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

November 2024

Lee Edition - Monthly

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# KICKING ED and URINARY INCONTINENCE WHERE IT HURTS!

By Ivan R. Bracic, D.C.

**W**e've heard it time and time again, the only way to help yourself 'possibly' help reduce your urinary incontinence or erectile dysfunction naturally, is to perform tons and tons of kegel exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor.

Kegel exercises have been the gold standard, prescribed to both men and women. We've been told that if we did enough of them, we 'might' actually strengthen the pelvic floor muscles sufficiently to reduce urinary incontinence and erectile dysfunction. Let's be real...could you possibly do 12,000 kegel's in an hour, a day, a week? Well, now you can, with a little help from Dr. Ivan in Fort Myers, Florida.

Dr. Ivan has invested heavily in the entire BTL line of regenerative medicine products, aimed at restoring muscle size and strength, to his southwest Florida family of patients.

HIFEM (high intensity focused electromagnetic) technology is here to stay. Again, HIFEM has been proven to improve the quality of life by reducing urinary incontinence and improving and maintaining erections in men suffering from erectile dysfunction.

At a 2023 scientific meeting in San Diego, CA, the results show how significant HIFEM therapy can be. Just 10 HIFEM treatments at 28 minutes per session resulted in a 46% reduction of nocturia (frequency of nighttime urination). Subjects also experienced a 37% improvement in reaching and sustaining an erection during intercourse. The treatments with Dr. Ivan's EMSELLA machine improves blood flow to the pelvic floor, causing hypertrophy of the pelvic floor muscles.

HIFEM therapy with EMSELLA enhances the quality of life for elderly men with post-prostatectomy incontinence. Surgical removal of the prostate is one of the most common procedures for patients with prostate cancer. 65% of men who undergo the procedure will experience POST-PROSTATECTOMY INCONTINENCE (PPI). A pilot study led by Javier Azparren, MD and Judson Brandis, MD demonstrated remarkable results. Ten male subjects age 70-75, who had prostatectomies with PPI received just six 28-minute HIFEM treatments on the BTL EMSELLA chair. Treatments were two times per week. All 10 demonstrated improvement in quality

of life after their six treatments. They were all using absorbent pads prior to the test period. Post-treatment, all 10 subjects reported reduction of absorbent pad usage per day. Two of the 10 participants were pad-free after the last therapy session. HIFEM procedure was safe and no adverse effects were found.

At a recent conference of the American Society Laser Medicine and Surgery HIFEM (high intensity focused electromagnetic) technology significantly improved the quality of life in reducing urinary incontinence in postpartum and post-menopausal female patients who presented with all three types of urinary incontinence.

The HIFEM EMSELLA machine delivers 12,000 Supramaximal Contractions. Supramaximal Contractions are more than three times as strong as the typical kegel exercise contraction and over 15 times faster when experiencing the EMSELLA treatment.

For both men and women, the primary reason for (pelvic floor muscle) PFM weakness can be attributed to age and deconditioning. This combination leads to PFM dysfunction with the direct consequence resulting in embarrassing urinary incontinence and leakage.

Dr. Ivan's EMSELLA machine by BTL is a safe and non-invasive procedure. The focused electromagnetic field passes right through your clothing while you sit and enjoy your favorite book or just relax. The energy field interacts with the pelvic floor muscles to trigger the Supramaximal Contractions.



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- TREATS THE ENTIRE PELVIC FLOOR
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Supramaximal Contractions delivered by the EMSELLA are independent of all brain activity and function to target and hold pelvic floor muscles in a state of full contraction for several seconds. This amazing phenomenon cannot normally be achieved by voluntary muscle contractions (i.e. kegel exercises).

Again, you will experience 12,000 Supramaximal Contractions in a short 28-minute treatment session. Far beyond anything humanly possible, if not for the amazing technology found in the EMSELLA chair. For your free consultation with Dr. Ivan reach out to us at 239-579-4444.

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# Diabetes and Vascular Health: A CRITICAL CONNECTION

**D**iabetes is a chronic condition affecting millions worldwide, with far-reaching implications for overall health. One of the most significant impacts of diabetes is on vascular health, leading to a cascade of potential complications. This article explores the intricate relationship between diabetes and vascular health, highlighting the importance of awareness, prevention, and specialized care.

## Understanding Diabetes and Its Vascular Effects

Diabetes is characterized by elevated blood sugar levels, which can damage blood vessels throughout the body over time. This damage affects both large arteries (macrovascular complications) and small blood vessels (microvascular complications), leading to various health issues.

### Macrovascular Complications

**1. Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD):** People with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing PAD, a condition where narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the limbs. This can cause pain, difficulty walking, and in severe cases, may lead to amputations if left untreated.

**2. Cardiovascular Disease:** Diabetes significantly increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes due to the accelerated development of atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque in the arteries.

### Microvascular Complications

**1. Diabetic Retinopathy:** Damage to the small blood vessels in the retina can lead to vision problems and potentially blindness if not managed properly.

**2. Diabetic Nephropathy:** The kidneys' filtering units can be damaged by high blood sugar levels, potentially leading to kidney failure and the need for dialysis or transplantation.

**3. Diabetic Neuropathy:** Nerve damage caused by poor blood flow can result in loss of sensation, particularly in the feet and legs, increasing the risk of injuries and infections.

### Vascular Complications and Specialized Care

As vascular specialists, we play a crucial role in managing and treating diabetes-related vascular complications:

#### Dialysis Access

For patients with advanced diabetic nephropathy requiring dialysis, creating and maintaining proper vascular access is essential. This may involve:

- Arteriovenous (AV) fistula creation
- AV graft placement
- Central venous catheter insertion
- Peritoneal Dialysis Access

Our expertise ensures that patients receive optimal dialysis treatment with minimal complications.

#### Revascularization of Diabetic Foot and Leg Wounds

Diabetic foot ulcers are a common and serious complication. Our role includes:

- Assessing blood flow to the affected area
- Performing angioplasty or bypass surgery to improve circulation
- Collaborating with wound care specialists to promote healing

Timely intervention can significantly reduce the risk of amputations and improve quality of life.

#### Treating Peripheral Artery Disease

For diabetic patients with PAD, we offer various treatments:

- Angioplasty and stenting to open blocked arteries
- Atherectomy to remove plaque buildup
- Bypass surgery for severe cases

These interventions aim to improve blood flow, alleviate symptoms, and prevent further complications.

#### Addressing Venous Insufficiency

While diabetes doesn't directly cause venous insufficiency, it can exacerbate the condition. We provide:

- Comprehensive evaluations of venous health
- Minimally invasive treatments for varicose veins and chronic venous insufficiency
- Education on managing venous health in the context of diabetes

#### Prevention: The First Line of Defense

While managing vascular complications is crucial, preventing diabetes and its progression is equally important. Here are some key strategies to consider:

- 1. Healthy Lifestyle:** Encouraging regular physical activity, a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and maintaining a healthy weight.
- 2. Blood Sugar Control:** For those with diabetes, tight glucose control is essential in preventing vascular complications.

**3. Regular Screenings:** Early detection of vascular issues through regular check-ups and screenings can lead to more effective treatments.

**4. Smoking Cessation:** Smoking significantly increases vascular risks, especially in combination with diabetes.

**5. Blood Pressure and Cholesterol Management:** Controlling these factors is crucial in preventing vascular complications.

#### A Collaborative Approach to Diabetes Care

Diabetes awareness extends beyond understanding blood sugar levels. It encompasses recognizing the profound impact on vascular health and the importance of specialized care. As vascular specialists, we are committed to working closely with patients, primary care physicians, endocrinologists, and other healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive care.

By raising awareness about the vascular complications of diabetes, promoting prevention strategies, and offering advanced treatments, we can significantly improve outcomes for patients living with diabetes. Remember, early intervention and consistent management are key to maintaining vascular health and overall well-being in the face of diabetes.

The Vascular and Vein Center at Gulfcoast Surgeons is one of the first and most respected vein clinics in Southwest Florida. Our surgeons, Dr. Abraham Sadighi and Dr. Johan Escribano have performed thousands of vascular and vein surgeries with consistently positive outcomes. We focus on diseases of the vascular system that can range from harmless but unattractive spider veins to dangerous conditions such as peripheral artery disease. Our caring and dedicated team will help you identify problems and offer the best treatment options for you.



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# 2025 Annual Enrollment is Here!

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

**M**edicare 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. You should have received your Notification of Change from your current insurance plan. This outlines the current year to the new year changes, as an example if your specialist provider cost \$20 now it might say \$35 in 2025 (no correlation just an example).

**Substantial 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 especially important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. 2025 RX 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 is 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 certain heart conditions or diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time. Many carriers are consolidating Part D plans or eliminating them completely. As a reminder if you choose NOT to ENROLL in a Part D drug plan and in later years you will have to wait for Annual Enrollment and then you will assed a penalty for every month you did not have a drug plan, that penalty will last for the REST OF YOUR LIFE! Careful not choosing a drug plan.

**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 sets 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 is not broken do not fix it DOES NOT apply to Annual Enrollment. Every year I see many people that have not checked/compared their current plan to what is 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 three 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 significant 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.

