Your Heart?

The Dangers of Muscle Mass Loss While Taking Weight Loss Medications

Preventing Muscle Loss: Vital for Heart Health

Our bodies undergo various changes as we age, including gradually losing muscle mass and strength. This process, known as sarcopenia, is not just a concern for our physical appearance but also for our overall health, particularly our heart health. Preserving muscle mass matters, especially for individuals taking weight loss medications like GLP-1 agonists, and how Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center is leading the way in addressing this issue.

Understanding the Connection Between Muscle Loss and Heart Disease

Sarcopenia isn't just about losing muscle; it's about losing a key component of our body's health and vitality. Recent studies have shown that the decline in muscle mass is closely linked to an increased risk of heart disease and other cardiovascular complications. This is particularly relevant for individuals with coronary heart disease (CHD), where maintaining muscle strength becomes even more critical.

Research has indicated that individuals with low muscle mass tend to experience higher rates of major adverse cardiovascular events (MACEs) and all-cause mortality. These findings underscore the importance of addressing muscle health in cardiovascular disease management.



Why Muscle Matters for Heart Health

Our muscles do more than help us move; they play a crucial role in supporting our cardiovascular system. Strong muscles promote better blood circulation, help regulate blood sugar levels, and contribute to overall metabolic health. By preserving muscle mass, we can better protect our heart and reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications.



Introducing Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center's Approach

At Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center, we understand the importance of preserving muscle mass, especially for individuals undergoing weight loss treatments like GLP-1 agonists. That's why we've integrated state-of-the-art equipment to accurately measure muscle mass in our patients participating in weight loss programs.

Led by renowned specialists like Dr. Leandro Perez, Dr. Tracy Roth, Dr. Javier, and the newest addition, Dr. Solano, our team is dedicated to helping patients maintain their muscle mass while achieving their weight loss goals. With board-certified lifestyle specialists on board, we offer comprehensive wellness programs tailored to each individual's needs.

Empowering Patients for Better Health

We believe that knowledge is power, so we're committed to educating our patients about the importance of muscle health in preventing cardiovascular disease. By providing the latest tools and techniques for measuring muscle mass and personalized lifestyle recommendations, we empower our patients to take control of their heart health and overall well-being.

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If you're taking any of the new weight loss medications like Ozempic, Wegovy or other formulations medications for weight loss or have concerns about preserving muscle mass, don't hesitate to contact Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center. Our team is here to support you on your journey to better health. If you are interested in knowing your body composition, including muscle mass, visceral fat, and other health risk factors, please call 239-300-0586 to set up an appointment for a DexaFit scan today.



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Aqualane Clinical Research Expands Facilities to Meet Growing Demand in Neurology and Other Clinical Trials

Aqualane Clinical Research, a leading organization dedicated in advancing medical therapies, has announced a significant expansion of its facilities to accommodate the growing demand for clinical trials, particularly in the field of neurological disease research. This strategic move, dubbed "Phase 1" of their expansion plan, highlights the increasing importance of clinical research in the healthcare landscape and Aqualane's commitment to providing patients with access to cutting-edge treatments.

The clinical research field has experienced substantial growth in recent years, driven by the urgent need to develop new and improved therapies for a wide range of medical conditions. Alzheimer's disease, in particular, has become a focal point for research due to its increasing prevalence and the lack of effective treatments. According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and this number is projected to rise to nearly 13 million by 2050.

Dr. William Justiz, one of Aqualane's founders, emphasized the significance of this expansion: "Our new facilities, especially our ability to conduct overnight stays for first-in-human trials, represent a major step forward in our research capabilities. This is particularly crucial for research, where closely monitored, round-the-clock observation can provide invaluable data in the early stages of drug development."

The Phase 1 expansion of Aqualane's facilities includes the addition of specialized overnight accommodations, state-of-the-art monitoring equipment, and an expanded team of researchers. This enhancement allows Aqualane to conduct first-in-human trials, a critical stage in the drug development process where new treatments are tested in humans for the first time.

Dr. Matthew Baker, another founder of Aqualane, explained the importance of these trials: "First-in-human studies are a pivotal step in bringing new treatments to patients. By offering overnight stays, we can provide continuous monitoring and immediate response to any effects of the new therapies we're testing. This is especially important in research, where understanding the 24-hour impact of a treatment can be crucial."



Aqualane continues to conduct trials across a broad spectrum of conditions, including Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, and various neuropsychiatric disorders. The expansion allows the organization to accommodate an increasing number of clinical trials across all these areas.

Kelly Calistri, also co-founder and CEO, highlighted the patient-centric approach of Aqualane: "Our expanded facilities not only enhance our research capabilities but also allow us to provide a more comfortable and comprehensive experience for our trial participants. We understand that participating in a clinical trial, especially one involving overnight stays, can be daunting. Our new facilities are designed to make patients feel at ease while ensuring the highest standards of care and data collection."

The growth of Aqualane Clinical Research reflects broader trends in the clinical research field. The global clinical trials market is expected to reach \$68.9 billion by 2026, growing at a compound annual rate of 5.1% from 2021 to 2026. This expansion is driven by the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases like Alzheimer's, the need for personalized medicine, and the growing emphasis on patient-centered care.

Aqualane's commitment to advancing research is particularly timely. Despite decades of research, effective treatments for various therapies remain elusive, making every new clinical trial a potential breakthrough. The ability to conduct first-in-human trials with overnight stays positions Aqualane at the forefront of this critical research.

"We're excited about the potential our expanded facilities bring to research," said Dr. Justiz. "Every day, we're learning more about these devastating diseases, and each trial brings us one step closer to potential treatments that could improve the lives of millions."

As Aqualane Clinical Research continues to grow, the organization remains focused on its mission of collaborating with patients, their care partners, and industry sponsors to safely and ethically study emerging therapies. This Phase 1 expansion marks a significant milestone in Aqualane's journey and reinforces its position as a leader in the clinical research field, dedicated to transforming the future of healthcare.

"Our expanded facilities represent not just growth for Aqualane, but hope for patients and families affected by challenging conditions," concluded Dr. Baker. "We're committed to leveraging these new capabilities to accelerate the pace of discovery and bring new treatments to those who need them most."

With the growing demand for clinical trials, Aqualane's unwavering dedication to patient-centric research, the future holds immense promise for the advancement of medical therapies and the well-being of patients worldwide.



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FIVE TIPS TO LOWER STRESS AND LIVE HEALTHIER

Everyone experiences stress, but how it's managed can impact your chances of developing serious health conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, dementia and stroke. Through healthy lifestyle habits, and sometimes professional help, you can reduce your daily stress, leading to better overall health.

Stress is the natural response to a perceived threat. When exposed to a stressor, the hormone cortisol is released, sending the body into "fight or flight." Typically our bodies recover once the perceived threat is over. However, too much exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones can disrupt the body's processes, negatively affecting everyday activities and leaving you more susceptible to chronic inflammation and life-altering diseases.



Larry Leslie, M.D., Interventional Cardiologist, says it is important to understand what causes stress and take steps to manage stress to protect your long-term health.

"Chronic stress can take a major toll on the body," Dr. Leslie says. "But with a few easy lifestyle changes, stress can be easily controlled, lowering the risk of heart disease, stroke and other conditions."

Dr. Leslie recommends five habits to help reduce stress:

- 1. Exercise daily:** The American Heart Association reports only 2.5 hours of moderate exercise a week can reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and Alzheimer's.
- 2. Eat healthy:** Break the "stress eating" habit and adopt a balanced diet that includes vegetables and healthy fats. Try planning healthy meals ahead of time to avoid reaching for unhealthy snacks when hunger – or stress - strikes.
- 3. Get enough sleep:** For adults, experts recommend sleeping seven to nine hours a day.



4. Practice self-care: Take time to relax and recharge through your favorite activities and practice mindfulness techniques like meditation.

5. Ask for help: Unfortunately, stress can become overwhelming. Physicians and mental health professionals can provide you with tools to help manage stress and feel better.

In the U.S., 60% of adults admit to feeling stress every day according to a nationwide survey by Gallup.

With so many of us experiencing stress, it's more important than ever to adopt healthy, stress-relieving habits.

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If you think stress might be a factor in your health, especially your heart health, schedule an appointment with Dr. Leslie by calling **239-348-4221** or visiting physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com.

FOCUSING ON EYE SAFETY: CONTACT LENS AND EYE INJURY PREVENTION MONTH

As we observe Contact Lens and Eye Injury Prevention Month, it's crucial to shine a spotlight on the importance of maintaining optimal eye health and safety. Our eyes are irreplaceable organs that deserve utmost care and attention. This month-long awareness campaign serves as a reminder to both contact lens wearers and the general public about the significance of proper eye care practices and injury prevention measures.

Contact lenses have revolutionized vision correction for millions of people worldwide. However, improper use and care of these tiny optical devices can lead to serious eye problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 45 million people in the United States wear contact lenses. While these lenses provide excellent vision correction, they also come with responsibilities.

One of the primary focuses of this awareness month is educating contact lens wearers about best practices. Proper hygiene is paramount when handling contact lenses. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your lenses or your eyes. This simple step can significantly reduce the risk of introducing harmful bacteria into your eyes.

It's also essential to follow the recommended wear schedule for your lenses. Overwearing contact lenses, especially sleeping in them when not approved by your eye care professional, can increase the risk of eye infections and corneal ulcers. Always remove your lenses before sleeping, swimming, or exposing your eyes to water, as these activities can introduce harmful microorganisms to your eyes.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of contact lenses are crucial. Use only the solutions recommended by your eye care professional, and never reuse or top off old solution. Replace your lens case every three months to prevent bacterial buildup. These habits can go a long way in preventing eye infections and ensuring the longevity of your lenses.

Beyond contact lens care, this month also emphasizes the importance of preventing eye injuries in various settings. Whether at work, home, or during sports activities, eye protection should always be a priority. According to the American Optometric Association, about 90% of eye injuries are preventable with proper safety eyewear.

In the workplace, especially in industries involving construction, manufacturing, or laboratory work, wearing appropriate safety goggles or face shields is crucial. At home, be cautious when using cleaning products, performing DIY projects, or working in the yard. Simple precautions like wearing safety glasses can prevent devastating eye injuries.

Sports enthusiasts should also take note. Activities like basketball, baseball, and racquet sports pose significant risks to the eyes. Wearing sports goggles or protective eyewear can prevent traumatic eye injuries and potential vision loss.

This awareness month also serves as a reminder for everyone, regardless of whether they wear contact lenses, to schedule regular comprehensive eye exams. These check-ups can detect early signs of eye diseases and ensure your vision prescription is up to date.

As we navigate through Contact Lens and Eye Injury Prevention Month, let's commit to making eye safety a year-round priority. By adopting proper contact lens care habits, using appropriate eye protection, and staying vigilant about potential eye hazards, we can significantly reduce the risk of eye injuries and maintain healthy vision for years to come.

Remember, your eyes are windows to the world – treat them with the care and respect they deserve. Whether you're a contact lens wearer or not, take this month as an opportunity to reassess your eye care routine and make any necessary improvements. Your future self will thank you for the gift of clear, healthy vision.



Penny Orr, O.D.
Optometric Physician

Dr. Orr is an optometric physician that provides a wide variety of primary eye care to patients. She completed her bachelor's degree at Florida Southern College, followed by her Doctor of Optometry degree at the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis. She completed internships at Winter Haven Eye Clinic in Winter Haven, Florida, and St. Luke's Eye Institute in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Dr. Orr is a member of the American Optometric Association, Florida Optometric Association, Southwest Florida Optometric Association, Contact Lens Association of Optometrists, and the Kiwanis Club. She has dedicated her time to the Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity, an organization that facilitates the provision and sustainability of vision care worldwide for people who can neither afford nor obtain such care. She has traveled to Belize, Santo Domingo, Costa Rica, Haiti, and Panama. Dr. Orr serves on several local boards, including the Humane Society of Lee County, Parkinson's of Southwest Florida, and Alzheimer's Association Florida Gulf Coast Chapter.

Originally from Maine, Dr. Orr has lived in Southwest Florida since 1989. Dr. Orr is active in sports, particularly tennis, golf, and cycling. She is passionate about animal rescue and enjoys crafting and traveling.



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NAVIGATING ADULT ADHD AND COGNITIVE HEALTH:

A Holistic Approach

By Sonny Gensing

October marks ADHD Awareness Month, shining a light on cognitive health concerns such as adult ADHD, memory loss, and brain fog. While ADHD is often associated with children, many adults struggle with poor concentration, forgetfulness, and mental fatigue. These challenges are complex and interconnected with overall wellness, making them ideally suited for a holistic and functional medicine approach.

Functional medicine emphasizes understanding the root causes of these symptoms and addressing them with personalized strategies to enhance brain function. From nutrition and exercise to advanced therapies like IV infusions and regenerative treatments, here are practical ways to improve focus, memory, and mental clarity.

Nutrition for Brain Health

A nutrient-rich diet plays a crucial role in managing cognitive function. Certain nutrients can alleviate ADHD symptoms and support overall brain health.

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Found in salmon, walnuts, and flaxseed, omega-3s are essential for brain function and are linked to improved ADHD symptoms. They support neurotransmitter activity, often dysregulated in individuals with ADHD.
- **Antioxidant-Rich Foods:** Antioxidants in berries, leafy greens, and colorful vegetables protect the brain from oxidative stress, which can lead to cognitive decline and memory issues.
- **Stable Blood Sugar:** Blood sugar fluctuations can cause mental fog and poor focus. A diet rich in lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats helps maintain steady energy levels and prevents mental fatigue.

The Role of Exercise

Exercise is a powerful tool for enhancing brain function, regulating dopamine and norepinephrine—neurotransmitters linked to attention and focus.

- **Strength Training:** Strength training offers unique cognitive benefits for adults dealing with ADHD, memory issues, or brain fog. It increases neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, essential for mood regulation and focus. Additionally, regular strength training promotes brain plasticity, helping preserve cognitive function and improve memory as you age.

Supplements for Cognitive Support

In addition to proper nutrition, certain supplements can boost brain health and reduce ADHD-related symptoms.

- **Magnesium:** Supports neurotransmitter function, promotes relaxation, and reduces stress, helping to enhance focus and calm the nervous system.
- **L-Theanine:** Found in green tea, L-theanine promotes calm alertness without causing drowsiness, improving attention span and reducing anxiety.
- **Nootropics:** Natural nootropics like lion's mane and cordyceps enhance focus, memory, and mental clarity, supporting overall cognitive function.

Advanced Holistic Therapies

For those seeking deeper care, advanced holistic therapies offer personalized solutions for cognitive concerns.

- **IV Therapy:** IV nutrient therapy delivers vitamins and minerals directly into the bloodstream, bypassing digestive limitations. IV infusions rich in magnesium, B-vitamins, and vitamin C can help improve mental clarity and reduce brain fog.
- **Compound Therapy:** Methylene blue, a compound with antioxidant and neuroprotective properties, has potential to enhance cognitive health. By improving mitochondrial function, methylene blue may boost brain energy metabolism, supporting focus, memory, and overall cognitive function.
- **Hormonal Balance:** Imbalances in hormones like thyroid, testosterone, and estrogen can contribute to cognitive issues. Personalized bioidentical hormone therapy can dramatically improve mental function, energy levels, and focus.
- **Regenerative Therapy:** Regenerative therapies, such as mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) infusions, offer cutting-edge solutions for cognitive health. MSCs help reduce inflammation, promote cellular repair, and enhance brain function.



Final Thoughts

As we recognize ADHD Awareness Month this October, it's important to understand that adult ADHD, brain fog, and memory challenges are deeply connected to overall health. A functional medicine approach can improve cognitive function through simple yet impactful changes in nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle, alongside advanced therapies like IV infusions, compound therapy, and regenerative treatments.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this article is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Always consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new diet, exercise program, supplementation, or therapy, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

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UNBALANCED THYROID - A FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE COMMON CONDITION

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

Prevention is a foundation of Functional Medicine which I practice. When I think of a disease that could easily be prevented if screened for early - Thyroid immediately comes to mind. In fact, almost 10% of the population is estimated to have some degree of thyroid imbalance, but only 1% is officially diagnosed. This means that 9 out of 10 people with early thyroid disease will likely not get the preventive help they need.

I think of the Thyroid gland as a mirror of our personal lifestyle. As our environment changes, so does the thyroid. Its function is designed to be activated or suppressed in response to the daily stressors and metabolic demands we face.

Patients with imbalanced thyroid gland present with a variety of complaints. Some of them are:

- Mental or physical fatigue
- Unintentional weight gain or loss
- Insulin Resistance or Metabolic Syndrome
- High Cholesterol despite best dietary efforts
- Depression
- Infertility

When holistic doctors consider thyroid etiology for the patient's presenting symptoms - they usually consider what kind of past or current stressors surround their patient. It is a well-known fact that stress suppresses thyroid function at multiple levels and should be considered right away. In fact, stress affects production of thyroid releasing hormone at the hypothalamic level, influences production of thyroid stimulating hormone at the pituitary level, interferes with the production of the T4 hormone by the thyroid gland itself and even at the peripheral level by affecting conversion of T4 to T3 hormone. It should come as no surprise that we consider the Ayurvedic (ancient Indian) view of the body chakras, thyroid function is intimately connected with blockages in the Throat Chakra. It takes an experience and a unique skill set to treat thyroid by fusing the best of Western and Eastern healing modalities.



In addition to stress, we should always consider what environmental triggers could the patient potentially have been exposed to? Could an infection or some sort of inflammation create a compromised milieu for the functioning of the thyroid gland? Many different viral, bacterial, fungal, and even parasitic infections can trigger autoimmune inflammation of the thyroid gland. Therefore, identification and treatment of any such underlying infection is of utmost importance.

Another consideration: Is there some sort of nutritional deficiency or a presence of food sensitivity, which could potentially compromise functioning of the thyroid gland? Getting checked for food sensitivities or Celiac might get us some answers. The most common deficiencies identified in newly diagnosed thyroid patients are: Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Selenium, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Iron, Zinc, and B12. If any such deficiency is identified - prompt supplementation may lead to correction of the imbalance. For example, a systematic review and a meta-analysis of Selenium supplementation in the treatment of Hashimoto's thyroiditis in *Thyroid: Official Journal of American Thyroid Association*, has concluded that on the basis of the best available evidence, Selenium supplementation is associated with a significant decrease in Thyroid Peroxidase Antibody titers at 3 months and with improvement in mood and general well-being.

Another 2017 study in the *International Journal of Endocrinology* concluded that Selenium supplementation in patients with Hashimoto's thyroiditis may be useful even for those who are already being treated with levothyroxine.

I must mention a common dietary question I hear from patients: how does iodine fit into the picture of healthy thyroid?

In truth, there is no straightforward answer to this question. It seems like iodine deficiency as well as the excess of iodine in the diet or supplementation, can cause disturbances with thyroid. I typically recommend that the salt the patient consumes for cooking should be iodinated. Interestingly, iodine deficiency seems to be most prevalent in pregnant, vegetarian, and vegan patients. In fact a study in the *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism* discovered that 80% of the vegans included in the study suffered from iodine deficiency, and the proposed reason was that vegans do not eat fish and other sea products, which are all rich in iodine. Nevertheless, I do not recommend taking any iodine containing supplements which have more than 150 micrograms of iodine (a recommended daily value, RDA). Food intake via seafood products is always more natural in my humble opinion than pushing high doses of supplements.

The takeaway message of this article is this: if you feel that your symptoms could be resulting from thyroid imbalance - get it checked out and consider how managing your stress, diet and lifestyle can help you heal this common condition.

Lifestyle interventions, however small, always improve thyroid function, and this is most likely thanks to the mitigation of an inflammatory state, which either directly or indirectly instigated thyroid dysfunction in the first place.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

The author of 'Diet Slave No More!', Svetlana Kogan, MD is a Board-Certified Internal Medicine, Holistic & Functional Medical Doctor with 25 years of experience. She has appeared as a health expert on prime-time TV and radio stations

and has authored hundreds of holistic health articles for internet and print. She moved her Concierge Practice from Manhattan NYC to Naples in 2019. Her Functional Medicine Primary Care Practice is focused on prevention and holistic approach to illness, and longevity.

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FIVE WAYS PHYSICAL THERAPY ENHANCES WELLNESS AT THE CARLISLE NAPLES

By Jenny Bradley

As we celebrate National Physical Therapy Month this October, it's the perfect time to highlight the remarkable advantages of physical therapy within senior living communities. Far from being just a rehabilitation tool, physical therapy in these vibrant environments becomes a gateway to enhanced well-being, improved mobility and a more active, fulfilling lifestyle for residents.

Here are five key benefits that make physical therapy an essential component of life in senior living communities:

1. Strength Through Community

One of the most significant advantages of physical therapy in senior living communities is the sense of collective strength it fosters. Many residents report feeling stronger after moving to a retirement community, and it's not just about physical ability. The supportive environment, regular physical therapy sessions and fitness classes create a positive atmosphere where residents motivate each other to stay active and healthy.

2. Comprehensive Wellness Programs

Senior living communities often offer a wealth of wellness programs that complement physical therapy. From aquatics classes to balance training, these programs are designed to cater to various needs and preferences. For instance, at The Carlisle Naples, a luxury senior living community, residents enjoy a full slate of wellness opportunities through their signature Zest program focusing on well-being in mind, body and soul. Residents also have access to licensed providers like EmpowerMe Wellness, which offers on-site physical, occupational and speech therapies. This integrated approach ensures that seniors receive well-rounded support and care that addresses all aspects of their physical, emotional and spiritual health.

3. Customized Fitness Classes

Physical therapy in senior living communities often extends beyond individual sessions. Many communities offer various fitness classes tailored specifically for older adults. These classes, which may include low-impact exercises, stretching and even cardio fitness, are often designed in consultation with



physical therapists to ensure they meet the unique needs of older adults while promoting overall health and mobility.

4. Preventive Care and Early Intervention

Living in a community with many opportunities for transformative wellness and on-site physical therapy services gives residents easy access to preventive care. Regular check-ins and screenings can help identify potential issues before they become serious problems. This proactive approach maintains optimal physical function and prevents future health complications, allowing seniors to enjoy their independence longer.

"Through our partnership with The Carlisle, we develop meaningful relationships with residents," said Christopher Dietz, director of EmpowerMe Wellness. "This familiarity allows us to notice subtle changes that might affect their well-being. When appropriate, we can offer early screenings or assessments. This proactive approach aims to support and provide timely information and resources."

5. Social Engagement and Motivation

Perhaps one of the most overlooked benefits of physical therapy in senior living communities is the social aspect. Group therapy sessions and fitness classes become social events where residents make friends, share experiences, and motivate each other. This social engagement is crucial for mental health and can significantly boost the effectiveness of physical therapy by making it an enjoyable, community-oriented activity.

Physical therapy within senior living communities like The Carlisle Naples goes far beyond traditional rehabilitation. It becomes an integral part of a lifestyle that promotes continuous self-improvement, social engagement and overall well-being.

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



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THE LIFE-SAVING POWER OF REGULAR SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS: WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

In a world where health consciousness is on the rise, one critical aspect of preventive care often goes overlooked: regular skin cancer screenings. With skin cancer being one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, the importance of early detection through routine check-ups cannot be overstated. This article delves into why staying vigilant about your skin health, particularly in checking for melanomas, could be a life-saving decision.

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow abnormally, often due to damage from UV radiation. While there are several types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most dangerous. Melanoma develops in the melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing skin pigment. Although it's less common than other skin cancers, melanoma is far more likely to spread to other parts of the body if not caught early.

The Power of Early Detection

The key to successfully treating skin cancer, especially melanoma, lies in early detection. When caught in its initial stages, the five-year survival rate for melanoma is an impressive 99%. However, this rate drops dramatically to 27% for melanomas that have spread to distant parts of the body. These statistics underscore the critical importance of regular skin checks and professional screenings.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

While professional screenings are crucial, being aware of your own skin and any changes is equally important. The "ABCDE" rule is a helpful guide for identifying potential melanomas:

Asymmetry: One half of the mole doesn't match the other half.

Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, or blurred.

Color: The color is not uniform and may include shades of brown, black, or tan.

Diameter: Melanomas are usually larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).

Evolving: The mole changes in size, shape, or color over time.

Any mole or skin growth exhibiting these characteristics warrants immediate medical attention.

The Screening Process

A professional skin cancer screening is a quick, painless procedure that can be performed by a dermatologist or trained healthcare provider. During the screening, the doctor will thoroughly examine your skin, paying close attention to areas frequently exposed to the sun. They may use a dermatoscope, a special magnifying tool, to get a closer look at suspicious spots.

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

While everyone should be mindful of their skin health, certain factors increase the risk of skin cancer:

- Fair skin
- History of sunburns or excessive sun exposure
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Family history of skin cancer
- Weakened immune system

For those at average risk, an annual skin check is recommended. However, individuals with higher risk factors may need more frequent screenings. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate screening schedule for your specific situation.

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

In between professional screenings, monthly self-examinations are crucial. These self-checks allow you to become familiar with your skin's normal appearance and help you spot any changes quickly. Use a full-length mirror and a hand mirror to examine your entire body, including hard-to-see areas like your back, scalp, and between your toes.

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

While regular screenings are vital, prevention remains the best strategy against skin cancer. Protect your skin by:

- Applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 daily
- Wearing protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses
- Seeking shade, especially during peak sun hours (10 am to 4 pm)
- Avoiding tanning beds and sun lamps

The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings


Regular skin cancer screenings don't just benefit individuals; they have a broader societal impact. Early detection reduces the overall burden on healthcare systems by catching cancers when they're most treatable. It also helps raise awareness about skin cancer, encouraging others to prioritize their skin health.

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

In the grand scheme of health maintenance, skin cancer screenings are a relatively small investment of time that can yield enormous benefits. By making these screenings a regular part of your health routine, you're taking a proactive step in protecting yourself against one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. Remember, your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense against the environment. Treating it with the care and attention it deserves isn't just about aesthetics—it's about preserving your overall health and potentially saving your life.

Don't wait for a problem to arise. Schedule a skin cancer screening today and empower yourself with the knowledge and vigilance needed to keep your skin healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for this simple yet powerful act of self-care.

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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?

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the insurance carriers in your area, we are happy to help you through the maze. We offer Free Medicare Seminars, Personal Appointments & Virtual appointments.

Please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

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A Groundbreaking Implant to Alleviate Pain From Arthritic Conditions of The Big Toe

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

Bunions are a form of arthritis and can cause painful, red, bony growths; consequently, bunions can also be hereditary and run in families, especially in females. More women than men experience the painful bony growth on their big toe, known as a bunion, or Hallux Valgus. More often than not, bunions hurt more when wearing shoes. Wearing shoes causes pressure on your toe joint, which in turn starts to ache, become fluid filled and can have bony growths. We all need to wear shoes, so is there anything that really works to heal bunions?

Non-Surgical, Conservative Approach

For a conservative approach, many individuals will start out trying to alleviate their pain by wearing more comfortable shoes, or by wearing gel toe inserts that help keep the toes in the proper alignment. Icing the foot can help to tamp down inflammations, as well as taking NSAID's (ibuprofen) as needed to lessen the discomfort. However, this is usually not beneficial. **Because most bunions fail to heal on their own, surgery is usually recommended.**

In traditional bunion surgery, the toe bone is cut in half, and part of the bone is removed. In many cases, there is a need to relieve tension on surrounding ligaments and tendons to try and realign the joint and bones. The total recovery can take a few months, but initially, you will be in a protective boot or cast for the first two to four weeks.

A groundbreaking Hallux Joint Implant can alleviate arthritic pain from bone on bone friction. It allows pain free movement of the joint.

There is a Cutting Edge Procedure called CARTIVA® SCI

Joint resurfacing with CARTIVA® SCI is simple, does not require significant removal of healthy tissue, and typically results in nominal surgical trauma and rapid recovery. It's minimally invasive and uses unique instruments to deliver the synthetic cartilage to the damaged joint.



The CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) device is comprised of an organic hydrogel polymer made of polyvinyl alcohol and saline. CARTIVA® SCI has a high water content, and its elastic and compressive mechanical properties are similar to articular cartilage. The device is intended to replace focal areas of painful damaged cartilage thereby reducing pain and maintaining range of motion in the first metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint.

CARTIVA® SCI is the first implant that behaves like the natural cartilage of your joint to relieve pain and improve mobility for patients suffering from big toe arthritis. **WHY CARTIVA® SCI?** Unlike fusion surgery, CARTIVA® SCI reduces joint pain without sacrificing your foot's natural movement

Your big toe joint is uniquely designed for movement and provides most of the force needed for walking and running. Unlike fusion surgery, which locks the joint in place, CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) reduces pain while also allowing your joint to move how it's supposed to.

Quick Procedure & Quick Recovery

Implanting CARTIVA® SCI is 40% faster than the alternative fusion surgery. There are no casts or crutches required. Patients can typically bear weight immediately after receiving CARTIVA® SCI.

Long Term Results

CARTIVA® SCI is proven to provide long-term pain reduction and increased foot mobility, with 97% reduction in pain demonstrated at almost six years post-procedure.

Collier Podiatry

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

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

Source:
<https://www.cartiva.net/what-is-cartiva/why-cartiva/>



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Michael J. Petrocelli
D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P.

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www.collierpodiatry.com

NCH Countryside Commons
1715 Heritage Trail, Suite 204
Naples, FL 34112
Phone: (239) 775-0019
Fax: (239) 775-0219

Pain, Dryness & Irritation:

How Women Are Rejuvenating Their Lives

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

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

Female Sexual Dissatisfaction Has Many Causes

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

CO2RE Intima

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



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

CO2RE Intima Benefits:

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

CO₂RE[®] Intima
Women's Intimate Wellness



CO2RE Intima might be for you if:

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

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

Ask us today if CO2RE Intima is right for you

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



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Lisa Mark, MD



Amy Goetz, PA-C


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Interview with Dr. Michael Shaffer: The M7 MLS Therapy Laser

Health and Wellness Magazine: Dr. Shaffer, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. You've been in practice for over 40 years, helping patients with chronic and difficult cases. Can you tell us a bit about the latest addition to your treatment options, the M7 MLS Therapy Laser?



Dr. Michael Shaffer: It's my pleasure! Yes, the M7 MLS Therapy Laser is the newest technology we've brought into our practice, and I'm very excited about it. We're the first in the area to have the M7 model, and it's been a real game changer for pain management. It allows us to treat a wide range of conditions using robotic light therapy, which is both safe and effective.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That sounds fascinating. How does this laser therapy work, and what makes it different from other treatments?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The M7 MLS Therapy Laser uses specific wavelengths of light to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and promote healing at the cellular level. What sets the M7 apart from other modalities is its advanced robotic system that delivers precise, consistent treatments with 50 watts of peak power. This allows for deeper penetration of the laser, meaning we can address more severe cases or reach deeper tissues without compromising patient safety.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That's impressive. What kinds of conditions can the M7 laser treat?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The M7 can be used to treat a wide variety of conditions, especially those involving musculoskeletal pain. This includes arthritis, tendonitis, sprains, strains, sports injuries, and even post-surgical recovery. The laser therapy works well for both acute injuries and chronic pain. Because it helps reduce inflammation and speeds up tissue regeneration, we've seen excellent results in patients with long-term issues like joint pain and neuropathy.