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

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

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

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# THE SILENT CONNECTION

## Exploring the Profound Effects of Diabetes on Hearing Health

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

### Diabetes and Hearing Loss: An Overlooked Association

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Characterized by elevated blood sugar levels, it can lead to a myriad of health complications, from heart disease to kidney problems. But one lesser-known consequence of diabetes is its link to hearing loss. This article explores the intriguing connection between diabetes and hearing impairment, shedding light on the hidden effects that often go unnoticed.

### The Diabetes Epidemic

First, let's understand the gravity of the diabetes epidemic. According to the International Diabetes Federation, approximately 463 million adults were living with diabetes in 2019, and this number is projected to rise to 700 million by 2045. The impact of diabetes extends far beyond its association with high blood sugar levels; it reaches into multiple facets of health and wellbeing, including hearing.

### The Biological Connection

So, how do diabetes and hearing loss intersect at a biological level? Research has shown that prolonged exposure to high blood sugar levels can damage the delicate blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear. This damage, in turn, impairs the ear's ability to transmit sound signals effectively to the brain. Moreover, the small blood vessels in the cochlea, a vital part of the inner ear, can become compromised, reducing blood flow and leading to hearing loss.

### Types of Hearing Loss in Diabetes

Diabetes-related hearing loss can manifest in two primary forms: sensorineural and conductive. Sensorineural hearing loss is the most common, affecting the inner ear or auditory nerve. It often results in difficulty hearing soft sounds and understanding speech, particularly in noisy environments. Conductive hearing loss occurs when sound waves cannot reach the inner ear due to issues with the ear canal or the middle ear. Diabetes can exacerbate conductive hearing loss by causing complications such as ear infections.

### Risk Factors and Progression

Several factors can influence an individual's risk of experiencing diabetes-related hearing loss. The



duration of diabetes plays a crucial role, with long-term, uncontrolled diabetes increasing the likelihood of hearing impairment. Additionally, age and genetic predisposition can compound the risk. It's essential for those with diabetes to be aware of these risk factors and to regularly monitor their hearing health to catch any issues early.

### The Emotional Impact

Hearing loss, regardless of its cause, can have a profound emotional impact on individuals. People with diabetes who develop hearing loss may experience feelings of isolation, depression, and frustration. Communication difficulties can strain relationships and affect one's overall quality of life. It's crucial to recognize these emotional consequences and seek appropriate support and treatment.

### Prevention and Management

While there is no guaranteed way to prevent diabetes-related hearing loss, there are steps individuals with diabetes can take to minimize their risk. Maintaining good blood sugar control is paramount. Regular check-ups with healthcare providers can help monitor and manage diabetes effectively. Additionally, protecting the ears from excessive noise and avoiding smoking can contribute to hearing health.

### Treatment Options

For those already experiencing diabetes-related hearing loss, there are treatment options available.

Hearing aids are a common solution that can significantly improve one's ability to hear and communicate. Cochlear implants may be considered for severe cases. Early diagnosis and intervention are essential in maximizing the effectiveness of these treatments.

Diabetes is a multifaceted condition that affects various aspects of health, and its link to hearing loss should not be underestimated. The damage to blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear can lead to significant hearing impairment. Understanding the risks, prevention strategies, and available treatments is crucial for individuals living with diabetes. By addressing the connection between diabetes and hearing loss, we can better support those affected and improve their overall quality of life.

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



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

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The neoGEN-Series® system is a state-of-the-art, technically-innovative medical device for producing electric cell signaling energy waves (EST and ESI). The system is used to successfully treat circulatory issues, all types of acute and chronic pain, long-term (intractable) pain and drug-resistant pain. The neoGEN-Series® also offers specific-parameter signaling for efficacious neuro-muscular reeducation, muscle strengthening and relaxation of muscle spasm activity.

### WHAT IT TREATS

- Tingling
- Numbness
- Pins & Needles
- Burning
- Aching
- Limb Weakness
- Difficulty with Balance
- Muscle Cramps or Spasms
- Increased or Decreased Sensitivity

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

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

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

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

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

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# TIPS TO HELP SENIORS STAY SOCIAL

**A**s we age, maintaining social connections becomes increasingly vital for overall well-being. Social engagement contributes not only to emotional health but also to cognitive vitality.

Explore effective tips and strategies designed to empower older adults to stay socially active, fostering a sense of connection, purpose and joy in their daily lives.

From embracing technology to exploring local community resources, these tips aim to enhance the social well-being of seniors, ensuring a vibrant and fulfilling golden age.

## 1. Embrace Technology

Dive into the digital world by learning to use smartphones, tablets or computers. Video calls, social media, and online communities provide avenues for staying connected with loved ones and making new friends.

## 2. Join Senior Clubs and Groups

The Terraces offers clubs, social groups, and hobby-centered activities. Whether it's a book club, a card club, or fitness class, participating in shared interests fosters camaraderie.

## 3. Explore Local Senior Centers

Senior centers are hubs of social activity, offering a range of programs, events, and recreational activities. From game nights to educational workshops, these centers provide excellent opportunities to meet peers.

## 4. Attend Campus Events

Engage with campus events and gatherings. These not only offer entertainment but also provide chances to connect with neighbors and make new acquaintances.

## 5. Volunteer

Contributing to a cause you're passionate about not only makes a positive impact on the community but also opens doors to new friendships. Consider volunteering on a resident department committee or in our health center.

## 6. Stay Active

Exercise is not just for physical health; it also contributes to mental well-being. Joining fitness classes or walking groups encourages social interaction while promoting a healthy lifestyle.



## 7. Frequent Community Libraries

The Terraces has two libraries which are run by our residents. These provide a relaxed setting for socializing with like-minded individuals.

## 8. Participate in Lectures

Attend one of the many lectures held at The Terraces. This not only expands your knowledge but also introduces you to people who share similar passions.

## 9. Attend Religious or Spiritual Gatherings

If you have religious affiliations, attending services, study groups, or community events can be an excellent way to stay socially connected within a supportive community.

## 10. Plan Regular Family Gatherings

Family is an integral part of social support. Plan regular get-togethers, family dinners, or special occasions to strengthen bonds with loved ones.

Staying social as an older adult is about finding activities that bring joy, connection, and a sense of purpose. By exploring various avenues and staying open to new experiences, you can build and nurture meaningful relationships, fostering a rich and fulfilling social life.

## Social Opportunities at The Terraces at Bonita Springs

The Terraces at Bonita Springs, a resort-style senior living community in Florida, has an extensive activities calendar that ensures residents enjoy a vibrant and engaging lifestyle.

From fitness and wellness to enriching life activities, there's something for everyone. Take a look at the types of social activities in our community:

## Connect During Mealtimes

Immerse yourself in a culinary journey with exclusive access to the dining venues at the community, each offering a unique and delicious experience. Whether you're going for a quick bite or a longer meal, you can always take this opportunity to meet someone new.



## Sip Into Something Extraordinary!

Wednesday, November 13 | 3 p.m.

Join us for an exclusive wine tasting featuring Kristin M. Howlett, a Concierge Personal Sommelier & Wine Consultant. Sample fine wines and indulge in curated light bites as you discover the benefits of life at The Terraces at Bonita Springs.

Sip, savor and learn about the advantages of our nonprofit Life Plan Community, including unlimited LifeCare, luxurious amenities, chef-prepared dining, wellness programs, and our current incentive!

Space is limited. Valet parking will be available. Please RSVP by Wednesday, November 6.

## Are you interested in learning more about The Terraces at Bonita Springs?

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

**The Terraces**  
— at Bonita Springs





**Social Clubs**

The Terraces at Bonita Springs has a number of social clubs for residents to join. Spanning a variety of interests like playing cards or attending shows at the Performance Art Center, you can find a club with peers who have similar hobbies and interests as you.

**Active Living and Fitness**

Stay active and vibrant with exclusive access to state-of-the-art fitness centers. Engage in activities like:

- Aqua aerobics
- Bocce practice
- Balance and stability sessions

**Intellectual Stimulation**

If you like to challenge your mind, you can attend lectures to learn about fascinating subjects.

**Tech and Entertainment**

Immerse yourself in the latest technological innovations with iN2L technology. Enjoy movie nights and cultural experiences.

Take part in Wii Bowling, a fun and interactive way to engage with fellow residents.

**On-the-Go Adventures**

Explore the surroundings and connect with neighbors during runs to local establishments and shopping excursions. These outings are a great opportunity to expand your social circle.

**Spiritual and Community Connections**

Attend church services and Mass within the community, fostering spiritual connections. Build a sense of belonging by participating in various community events and gatherings.

**Lead an Active, Social Lifestyle at The Terraces**

The Terraces at Bonita Springs is a welcoming community with a robust activities calendar to give you every opportunity to meet new people and spend time with friends. Call us today at 239-204-3469 to learn more about our community's programming.



Couples Save **\$25,000** on Second-Person Fees!\*

Plus, take advantage of our Pack and Move program.

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\*Applies to select residences for couples with a participating LifeCare contract.