Health and Wellness Magazine: You mentioned this laser has a robotic feature. Can you explain how that benefits patient care?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: Absolutely. The robotic arm on the M7 ensures that the treatment is delivered in a uniform and precise manner. The system is programmed with four different treatment modalities,



allowing us to customize therapy based on the patient's specific condition. This means we can tailor the treatment to provide optimal results, reducing the variability that can come with manual application.

Health and Wellness Magazine: How has incorporating the M7 laser into your practice enhanced patient outcomes?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The feedback from patients has been overwhelmingly positive. They're experiencing faster recovery times, and for many, the pain relief has been more significant than with other treatments. We're seeing improvements in patients who have struggled with chronic pain for years, sometimes within just a few sessions. What's especially beneficial is that this laser therapy is non-invasive, so patients don't have to worry about downtime or recovery after treatment.

Health and Wellness Magazine: Safety is always a big concern with new technologies. Can you talk about the safety features of the M7?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: Safety is a top priority, and the M7 has been designed with this in mind. The laser's software includes enhanced safety protocols, such as adjusting the intensity automatically to ensure it's never too high for the treatment area. There are also built-in safety features that prevent overheating and protect sensitive areas of the body. Patients can feel confident knowing that the therapy is both effective and safe.

Health and Wellness Magazine: With over four decades of experience in chiropractic care, what led you to incorporate cutting-edge technologies like the M7 MLS Therapy Laser?

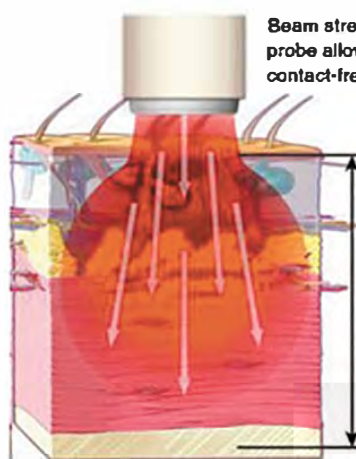
Dr. Michael Shaffer: I've always believed in offering my patients the best care possible. Throughout my career, I've continuously looked for new ways to enhance treatment outcomes, especially for chronic and complex cases. The M7 laser is part of that commitment. It allows us to stay at the forefront of pain management and non-surgical treatment options, giving our patients access to the most advanced therapies available.

Health and Wellness Magazine: It's clear that you're dedicated to evolving the care you provide. How does this fit with your overall philosophy as a healthcare provider?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: My approach has always been to treat the whole patient, not just the symptoms. That means using a combination of proven methods such as non-surgical spinal decompression and innovative treatments to address the root cause of pain or dysfunction. The M7 laser helps us do that more effectively by promoting true healing at the cellular level, not just masking the pain. It's a tool that fits perfectly into our mission of helping patients achieve long-term health and wellness.

Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, non-surgical spinal decompression, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation. For a more information, please call (239)793-3200.

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HEALTHY AGING:

A Fun Guide to Staying Young at Heart

By Dennis J. Ruditser, MD

Aging is like a fine wine—it gets better with time! While the years may add a few wrinkles and gray hairs, they also bring wisdom, experience, and plenty of opportunities to embrace life in new ways. As an internal medicine doctor, I've seen firsthand that staying healthy as we age isn't just about medicine and checkups—it's about living life to the fullest with a smile on your face. So, let's dive into some easy (and fun!) ways to keep feeling youthful and vibrant, no matter your age.

1. Keep Moving: Dance, Walk, Play—Just Move!

Staying active is one of the best things you can do for your body and mind. And here's the good news: you don't have to run marathons to reap the benefits. Whether it's walking your dog, dancing in your kitchen, or gardening, any movement counts! Exercise helps keep your muscles strong, your balance steady, and your heart happy.

Think of it this way: your body is like a car. If you leave it in the garage too long, it gets rusty. But take it for a spin every day, and it'll keep running smoothly for years to come!

Tip: Try for 30 minutes of movement a day. That could mean a brisk walk, some stretches, or even a few rounds of your favorite dance moves. The goal is to make it fun so you stick with it!

2. Eat Well: Healthy Food That Tastes Great

Eating for healthy aging doesn't mean giving up your favorite foods. It's more about adding in some power-packed goodies that will help you feel your best. Think colorful fruits, crunchy veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains. These foods are like fuel for your body, keeping your energy up and your system running smoothly.

As you age, your body might need a little extra of certain nutrients, like calcium for strong bones and vitamin B12 for energy. But don't worry—there are plenty of delicious ways to get these. For example, yogurt, cheese, and leafy greens are great for calcium, while fish, eggs, and fortified cereals can help with B12.

Tip: Focus on adding in foods you love that are also good for you. And remember, it's okay to treat yourself! A little piece of chocolate or a favorite dessert won't hurt if you're mostly eating nutritious meals.



3. Keep Your Brain Sharp: Puzzles, Books, and New Hobbies

Just like your body, your brain needs exercise too! Keeping your mind active is key to staying sharp and mentally fit as you age. And the best part? Brain-boosting activities can be really fun. Whether you enjoy crossword puzzles, Sudoku, reading, or learning something new (like knitting, painting, or a new language), it's all great for keeping your mind in tip-top shape.

Tip: Challenge yourself with something new every day. It could be a puzzle, a book, or even a new hobby. Learning keeps the brain young!

4. Stay Social: Friends, Family, and Fun

Humans are social creatures, and staying connected with others is one of the best ways to keep spirits high and the mind sharp. Whether it's spending time with family, catching up with friends, or joining a club, staying socially active helps combat loneliness and improves both mental and emotional well-being.

Don't underestimate the power of a good laugh or a meaningful conversation. Connecting with others adds joy to life and can help keep depression and anxiety at bay. Plus, it's a great excuse to get out of the house!

Tip: Make time for social activities, even if it's just a phone call with a friend or a video chat with family. Being with people who make you laugh and feel good is one of the best medicines around.

5. Preventive Care: Stay on Top of Your Health

One of the easiest ways to stay healthy as you age is by staying on top of your check-ups and screenings. Think of it like regular maintenance for your body, just like you'd give your car a tune-up. Regular screenings, like blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests, and cancer screenings, can catch problems early when they're easiest to fix.

And don't forget your vaccines—staying up to date on shots like the flu, pneumonia, and shingles vaccines can help you avoid serious illnesses.

Tip: Make a list of your regular check-ups and stay on top of them. If you're not sure what screenings you need, just ask your doctor.

6. Get Your Zzz's: Sleep is Your Superpower

Sleep is often called "nature's best medicine," and it's true! A good night's rest helps you feel refreshed, keeps your mood steady, and even helps your body repair itself. As we age, though, sleep can sometimes be a little trickier. Maybe you wake up more often at night or don't feel as rested in the morning.

The key to better sleep is creating a routine that helps you wind down. Think cozy—dim the lights, put away the screens, and maybe try a relaxing activity before bed like reading or listening to calming music.

Tip: Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night. If sleep issues persist, talk to your doctor. There could be an easy fix, like treating sleep apnea or adjusting your routine.

7. Find Your Joy: Stay Engaged in Life

As you grow older, it's more important than ever to stay connected to the things that make you happy. Whether it's a hobby, a passion project, or volunteering, staying engaged gives life meaning and keeps your heart full.

Maybe you've always wanted to learn how to paint, or perhaps you've got a green thumb and love gardening. Whatever it is, make time for the activities that bring you joy. They're good for your heart and soul.

Tip: Take time each day to do something that makes you smile, whether it's a hobby or just spending time with people you love. Your happiness is as important as your physical health!

Age Gracefully, with a Smile

Aging doesn't have to be a time of slowing down—it can be a time to thrive! By staying active, eating well, keeping your brain sharp, and maintaining strong social connections, you can continue to live life with vitality and joy. Remember, growing older is a gift, and with the right habits, you can make every year your best yet.

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PROTECTING YOUR SPINE:

5 Causes of Back Pain and What to Do About Them

By Amanda N. Sacino, MD-PhD • Neurosurgeon and Managing Partner

Back pain is a common problem that most people will experience at some point in their lives. It can range from mild discomfort to serious, debilitating pain. Often, the cause of back pain is related to specific conditions affecting the spine. Understanding these conditions and knowing how to manage them can help protect your spine and improve your quality of life. In this article, we'll explore five common causes of back pain and how to address them.

1. COMPRESSION FRACTURE

A compression fracture occurs when a vertebra in your spine collapses or is compressed, usually due to weakened bones from osteoporosis. This type of fracture often causes sudden, severe back pain, particularly when standing or moving. Left untreated, it can lead to kyphosis, or a rounded back.

What to do about it: If you suspect a compression fracture, seek medical attention immediately. Treatment typically involves pain management, rest, and wearing a lumbar brace to stabilize the spine and limit movement. In some cases, a procedure such as kyphoplasty may be recommended to repair the fracture. Prevent future fractures by maintaining bone health through adequate calcium, vitamin D, and weight-bearing exercises.

2. HERNIATED DISC

A herniated disc occurs when one of the soft, gel-like discs between the vertebrae becomes damaged and pushes out of place, putting pressure on nearby nerves. This can cause significant pain, as well as numbness or tingling in the arms or legs, depending on the location of the herniation. Herniated discs often result from wear and tear over time or from an injury.

What to do about it: Herniated discs can often be managed with conservative treatments, such as physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications, and rest. Physical therapy exercises strengthen the muscles surrounding the spine, helping to alleviate pressure on the herniated disc. A lumbar brace can provide additional support by limiting movement and reducing pain. In severe cases, surgery may be needed to remove the damaged portion of the disc and relieve nerve pressure.



3. SPONDYLOLISTHESIS

Spondylolisthesis occurs when one vertebra slips forward over the one below it, leading to spinal instability. This misalignment can compress nerves, causing pain in the lower back, buttocks, or legs. Spondylolisthesis can result from congenital defects, spinal degeneration, trauma, or stress fractures.

What to do about it: Mild cases of spondylolisthesis can be treated with rest, physical therapy, and pain management. A lumbar brace can help stabilize the spine and prevent further slippage of the vertebrae. Strengthening the core muscles in your back and abdomen through physical therapy can reduce symptoms and improve spinal stability. In more severe cases, where nerves are compressed, surgery may be required to realign and stabilize the spine.

4. SPINAL STENOSIS

Spinal stenosis is the narrowing of spaces within the spine, putting pressure on the spinal cord and nerves. It typically results from age-related changes, such as thickened ligaments or bone spurs. People with spinal stenosis often experience pain, numbness, or weakness in the back, buttocks, or legs, which worsens with walking or standing and improves with sitting.

What to do about it: For mild spinal stenosis, physical therapy can strengthen the muscles supporting the spine, while anti-inflammatory medications can reduce pain. Targeted epidural steroid injections can decrease inflammation of the nerves. A lumbar brace can also help by providing support and reducing pressure during physical activity. If conservative treatments don't provide relief, surgery, such as a laminectomy, may be necessary to create more space for the spinal cord and nerves.

5. DEGENERATIVE DISC DISEASE

Degenerative disc disease occurs as the discs between the vertebrae lose hydration and flexibility with age. This can cause the discs to thin, bulge, or herniate, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility. Pain is often worse with certain activities, such as lifting or twisting.

What to do about it: Conservative treatments, like physical therapy, targeted epidural steroid injections, and anti-inflammatory medications, are often effective for managing degenerative disc disease. Physical therapy can help improve flexibility and strengthen the muscles supporting the spine. A lumbar brace may also be recommended to limit motion and provide additional support during daily activities. In severe cases, where conservative treatments are not effective, surgical options such as spinal fusion or disc replacement may be necessary to stabilize the spine.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If you experience chronic back pain that lasts for more than a few weeks, worsens, or is accompanied by symptoms such as numbness, weakness, or difficulty walking, it's important to seek medical help. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent the condition from worsening and help you get back to a pain-free life.

At Apex Brain & Spine Neurosurgical Specialists in Naples, Florida, our team of expert neurosurgeons, including Dr. Amanda Sacino and Dr. Gregory Cannarsa, specialize in diagnosing and treating a wide range of spinal conditions. Whether you're dealing with compression fractures, herniated discs, spondylolisthesis, spinal stenosis, or degenerative disc disease, we provide personalized care tailored to your specific needs. We offer conservative treatment options, such as lumbar bracing and physical therapy, as well as advanced surgical solutions when necessary. Contact us today to schedule a consultation and take the first step toward a healthier, pain-free spine.



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Supporting Cancer Patients Through Community:

The 2025 Wine Women & Shoes Event

In Southwest Florida, cancer touches the lives of countless families. When faced with the uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis, finding the right care, advice, and support can be overwhelming.

This is where Naples Cancer Advisors steps in, offering an invaluable resource to cancer patients and their families with knowledgeable, personalized oncology consultation services at no cost, ensuring that no one has to face cancer alone or without access to expert advice. However, the ability to provide these vital services depends entirely on fundraising efforts, community engagement, and the generosity of donors.

One of the key opportunities to support this mission is the 2025 Wine, Women & Shoes event, scheduled for February 8th at the exclusive Naples Yacht Club. This premier fundraising event not only promises an evening of fun, fashion and philanthropy but also provides critical funds that help Naples Cancer Advisors continue to offer platinum-level cancer consultations and services free of charge.

Wine, Women & Shoes: More Than an Afternoon Out
If you haven't experienced it yet, Wine Women & Shoes is a nationally renowned event that brings together wine tastings, designer shopping and high-energy auctions in a glamorous setting. The upcoming Naples event is expected to draw hundreds of attendees, all gathering to support NCA and its mission. Attendees will enjoy the finest wines, a fashion show, and exclusive opportunities to bid on luxury auction items, all while knowing their participation helps local cancer patients receive the best possible care.

But behind the glitz and glamour of the afternoon is a deeper purpose: ensuring that no cancer patient in our community must go without expert oncology consultations. Naples Cancer Advisors offers second opinions, clinical trial navigation, financial guidance, genetic testing, and much more—all free to the patient. The Wine, Women & Shoes event is crucial to keeping these services available and accessible for everyone who needs them, with all funds raised staying right here in our community, directly benefiting local cancer patients.

Ways You Can Make an Impact

As we prepare for the February 8th event, we're calling on local businesses, philanthropists and community members to take action. There are several ways you can be part of this life-changing effort:

1. Donate Auction Items

Auction items are a huge draw for event attendees, and we are seeking donations of exclusive experiences, high-end products and unique services. Whether it's a luxury getaway, private wine tasting, designer handbags, or one-of-a-kind art, your donation is more than just an auction item – it's a way to directly impact the lives of cancer patients who depend on NCA for expert guidance. Every auction item contributed helps drive the success of the event and boost the funds raised for Naples Cancer Advisors, allowing us to continue offering our critical services.

2. Purchase Tables

Wine Women & Shoes is the perfect event for an elegant afternoon with friends or colleagues. By purchasing a table, you'll secure prime seating for a night of wine, fashion and giving. Plus, table sales are a significant part of the fundraising efforts, ensuring that every guest contributes to supporting the life-saving work done by Naples Cancer Advisors.

3. Become a Business Sponsor

One of the most impactful ways to support Naples Cancer Advisors is through corporate sponsorship. The 2025 event offers a range of sponsorship packages tailored to businesses looking to increase their visibility while giving back to the community. Sponsorship packages include benefits such as premier recognition at the event, logo placement in event materials, VIP seating, and more. This is a great opportunity for local businesses to align their brand with a cause that makes a real difference in the lives of local cancer patients.

More sponsorship details, including levels and benefits, can be found on our website: Wine, Women & Shoes – Naples. Your business can make a lasting impact while gaining exposure among an affluent and engaged audience.