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# ALIGNMENT MATTERS: STRENGTHENING MEN CORE TO COURT

By Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

**D**on't let the misconception fool you—Pilates isn't just for women and fitness enthusiasts. Some of the biggest names in sports are getting in on the action. Superstars like LeBron James, Tiger Woods, and Cristiano Ronaldo swear by Pilates to keep them at the top of their game. From court to field, these athletes know that a strong core and flexibility can be the secret sauce to outplaying the competition and staying injury-free.

Pickleball is rapidly gaining popularity, with more men joining the action. This fast-paced sport blends tennis, badminton, and table tennis but comes with physical demands that can lead to injuries. Pilates effectively boosts performance, improving strength, flexibility, and balance while reducing injury risks.

## 1. Core Strengthening

Core strength is crucial for pickleball players, supporting rapid lateral movements, powerful swings, and balance. Pilates strengthens the deep abdominal muscles, obliques, and lower back, improving agility, swing power, and balance. This foundation leads to better performance and injury prevention during intense rallies.

When men engage in Pilates, they improve their core stability, which translates into enhanced control during play. Not only does a strong core support better posture while playing, but it also reduces the risk of lower back injuries, a common issue among male athletes who engage in repetitive motions.

## 2. Improving Flexibility

Flexibility is another crucial component of athletic performance in a sport like pickleball, where quick, agile movements are necessary. Many men may overlook flexibility training, but Pilates emphasizes stretching and lengthening muscles, which can significantly improve a player's range of motion.

Increased flexibility allows pickleball players to reach for shots more effectively and quickly recover from movements. This improved range of motion can lead to more powerful swings and better agility on the court. Additionally, improved flexibility helps prevent injuries, such as strains and sprains, by ensuring that muscles can stretch adequately during dynamic movements.

## 3. Boosting Balance and Coordination

Pickleball is a game of quick reactions and sudden changes in direction. Balance and coordination are essential skills for men playing this sport. Pilates exercises, which often require controlled movements and body alignment awareness, can significantly improve these abilities.



**Ryan Reader (co-founder)  
G.O.A.T. Paddle  
goatpaddle.com**

*"You can not call yourself a champion of any sport, specifically pickleball, without pilates in your life. And now that I am committed to pilates, I feel sorry for the competition going forward. I highly encourage all athletes to get involved in Pilates and learn to allow yourself to develop stronger into a champion of your discipline."* Ryan Reader

By incorporating Pilates into their training, male pickleball players can develop better body awareness and control. This improved balance directly translates to the court, allowing players to maintain stability during rapid movements and execute shots precisely. Improved coordination can also lead to more effective teamwork and communication during doubles play.

## 4. Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation

Injuries are an unfortunate reality for many pickleball athletes. Common issues such as ankle sprains, shoulder injuries, and knee pain can sideline players and hinder their performance. Pilates is an excellent preventative measure.

For men recovering from injuries, Pilates provides a low-impact way to regain strength and mobility while minimizing the risk of joint inflammation. Controlled movements help rebuild fitness gradually, focusing on proper alignment and technique. This approach supports recovery and corrects muscular imbalances that may have caused the injury.

## 5. Enhancing Posture

Good posture is vital for athletes, yet many men struggle with maintaining proper alignment, especially during intense physical activities. Poor posture can lead to various issues, including back pain and decreased performance. Pilates emphasizes spinal alignment and body awareness, helping players develop better posture on and off the court.

Pilates helps male pickleball players improve performance by enhancing posture, allowing for better energy transfer during swings, and increasing power and accuracy. Improved alignment also reduces the risk of chronic pain, supporting long-term athletic health.

## 6. Mental Focus and Stress Relief

The mental aspect of sports is often underestimated, but it plays a critical role in performance. Pickleball requires concentration, strategy, and quick decision-making. Pilates encourages mindfulness and body awareness, helping players develop a focused mindset.

The rhythmic nature of Pilates can also serve as a form of stress relief, allowing players to unwind and clear their minds. By incorporating Pilates into their fitness routines, men can improve their mental clarity and focus, improve their decision-making abilities during matches, and contribute to a more enjoyable playing experience.

## 7. Cross-Training Benefits

Incorporating Pilates into a fitness regimen provides valuable cross-training benefits for male pickleball players. It complements the sport's physical demands by promoting overall body conditioning. By diversifying their workouts, players can avoid burnout and keep their training fresh and engaging.

Cross-training through Pilates can also improve overall athleticism, making players more versatile on the court. This well-rounded approach to fitness enhances endurance and strength, leading to better performance and greater enjoyment.

## Pilates is a Secret Weapon for Male Athletes

Incorporating Pilates into a regular fitness routine offers more than just physical benefits—it strengthens every part of the body, improves mobility, and helps maintain balance on and off the court.

For pickleball players, Pilates is the key to building core stability, preventing injuries, and ensuring long-term success in the game. For the guys out there, think of Pilates as your secret weapon—improving agility, power, and flexibility so you can outplay the competition and recover faster. Don't just train hard; train smart.

## Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

Shannon is a Master Pilates Educator and owner of 4 local Club Pilates studios. As a career Pilates instructor and functional movement specialist, Shannon has mastered the science and art of her craft. She shares her knowledge by certifying aspiring Pilates instructors. Shannon's unique approach to developing an apprenticeship has led to the establishment of the Southwest Florida Pilates Academy. She holds prestigious certifications in STOTT Pilates and Gyrotonic® Method, completed a fellowship in Applied Functional Science (FAFS), and is a Functional Golf Specialist. Special thanks to Ryan Reader with G.O.A.T. Paddle, goatpaddle.com, info@goatpaddle.com.

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# REJUVENATE YOUR SKIN THIS NOVEMBER:

## Celebrate National Healthy Skin Month with Hideout Boutique's Advanced Treatments

**A**s we enter November, National Healthy Skin Month reminds us of the importance of caring for our largest organ - our skin. At Hideout Boutique, we're committed to helping you achieve and maintain radiant, healthy skin year-round. This month, we're shining a spotlight on our cutting-edge skin tightening treatments featuring microneedling with radiofrequency (RF) technology, specifically our Morpheus8 and Scarlet devices.

### The Power of Microneedling RF

Microneedling RF is a revolutionary technique that combines the benefits of traditional microneedling with the power of radiofrequency energy. This dual-action treatment stimulates your skin's natural healing processes while delivering targeted heat to the deeper layers of your skin, resulting in:

1. Increased collagen and elastin production
2. Improved skin texture and tone
3. Reduced appearance of fine lines and wrinkles
4. Minimized pore size
5. Tighter, firmer skin

### Morpheus8: Precision Skin Remodeling

Our Morpheus8 treatment is a state-of-the-art fractional skin treatment that remodels and contours the face and body. This minimally invasive procedure penetrates deep into the skin and fat, targeting the underlying layers for maximum rejuvenation. Morpheus8 is ideal for:

- Reducing wrinkles and fine lines
- Tightening loose skin on the face and neck
- Improving acne scars and other textural irregularities
- Contouring and refining the jawline

### Scarlet: The Future of Skin Tightening

The Scarlet device takes skin tightening to the next level. Using short-pulse radiofrequency technology, Scarlet delivers precise and controlled energy to multiple layers of the skin. This advanced treatment offers:

- Non-surgical skin lifting and tightening
- Improvement in skin elasticity
- Reduction of pore size and oil production
- Enhanced skin texture and tone
- Minimal downtime and discomfort



### WHY CHOOSE MICRONEEDLING RF AT HIDEOUT BOUTIQUE?

1. **Customized Treatments:** Our expert technicians tailor each treatment to your unique skin needs and goals.
2. **Advanced Technology:** With Morpheus8 and Scarlet, we offer the latest in skin rejuvenation technology.
3. **Natural-Looking Results:** Our treatments stimulate your body's natural processes for gradual, long-lasting improvements.
4. **Minimal Downtime:** Return to your daily activities quickly with our non-invasive procedures.
5. **Comprehensive Skin Health:** We focus on overall skin health, not just surface-level improvements.

### Celebrate Your Skin This November

National Healthy Skin Month is the perfect time to invest in your skin's health and appearance. At Hideout Boutique, we believe that healthy skin is beautiful skin. Our microneedling RF treatments with Morpheus8 and Scarlet offer a non-surgical path to firmer, younger-looking skin.

This November, take the first step towards radiant, healthy skin. Schedule a consultation at Hideout Boutique to learn how our advanced skin tightening treatments can help you achieve your skincare goals. Let's celebrate National Healthy Skin Month together by giving your skin the care and attention it deserves.

Remember, healthy skin is a journey, not a destination. With the right treatments and ongoing care, you can enjoy beautiful, vibrant skin at any age. Visit Hideout Boutique today and discover the transformative power of microneedling RF for yourself. Your skin will thank you for years to come!

Hideout Boutique is your all-inclusive medical spa in Fort Myers, FL, where results and relaxation collide. At Hideout, we offer a wide range of services, from skin care and lashes, to permanent makeup, lasers, injectables and skin tightening. Our professional team provides personalized treatments tailored to your unique needs, ensuring exceptional results with every visit. We specialize in acne and anti-aging by providing the highest quality cosmetic and aesthetic injectables, including Lasers, Botox/Jeuveau/Xeomin, Filler, Sculptra, PRP, Peels, Microneedling and PDO threading. Our providers at Hideout also specialize in helping our clients achieve their ultimate skin health by utilizing proper medical-grade products and integrating appropriate and evidence-based skin health procedures.

We prioritize safety, natural results and client relationships, so your journey begins with a consultation and mutual decisions based on individual needs. Your providers will then create a customized anti-aging/skin health plan for you. At Hideout, education and safety is our top priority. Our medical cosmetic treatments are performed by our highly trained and experienced medical providers, nurses and aestheticians.



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# FIND RELIEF THROUGH DRY NEEDLING: A Revolutionary Approach to Pain Management

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS

**A**re you struggling with persistent muscle pain that just won't go away? Edge Physical Therapy offers an innovative solution through dry needling therapy, a specialized treatment that's helping countless patients find relief from chronic pain and muscle dysfunction. This modern therapeutic approach combines ancient wisdom with contemporary medical science to deliver remarkable results.

## What Is Dry Needling?

Dry needling is a skilled intervention performed by certified physical therapists that involves inserting thin, sterile needles into specific points in your muscles known as trigger points. Unlike acupuncture, which is based on traditional Chinese medicine and focuses on energy meridians, dry needling is grounded in modern Western medicine and targets musculoskeletal and nervous system conditions.

The term "dry" refers to the fact that the needles don't inject any substance into the body. Instead, the needle's presence creates a precise mechanical and neurophysiological effect that helps release muscle tension and promote healing.

## How Does Dry Needling Work?

When your physical therapist at Edge Physical Therapy inserts a needle into a trigger point, it stimulates several therapeutic responses:

- Releases tight muscle bands and knots
- Improves blood flow to the affected area
- Reduces local and referred pain
- Decreases muscle tension
- Normalizes muscle function
- Promotes natural healing processes
- Stimulates the body's pain-relieving mechanisms

## What Conditions Can Dry Needling Treat?

This versatile treatment approach effectively addresses numerous conditions:

### Musculoskeletal Issues

- Chronic back and neck pain
- Shoulder impingement
- Tennis and golfer's elbow
- Hip and knee pain
- Muscle strains and spasms
- Plantar fasciitis



### Neurological Conditions

- Headaches and migraines
- Sciatica
- Nerve compression syndromes
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

### Sports-Related Injuries

- Athletic performance issues
- Post-workout muscle soreness
- Sports-specific overuse injuries
- Recovery enhancement

### The Edge Physical Therapy Difference

At Edge Physical Therapy, our certified practitioners combine dry needling with comprehensive physical therapy treatments to maximize your results. We create personalized treatment plans that may include:

- Targeted dry needling sessions
- Therapeutic exercises
- Manual therapy techniques
- Movement education
- Posture correction
- Pain management strategies

### What to Expect During Treatment

Your dry needling session at Edge Physical Therapy will be conducted in a comfortable, clinical setting. The procedure typically involves:

1. A thorough evaluation of your condition
2. Careful identification of trigger points
3. Brief needle insertions lasting 10-30 minutes
4. Minimal to no discomfort during treatment
5. Immediate or gradual relief of symptoms

### Is Dry Needling Right for You?

While dry needling is safe and effective for most people, it's particularly beneficial if you:

- Have chronic muscle pain or tension
- Haven't responded well to other treatments
- Want to improve athletic performance
- Seek natural pain management solutions
- Need to enhance your recovery process

### Take the Next Step

Don't let chronic pain hold you back from living your best life. Edge Physical Therapy's expert team is ready to help you discover the benefits of dry needling therapy. Our evidence-based approach, combined with personalized care, ensures you receive the most effective treatment for your specific condition.

Contact Edge Physical Therapy today to schedule your consultation and take the first step toward lasting pain relief through innovative dry needling therapy.

### PERSONALIZED PHYSICAL THERAPY TREATMENTS TAILORED FOR YOU



**Scott Bradley**  
Physical Therapist/Clinic Owner



**Mitchell Murphy**  
Physical Therapist/Assistant



**Heather Guck**  
Physical Therapist/Assistant

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# Medicare Advantage: A POWERFUL ALLY IN MANAGING DIABETES

Lisa Mattingly, M.D.

## Take Control of Your Diabetes with Medicare Advantage

**L**iving with diabetes can be challenging, but you don't have to face it alone. Medicare Advantage plans offer comprehensive support designed to help you manage your diabetes and live a healthier, more fulfilling life.

### Why Choose Medicare Advantage for Diabetes Care?

Medicare Advantage plans are packed with benefits that go beyond Original Medicare. These plans offer personalized care and resources tailored to meet your specific health needs, especially when it comes to managing chronic conditions like diabetes.

### Key Benefits of Medicare Advantage for Diabetes:

#### 1. Coordinated Care for Better Health Outcomes

Medicare Advantage plans focus on coordinated care, ensuring that your healthcare providers are all on the same page. Your primary care physician, specialists, and other healthcare professionals work together to create a personalized care plan that helps you manage your diabetes effectively.

#### 2. Prescription Drug Coverage

Managing diabetes often requires medication, and Medicare Advantage plans typically include Part D prescription drug coverage. This means you'll have access to a wide range of diabetes medications at affordable prices, helping you maintain your health without breaking the bank.

#### 3. Preventative Services at No Extra Cost

Preventing complications from diabetes is key to living a long and healthy life. Medicare Advantage plans cover essential preventative services like blood sugar testing, eye exams, foot exams, and more—often at no extra cost to you. Staying on top of these services can help you avoid serious health issues down the line.

#### 4. Access to Diabetes Education and Support Programs

Knowledge is power when it comes to managing diabetes. Many Medicare Advantage plans offer access to diabetes education programs, where you



can learn about healthy eating, physical activity, and how to monitor your blood sugar. Some plans even include health coaching to provide you with personalized support and guidance.

#### 5. Additional Benefits to Keep You Healthy

Beyond diabetes care, Medicare Advantage plans often include extra benefits that can help you stay healthy overall. These may include vision, dental, and hearing care, gym memberships, and wellness programs—all designed to support your health and well-being.

#### 6. Convenience and Affordability

Medicare Advantage plans combine your Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance), Part B (Medical Insurance), and Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage) into one convenient plan. Many plans offer lower out-of-pocket costs than Original Medicare, making it easier to manage your healthcare expenses.

### Take the Next Step Toward Better Diabetes Management

If you're living with diabetes, a Medicare Advantage plan could be the right choice for you. With

comprehensive coverage and a focus on coordinated care, these plans provide the tools and support you need to manage your condition effectively. Contact your agent to discuss your options and find a plan that fits your needs.

### Put Your Health First with VIPcare!

If you're managing diabetes or another chronic condition, VIPcare is here to help you every step of the way. Our compassionate care team, combined with the comprehensive support of Medicare Advantage plans, offers personalized solutions to keep you healthy and thriving. Don't wait—call VIPcare at 239-747-7202 and discover how we can help you better manage your diabetes and enjoy a more fulfilling, healthier life!

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# Understanding COPD and Sleep Apnea Overlap Syndrome

By Dr. Ernesto Eusebio

**C**hronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) are two distinct but often overlapping respiratory conditions that impact millions of Americans. COPD is a progressive condition, characterized by difficulty in breathing due to long-term exposure to lung irritants, while OSA is a sleep disorder marked by repeated episodes of blocked airflow during sleep. When these conditions co-occur, they form what is known as "COPD and Sleep Apnea Overlap Syndrome." This complex syndrome presents unique challenges in diagnosis, treatment, and management. Dr. Ernesto Eusebio, Board Certified in Sleep Medicine at the Sleep and Apnea Institute of FL, explores the critical aspects of this condition and highlights the importance of early intervention and specialized care.

## The Mechanisms of COPD and OSA

COPD is primarily caused by chronic exposure to harmful irritants, most notably tobacco smoke, which leads to irreversible damage to the lungs. Individuals with COPD often experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, frequent coughing, and chest tightness, which can worsen over time. OSA, on the other hand, is commonly linked to physical obstruction in the upper airway, resulting in intermittent oxygen deprivation during sleep. The repetitive airway blockage often disrupts sleep and can lead to systemic complications, such as hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

In individuals with COPD, the presence of OSA can exacerbate breathing difficulties, particularly during sleep, when respiratory muscle tone naturally decreases. As detailed in a publication on the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), the interaction between COPD and OSA may intensify hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels), leading to further declines in respiratory function and overall health impact of Overlap Syndrome.

The combination of COPD and OSA presents distinct challenges. While each condition independently increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and decreased quality of life, together, they amplify these risks. Overlap Syndrome, as a combined condition, is associated with more severe nocturnal hypoxemia and an increased risk of mortality compared to those with COPD or OSA alone.

Studies show that individuals with Overlap Syndrome are more likely to experience:

- **Higher levels of hypoxemia:** The co-occurrence of COPD and OSA worsens oxygen deprivation, especially during sleep, which can significantly stress the cardiovascular system.
- **Increased risk of acute exacerbations:** Overlap Syndrome is associated with more frequent exacerbations of COPD symptoms, which may lead to increased hospitalizations.
- **Higher likelihood of pulmonary hypertension:** Persistent low oxygen levels can lead to pulmonary hypertension, where the blood vessels in the lungs experience high blood pressure, leading to increased strain on the heart.