The Critical Role of Fundraising

At the heart of all these fundraising efforts is the unwavering commitment to cancer patients in Collier and Lee counties. The services provided by Naples Cancer Advisors are essential for those seeking guidance through some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Our team of expert physicians and healthcare professionals is dedicated to ensuring that every patient receives the comprehensive care and support they need—without the barrier of cost.

The incredible support from our donors and sponsors makes all of this possible. The funds raised from events like Wine Women & Shoes directly fuel NCA's ability to offer life-changing services to the community. By participating in this event, whether through donations, table sales or sponsorships, you are helping to provide hope and expert care to those who need it most.

Together, we can continue to offer free oncology consultation services and help cancer patients in Southwest Florida navigate their path with confidence and support.

Mark your calendars for February 8, 2025, and join us at the Naples Yacht Club for a spectacular afternoon of giving, glamour and goodwill. Every dollar raised will go towards ensuring that no cancer patient in our community is left without expert guidance during their battle.



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Safeguarding Your Sight: Essential Tips for Eye Injury Prevention

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

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.**
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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.



Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes, and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times.

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

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

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

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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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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: NEW FRONTIERS IN DETECTION, TREATMENT, AND HOPE

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

As we move through 2024, the landscape of breast cancer research and treatment continues to evolve rapidly. This year has brought significant advancements in early detection, personalized therapies, and survivorship care, offering new hope to millions affected by this disease worldwide.

Revolutionizing Early Detection

One of the most exciting developments of 2024 is the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in mammography screening. Advanced machine learning algorithms have dramatically improved the accuracy of breast cancer detection, reducing false positives and catching subtle abnormalities that human radiologists might miss. This technology is now being integrated into standard screening protocols across many healthcare systems, potentially saving countless lives through earlier diagnosis.

Additionally, liquid biopsy tests have made significant strides this year. These blood-based tests can detect circulating tumor DNA, allowing for non-invasive early detection and monitoring of breast cancer. The latest versions of these tests boast improved sensitivity and specificity, making them a promising complement to traditional imaging techniques.

Personalized Treatment Approaches

The era of one-size-fits-all breast cancer treatment is firmly behind us. In 2024, oncologists are leveraging sophisticated genomic profiling techniques to tailor therapies to each patient's unique tumor characteristics. This approach, known as precision medicine, has led to the development of several new targeted therapies that have shown remarkable efficacy in clinical trials.

One standout example is the new class of PARP inhibitors specifically designed for patients with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. These drugs have demonstrated unprecedented success in treating aggressive forms of triple-negative breast cancer, offering hope to a patient group that has historically had limited treatment options.

Immunotherapy continues to make waves in breast cancer treatment. This year saw the approval of novel combination therapies that pair immune



checkpoint inhibitors with traditional chemotherapy, significantly improving outcomes for certain subsets of breast cancer patients.

Advancements in Surgical Techniques

Breast-conserving surgery has taken a leap forward in 2024 with the introduction of fluorescence-guided surgery. This technique uses specialized dyes that accumulate in cancer cells, allowing surgeons to visualize tumor margins more accurately during operations. The result is more precise tumor removal and better cosmetic outcomes for patients.

Robotic-assisted mastectomies have also gained traction this year. These procedures offer increased precision and potentially faster recovery times compared to traditional surgical methods. While still not widespread, early adopters are reporting promising results, and more hospitals are beginning to invest in this technology.

Radiation Therapy Innovations

Proton beam therapy, a highly targeted form of radiation treatment, has become more accessible in 2024. This technology allows for more precise targeting of tumor sites while sparing healthy surrounding tissue. For breast cancer patients, this can mean reduced risk of heart and lung complications, particularly for those with left-sided breast tumors.

Additionally, hypofractionated radiation therapy – which delivers higher doses of radiation over a shorter period – has become the new standard of care for many breast cancer patients. This approach not only reduces treatment time but also minimizes side effects and improves quality of life during treatment.

Survivorship and Quality of Life

As survival rates continue to improve, there's an increased focus on long-term quality of life for breast cancer survivors. 2024 has seen the launch of several large-scale studies examining the long-term effects of various treatment modalities, with the aim of developing better survivorship care plans.

Virtual reality (VR) technology is being increasingly used to help patients manage treatment-related side effects such as chemotherapy-induced nausea and pain. VR programs designed specifically for breast cancer patients have shown promise in reducing anxiety and improving overall well-being during treatment.

Looking Ahead

While these advancements offer much to celebrate, challenges remain. Disparities in access to cutting-edge treatments persist, and researchers continue to grapple with drug resistance in metastatic disease. However, the pace of innovation in breast cancer research shows no signs of slowing.

As we look to the future, ongoing clinical trials in areas such as cancer vaccines and nanotechnology-based drug delivery systems hint at even more groundbreaking developments on the horizon. The breast cancer landscape of 2024 is one of hope and progress, with each new discovery bringing us one step closer to a world where breast cancer is no longer a life-threatening disease.

KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

Kathy earned her Master's in Nursing Degree from Kaplan University in 2017. Kathy is certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) as an Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (A-GNP-C). Prior to her Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Degree (APRN), Kathy managed a weight loss clinic for over 6 years right here in Naples. Kathy has since then managed acute and chronic care illnesses in different settings, and she genuinely enjoys spending time with her patients.



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NO NEED TO WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE INJURED TO SEE A PHYSICAL THERAPIST

By Robert Swift, D.O. - Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

Many people believe that physical therapy is only needed when recovering from an injury. Makes sense, right?

However, that's not always the case. As we get older, physical therapy can play just as much of a role in preventing injuries as it does in helping us successfully through our recovery. That's why it's important as we age to be proactive about high-risk injuries such as those that result from falling.

Falls are a worldwide public health concern, especially for seniors. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 37.3 million falls that are severe enough to require medical attention occur each year. Additionally, the WHO noted that falls are also the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide. Strategies to prevent these falls from occurring should include additional education, training, and safer environments according to the WHO.

So, what proactive measures can you take to prevent these potentially life-threatening falls? This is when physical therapy can come into play. A physical therapist evaluates and assess the patient for risk of falls, and develops fall prevention strategies and interventions for seniors based on select tests and measures that are designed to gauge the patient's strength, agility, and balance. For example, physical therapists conduct tests such as the Functional Reach Test and the Timed Up & Go Test (TUG) as ways to better understand a patient's fall risk and recovery potential. Physical therapists can then assign and assist in exercises with senior patients to properly counteract these risks.

The Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago, Illinois explains the Functional Reach Test as an exercise that is administered while a patient is standing next to, but not touching a wall. The patient is then instructed to, with the arm that is closer the wall, "reach as far as you can forward without taking a step." Three trials are done, and the final score of the test comes out to the average score of the second two trials.

The other test, the TUG Test, begins with a patient sitting in a chair with their back against the chair's backrest and arms on the chair's arm rests. From



that position, the patient is then timed while standing up, walking three meters, turning around, and returning to their original resting position in the chair. Test results from these quick and easy evaluations help provide a reliable foundation for physical therapists to measure a patient's fall risk and conduct the necessary preventative training.

As a patient, or to perhaps avoid becoming one, taking care of your body through the proper preventative measures before an injury happens is just as important as the recovery process after an injury has already occurred. That's why we often see professionals in fields that require a lot physically constantly training in attempts to get ahead of potential injuries. But you don't have to be a professional athlete, bodybuilder, or manual laborer to take the important steps necessary to take care of your body. That's why when working with a patient, injured or not, it's vital for physical therapists to understand the full scope of their patients' strengths and limitations to assign the correct interventions to prevent any injuries in the future. Workouts and testing exercises such as these are a significant part of a physical therapist's training and responsibilities in the field.

About Dr. Robert D. Swift, D.O.

Robert D. Swift, D.O. is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and a Fellow of the American Osteopathic Association of Orthopedics. He has advanced training in minimally invasive surgery of the shoulder, knee, ankle, hip, and orthopedic trauma training.

Dr. Swift attended medical school at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed a general surgery internship with the US Army at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center. While stationed in Europe as an army physician, he supported missions and troops throughout Bosnia and Kosovo.

Dr. Swift completed his orthopedic residency training at the University of Medicine Dentistry of New Jersey, also known as UMDNJ-SOM/Copper Medical Center. After residency, he rejoined the military and was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY. He was deployed as Chief of Orthopedics in Bagram, Afghanistan. His services are decorated by the Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Dr. Swift is accomplished in his field. He has been a course instructor, presenter, and author on fracture care and on the minimally invasive shoulder and knee surgery.

Dr. Robert D. Swift, D.O., Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon, is a national leader in sports medicine and orthopedic joint care with over 20 years of experience in:

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National Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Prioritize Your Health with Comprehensive Hormone Testing and Wellness Services

October marks National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a critical time to raise awareness about breast cancer, promote early detection, and encourage proactive health measures. At Ageless Wellness Spa, we believe that prevention and knowledge are key components in maintaining overall health. One essential aspect of this is understanding your hormone levels, which can significantly impact your risk factors and overall well-being.

The Importance of Checking Your Hormone Levels

Hormonal imbalances can increase the risk of developing various health conditions, including breast cancer. Estrogen and progesterone, in particular, play a crucial role in breast health. High estrogen levels, for instance, can be linked to a higher risk of breast cancer. Monitoring your hormone levels regularly is a proactive approach to early detection and can help you take control of your health.

At Ageless Wellness Spa, we offer a comprehensive hormone level lab test for \$199.99 during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This test is designed to give you a clear picture of your hormonal health, allowing you to take informed steps to address any imbalances.

How Our Wellness Spa Supports Your Health Journey

In addition to our hormone lab testing, we offer a range of holistic therapies designed to promote overall wellness and support your body's natural healing processes. Some of our services that can complement your hormone health and overall well-being include:

- **IV Therapy:** Delivers essential vitamins, minerals, and nutrients directly into your bloodstream for optimal absorption, boosting your immune system and energy levels.
- **Ozone Therapy:** A powerful treatment that helps detoxify the body, improve oxygenation, and support cellular health.
- **Red Light Therapy:** Promotes cell regeneration, reduces inflammation, and supports skin health.



- **Hyperbaric Chamber Therapy:** Enhances oxygen supply to tissues, promoting faster healing and recovery.
- **PEMF Therapy (Pulsed Electromagnetic Field):** Stimulates cellular repair and reduces inflammation, supporting overall body wellness.

Empowering Your Health Journey

Taking charge of your health means being proactive and informed. During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we encourage everyone to prioritize hormone testing, which plays a crucial role in breast health. Our \$199.99 hormone lab test provides you with valuable insights, helping you make informed decisions about your well-being. Coupled with our advanced wellness treatments, Ageless Wellness Spa is here to support your journey to optimal health.

Book your hormone test today and explore our wellness services to support your health this Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Contact us at Ageless Wellness Spa for appointments or more information. Together, let's make health and wellness a priority!



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October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October marks National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign dedicated to increasing awareness and education about the disease that affects millions of people worldwide. Breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer, and it's crucial that we take this time to reflect on the progress made in detection, treatment, and support for those impacted by this devastating illness.

Breast cancer awareness has come a long way since the first recognition of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 1985. What started as a small initiative has grown into a global movement, with organizations and individuals coming together to shine a spotlight on the importance of regular screenings, early detection, and advancements in research.

One of the primary goals of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is to encourage women to schedule regular mammograms and perform self-exams. Mammograms, which are low-dose x-ray images of the breast, can detect tumors before they are large enough to be felt, allowing for earlier diagnosis and treatment. Self-exams, on the other hand, empower individuals to be proactive about their breast health by becoming familiar with their own breast tissue and reporting any changes to their healthcare provider.

Early detection is crucial when it comes to breast cancer, as it significantly improves the chances of successful treatment and recovery. Many women diagnosed with breast cancer in its early stages have a five-year survival rate of nearly 100%. This highlights the importance of regular screening and self-awareness, as it can make all the difference in the world.

In addition to raising awareness about the importance of screening, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month also shines a light on the incredible progress that has been made in breast cancer research and treatment. Over the past few decades, researchers have made significant strides in developing new and more effective therapies, including targeted treatments, immunotherapies, and personalized medicine approaches.



These advancements have not only improved outcomes for those diagnosed with breast cancer but have also helped to reduce the overall mortality rate. According to the American Cancer Society, the breast cancer death rate has decreased by 40% since 1989, thanks in large part to these medical breakthroughs and increased awareness and screening efforts.

While the progress made in the fight against breast cancer is certainly worth celebrating, there is still much work to be done. Millions of people continue to be diagnosed with the disease each year, and disparities in access to quality healthcare and screening services remain a significant challenge, particularly for underserved communities.

That's why **National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is so important** – it provides an opportunity to not only educate the public about the importance of breast health but also to rally support for those affected by the disease and to advocate for continued research and improved access to care.

Throughout the month of October, you'll see pink ribbons, fundraising events, and educational campaigns across the country, all aimed at making a difference in the fight against breast cancer. Whether you're a survivor, a caregiver, or simply someone who wants to show their support, there are countless ways to get involved and make a meaningful impact.

One way to get involved is by participating in a local or national breast cancer awareness event, such as a walk or run. These events not only raise funds for research and support services but also create a sense of community and solidarity among those affected by the disease. By coming together and sharing our stories, we can help to break down the stigma and isolation that often accompanies a breast cancer diagnosis.

Another way to get involved is by supporting organizations that provide resources and support to those affected by breast cancer. This can include making a donation, volunteering your time, or even spreading the word about the services and programs available in your community.

Additionally, you can use your voice to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote breast cancer awareness and improve access to care. This might include contacting your elected representatives, attending town hall meetings, or joining advocacy groups that are working to address the systemic barriers that prevent many people from accessing the care they need.

Ultimately, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is about more than just wearing pink or attending events. It's about taking action and making a real difference in the lives of those affected by this disease. Whether you're a survivor, a caregiver, or simply someone who wants to make a difference, there are countless ways to get involved and help us move closer to a world where breast cancer is no longer a threat to the health and well-being of individuals and communities around the world.

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



Dr. Ricardo Martinez

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



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October Is Hearing Awareness Month: Protect Your Hearing, Protect Your Life

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

October is Hearing Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the significance of hearing health and the profound impact it has on our lives. As a Doctor of Audiology, I see firsthand the transformative effects of addressing hearing loss and the critical importance of early detection and intervention. Hearing is one of our most vital senses; it connects us to the world, our loved ones, and our environment. Yet, many people often take it for granted until they start noticing the signs of hearing loss.

The Importance of Hearing Health

Hearing health is more than just being able to hear sounds clearly; it is about maintaining quality of life, communication, and overall well-being. Untreated hearing loss can lead to various challenges, including social isolation, depression, cognitive decline, and even increased risk of falls. Despite these serious consequences, many people tend to ignore the early signs of hearing loss, often dismissing them as part of aging. However, hearing loss can affect people of all ages, and it is crucial to address it promptly to prevent further complications.

Recognizing the Signs of Hearing Loss

During Hearing Awareness Month, I encourage everyone to become more aware of the signs of hearing loss, both for themselves and their loved ones. Common indicators include difficulty understanding conversations in noisy environments, frequently asking others to repeat themselves, or experiencing a constant ringing in the ears (tinnitus). If you or someone you know experiences these signs, it is vital to seek a comprehensive hearing evaluation from a qualified audiologist.

The Role of an Audiologist

Audiologists are hearing healthcare professionals specializing in diagnosing, managing, and treating hearing loss. Our role extends beyond simply fitting hearing aids. We take a holistic approach to hearing healthcare, considering each patient's unique needs, lifestyle, and overall health. This month serves as an excellent opportunity to highlight the crucial work we do and emphasize the importance of professional care in managing hearing health.

Advancements in Hearing Technology

The field of audiology has seen remarkable advancements in recent years, particularly in hearing aid technology. Modern hearing aids are not the bulky, uncomfortable devices many people remember from decades past. Today's hearing aids are sleek, sophisticated, and highly effective in addressing various types of hearing loss. They come equipped with features like Bluetooth connectivity, rechargeable batteries, and even artificial intelligence that can adapt to different listening environments.

The Impact of Untreated Hearing Loss

Many people are unaware that untreated hearing loss can have far-reaching consequences. Studies have shown a strong link between hearing loss and cognitive decline, including dementia. When the brain has to work harder to understand sounds, it can lead to a decline in cognitive function over time. Social isolation is another significant issue, as people with hearing loss may withdraw from social interactions due to frustration or embarrassment. This isolation can contribute to depression and a decreased quality of life.

Additionally, hearing loss has been linked to an increased risk of falls. Our hearing plays a critical role in maintaining balance, and when it is compromised, it can increase the likelihood of accidents. Hearing Awareness Month is an opportunity to educate the public about these risks and the importance of seeking treatment early.

Early Intervention: The Key to Better Outcomes

One of the most important messages we can convey during Hearing Awareness Month is the value of early intervention. The sooner hearing loss is identified and treated, the better the outcomes. Early intervention helps preserve the auditory nerve and prevents auditory deprivation, which can make hearing loss more challenging to treat over time. It also allows individuals to maintain a high quality of life, stay socially engaged, and prevent the cognitive decline associated with untreated hearing loss.

Encouraging Regular Hearing Check-Ups

Just as we prioritize regular check-ups for our eyes and teeth, hearing health should be no different. Regular hearing assessments should be part of everyone's healthcare routine, especially for those over 50 or those who have been exposed to loud noises. If you have not had a hearing test in the last few years, I urge you to schedule an appointment with a licensed audiologist. Hearing is a precious sense that deserves the same level of care and attention as any other aspect of our health.

Community Awareness and Support

At Decibels Audiology and Hearing Center, we are committed to raising awareness about hearing health and providing the highest level of care to our community. Throughout October, we will host free hearing tests, educational workshops, and open house events to engage the public and promote hearing health awareness. We invite everyone to participate, whether you're concerned about your hearing or simply want to learn more about maintaining healthy hearing.

Taking Action: How You Can Help

Hearing Awareness Month is not only about personal awareness; it's also about community action. Encourage friends and family members to get their hearing tested. Share information about the risks of untreated hearing loss and the benefits of modern hearing aids. Help dispel the stigma around hearing loss and hearing aids by talking openly about these topics.

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EPIDURAL INJECTIONS: A Beacon of Hope for Sciatic Back Pain Sufferers

By Dr. Magdalena Kerschner

Sciatic back pain can be a debilitating condition that affects millions of people worldwide, interfering with daily activities and quality of life. For those grappling with this persistent discomfort, epidural injections have emerged as a promising treatment option, offering relief and improved functionality. This article delves into the use of epidurals for sciatic back pain, exploring their benefits, risks, and what patients can expect from the procedure.

Understanding Sciatic Back Pain

Sciatica is characterized by pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from the lower back through the hips and buttocks and down each leg. This condition is typically caused by a herniated disk, bone spur on the spine, or narrowing of the spine (spinal stenosis) compressing part of the nerve. The resulting inflammation and pressure on the nerve lead to the characteristic pain, tingling, and numbness associated with sciatica.

The Role of Epidural Injections

Epidural injections have become a popular treatment for managing sciatic back pain, especially when conservative treatments like physical therapy and oral medications prove insufficient. These injections deliver a combination of local anesthetics and corticosteroids directly into the epidural space surrounding the spinal cord and nerve roots.

The primary goals of epidural injections are:

1. To reduce inflammation around the affected nerve roots
2. To provide pain relief
3. To improve function and mobility

The Procedure

The epidural injection procedure is typically performed on an outpatient basis and usually takes less than 30 minutes. Here's what patients can expect:

1. The patient lies on their stomach or side on an X-ray table.
2. The injection site is cleaned and numbed with a local anesthetic.
3. Using fluoroscopy (live X-ray) for guidance, the physician inserts a needle into the epidural space.
4. A contrast dye may be injected to ensure proper needle placement.
5. The medication mixture is then injected into the epidural space.



Patients are usually monitored for a short period after the injection before being discharged.

Benefits and Effectiveness

Many patients experience significant pain relief within a few days of receiving an epidural injection. The effects can last from a few weeks to several months, allowing patients to engage more effectively in physical therapy and rehabilitation programs. This combination of pain relief and improved function can lead to long-term benefits and potentially delay or avoid the need for surgery.

Studies have shown that epidural injections can be effective in providing short to medium-term relief for sciatic back pain. However, the degree and duration of relief can vary significantly among individuals.

Who Should Consider Epidural Injections?

Epidural injections may be recommended for patients who:

- Have not found relief from conservative treatments
- Experience moderate to severe sciatic pain
- Need short-term pain relief to participate in physical therapy
- Wish to avoid or delay surgery

However, they may not be suitable for everyone, particularly those with certain medical conditions or allergies to the medications used.

Conclusion

Epidural injections represent a valuable tool in the management of sciatic back pain, offering a middle ground between conservative treatments and surgery. While not a cure-all, they can provide significant relief and improve quality of life for many sufferers. As with any medical procedure, it's essential for patients to have thorough discussions with their healthcare providers to determine if epidural injections are the right choice for their specific situation. With proper evaluation and administration, epidural injections can be a beacon of hope for those navigating the challenging waters of sciatic back pain.



Dr. Kerschner

Dr. Magdalene Kerschner, a graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine, completed her Anesthesiology residency at The University of Kentucky. Her experience in spine surgery anesthesia led to her specialization in chronic pain management. As a Board Certified Interventional Pain Physician, Dr. Kerschner believes that while pain is undeniable, suffering is optional. She aims to help patients reclaim their joy through interventional techniques and complementary therapies.

Dr. Kerschner stays involved with professional societies to keep up with medical advancements. She served as Vice President of Ohio Interventional Pain Physicians Society and is an active member of Ohio Medical Association's Substance Abuse Committee. She contributed to the development of Ohio's HB 93, known as "The Pill Mill Bill," which led to the closure of illegal pain clinics.

Her compassionate work extends internationally. Dr. Kerschner has participated in medical missions with World Medical Mission in Kenya, worked alongside Mother Teresa in Calcutta, and served in Brazil, the Philippines, and Belize. She received a Humanitarian Award from the Philippine government for her contributions.

Dr. Kerschner's Scotty Dog Foundation has awarded numerous high school scholarships in Southwest Ohio and surrounding areas.

In her practice, Dr. Kerschner emphasizes individualized treatment plans, recognizing that each patient has unique needs. She believes in using good judgment to determine the most beneficial procedures, medications, and therapies for each patient. Dr. Kerschner and her staff prioritize spending ample time with patients during consultations, ensuring they have opportunities to ask questions and fully understand their treatment options.

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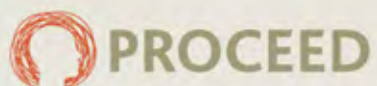
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Hormonal Imbalance and Its Effect on Skin Health

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

The skin is no unsubstantial organ. In fact, it's the body's largest and a significant defender from outside contagions. Beyond the protection it offers your body, the skin also offers a unique ability for you to gauge your internal health purely by looking at it.

However, with an organ so large, many things can affect it, one of which is your hormones or, more accurately, an imbalance in them.

Hormonal Imbalance

Much as the name suggests, a hormonal imbalance occurs when your hormones are no longer balanced, either because a hormone is secreted too much or too little.

Hormonal imbalance can be disastrous for your well-being because your hormones regulate many different processes in the body, including your development, metabolism, and reproduction. So, if you're producing too much or too little hormones, it can also affect these processes.

Some of the impacts of hormonal imbalance include primary ovarian insufficiency, early menopause, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in women, and prostate cancer in men.

Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance

While the symptoms of hormonal imbalance can vary based on the hormone out of balance, some of the general symptoms of hormonal imbalance include:

- increased stomach issues
- sudden weight loss/gain
- weakness
- skin dryness
- fatigue
- body aches
- increased urination
- persistent thirst
- anxiety
- mood swings
- changes in appetite
- hair loss
- infertility

If you notice any of these symptoms, it's best to visit a doctor specializing in hormones to pinpoint the cause of the imbalance and correct it. Often, hormonal imbalance can be an indicator of an even bigger issue, and choosing to ignore the symptoms may cause life-threatening risks, which is why it is always recommended to address hormonal imbalances as soon as you notice them.

Luckily, hormonal imbalance can often manifest on your skin, helping you see if something is unbalanced internally. If you're aware of what to look for, and what skin conditions may be due to hormonal imbalances, you have the advantage of knowing when there is a need to look more closely into your hormone levels.

How Hormonal Imbalance Affects Your Skin

As we know, the skin is the largest organ in your body, so its health relies on many things. However, one of the most important components of your skin comes from the sebaceous glands under your skin that produce sebum, a natural oil secreted through the pores of your skin.

Sebum helps protect the skin from UV radiation, locks in moisture, and transports fat-soluble antioxidants to the surface of the skin, which can then help prevent oxidative skin damage.

However, as with all things, too much can be a problem. In fact, too much sebum production is often the cause of various skin issues like inflammation and acne. One reason for excess sebum production? An imbalance of androgen, or male sex hormones that are present in those of both genders.

Sebum is not the only important part of the skin, either. Your skin is composed of the protein collagen, which is a building block of your skin. It is collagen that helps to give your skin a youthful appearance, and when your collagen production is down, your skin may start to sag.

Estrogen, a female sex hormone, is crucial in producing collagen and helps keep your skin thick and hydrated. If your estrogen levels are low, such as the case with older women entering menopause, skin can become thinner and more sensitive.



It's not just those entering menopause who see these results of low estrogen, though. A survey found that 2 out of 5 women still getting a period each month report unusually sensitive skin before and during their menstruation, which is generally the time when estrogen levels drop. Many women also notice an increase in sebum production before and during their menstrual cycle, which can contribute to acne.

When we look at the effects of hormonal changes on the body, it's clear that hormonal imbalance can manifest in changes to your skin.

Hormonal Imbalance as Skin Manifestations

Let's take a look at the different skin imperfections that can result from hormonal imbalances.

Under Eye Dark Circles

The constant companion for college students staying up all night to study, under eye dark circles are a skin problem resulting most often from adrenal fatigue.

When you experience more stress, your body produces more of the stress hormone cortisol. However, excess cortisol production can cause poor sleep at night because it tends to make people feel restless. If you continually suffer from poor sleep, dark circles can appear around your eyes.

Furthermore, if you're suffering from low estrogen levels, the skin under your eyes can become thinner, which can make the darkness even more prominent.

Dry Skin

While common during the dry and cold winter months, dry skin can also occur to those with hormonal imbalances, specifically if hormones such as estrogen decline. This is because a reduction in estrogen can cause a decrease in sebum production. Sebum is essential for retaining moisture in your skin, so if your body is not producing enough sebum, it will not stay hydrated enough and can experience dryness, roughness, and flakiness.

In addition to estrogen, thyroid hormones also stimulate the oil glands, but instead of increasing sebum production, they reduce it. So, if you suffer from hyperthyroidism, or an overproduction of thyroid hormones, you may experience dry skin.

Acne

It can be frustrating to experience acne in your 20s and 30s, with most people assuming it is an affliction only for teenagers. However, hormones can significantly influence your body's sebum production, leading to acne, regardless of age.

For women, estrogen and progesterone, which are key players in your menstrual cycle, can increase the amount of sebum produced, clogging your skin's pores and leading to acne. As for men, an excessive amount of testosterone can also produce excess sebum.

For those experiencing acne due to hormonal imbalance, they most often appear on the chin, forehead, and nose.

Skin Tags

Skin tags are small skin-colored growths on the skin of your neck or eyelids, resulting from a compromise in your insulin and glucose hormonal balance. When these hormones start changing, estrogen can dramatically reduce, which affects your skin's elasticity and can cause overlapping in your skin layers. When these skin layers experience constant friction, skin tags can occur.

In general, skin tags are most often associated with metabolic syndrome, PCOS, and diabetes.

Pale or Yellow Skin

Hormonal imbalance can affect your blood vessels, making your skin appear pale and waxy. However, hormonal imbalance is not the only cause of this appearance, with liver failure also lending itself to pale or yellow skin. If you notice that your skin or eyes appear yellow, check in with a doctor to determine the cause.

Balancing Hormones and Regulating Skin Health

If your skin is suffering from imbalanced hormones in the form of dry, thin, sensitive, or pale skin, correcting the hormonal imbalance is the best way to address the root of the problem and see improvements in your skin as a result.

The following are some of the possibilities for correcting a hormonal imbalance:

Oral Contraceptives

Oral contraceptives can help correct hormonal imbalance in women and, in some cases, are prescribed to treat acne. Oral contraceptives help to target the hormones that peak at ovulation, which is generally when those experiencing hormonal acne may see an increase in breakouts. Oral contraceptives keep hormone levels more even, lessening breakouts.

However, oral contraceptives are not for everyone, with those with a history of breast cancer, high blood pressure, or blood clots potentially unfit for this treatment. Talk to your doctor to determine if this is an adequate treatment for your skin and hormonal needs.

Anti-Androgen Drugs

As discussed, high levels of androgens, such as testosterone, can increase sebum production in some people, increasing the odds of clogged pores and acne breakouts. Anti-androgen drugs help to keep androgens from rising too high, which can help manage skin issues.

Testosterone Replacement

On the opposite end of the spectrum are medications that help address low testosterone, including testosterone gels and patches. These therapies help to fight the decline in testosterone production seen in some in men.

Check Your Lifestyle

While medications and therapies can help with hormonal imbalance, it is also best to ensure your lifestyle reflects healthy habits aimed at keeping your hormones balanced. Some of these habits include:

- exercising regularly
- getting enough sleep each day
- having a balanced diet
- drinking enough water
- managing stress levels
- reducing alcohol consumption
- avoiding smoking

These habits help keep your hormone levels regular while also supporting healthy skin.

The Influence of Hormones on Your Skin

Hormones are chemical messengers used throughout your body, and one area they can impact is your skin. Stress hormones such as cortisol and sex hormones like estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone can all cause unwanted skin reactions if unbalanced, such as acne, dry skin, sagging skin, or increased sensitivity.

If you're noticing skin problems and can't determine their cause, it might be something more internal. Reach out to a hormone specialist to get a reading on your hormone levels, see if there is an imbalance, and devise a treatment plan to help restore the equilibrium that your entire body, including your skin, will benefit from.

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What sets The DRIPBaR apart is our unwavering dedication to safety, quality, and efficacy. All of our IV infusions are carefully compounded by Registered Nurses under the direct supervision of our Medical Director in a USP 797 compliant sterile mixing lab. We undergo rigorous monthly testing to ensure the sterility and potency of every single drip, so you can trust that you're receiving the highest standard of care.

One of the standout IV therapies we offer is our NAD+ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) Rejuvenation Drip. NAD+ is a coenzyme that plays a crucial role in cellular function and energy production. As we age, our natural levels of NAD+ steadily decline, contributing to the signs of aging, fatigue, and a host of other health concerns.

By replenishing your NAD+ levels through an IV infusion, you can experience a wide range of benefits, including increased energy and vitality, enhanced cognitive function, reduced signs of aging, and improved metabolic health.

In addition to our IV therapies, The DRIPBaR is proud to offer a comprehensive Medical Weight Loss program. We understand that weight management is a complex issue that often requires more than just diet and exercise. That's why we've incorporated the latest advancements in weight loss medications into our treatment plans.