The NCBI review underscores the elevated mortality rate in Overlap Syndrome patients and the need for specialized interventions to mitigate these compounded health risks.

## Self-Diagnosis

The symptoms of Overlap Syndrome may overlap with those of COPD and OSA, making it crucial to recognize the distinct clinical indicators. Common symptoms include:

- **Chronic shortness of breath, especially during sleep**
- **Daytime fatigue and sleepiness, often due to sleep disruptions from OSA**
- **Loud snoring and episodes of gasping for air during sleep**
- **Morning headaches and dry mouth, often linked to sleep apnea**

Diagnosing Overlap Syndrome requires a comprehensive evaluation that includes both pulmonary and sleep assessments. Polysomnography (sleep study) is typically used to confirm OSA, while spirometry is essential for evaluating COPD severity. Dr. Eusebio emphasizes the importance of coordinated diagnostic efforts, as a combined assessment can provide a more accurate picture of a patient's respiratory health.

## References:

- NCBI. (2021). *Overlap Syndrome in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Obstructive Sleep Apnea*. In *StatPearls*. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK589658>

## Treatment Approaches

Treatment for Overlap Syndrome often involves a combination of therapies aimed at addressing both COPD and OSA. Dr. Eusebio advocates for an individualized treatment approach, recognizing that no two patients with Overlap Syndrome are alike. Core elements of Overlap Syndrome management include:

**1. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Therapy:** CPAP is the primary treatment for OSA and is beneficial for individuals with Overlap Syndrome. It helps maintain airway openness during sleep, reducing episodes of apnea and hypopnea. This therapy also improves oxygen saturation, thereby mitigating the hypoxemic effects of both OSA and COPD.

**2. Supplemental Oxygen:** For those with significant nocturnal hypoxemia, supplemental oxygen may be prescribed alongside CPAP therapy to improve oxygen levels during sleep.

**3. Medications:** Individuals with COPD often use bronchodilators and inhaled corticosteroids to manage symptoms and prevent exacerbations. These medications can also help manage Overlap Syndrome by improving airflow and reducing inflammation.

**4. Lifestyle Modifications:** Smoking cessation, regular exercise, and a healthy diet are foundational in managing both COPD and OSA. Weight management is also essential, as excess weight can exacerbate both conditions by increasing respiratory demand and airway obstruction.

**5. Pulmonary Rehabilitation:** This supervised program combines exercise training, nutritional advice, and counseling to improve lung function and overall quality of life in patients with COPD and Overlap Syndrome.

## Importance of Specialized Care

Managing Overlap Syndrome requires a multi-disciplinary approach to address the various facets of both COPD and OSA. Dr. Eusebio encourages patients with COPD who experience symptoms of sleep apnea, such as snoring, daytime fatigue, and morning headaches, to schedule an appointment soon.

*Accepting New Patients!*



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# THE CRITICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN DIABETES AND HEALTHY FEET

By Sahiba Singh DPM, AACFAS

**N**ovember marks National Diabetes Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about diabetes and its wide-reaching impact. One crucial, often-overlooked aspect of diabetes management is foot care. As podiatrists, we play a vital role in helping individuals with diabetes prevent serious complications related to their feet and overall well-being.

The Connection Between Diabetes and Foot Health For those living with diabetes, elevated blood sugar levels can lead to a number of foot-related problems, primarily by damaging the nerves and blood vessels. This damage often manifests in several ways:

- **Peripheral Neuropathy:** Reduced sensation in the feet can cause individuals to be unaware of injuries like cuts, blisters, or sores, increasing the risk of infections.
- **Poor Circulation:** Impaired blood flow makes it harder for wounds to heal, leaving patients more vulnerable to ulcers and other complications.
- **Foot Deformities:** Conditions such as bunions and hammertoes may develop, leading to discomfort, altered gait, and an increased risk of injury.

As podiatrists, it's essential to educate diabetic patients on the connection between diabetes and their foot health, emphasizing how closely these areas are intertwined.

## The Role of Podiatry in Diabetes Management

Podiatric care is fundamental for diabetes management. Regular foot care, examinations, and prompt treatment of any arising issues can make a profound difference in a patient's quality of life. Here are the key ways podiatrists help manage diabetes-related foot complications:

- 1. Routine Foot Examinations:** As a podiatrist, I conduct thorough foot exams to catch early signs of trouble, such as neuropathy, wounds, or reduced circulation, allowing for timely intervention before these issues worsen.
- 2. Foot Care Education:** Educating patients about the importance of daily foot care routines is one of the most critical aspects of my role. Proper hygiene,

nail trimming techniques, and selecting appropriate footwear can help patients avoid injuries and infections.

**3. Management of Foot Conditions:** Many individuals with diabetes develop corns, calluses, or fungal infections. These issues can be more serious for diabetic patients and require careful treatment. I also provide custom orthotics to improve foot mechanics and alleviate pressure points.

**4. Wound Care:** Ulcers and sores are common in diabetic feet. My specialized wound care treatments focus on promoting healing and preventing infections or, in severe cases, the need for amputation.

**5. Surgical Intervention:** In advanced cases of foot deformities or infections, surgical procedures may be necessary. As a podiatrist, I can perform surgeries to correct issues such as hammertoes, bunions, or even address serious infections that threaten the foot's integrity.

## Proactive Tips for Diabetic Foot Health

Beyond regular podiatric care, there are several steps I encourage my diabetic patients to take to protect their feet and maintain optimal foot health:

- **Daily Foot Inspections:** Patients should check their feet for any cuts, blisters, changes in color, or temperature every day.
- **Maintain Cleanliness:** Washing the feet with mild soap and water and drying them thoroughly, especially between the toes, is crucial to preventing infections.
- **Proper Footwear:** I always emphasize the importance of well-fitting shoes with proper support to help prevent injuries like blisters and sores.
- **Blood Sugar Management:** Keeping blood sugar levels within the target range not only supports overall health but also reduces the risk of foot complications.
- **Stay Active:** Regular physical activity improves circulation, which is essential for keeping the feet healthy.



## The Importance of Podiatry in Diabetes Awareness Month

As we recognize American Diabetes Month, I want to highlight the essential role podiatry plays in diabetes care. Foot health is a critical component of diabetes management, and taking preventive measures can significantly reduce the risk of complications. By partnering with a podiatrist and incorporating proactive foot care into their routine, individuals with diabetes can safeguard their foot health, leading to a better quality of life.

In the end, healthy feet are a key part of overall well-being. Let's work together to ensure that proper foot care is a priority for every person managing diabetes!

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

### Sahiba Singh DPM, AACFAS

Sahiba Singh DPM, AACFAS, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Fort Myers. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. Call 239-430-3668 or visit [www.NaplesPodiatrist.com](http://www.NaplesPodiatrist.com) to make an appointment. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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# Innovative Teaching is Integral to FGCU's Mission

## Marieb College of Health & Human Services Employs Cutting-Edge Educational Technology

Innovative teaching is one of the keys to preparing the next generation of highly skilled healthcare professionals. At Florida Gulf Coast University, Marieb College of Health & Human Services is pioneering a new era in healthcare education with immersive learning experiences and cutting-edge technology that ensure graduates are ready to excel in the rapidly evolving health professions.

Imagine stepping into a classroom where a holographic image isn't just Hollywood special effects but tangible reality. That's the vision realized by Marieb College, where seven state-of-the-art units from Proto Hologram have been integrated into the curriculum. The college has one EPIC Hologram, about 4.5 feet wide and a little over 7 feet tall, that can deliver a life-size holographic-style image. Using 2D images or video, the unit creates a 3D-like experience. The other six units in Marieb College are tabletop models, making them easy to transport from classroom to classroom.

All seven units have the same capabilities; each has a smart camera enabling two-way communication and projects 4k images and video. Eventually, the units will be housed in a new center planned for FGCU's next academic building. With the help of such advanced technology, students experience realistic scenarios and develop skills needed to provide better patient care.

With the click of a button, they are transported into a telepresence healthcare technology known as Dr. Hologram. This innovative tool allows students to engage with virtual patients in a safe and controlled environment, honing their diagnostic and empathetic skills.

The possibilities are endless. Whether it's presenting pre-recorded cases or beaming in standardized patients or guest speakers, Dr. Hologram bridges the gap between theory and practice. In healthcare simulations, the idea is to create realistic environments to increase the ability of the learner to suspend disbelief.

### Putting theory through its paces

By immersing nursing, social work and health sciences students in lifelike scenarios, Marieb College is cultivating a new generation of healthcare professionals equipped to tackle real-world challenges with confidence. Nursing students perfect



their skills in labs that emulate operating rooms, intensive care units and other patient care environments that are equipped with state-of-the-art mannequins that talk, bleed and present like humans. Exercise science students get hands-on experience using anti-gravity technology and gold-standard equipment such as Bod Pod body composition analysis systems.

With such experiences complementing rigorous classroom instruction, Marieb College maintains 100% graduate employment rate within six months of degree completion.

But Marieb College's educational innovation doesn't stop there.

The "Nursing Escape Room" at FGCU was designed to reinforce nursing fundamentals in an adrenaline-fueled setting. Picture a hospital room transformed into a labyrinth of clues and puzzles, where students race against the clock to diagnose a simulated patient's condition.