Our Medical Weight Loss program features Semaglutide and Tirzepatide treatments, two groundbreaking medications that have shown remarkable results in clinical trials. These medications work by mimicking natural hormones in your body that regulate appetite and food intake, helping you feel fuller for longer and reducing cravings.



Semaglutide, originally developed for type 2 diabetes management, has been proven to be highly effective for weight loss in individuals with or without diabetes. Many of our clients have reported significant weight loss, improved blood sugar control, and better overall health after starting Semaglutide treatments.

Tirzepatide, a newer medication, has shown even more promising results in clinical trials. It works on multiple hormone receptors to not only reduce appetite but also improve insulin sensitivity and metabolic function. Some studies have shown that Tirzepatide can lead to weight loss of up to 20% of body weight in many individuals.

By combining these powerful medications with our IV nutrient therapies and personalized health coaching, we offer a holistic approach to weight management that addresses not just the symptoms, but the underlying factors contributing to weight gain.

Another popular IV treatment at The DRIPBaR is our ALA (alpha-lipoic acid) Drip. ALA is a powerful antioxidant that can help reduce inflammation, improve nerve function, and support overall brain health. It's particularly beneficial for those with diabetic neuropathy, Alzheimer's disease, and other neurological conditions.

Many of our clients who struggle with diabetic neuropathy have reported significant improvements in their symptoms after just a few ALA drip sessions. The anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective properties of ALA help to alleviate nerve damage and promote healing.

Whether you're looking to boost your energy, support healthy aging, manage a specific health condition, or achieve sustainable weight loss, The DRIPBaR is here to help. Our team of medical professionals will work with you to create a customized treatment plan that addresses your unique needs and goals. We're passionate about empowering our clients to take control of their wellbeing and unlock their full potential through the power of IV vitamin and nutrient therapy, combined with advanced medical weight loss solutions.

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HORMONE THERAPY:

A Potential Shield Against Alzheimer's Disease

By Dr. Magdalena Kerschner

As the world's population ages, the prevalence of neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's disease continues to rise. This devastating condition robs individuals of their memories, cognitive abilities, and ultimately, their independence. However, recent research has shed light on a promising avenue for prevention: the use of bioidentical hormone therapy, specifically estrogen and testosterone replacement.

Bioidentical hormones are molecules that are structurally identical to those produced naturally by the human body. Unlike synthetic hormones, which can have undesired side effects, bioidentical hormones are designed to mimic the body's natural processes, making them a potentially safer and more effective treatment option.

The Link Between Hormones and Brain Health

Estrogen and testosterone play crucial roles in brain function and cognitive health. Both hormones have been shown to exert neuroprotective effects, promoting neuronal survival, enhancing synaptic plasticity, and modulating neurotransmitter systems. As we age, our hormone levels naturally decline, which may contribute to an increased risk of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.

The Estrogen Connection

Estrogen, in particular, has garnered significant attention for its potential role in preventing Alzheimer's disease. This hormone has been found to regulate various processes in the brain, including neuronal growth, synaptic function, and the metabolism of amyloid-beta, a protein that accumulates in the brains of individuals with Alzheimer's disease.

Several studies have suggested that women who undergo hormone replacement therapy (HRT) with estrogen during and after menopause may have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease compared to those who do not receive HRT. However, it is important to note that the timing and duration of estrogen therapy may play a crucial role in determining its effectiveness.

The Testosterone Link

While estrogen has been the primary focus of research in this area, emerging evidence suggests that testosterone may also play a protective role against Alzheimer's disease. Testosterone has been

shown to enhance cognitive function, promote neuronal survival, and modulate the clearance of amyloid-beta from the brain.

In men, age-related declines in testosterone levels have been associated with an increased risk of cognitive impairment and dementia. Conversely, testosterone replacement therapy has been linked to improved cognitive performance and a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease in some studies.

Personalized Hormone Therapy

It is important to note that hormone therapy is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Factors such as age, sex, medical history, and individual risk factors must be carefully considered when determining the appropriate treatment plan. Bioidentical hormone therapy should be tailored to each individual's unique needs and closely monitored by a qualified healthcare professional.

Furthermore, the potential risks and benefits of hormone therapy must be weighed carefully. While bioidentical hormones are generally considered safer than synthetic alternatives, they can still carry potential side effects, such as an increased risk of certain types of cancer or cardiovascular events.

Ongoing Research and Future Directions

While the research on the use of bioidentical hormone therapy for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease is promising, more work is needed to fully understand its mechanisms and optimal application. Larger-scale, long-term studies are necessary to validate the findings and establish guidelines for safe and effective use.

Additionally, researchers are exploring the potential synergistic effects of combining hormone therapy with other interventions, such as lifestyle modifications, cognitive training, and pharmacological treatments. By targeting multiple pathways involved in Alzheimer's disease, a multi-pronged approach may yield even better results in preventing or slowing the progression of this devastating condition.

As our understanding of the complex interplay between hormones and brain health continues to evolve, bioidentical hormone therapy emerges as a promising avenue for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease. By harnessing the body's natural processes and tailoring treatment to individual needs, we may be able to unlock a powerful tool in the fight against this debilitating condition.



Dr. Kerschner

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

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

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

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

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PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

A WIDESPREAD BUT TREATABLE CONDITION

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

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

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

The Peripheral Neuropathy Puzzle

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

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

Recognizing the Signs

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

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

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Painkillers

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

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

Regenerative Neuropathy Treatments

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

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

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

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

Embracing a Brighter Future

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

Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute

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

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

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



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

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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Treatment

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

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

Associates in Nephrology

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Source:

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

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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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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DIVORCED ESTATE PLANNING

Congratulations. You just got your final judgment and you are now officially divorced.

By Ross E. Schulman, Esquire - Master of Laws (LL.M.), Estate Planning

Before you book the next flight out to Las Vegas to celebrate or hit the panic button, take a breath. Make sure to review the terms and provisions in your marital settlement agreement or court ordered final judgment. Too often, family lawyers do not take the time after the final judgment to meet with clients and review the next steps and the dates which assets need to be transferred to or from the other spouse. Sometimes Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDROs) need to be drafted and ordered to affect division of certain retirement assets or pensions. You just fought hard to acquire or preserve assets in the divorce, now is the time to protect your new estate.

The good news is you and your attorney have just identified and valued all of your assets and liabilities. Whether the divorce just put you in control of wealth that your spouse previously managed, or the divorce resulted in a significant reduction of your assets, you need to reevaluate your new estate and revisit any existing estate planning you had in place prior to the divorce. It is time to update and rethink how you will address your estate moving forward based on your new asset structure. For example, did your spouse just get the property you intended to leave to your child? How does an existing trust or will treat your ex-spouse if they are in that document? How are the terms in your existing estate plans identifying a spouse, by legal name or through use of phrasing such as "my spouse." And will that inadvertently leave assets for a new spouse you may not have otherwise meant to, creating issues with your other family members?

Ideally, in your dissolution of marriage, you worked with your Certified Public Accountant and your Financial Advisor. In reality, your estate planning team is already in place. In the event that you have not previously addressed your estate planning, now is the ideal time to begin that conversation, while your team of professionals are already up to speed on your assets and goals.

Whether the division of assets left you with a taxable estate or not, you need to have discussions with an estate planning lawyer if you plan to regularly provide



support or gifts to your children, grandchildren, favorite charity, or alma matter. The changes of your marital status will affect your ability to gift annually while avoiding that pesky gift tax! While your estate may not be taxable at today's lifetime gift exclusion rates, it is widely anticipated that come December 31, 2025 when the current Trump tax laws are set to sunset, there may be a dramatic decrease in the amount of money you will be able to give away without incurring significant gift and estate taxes. If one of the presidential candidates has her way, the effect of your 2024 divorce would mean that while you and your spouse had the ability to give away \$28 million dollars prior to the final judgment, January 1, 2026 your ability to avoid the gift and estate tax may be reduced down to \$3.5 million dollars. (How much was the residence your divorce lawyer just fought for you to receive?!) Further, there is suggestion that the current 40% tax rate on your estate may skyrocket to 65% should that candidate prevail at the polls. Now may be a good time to hit that previously mentioned "panic button."

The dissolution put you in control of your finances, which is a great thing. However, financial freedom and power comes with responsibility. Now is the time to have the discussion about how to manage your wealth and to put into place an estate plan which protects you and your loved ones in the event you become incapacitated or otherwise unable to handle your own financial affairs. You want to ensure you have either an updated will or current trust documents so that your legacy will pass to your desired beneficiaries. You may want to have your assets available for the use and enjoyment of those beneficiaries, while still being able to protect the assets even after you pass. Your goal may simply be to avoid probate.

Based on a decade of experience practicing family law and earning a Master of Laws in Estate Planning from University of Miami's esteemed Heckerling program, I can affirmatively state two things. First, the overwhelming majority of family lawyers do not actively practice, nor are they knowledgeable regarding estate planning issues. Second, most estate planning attorneys are not involved in the dissolution of marriage process. The result of those two statements is that far too many recently divorced couples have outdated or outright inadequate estate plans in effect following their divorce. The irony is there may never be an easier time to update or draft your documents than at this particular time in your life. Add in the significant threat of extreme changes in tax law lingering around the corner, and you see why I suggest calling your estate planning attorney before booking that celebratory flight out of town. You just fought too hard to get those assets, now it is time to put the proper estate plan in place to protect them.



About the Author

Ross E. Schulman is a highly rated family law and estate planning attorney at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. in Naples, Florida. He is licensed to practice law in Florida and New York and is a Certified Financial Litigator (CFL™). Ross' Juris Doctorate is from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Yeshiva University. He recently completed the University of Miami School of Law, Heckerling Graduate Program in Estate Planning, with a Master of Laws in Estate Planning LL.M.

Before becoming a lawyer, Ross worked in finance and gained strong negotiation skills while working on Wall Street. He traded financial products at Spear Leeds & Kellogg (later Goldman Sachs) and Bear Stearns. He also worked as a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley, where he gained extensive knowledge about asset classes and various financial products. Ross is highly qualified to help you handle a variety of legal issues.

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HIRING AN EXPERIENCED REALTOR FOR YOUR REAL ESTATE JOURNEY MATTERS

In the dynamic world of real estate, the decision to buy or sell a property is a significant milestone, laden with both excitement and complexity. Amidst the myriad of tasks and considerations, one critical choice can make or break your real estate experience – the selection of a seasoned and experienced realtor. In this article, we delve into the reasons why hiring an experienced realtor matters and how their expertise can be a game-changer in achieving your property goals.

Expertise That Transcends Transactions

An experienced realtor is not merely a facilitator of transactions; they are seasoned professionals equipped with a wealth of industry knowledge. From understanding market trends and pricing strategies to navigating intricate legal nuances, their expertise extends beyond the surface. When you engage an experienced realtor, you gain a strategic partner who can provide valuable insights and guidance throughout the entire real estate process.

Navigating the Complex Landscape

The real estate landscape is multifaceted, marked by intricate processes and regulations. An experienced realtor has weathered the storms of various market conditions and witnessed the evolution of legal frameworks. This wealth of experience empowers them to navigate complexities seamlessly, ensuring that your transactions adhere to all legal requirements and regulatory standards. Their ability to foresee potential challenges and proactively address them adds an extra layer of security to your real estate endeavors.

Market Knowledge: A Competitive Edge

Markets are dynamic, with fluctuations in demand, supply, and pricing. An experienced realtor is akin to a living repository of market knowledge, attuned to the pulse of the industry. Their ability to analyze trends, anticipate shifts, and identify strategic opportunities provides you with a competitive edge. Whether you are buying or selling, having a realtor with a finger on the market's pulse can maximize your returns and optimize your investment.

Negotiation Prowess

The art of negotiation is a crucial aspect of any real estate transaction. Seasoned realtors hone their negotiation skills over years of dealing with diverse



clients, fellow agents, and market conditions. When you have an experienced realtor by your side, you benefit from their adept negotiation prowess. Whether securing the best price for your property or navigating a competitive bid to secure your dream home, their ability to negotiate effectively can be the differentiating factor in a successful deal.

Access to a Robust Network

Establishing connections is paramount in the real estate realm, and experienced realtors boast an extensive network of professionals. From mortgage brokers and inspectors to contractors and legal experts, their connections can streamline the entire process. This network not only expedites transactions but also ensures that you have access to trusted professionals, enhancing the overall quality of your real estate journey.

Personalized Guidance and Support

Buying or selling a property is a deeply personal experience, often laden with emotions and aspirations. An experienced realtor recognizes the individuality of each client's needs and tailors their approach accordingly. Their ability to offer personalized guidance and support goes beyond the transactional aspects, fostering a sense of trust and reliability. This personalized touch is particularly invaluable in mitigating stress and ensuring a smooth, enjoyable real estate experience.

In conclusion, the decision to hire an experienced realtor is an investment in the success of your real estate journey. Their expertise transcends the transactional nature of real estate, offering a holistic approach that encompasses market knowledge, negotiation prowess, and a robust network of professionals. As you embark on your property endeavors, partnering with an experienced realtor is not just a choice; it's a strategic decision that can make all the difference in achieving your real estate goals.

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CARDIOVASCULAR WELLNESS

What is Cardiovascular Wellness???

By James V. Talano, MD, MBA, FACC

Cardiovascular wellness is the ability to maintain physical health, mental capacity, and longevity through early detection and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular disease is a compilation of diseases affecting your heart and blood vessels, which can affect one or more organs in your body.

A person may be **symptomatic**, physically experiencing disease, or **asymptomatic**, not experiencing any symptoms at all.

Cardiovascular disease includes issues with the heart and blood vessels, including:

1. Narrowing of the blood vessels in your heart and other organs throughout the body
2. Blood vessel problems which developed at birth
3. Heart valves that are not working correctly
4. Irregular heart rhythms

If you are symptomatic, you could have:

1. Chest pain
2. Shortness of breath
3. Dizziness or lightheadedness
4. Palpitations or irregular heartbeat
5. Pain or cramps in your legs

But if you're asymptomatic, you may have no outward signs or symptoms of disease states.

There is a variety of heart diseases, but the most common are:

- Coronary artery disease
- Valvular heart disease
- Cardiac arrhythmias
- Heart failure
- Peripheral arterial disease
- Disease of the aorta
- Congenital heart disease
- Pericardial disease
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Deep vein thrombosis

There are several risk factors for coronary artery disease and other cardiovascular diseases, which are, in decreasing order:

1. Hypertension
2. Hyperlipidemias
3. Diabetes type 1 and type 2



4. Family history of heart disease
5. Lack of physical activity
6. Excessive weight or obesity
7. Diet high in sodium, sugar, and fats
8. Overuse of alcohol
9. Misuse of recreational drugs
10. Gestational diabetes
11. Preeclampsia
12. Chronic inflammatory or autoimmune diseases
13. Chronic kidney disease

We have many tools that can help us diagnose heart disease. They include:

- Blood testing including inflammatory markers
- Lipids
- Blood count
- Electrocardiogram
- Ambulatory ECG monitor
- Nuclear SPECT stress testing
- PET myocardial perfusion imaging
- Cardiac MRI
- Invasive coronary angiography
- CT coronary angiography
- Dynamic nuclear imaging

The most important approach to diagnosing cardiovascular disease is a high index of suspicion, including excessive weight gain, worsening diabetes, decreasing exercise tolerance, excessive sleepiness and tiredness, inability to walk long distances, passing out, palpitations, and irregular heart rhythms.

However, prevention to identify and address risk factor modification is the more prudent and effective way to prevent cardiovascular disease and improve cardiovascular wellness. It is important to identify and correct modifiable risk factors by taking a proactive stance, empowering individuals to actively manage their heart health and minimize CV events. There is an

adequate relationship between cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. These act as amplifiers, intensifying risk factors that promote heart disease.