In this high-stakes game, every decision matters. Guided by faculty, teams of nursing students embark on a quest to unravel the mystery of "Mr. Jones," a lifelike human patient simulator. With each clue discovered and problem solved, they inch closer to the correct diagnosis, reinforcing classroom learning along the way.

In the safe confines of simulation, students are empowered to make errors and learn from them, ensuring they're better prepared for the realities of patient care. These simulations not only sharpen clinical skills but also instill confidence and resilience

in Southwest Florida's future healthcare professionals. All of this contributes to FGCU's ranking among the top-10 registered nursing education programs in Florida.

But the Nursing Escape Room isn't just about solving puzzles. It's about fostering teamwork, communication and critical thinking skills essential for success in the field. In an era where healthcare delivery is increasingly team-based, students are encouraged to work alongside peers from diverse backgrounds, gaining invaluable insights into the interconnected nature of modern healthcare systems.



Marieb College fosters such collaboration and interdisciplinary learning through its innovative approach to education. With cutting-edge tools like hologram technology and immersive simulation, graduates of the college's seven bachelor's and 12 graduate programs are poised to embark on a transformative journey toward becoming the next generation of healthcare leaders.

Compassion. Skill. Discipline. Critical thinking. Professionalism. The healing professions require all in equal degrees. Marieb College creates well-rounded, 360-degree practitioners through hands-on learning, intensive clinical experience and personalized attention.

For more information about Marieb College's programs, go to [fgcu.edu/mariebcollege](http://fgcu.edu/mariebcollege).



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# GUARDING YOUR VISION: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO DIABETIC EYE CARE

**D**iabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide. While managing blood sugar levels is a top priority, it's crucial to recognize that diabetes can also have a significant impact on your eye health. Diabetic eye care is a vital aspect of overall diabetes management, and in this article, we will explore the key aspects of safeguarding your vision.

## Diabetic Retinopathy: A Growing Concern

Diabetic retinopathy is a common eye condition among people with diabetes. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels in the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This can lead to vision problems and even blindness if left untreated. Regular eye examinations are the first line of defense against diabetic retinopathy. The American Diabetes Association recommends annual eye check-ups for people with diabetes to catch any signs of retinopathy early.

## Lifestyle Choices and Blood Sugar Control

Maintaining stable blood sugar levels is essential in preventing and managing diabetic eye complications. Healthy lifestyle choices play a crucial role in this aspect. A balanced diet, regular exercise, and proper medication management are all essential in controlling diabetes. By adhering to your healthcare provider's recommendations, you can significantly reduce the risk of eye complications.

## The Importance of Regular Eye Exams

Regular eye examinations are the cornerstone of diabetic eye care. These exams can detect diabetic retinopathy and other eye conditions early, allowing for prompt treatment. If you have diabetes, don't skip your annual eye check-ups, even if your vision seems perfectly fine. Early detection and intervention can prevent further vision loss.

## Medication and Treatment Options

If diabetic retinopathy is detected, there are various treatment options available, depending on the severity of the condition. These may include laser therapy, anti-VEGF injections, or surgery. Your eye doctor will determine the most suitable treatment based on your specific situation. It's crucial to follow through with the recommended treatment plan and attend all follow-up appointments.

## Blood Pressure Management

High blood pressure is often a companion to diabetes and can exacerbate diabetic eye complications. Controlling your blood pressure through medication and lifestyle changes is crucial in preserving your vision. Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider can help you manage both your blood sugar and blood pressure effectively.

## Protecting Your Eyes Daily

Aside from medical interventions, there are everyday steps you can take to protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses with UV protection to shield your eyes from harmful sun exposure. Manage your blood sugar levels consistently to reduce the risk of diabetic eye issues. Additionally, it's essential to quit smoking if you're a smoker, as smoking can worsen eye problems associated with diabetes.

## Dietary Choices for Eye Health

A diet rich in certain nutrients can benefit your eye health. Antioxidants, such as vitamin C and E, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids, can support your retinal health. Incorporate foods like leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, and fish into your diet to promote healthier eyes. Always consult with a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian for personalized dietary advice.

## Technology and Advancements

The field of diabetic eye care has seen significant advancements in recent years. Digital retinal imaging is making it easier for individuals to receive eye care. Technology and available pharmaceuticals are improving every year for these patients.

## The Bottom Line

Diabetic eye care is a crucial aspect of managing diabetes and preserving your vision. By maintaining stable blood sugar levels, attending regular eye exams, and following your healthcare provider's recommendations, you can reduce the risk of diabetic retinopathy and other eye complications. Remember that your eyes are precious, and with the right approach, you can protect your vision and enjoy a higher quality of life, even while managing diabetes.



**Len Brown, O.D.**  
Optometric Physician

Dr. Len Brown is a board-certified optometric physician who has been practicing in Southwest Florida for over 40 years, providing unsurpassed eye care to patients in Lee and Collier counties. At Center For Sight, he offers primary eye care services including vision testing, contact lens fittings, eyewear prescriptions, pre and post-operative eye care and the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders.

Dr. Brown earned his Doctor of Optometry degree at Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee. He is currently a member and past President of the Southwest Florida Optometric Association, Logistics Chairman for the SECO International Education Committee of the Southern Council of Optometrists, and previous Examiner for the Florida State Board of Optometry.

Within his local community, Dr. Brown is a member and past President of the Rotary Club of Cape Coral, has served as the chairman of the Caloosa District of the Southwest Florida Council of the Boy Scouts of America. His interests include boating, flying, motorcycling and drag racing.

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# MEMORY MATTERS

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

**N**ovember is Alzheimer's Awareness month and national family caregiver's month. Family caregivers play a critical role in providing support, physical and emotional care for those living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. The majority of individuals who have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia live at home.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are over 6.9 million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease. That is about the size of the total population of the state of Indiana.

That number projected to increase to 13 million by the year 2050. In the state of Florida, it is estimated that the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease is around 580,000. Alzheimer's disease does discriminate, with women and individuals of color having a higher risk:

- Approximately 2/3 of individuals with Alzheimer's are women
- Black Americans are about twice as likely as White Americans to have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia
- Hispanic individuals are one and a half times more likely to have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia

As mentioned previously, the vast majority of those providing care and support for those with Alzheimer's disease are family members, friends and neighbors. Anyone who has ever been a caregiver understands that while caregiving can be rewarding, it can also be challenging.

Caregiving can lead to stress and burnout. Caregiving, particularly for those caring for individuals with cognitive impairment can be especially stressful. The Alzheimer's Association lists signs to watch out for if you are a caregiver:

**Denial** about the disease and its effects on the person who has been diagnosed. "I know my wife is going to get better."

**Anger** at the person with Alzheimer's and/or frustration that he or she can't do the things they used to be able to do. "He knows how to get dressed, he is just being stubborn."



**Social withdrawal** from friends and activities that used to make you feel good. "I don't care about visiting with the neighbors anymore."

**Anxiety** about the future and facing another day, "What happens if he needs more care than I can provide?"

**Depression** that breaks your spirit and affects your ability to cope. "I just don't care anymore."

**Exhaustion** that makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks. "I am too tired for this."

**Sleeplessness** caused by a never ending list of concerns. "What if she wanders out of the house or falls and hurts herself?"

**Irritability** that leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and actions. "Just leave me alone!"

**Lack of concentration** that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks. "I was so busy, I forgot my appointment."

**Health problems** that begin to take a mental and physical toll. "I can't remember the last time I felt good."

According to the NIH, caregivers report lower levels of physical activity, poorer nutrition and sleep. In addition, sleep disturbances, as well as heart disease, anxiety, depression and challenges with memory and paying attention have all been reported in research.

What do caregivers need? They need to know what resources are available. Caregivers need emotional support and hands on assistance with caregiving. They need to be acknowledged and appreciated for their role in caregiving. They need time for self-care and breaks from their caregiving responsibilities.

Here are some tips from the NIH for caregivers:

- Do your best to get organized, make notes, keep important caregiving information in one place, and create a daily routine
- Accept help. Many times, caregivers hear "let me know if I can help" or "call me if you need anything". Create a list of things that you can let others do for you. If they ask, you will have your list ready. Things like picking up prescriptions groceries, helping with household tasks, spending time with your loved one when you run errands may be places to start. Create a running list of things that if you did not have to do, would make your life easier. Let others help!
- Follow up on your own health needs with your primary care provider
- Consider joining a support group to connect with others in your situation. Groups can provide solutions, support and a sense of community
- Do the best you can to eat healthy and get in some moderate exercise
- Take a break to do something you enjoy. Call a friend, read a book, sit outside to enjoy nature, keep up with a fun hobby. Invest in yourself

Most importantly, give yourself grace and forgiveness. You are doing the best you can. Know that your efforts are appreciated.

If you are concerned about your memory, connect with the experienced team at the Neuropsychiatric Research center at 239-939-7777. We have a proven track record of helping individuals and families navigate memory related challenges. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. #MemoriesMatter.

References:  
Alzheimer's Facts and Figures Report | Alzheimer's Association  
Caregiving | National Institute on Aging (nih.gov)



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November 2	10:00 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions	2161 McGregor Blvd STE C, Ft Myers
November 7	4:30 PM	Perkins	103620 N Cleveland Ave, NFM
November 9	4:30 PM	Logical Insurance Solutions	2161 McGregor Blvd STE C, Ft Myers
November 12	10:00 AM	Pinchers Crab Shack	2360 W First St, Fort Myers, FL
November 14	4:30 PM	Perkins	103620 N Cleveland Ave, NFM
November 19	9:00 AM	Alliance of the Arts	10091 McGregor Ave, Ft Myers, FL
November 23	10:00 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions	2161 McGregor Blvd STE C, Ft Myers

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# UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY: Advanced Diagnostic Testing at Your Doorstep

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS

**P**eripheral neuropathy affects millions of Americans, causing numbness, tingling, and pain that can significantly impact quality of life. Accurate diagnosis is crucial for effective treatment, and two sophisticated tests - Nerve Conduction Studies (NCS) and Electromyography (EMG) - have become the gold standard in identifying and evaluating nerve disorders. Edge Diagnostics is revolutionizing access to these essential diagnostic tools by bringing them directly to patients and clinics.

## The Science Behind Nerve Testing

Peripheral neuropathy can be challenging to diagnose without objective testing. EMG/NCS testing combines two complementary procedures that provide detailed information about nerve and muscle function. This comprehensive approach helps healthcare providers develop targeted treatment plans based on precise diagnostic data.

## Nerve Conduction Studies (NCS)

NCS evaluates how well electrical signals travel through your nerves. During this test, mild electrical stimulation is applied to specific points on the skin above the nerve being tested. Electrodes placed on the skin's surface measure how quickly and strongly these signals travel along the nerve pathway. This information is crucial for:

- Identifying nerve compression or damage
- Determining the location of nerve dysfunction
- Assessing the severity of nerve damage
- Distinguishing between different types of neuropathy
- Monitoring treatment effectiveness

## Electromyography (EMG)

The EMG portion of the testing uses a thin, sterile pin electrode to measure electrical activity within the muscles. This provides vital information about:

- Muscle response to nerve stimulation
- Muscle health and function
- Evidence of nerve root compression
- Signs of neuromuscular disorders
- Patterns of muscle activation and recruitment

## Common Conditions Diagnosed

EMG/NCS testing is valuable in diagnosing numerous conditions, including:



- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Diabetic Neuropathy
- Radiculopathy (pinched nerves)
- Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP)
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Peripheral Nerve Injuries

## The Edge Diagnostics Difference

What sets Edge Diagnostics apart is their commitment to making these sophisticated tests accessible while maintaining the highest standards of care. Their mobile diagnostic services offer several key advantages:

- 1. Convenience:** Testing is performed at your location, eliminating the need for travel to specialized facilities
- 2. Rapid Results:** Comprehensive reports are delivered within 24 hours/next business day
- 3. Professional Expertise:** Experienced technicians perform all tests using state-of-the-art equipment
- 4. Seamless Integration:** Direct coordination with your healthcare providers ensures continuity of care
- 5. Flexible Scheduling:** Appointments are arranged to accommodate patient and clinic schedules

## The Testing Process

Patients can expect a professional and comfortable experience during their EMG/NCS testing. The entire procedure typically takes 45 minutes -1 hour and is performed in familiar surroundings - either at their regular clinic or in their home. While some mild discomfort may be experienced during the testing, most patients find it very tolerable.

## Preparing for the Test

To ensure optimal results, patients should:

- Avoid using lotions or oils on the day of testing
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing
- Continue taking prescribed medications as normal
- Inform the technician about any medical devices or implants

## The Impact on Treatment

Early and accurate diagnosis of peripheral neuropathy is crucial for optimal treatment outcomes. The detailed information provided by EMG/NCS testing helps healthcare providers:

- Develop targeted treatment plans
- Monitor disease progression
- Adjust interventions based on objective data/medications
- Improve patient outcomes
- Make informed decisions about surgical interventions when necessary

## Insurance and Accessibility

Edge Diagnostics works with most major insurance providers and handles all billing procedures directly. This streamlined approach ensures that patients can focus on their health while minimizing administrative burden. Their team can verify insurance coverage prior to testing and discuss any potential out-of-pocket expenses.

Physical therapists are now qualified to perform these tests after completing the required board certification and fellowship.

## Looking Forward

As healthcare continues to evolve toward more patient-centered models, Edge Diagnostics represents the future of diagnostic testing - bringing sophisticated medical procedures directly to patients while maintaining the highest standards of care. Their commitment to providing timely, accurate results helps healthcare providers make informed decisions and deliver optimal patient care. For more information about EMG/NCS testing or to schedule an evaluation, contact Edge Diagnostics. Their team of professionals is ready to bring these essential diagnostic services to your location, making advanced nerve testing more accessible than ever.



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# Diabetic Wound Care:

## Harnessing the Power of Amniotic Membrane Technology

The management of diabetic wounds remains one of the most challenging aspects of modern healthcare, with complications potentially leading to severe outcomes including amputation. However, innovative treatments like amniotic membrane therapy from RxWound are revolutionizing the approach to diabetic wound care, offering new hope for patients struggling with chronic wounds.

### Understanding the Power of Amniotic Membrane Technology

Amniotic membrane grafts represent a groundbreaking advancement in wound care treatment. Derived from the innermost layer of human placenta, these grafts are ethically sourced from planned cesarean section donations, ensuring both moral integrity and clinical excellence. The procurement process involves rigorous screening and testing for communicable diseases, maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality.

The impressive 95% success rate of patients attaining full wound closure within a six-week period, along with a minimal risk of negative side effects, establishes amniotic membrane therapy as a transformative advancement in wound care. This natural approach not only accelerates healing but also aligns with sustainable medical practices, making it an ideal choice for advanced wound management.

### The Five Pillars of Healing Process

Amniotic membrane technology works through five fundamental mechanisms that synergistically promote optimal wound healing:

**1. Reduced Inflammation:** The membrane's natural anti-inflammatory properties help control excessive inflammation, which is particularly crucial for diabetic patients who often experience prolonged inflammatory responses. This regulation creates an optimal environment for healing to begin.

**2. Powerful Antibacterial Properties:** The inherent antibacterial characteristics of amniotic membrane provide a natural defense against pathogens, reducing the risk of infection without relying solely on conventional antibiotics. This is especially valuable given the rising concerns about antibiotic resistance.



**3. Enhanced Tissue Growth Support:** Rich in growth factors and essential proteins, the membrane actively promotes tissue regeneration and cellular proliferation. This support is vital for diabetic wounds, which typically struggle with delayed healing due to compromised cellular function.

**4. Creation of Optimal Wound Healing Environment:** The membrane maintains ideal moisture levels and provides necessary nutrients, creating a perfectly balanced environment for wound healing. This microenvironment supports cellular migration and proliferation, essential components of the healing process.

**5. Effective Biological Barrier:** Acting as a natural protective shield, the membrane creates a physical barrier against external contaminants while maintaining the wound's optimal healing environment. This dual-action protection is crucial for preventing complications in diabetic wounds.

### Clinical Impact and Future Implications

The implementation of RxWound's extensive array of amniotic membrane solutions marks a significant advancement in diabetic wound care. Traditional treatments often struggle with the complexity of diabetic wounds, but this innovative approach addresses multiple aspects of wound healing simultaneously. The therapy's success rate demonstrates its potential to reduce healing time, decrease the risk of complications, and improve patient outcomes.

Healthcare providers report that patients receiving amniotic treatment experience faster healing rates and reduced complications compared to conventional treatments. The therapy's natural composition and lack of adverse effects make it an attractive option for patients who may be sensitive to synthetic treatments or those with compromised immune systems.

The sustainable and ethical sourcing of amniotic membranes, combined with their remarkable healing properties, positions RxWound as a leader in modern wound care solutions. As the medical community continues to seek effective treatments for diabetic wounds, the role of amniotic membrane therapy grows increasingly significant, offering hope for improved outcomes in this challenging aspect of healthcare.

### About RxWound

Founded in 2015, RxWound is a team of dedicated wound care professionals serving seniors with advanced care solutions across all 50 states.

The company mission is to improve the outcomes of wound healing and elevate the quality of life for each patient, while respecting the precious gift of donated human tissue. It is dedicated to upholding standards of excellence, integrity, and compassion, with the goal of setting new standards in care and promoting a healthier, more vibrant future.

RxWound looks forward to serving you and making a positive difference in your healthcare journey.

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# TIS' THE SEASON FOR GIFTING

Often times it may not feel like the holiday season with Florida's toasty temperatures, but don't be fooled. The holidays are here! There's an undeniable sense of anticipation in the air, as many of us are looking forward to reconnecting with friends and family.

With Christmas 2024 just around the corner, the age-old tradition of exchanging gifts and spreading joy takes center stage. This year, however, there's a growing trend that savvy shoppers are embracing – the art of shopping early. Beyond the twinkling lights and bustling holiday markets, the wisdom of starting your Christmas shopping ahead of time becomes evident. As we navigate through a world of ever-changing dynamics, early holiday shopping not only ensures access to the finest gifts but also offers a respite from the last-minute chaos, allowing for a more thoughtful and enjoyable celebration.