Through prevention, we can promote lifestyle changes including adopting healthy lifestyle choices such as exercise and diet while integrating drug management.

To summarize, people with cardiovascular disease often experience symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath, and excess or new onset fatigue. The symptoms limit the patient's ability to perform their daily activities such as walking, climbing stairs, or even carrying groceries; they note new onset of fatigue not present previously.

Managing cardiovascular disease requires lifestyle adjustments. This includes dietary restrictions and substitutions, regular exercise, taking medications as prescribed by the physician, and following a heart-healthy diet low in saturated fats, sugars, and sodium. Living with cardiovascular disease can also affect the mind, causing anxiety and stress for individuals worrying about their health and future.

As part of the plan, regular medical follow-up and the need to monitor symptoms can also address additional stress. However, social and recreational activities really contribute to improvement. Some people may need to limit or modify their social and recreational activities. They need to avoid strenuous activities, take frequent breaks during physical activities, and stay hydrated.

Regular visits to your physician or healthcare provider are essential and may need adjustments to diet and medication. This can be time-consuming but, in the end, it is effective in eliminating medical disasters and hospitalization.

Despite these challenges, many people with cardiovascular disease can live fulfilling lives by managing their conditions effectively.



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What You Should Know About 2-Methoxyestradiol (2-MEO) and Cancer Research

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

2-Methoxyestradiol (2-MEO) is a compound made from estrogen, a hormone in the body. Scientists have been studying 2-MEO for its possible role in cancer research, especially breast cancer. While it's not approved by the FDA as a treatment for any condition, early studies suggest it may have potential benefits in fighting cancer. This article will explain what 2-MEO is, how it works, and why researchers are looking into it for cancer, including breast cancer.

How 2-MEO Works

2-MEO is made when the body breaks down estrogen. One of the ways it might help in cancer research is by stopping tumors from creating new blood vessels. Tumors need blood vessels to grow because they use them to get oxygen and nutrients. By blocking this process, 2-MEO might slow or stop the growth of cancer.

Another way 2-MEO might work is by causing cancer cells to die through a process called apoptosis. Apoptosis is a natural way that the body gets rid of damaged or unwanted cells. In cancers, cells often avoid this process, which is why they can keep growing. 2-MEO could help trigger apoptosis in cancer cells, which may help slow down or reduce the size of tumors.

2-MEO and Breast Cancer

Even though 2-MEO is not FDA-approved for treating cancer, some research has shown that it might have positive effects in breast cancer. A study in 2010 found that 2-MEO could slow the growth of breast cancer cells and cause them to die, without causing too much damage to healthy tissue.

Some studies suggest that 2-MEO could be used alongside other cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy. Breast cancer can sometimes become resistant to standard treatments, but because 2-MEO works differently from most cancer drugs, it might help overcome this resistance. More research is needed to confirm these findings.

What Other Cancers Could 2-MEO Affect?

In addition to breast cancer, researchers have studied 2-MEO's effects on other types of cancer.

Early research suggests that 2-MEO could be useful in treating cancers like ovarian, prostate, pancreatic, and brain cancers. In prostate cancer, for example, 2-MEO has been shown to stop cancer cells from growing and to trigger their death.

Its ability to stop the growth of blood vessels (anti-angiogenic properties) and to kill cancer cells makes 2-MEO a compound of interest for many different cancers, although it is still being researched.

How to Get 2-MEO

Because 2-MEO is not a standard prescription drug, it can only be obtained from compounding pharmacies like Creative Scripts. Compounding pharmacies create custom medications based on a prescription from your healthcare provider. Since 2-MEO is not widely available, a healthcare provider would need to assess if it might be right for you, based on your individual health needs.

It's also important to remember that 2-MEO is still considered an experimental treatment in cancer research. The FDA has not approved it for cancer or any other condition, which means doctors and patients need to carefully weigh the potential risks and benefits before considering it as part of a treatment plan.

Is 2-MEO Safe?

While studies on 2-MEO are still ongoing, early trials show that it is generally safe and well-tolerated by patients. Some researchers are concerned about its potential interaction with estrogen-sensitive tissues, especially in women with hormone-driven cancers like estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer. This is why it's critical for patients to work closely with their healthcare providers if considering 2-MEO as an option.

A 2014 study suggested that better ways to deliver 2-MEO into the body, such as through advanced technology like nanoparticles, could improve its effects and safety. This research is ongoing, and more clinical trials are needed before it can be widely used in cancer care.

Talk to Your Doctor

If you are interested in learning more about 2-MEO, the best first step is to talk to your healthcare provider. While the research so far is promising, 2-MEO is not an FDA-approved cancer treatment. Your doctor can help you understand the current research, discuss whether it might be right for you, and provide information on how to obtain it from Creative Scripts. Cancer treatment is complex, and it's important to be fully informed about experimental therapies like 2-MEO. Always consult with your healthcare provider before making any decisions about new treatments.

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Magnym/Bocox: A Breakthrough Treatment for Erectile Dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction (ED) affects millions of men worldwide, impacting their quality of life and relationships. A groundbreaking procedure known as Magnym or Bocox is gaining attention for its potential to offer long-lasting relief from ED symptoms and premature ejaculation. This innovative treatment uses botulinum toxin injections to address the root causes of these conditions.

Understanding Magnym/Bocox

Magnym and Bocox are essentially the same procedure, differing only in name. This treatment involves carefully administered injections of botulinum toxin (commonly known as Botox) into specific muscles of the penis to improve erectile function and address premature ejaculation.

How It Works

The Magnym/Bocox procedure works by:

1. Relaxing smooth muscles in the penis, particularly the bulbospongiosus and ischiocavernosus muscles.
2. Enhancing blood flow to the erectile tissue, facilitating better and longer-lasting erections.
3. Modulating muscle contractions involved in the ejaculatory process, potentially delaying ejaculation.

Benefits

Key advantages of the Magnym/Bocox procedure include:



- Improved erectile function with stronger, more sustainable erections
- Longer-lasting results compared to oral medications
- Potential for delayed ejaculation in men with premature ejaculation
- Minimally invasive, non-surgical approach
- Quick recovery with minimal downtime
- Potential for enhanced sexual satisfaction for both partners

The Procedure

Typically performed in a medical office, the Magnym/Bocox procedure involves:

1. A thorough consultation and evaluation
2. Preparation of the treatment area
3. Precise injections of botulinum toxin using fine needles
4. Post-procedure care instructions

Candidacy and Considerations

Ideal candidates include men experiencing erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculation, especially those who haven't responded well to oral medications. It's crucial to consult with a qualified health-care provider to determine suitability for the treatment.

While Magnym/Bocox has shown promising results, it's important to consider:

- Results may vary among individuals
- Multiple treatments may be necessary for optimal outcomes
- Potential side effects, though rare, may include temporary bruising, swelling, or discomfort at the injection site
- The treatment is not permanent and may need periodic repetition

Orchidia Medical Group is Here to Help

At Orchidia Medical Group in Naples, FL, we know that erectile dysfunction is a common issue experienced by men. For this reason, we offer the Magnym Procedure to resolve this problem and help you feel more confident in every area of life. Your sexual health affects your life in many ways, so if there is an issue, it will affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Sexual dysfunction is a condition that spills over into every area of your life, so it's important that you take steps to resolve that condition, whatever it may be. Our experts can provide you with a safe, confidential, and relaxing environment in which you can seek out the treatment you need to improve your confidence and get back your self-esteem.

Let us help you realize your potential well-being and become the individual that you have long desired.

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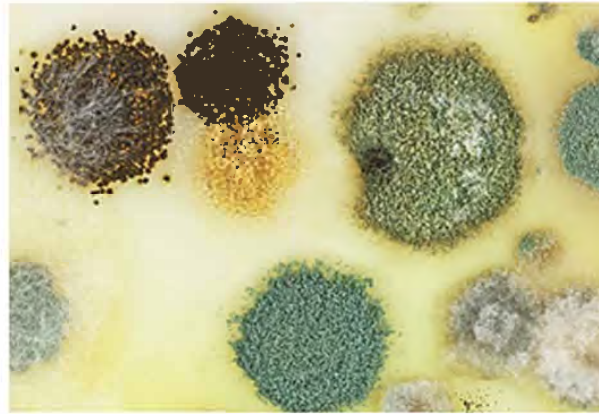
Remediation Complete... What Next?

By Julie S. Hurst-Nicoll, MBA, CMI, CMR - President, Mold Safe Homes, LLC

I often see clients complete their remediation process and render a sigh of relief after their clearance comes back clean. I understand the thought "glad that is over", but the reality is this is where the homeowner due diligence begins!

Yes your home is now mold safe but the key is understanding all the issues that can affect your home in the future and safeguarding your future. From the moment we complete the work recontamination can begin. Mold is everywhere. Have you considered all the issues that could potentially affect your living space:

1. Finding a great deal on a garage sale furniture or even new furniture that has been sitting in a warehouse that might not be climate controlled could easily transfer mold spores into your home.
2. Have you considered your auto is making you sick? Cars can get moisture in from rain and snow and create humidity to grow mold. Same for boats, campers and RV's.
3. Have you considered your work environment may have mold in building or HVAC. Monitor humidity; look for roof leaks, stained drop down ceiling tiles or condensation moisture, dark stains on return air grates.
4. Has your vacuum been cleaned? Does your cleaning lady bring in her own vacuum or pole duster transferring spores from the previous home they cleaned?
5. What are you doing to eliminate dust? Mold feeds on dust.
6. Remember every time you enter your home from outside mold spores can remain on your clothes and enter your home. True for your pets too, bringing in mold spores.
7. Those that live in wooded areas will naturally have more mold spores around their home.
8. Those that love to nourish your landscape with wood mulch are actually providing more mold spores



around the exterior of their home that can easily enter through entering a door. Be especially diligent when new mulch gets laid before it settles.

9. Condensation. Whether on windows, ductwork or plumbing pipes this added moisture can raise your humidity levels and provide the needed nutrition for mold to multiply.

10. Help your furnace help you. Be sure you are using at least a MERV 8 filter and change regularly. And when you change out be sure and put the old one in a sealed plastic bag before walking through your home to dispose of in your trash.

11. For as little as \$10 you can purchase humidity meters to place throughout your home or office. Make sure the humidity stays below 60% at all times! Some common species of mold can grow and thrive just on high humidity.

12. Basements are notorious for humidity and even the best maintained finished basement can have leaks or sump pump failures. Keep on guard with humidity meters, have back up alarms on sump pumps and monitor humidity.

13. Monitor the humidity coming from your HVAC vents. If your air conditioning short cycles it may cool but not run long enough to remove the humidity. This can be due to your unit being oversized for the home or a fan speed issue. Another HVAC issue is keeping your home too warm when your AC is on. If your unit does not run often to dehumidify then high humidity will cause the most

common mold species, that looks like dust to grow unnoticed. If you are one of those that were told to keep your fan on continuously versus auto is another problem we often see causing high humidity. When your system is on and the humidity it extracts from the air condensates in the unit. If when the system is off but the fan is still running the air blows over these wet coils putting humidity back into your home.

14. Make sure you keep your crawl space vapor barrier in good shape and contractors that might be in there like a plumber does not move it about providing for uncovered areas that can allow earth humidity to rise and increase the humidity within your home.

15. Check your downspouts to be sure they extend from your structure and don't dislodge during mowing or storms.

16. Always be on the look out for excess moisture:

- Disconnected dryer vents
- Icemaker line leaks
- Plumbing leaks
- Roof or chimney leaks
- Windows excess condensation
- Toilet seal leaks
- Tub/shower leaks or escaping water during a bath or shower
- Dishwasher or clothes washer leaks
- Wet towels, swimsuits, athletic clothes

Once you have been affected by mold or the mycotoxins they produce there is a new realization that you must now be more conscious with humidity and water leaks. This list certainly is not exhaustive but can provide a checklist to review. If you have any questions, please contact us.



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Julie S. Hurst-Nicoll, MBA, CMI, CMR
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National Pet Wellness Month

A Time to Celebrate Happy, Healthy Pets

Every October, pet lovers across the nation come together to celebrate National Pet Wellness Month, a time dedicated to the health and happiness of our beloved four-legged companions. This annual observance serves as a reminder of the importance of proactive pet care, promoting their overall well-being, and fostering a deeper bond between humans and animals.

Our pets hold a special place in our hearts, providing us with unwavering love and companionship. As responsible pet owners, it is our duty to ensure they lead long, fulfilling lives. National Pet Wellness Month offers a unique opportunity to focus on their health and wellness in various ways.

Nutrition: A Key Ingredient for Pet Wellness

One of the cornerstones of pet wellness is nutrition. The food we provide to our furry friends plays a pivotal role in their health. During National Pet Wellness Month, it's the perfect time to review your pet's diet. Consult with your veterinarian to ensure you are feeding them a balanced and appropriate diet tailored to their specific needs. Proper nutrition can prevent obesity, allergies, and other health issues.

Regular Exercise: Keeping Pets Fit and Happy

Exercise is equally vital for your pet's wellness. Dogs need daily walks and playtime, while cats enjoy interactive toys and climbing structures. Regular exercise not only helps them maintain a healthy weight but also keeps their minds active and their spirits high. Use this month to establish an exercise routine that suits both you and your pet.



Preventive Healthcare: A Priority

Preventive healthcare is the cornerstone of keeping your pet healthy. Regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, and dental care are essential. National Pet Wellness Month encourages pet owners to schedule these visits if they have not already done so. Early detection of illnesses can save both money and heartache down the road.

Mental Well-being: A Happy Mind, a Happy Pet

Mental well-being is just as important as physical health. Pets thrive on routine and social interaction. Ensure your pet is mentally stimulated through play, training, and spending quality time together. Mental enrichment toys and activities can keep their minds engaged.

Safety First: Pet-proofing Your Home

During this month, take some time to pet-proof your home. Ensure that toxic plants, chemicals,

and hazards are out of reach. Checking your fences and gates can also prevent your pets from wandering off or getting into dangerous situations.

Community Involvement: Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership

National Pet Wellness Month is also an opportunity to get involved in your local community. Participate in pet adoption events, volunteer at animal shelters, or donate to organizations dedicated to animal welfare. Promoting responsible pet ownership benefits not only your own pet but also countless others in need.

Celebrate Pet Wellness Year-Round

As National Pet Wellness Month draws to a close, remember that pet wellness should be a year-round commitment. Our pets give us unconditional love, and it's our responsibility to reciprocate by providing them with the best care possible. By embracing a holistic approach to pet wellness, we can ensure that our furry family members lead happy, healthy lives filled with love and joy.

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The Secret to Fixing Pain Fast: Addressing Neurological Compensation

By Ally Folkert, DAT, LAT, ATC

Chronic pain is an ever-growing problem in this country. There are over 50 million people who report chronic pain in the United States alone. If not affected personally, many of our friends and family members' daily lives are impacted by limitations caused by chronic pain. The US physical rehabilitation market is overwhelmed with hundreds of billions in annual costs to treat musculoskeletal pain and yet the number of individuals in pain continues to rise.

Have you ever completed physical therapy but the problem returned?

Do you feel like you have tried everything but nothing has seemed to work?

Do you feel like you have lost hope and you are reduced to living with your pain forever?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, it is likely that your therapy thus far has focused on the symptoms and hasn't addressed the root cause of your problem neurologically.

Coordinated movement is planned in the cerebral cortex, and staged signals are sent down to the spinal cord and out to the motor neurons. When staged signals fire in the correct order and reach their intended muscles, the body moves with an efficient motor pattern. After an injury or feeling pain, the pattern of these staged signals can become distorted or changed; resulting in compensation, which can lead to weakness, pain and further injury. Pain signals from the brain can last long after the acute tissue is healed causing chronic pain.

Correcting your neurological compensation allows for signals to fire in the correct order to absorb the force of movement. Once your brain and muscles communicate as they should, your body will operate efficiently and the brain will not elicit a pain signal. The leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naples based Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat over 70 professional athletes, 11 Olympians and thousands of SW Florida



residents in as little as two weeks. In their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it fast and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods without any results. When you address pain, injury and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

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

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

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

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

*To schedule an initial evaluation visit
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Recognizing the Signs:

Diagnosing Adult ADD and Exploring Treatment Options

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), now commonly referred to as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), predominantly inattentive type, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that can persist into adulthood. While often associated with childhood, many adults struggle with undiagnosed ADD, facing challenges in their personal and professional lives. Recognizing the signs and seeking proper diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve quality of life for those affected.

Diagnosing Adult ADD

Diagnosing ADD in adults can be complex, as symptoms may manifest differently than in children and can overlap with other conditions. Common signs of adult ADD include:

1. Difficulty concentrating and staying focused
2. Procrastination and trouble completing tasks
3. Forgetfulness in daily activities
4. Poor time management and organizational skills
5. Impulsivity in decision-making
6. Restlessness or feeling "on edge"
7. Mood swings and low frustration tolerance
8. Difficulty multitasking or prioritizing

To receive a diagnosis, adults should consult with a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist, who specializes in ADHD. The diagnostic process typically involves:

- A comprehensive clinical interview
- Review of medical and psychiatric history
- Standardized rating scales and assessments
- Gathering information from family members or close friends
- Ruling out other potential causes of symptoms

It's important to note that many adults with ADD have developed coping mechanisms over time, which may mask some symptoms. A thorough evaluation by a professional is crucial for an accurate diagnosis.

Treatment Options

Once diagnosed, there are several treatment options available for adult ADD. A comprehensive treatment plan often involves a combination of approaches:

1. **Medication:** Stimulant medications, such as methylphenidate or amphetamines, are often prescribed to improve focus and reduce impulsivity. Non-stimulant options, like atomoxetine, may also be considered.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** This form of psychotherapy helps individuals develop coping strategies, improve time management skills, and address negative thought patterns associated with ADD.

3. **Psychoeducation:** Learning about ADD and how it affects daily life can empower individuals to better manage their symptoms and advocate for themselves.

4. **Lifestyle modifications:** Implementing structure, creating routines, and using organizational tools can significantly improve functioning for adults with ADD.

5. **Mindfulness and meditation:** These practices can help improve focus and reduce stress associated with ADD symptoms.

6. **Coaching:** ADD coaches can provide practical strategies for managing symptoms in personal and professional settings.

7. **Support groups:** Connecting with others who have ADD can offer emotional support and practical advice.

It's essential to work closely with healthcare providers to find the right combination of treatments, as what works best can vary from person to person. Regular follow-ups and adjustments to the treatment plan may be necessary to achieve optimal results.

While living with adult ADD can be challenging, proper diagnosis and treatment can lead to significant improvements in daily functioning, relationships, and overall quality of life. With increased awareness and understanding of how ADD manifests in adulthood, more individuals are seeking help and finding effective ways to manage their symptoms.

Dr. Richard J. Capiola is the Chief of Psychiatry for Physicians Regional Medical Center. He received his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years. Call Dr. Capiola today at 239-649-7494.

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Dr Capiola's mission is to focus on the strengths inherent in all of us to help overcome any problems and life stresses that make us feel stuck and limited. He combines psychotherapy and medication management into all patient visits.

UNDERSTANDING DIZZINESS, VERTIGO & BALANCE DISORDERS

What Is a Balance Disorder?

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

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

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

Balance and the Inner Ear

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

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

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

Common Vestibular Disorders

Autoimmune Inner Ear Disease (AIED)

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



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

Acoustic Neuroma

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

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

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

Mal de Debarquement Syndrome (MdDS)

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

Ménière's Disease

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

Vestibular Neuritis

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

Perilymph Fistula

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

Diagnosing Vestibular Disorders

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

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



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

Treating Vestibular Disorders

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

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

Be Safe When Feeling Dizzy

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

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

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

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

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

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Navigating Sexual Health in the Over-85 Population

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

The term sexual health is rarely considered in discussions focusing on older adults over the age of 85. However, engagement in sexual relations or being emotionally intimate may continue to be of great value to older age groups. In the present context, as people's lifespan increases and cultural norms change, it becomes essential to think about the sexual health concerns of this age group.

Understanding Sexuality Beyond 85

With regards to sexuality of older adults, it is not only about having sexual acts—it also involves emotional relationships, physically being close to someone, and caring about them. For many people over 85 years it may be important to help and sustain such intimate relationships as it contributes to positively beautiful enhancement of life satisfaction and mood. Sadly, negative social norms and beliefs regarding ageing often create a false impression that the older generation is devoid of any sexuality or does not wish for any such engages, which is not the case.

A considerable number of these adults still have sexual fantasies, indulge in sexually related actions, or even seek people in intimacy although they face problems of old age that hinder sexual health. These problems include, amongst others, medical illnesses, cognitive ageing, the adverse effects of treatment, and lack of other people's participation.

Common Sexual Health Concerns in the Over-85 Population

1. Physical Changes and Sexual Function:

Changes related to the normal aging process can affect sexual function. The most common sexual problem in older men is erectile dysfunction. For women, there may be insufficient lubrication, pain during intercourse, or decreased interest in sex due to lower levels of estrogen. Nonetheless none of these changes entail per se the cessation of orgasmic activity. All medications, lubricants and other interventions can address these problems.

2. Chronic Illness and Sexual Health: It is not unusual for some of the people over 85 to have chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, or arthritis among others that have bearing



on the sexual act. More so, the treatment of these conditions may require certain medications whose side effects may interfere with sexual drive or performance. Still, many elderly people adjust and manage to be intimate with others, be it through non-sexual skin contact, talking to someone or other ways of sexual expressions.

3. Cognitive Decline: Cognitive impairment, such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, can lead to difficulties in relationships, especially the physical aspects of such relationships. Furthermore, although this is uncommon, patients who experience cognitive decline may act out sexually inappropriately or exhibit states of confusion or other changes regarding their sexual interests. In all situations where sexual health needs are to be addressed, it is rather critical that family and caregivers understand these matters compassionately and ensure that dignity is preserved.

4. Psychological Factors: Factors such as social isolation, the death of a partner, geriatric depression, and anxiety are problems that can be noted in these older people and also have an adverse effect on sexual health. These emotional issues might trigger a drop in intimacy levels. It helps to combine support from practitioners with social activities.

5. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): Older adults are likely to believe that they are not at risk of infections. Despite this myth, older population is also prone to STIs. Also, there has been a rise of STDs among older people due to lack of information and methods to prevent. With a doctor's recommendation, these lessons should not be contraindicated to people aged 85 years and above.

Promoting Sexual Health and Well-being

Those over 85 require an integrated response which addresses sexual health and includes health practitioners, family, care providers and patients.

1. Open Communication: Discussing sexual health issues is mostly forgotten when one advances in age. Society needs to blatantly create the need for these conversations. Healthcare workers are to include sexual health without being directed on how to include it in the routine visits as sexual health is central to one's wellbeing irrespective of their age.

2. Education and Awareness: Enlightening seniors on how to practice safe sex, how the body functions sexually, and how medications work can ensure their participation in relevant activities. Stereotypes that associate old age with certain characteristics can also be suppressed by campaigns that seek to raise awareness of the harm of old age.

3. Tailored Healthcare: Patients' treatment plans must integrate sexual wellness into the wider picture of healthcare. This might mean providing patients with means of addressing erectile disorders or prescribing post-menopausal hormone therapies or other forms of mental wellbeing support.

4. Emotional and Social Support: Older individuals are encouraged not to isolate themselves and look for activities that boost self-esteem, and even relationships, which can promote a healthy sexual atmosphere.

Conclusion

Sexual health cannot be ruled out even in elderly persons above 85 years of age. By taking care of the various spheres of a person on a particular age, we are able to achieve a better health and quality of life among a specific group of people. Societal misunderstandings should be disregarded and the notion that older persons are not entitled to any sexual care should be disbanded. This view enables better facilities and improvements in the quality of life for elderly people.



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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

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

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

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

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

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

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

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

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

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

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

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

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

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

What Is Your Definition of “Enough”?

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

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

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

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

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

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

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- **STD Panel, Comprehensive:** Screens for all major sexually transmitted infections like HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B & C, herpes, chlamydia and more.
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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

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

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

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

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

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

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

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

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

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BERRIES AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK

How to Enjoy Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

Your house is a mess. You have no free time. You hate to clean. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Over 100 million people in the US and Canada feel the same way. As you plan to hire house cleaning services, here are some tips that will make your experience even better.

Remember that you're hiring human beings

If you plan on every speck of dust being gone after your clean, you're most likely setting yourself up for disappointment. You'll enjoy your service more if you are realistic about what you're getting. While professional house cleaners are exceptional at what they do, they are not super human. They can't clean your master bathroom in 5 minutes. Humans also make mistakes. If something isn't done well, relax, call the house cleaning service at the office, and let them know. Depending on the type of issue, most professional house cleaning companies will send someone out to re-clean the area and make sure to correct the situation.

Leave your home while it's being cleaned

Do you like when someone looks over your shoulder while you work? Neither do housecleaners. Relax. Professional house cleaning services screen their employees, conduct background checks, and are bonded and insured. Get the most out of your cleaning service by getting out of your house during the cleaning process. Not only will you enjoy the great feeling of walking into a clean

home, but the cleaning staff will be better able to focus on their job. While leaving isn't a requirement, you just might find out how great it feels to abandon all thoughts of cleaning!

Leave a tip

Tipping service professionals is nothing new. Everyone tips their server at a restaurant, the bellboy, the valet. Tipping your cleaning professional is a good thing. Think about this; a professional cleaner is in your home, touching virtually all of your possessions. Cleaning is a physically demanding job. House cleaners are constantly bending down, scrubbing, walking up and down stairs, reaching up high, and moving heavy things around. And if hard work isn't enough, remember that they're dealing with all your dirty stuff! It's well worth a few extra dollars to say thank you. And who doesn't love a tip? Remember, a happy cleaner is a great cleaner.

To clean or not to clean

It's a question most people grapple with. Should I clean my house before the cleaning person comes? This is really up to you and there is no right answer. If you have hired a cleaning person for a set amount of time, the cleaner will be able to provide a deeper clean if your home is very tidy before their arrival. But, some people don't like even tidying up. If that's you, then letting the house cleaner do that might be well worth it. In the end, you have to decide how you want the house cleaner spending their time.


I clean my home in 1 hour... they should too

People always think a professional house cleaner should be able to clean their home faster than they clean it themselves. This is a misconception. When most homeowners clean their homes, they clean very differently than someone they hire. Homeowners know what areas they can skip and usually don't clean all the areas that professionals do. For example, many homeowners may skip the toilet when cleaning the bathrooms, only wiping down the counter and mirror. And even if they do tackle the toilet, they usually don't get the floor behind it. Professional home cleaners must clean everything, which, in the end, usually takes longer.


If you're realistic about your house cleaning service, you'll be much happier. And if there is something you're not happy with, simply call the office. You'll be much better off working through a few small issues than constantly jumping from one cleaning service to the next. Once you and the professional company get it right, having your home professionally cleaned is on.



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MIGRAINES AND THE ROLE OF CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY & MANUAL LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE

By Dr. Mary Lambert, AP, DOM

Migraines are more than just headaches—they're a debilitating neurological condition that affects over 1 billion people worldwide. Characterized by throbbing pain, nausea, and sensitivity to light and sound, migraines can drastically affect a person's quality of life. While traditional treatments such as medications and lifestyle adjustments are commonly used, people are exploring alternative therapies to manage the condition. Two popular therapies are Craniosacral Therapy (CST) and Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD), both of which are specialized modalities that focus on the body's fluid systems and nervous system.

Migraines are complex and not fully understood, but research has identified several contributing factors. Migraines are believed to be influenced by both genetics and environmental factors, with changes in brain chemistry playing a central role. Recent studies also indicate that the lymphatic system plays a role in migraines. The brain's lymphatic system, which removes waste and fluid from the central nervous system, may become impaired during a migraine, contributing to the buildup of inflammatory substances. This is where therapies like CST and MLD come into play, as they target both the cerebrospinal and the lymphatic systems to support fluid drainage and reduce inflammation.

Craniosacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle, non-invasive technique developed by osteopath Dr. John Upledger in the 1970s. It focuses on manipulating the craniosacral system, which consists of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. CST practitioners, like Jenn Lambert of Lambert Wellness, use light touch to release restrictions in these tissues, thereby improving the flow of cerebrospinal fluid and promoting the body's natural healing processes.

Research on CST has demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing migraine symptoms. In a study published in the *Journal of Headache and Pain* in 2011, researchers evaluated the impact of CST on 20 individuals suffering from chronic migraines. The participants received 10 treatments over a five-week period. At the end of the study, participants reported a significant reduction in the frequency and intensity of their migraines, along with improved overall quality of life.



Another study published in *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* in 2016 found similar results. This randomized controlled trial involved 25 participants with migraines who underwent CST treatments for eight weeks. The researchers found that CST led to a decrease in both the duration and severity of migraine attacks. Additionally, patients reported reduced reliance on medication.

Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) is another gentle technique that focuses on improving the flow of lymphatic fluid, which plays a key role in the body's immune and detoxification processes. MLD was developed by Dr. Emil Vodder in the 1930s as a way to reduce fluid buildup in the body, commonly used for conditions like lymphedema and post-surgical recovery.

However, recent research suggests that MLD may also help manage migraines by facilitating the removal of toxins and inflammatory substances from the brain and body, which are often associated with migraine attacks. The lymphatic system helps clear waste products, but impaired lymphatic drainage can lead to inflammation, worsening migraine symptoms.

A study published in the *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine* in 2014 explored the effects of MLD on migraine patients. Over a four-week period, 20 individuals with migraines received regular MLD sessions. The study found that MLD significantly reduced the frequency of migraines, as well as the severity of headache pain and associated symptoms like nausea and light sensitivity.

Further research published in *Lymphatic Research and Biology* in 2020 highlighted the potential for MLD in treating neurological conditions, including migraines. This study emphasized how MLD supports the brain's glymphatic system (a specialized waste-clearing network) and enhances cerebrospinal fluid drainage. By improving the efficiency of this system, MLD helps reduce the buildup of substances that trigger migraine attacks.

While both Craniosacral Therapy and Manual Lymphatic Drainage have been shown to provide migraine relief independently, at Lambert Wellness we combine the two treatments for greater efficacy. The combination of CST and MLD can improve fluid flow throughout both the craniosacral and lymphatic systems, promoting better waste removal, reducing inflammation, and easing tension in the muscles and tissues surrounding the brain. These therapies are particularly beneficial because they are gentle, non-invasive, and suitable for most individuals, including those seeking alternatives to medication.

Migraines are a complex and often debilitating condition, but therapies like Craniosacral Therapy and Manual Lymphatic Drainage offer promising alternatives for relief. With growing research highlighting the role of the lymphatic and craniosacral systems in migraines, these gentle, hands-on techniques may help reduce the frequency and severity of migraine attacks. If you suffer from migraines and are looking for natural, effective treatments, consider exploring CST and MLD as part of your holistic health plan. With more than 20 years of experience in manual therapies, Jenn Lambert specializes in the advanced techniques of Manual Lymph Drainage and Craniosacral Therapy. She is here to support your migraine management. Book a session today by calling us at **239-776-4055** and experience the benefits for yourself. MA43338 MM40606



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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. (1 Corinthians 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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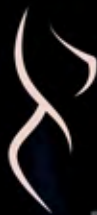
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