## 2024 Gifting Trends

It seems many friends and family have been under a lot of stress from the recent hurricanes, the election season and the economy. So this year, give something they can really use that is around improving wellness and mindfulness. Think self care, aromatherapy, meditation, journaling and even fitness. The great thing about wellness gifts is that they are perfect for people of all ages and enjoyed by both men and women alike.

Young children will enjoy a set of fizzy bath bombs. Your best friend will appreciate a carefully curated bath set. You can't go wrong with an aromatic collection of soaps or essential oils for a coworker. And, your significant other will love a set of comfy pajamas or muscle massagers for after a workout at the gym.



## Avoid the Sweets & Drinks

Traditionally, alcohol and sweets such as chocolate and cookies, have been the "go to" gifts for clients and family members. They're easy to give, but often times they're eaten and forgotten. Or, they're simply trashed when New Year's Day rolls around, and people are purging their kitchens of all the calorie-laden gift sets. Let's face it, many of us have put on some "lb's", so do everyone a favor and skip the sweets and choose health & wellness options.

## Give Experiences

Another gift idea that is on trend for 2024 is experiential gifts. This could be a trip to the spa for a relaxing massage, a facial with your local esthetician, a sunset boat cruise or an art class. Experiential gifts are memorable, and they're perfect for the person in your life who already has one of everything.

## Shop Local

Although it's tempting to knock-out your list by simply shopping online, consider visiting the locally-owned stores in your community. Many small



businesses and restaurants have struggled the past few years. By shopping local, you'll find truly unique gifts with a delightful shopping experience that you can't get online. Plus, you'll be supporting the fabric and diversity of your community by helping to keep local shops in business.



*Skip the holiday hustle this year. Make your list. Check it twice. And get your holiday shopping done!*



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# Beyond the Bottom Line: Crafting an Estate Plan That Truly Protects Your Family

By Carl Zacharia

**A**s an estate planning lawyer in Florida, I've seen firsthand how easy it is for people to get caught up in the numbers game when planning their legacy. While minimizing taxes and maximizing asset values are important, they shouldn't be the driving force behind your estate plan. The heart of estate planning lies in something far more precious: your family's well-being and future.

## Shifting the Focus: From Dollars to Dreams

When you sit down to plan your estate, it is important to take a moment to look beyond the balance sheets. You will want to ask yourself: What kind of impact do I want my legacy to have on my loved ones' lives? How can I use my estate to support their dreams, address their challenges, and help them grow?

This shift in perspective can transform your estate plan from a mere financial transaction into a powerful tool for family care and personal growth. Let's explore some key considerations that often get overlooked in the rush to crunch numbers.

## Understanding Your Heirs: The Human Element

Every family is unique, and so are the individuals within it. As you plan your estate, consider the specific circumstances, strengths, and challenges of each potential heir:

1. **Financial Literacy:** How equipped are your children to handle a significant inheritance? Do they need guidance or education in financial management?
2. **Career and Life Goals:** Could your estate plan help support a child's entrepreneurial dreams or fund further education?
3. **Personal Challenges:** Are there ongoing issues like addiction, mental health concerns, or chronic illness that need to be factored into your plan?
4. **Relationship Dynamics:** How might an inheritance affect marriages, sibling relationships, or family harmony?
5. **Values and Responsibilities:** How can your estate plan reinforce the values you hope to pass on to the next generation?

By taking these factors into account, you can craft a plan that not only distributes your assets but also supports your heirs' personal growth and well-being.

## When Inheritance Meets Real-Life Challenges

It's a hard truth to face, but sometimes a large inheritance can do more harm than good. Consider these scenarios:

- A child struggling with addiction suddenly has access to funds that could fuel their habit.

- An heir with poor financial management skills quickly burns through their inheritance, leaving nothing for the future.
- A substantial inheritance creates tension in a marriage or between siblings, leading to family conflict.
- A beneficiary becomes demotivated, abandoning career aspirations or personal growth in favor of living off their inheritance.

These situations underscore why it's crucial to look beyond the numbers and consider the human impact of your estate plan.

## Tailoring Your Plan: Tools and Strategies

Fortunately, estate planning offers a variety of tools to address these complex family dynamics:

1. **Trusts with Specific Provisions:** Instead of outright distributions, consider setting up trusts with provisions that align with your family's needs. For example:
  - Incentive trusts that reward educational achievements or career milestones
  - Spendthrift trusts to protect assets from creditors or imprudent spending
  - Substance abuse trusts that make distributions contingent on maintaining sobriety
2. **Staggered Distributions:** Rather than a lump sum, structure inheritances to be distributed over time or at certain age milestones.
3. **Education and Support Trusts:** Earmark funds specifically for education, healthcare, or other supportive purposes.
4. **Professional Management:** Consider appointing a professional trustee to manage complex family dynamics or significant assets.
5. **Family Governance Structures:** For larger estates, family governance models can help prepare heirs for their inheritance and foster collaborative decision-making.
6. **Charitable Giving Strategies:** Involve your heirs in philanthropic efforts to instill values of generosity and social responsibility.

## The Importance of Communication

Perhaps the most crucial element in family-focused estate planning is open communication. Discussing your plans, values, and concerns with your heirs can:

- Prevent misunderstandings and potential conflicts after you're gone
- Provide an opportunity to address any concerns or questions your heirs might have

- Help prepare your beneficiaries for their future responsibilities
- Strengthen family bonds and shared values

While these conversations can be challenging, they're invaluable in ensuring your estate plan truly serves its intended purpose.

## A Lasting Legacy of Care

Remember, a well-crafted estate plan is about more than just efficiently transferring assets. It's about extending your love and care for your family beyond your lifetime. By focusing on the human element of estate planning, you can create a legacy that not only provides financial support but also nurtures personal growth, reinforces family values, and helps your loved ones navigate life's challenges.

Your legacy isn't just about what you leave behind; it's about the positive impact that you can continue to have on your family's future. Working together with an experienced estate planning and elder law attorney at Zacharia Brown will allow you to craft an estate plan that reflects your deepest values and supports your family's well-being for generations to come.

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# Hormones and Depression

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

**Y**our hormones play an essential role in regulating many bodily functions, such as development, metabolism, and reproduction, but their influence can also extend to your mood. However, since hormones help to keep your mood regulated, an imbalance in hormones can negatively impact your mood, potentially causing symptoms of depression.

If hormones are the cause of your depression, finding the underlying cause of your hormonal imbalance, addressing it, and returning your hormone levels to their ideal range may help relieve your depressive symptoms.

## Symptoms of Depression

Depression is a mental illness that affects the way you think, how you feel, and how you act. It is most commonly associated with feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in the activities that once brought you joy. If left untreated, depression can affect your work and personal life while also leading to physical and emotional problems.

Depression can present differently in everyone, and what one person may experience often differs from what another does. That being said, the following are some possible symptoms of depression:

- irritability
- persistent feelings of anxiousness or sadness
- difficulty sleeping
- frustration or restlessness
- loss of interest in hobbies or usual activities
- feeling pessimistic or hopeless
- appetite changes
- difficulty focusing
- fatigue or lack of energy
- physical aches and pains
- suicidal thoughts

As you can see, depression is not an entirely mental dilemma; it can manifest with physical concerns.

There are many potential causes of depression, including medical conditions (e.g., a brain tumor, vitamin deficiency, thyroid problems) or personal circumstances (e.g., a death in the family). In some cases, depression may even result from imbalanced hormones.

## Imbalanced Hormones

If there is one thing that your body prioritizes, it is balance. It requires balance in order to function correctly, and if there is a problem in your body, it can often be tied back to imbalance, such as an imbalance in your bacterial microbiomes, immune cells, or even hormone levels.

Some factors that commonly affect hormone levels include birth control, menopause, or pregnancy. When these conditions alter your hormone levels, they can also affect certain neurotransmitters responsible for your mood.

Not just women have to worry about hormonal imbalance, though. A drop in testosterone, which is present and used by those of both genders, although notably more prominent in males, can affect your mood and cause symptoms such as:

- increased anxiety
- depression
- low sex drive
- increased irritability
- reduced energy levels

In short, both genders can be susceptible to hormone troubles and changes in mood.

## Causes of Hormonal Depression

Aptly named, depression that results from hormonal imbalances is called hormonal depression. Let's explore some hormonal imbalances, their causes, and how they can lead to depression.

## Low Testosterone

While both males and females use testosterone, the effects of low testosterone can be more dramatic in males since their body requires significantly more testosterone.

Those with low testosterone may experience erectile dysfunction, reduced lean muscle mass, low sex drive, fatigue, irritability, and loss of body or facial hair. In some individuals, depression may develop, although researchers are less sure if it is because of low testosterone or because of the symptoms of low testosterone. Nevertheless, those of both genders show connections between low testosterone levels and depression.

Some potential causes of low testosterone include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, injury to or removal of testicles, diseases affecting the pituitary gland, certain infections, obesity, autoimmune diseases, and metabolic syndrome.

Coincidentally, certain medications, such as antidepressants, can also cause low testosterone, which can then cause depressive symptoms. In this case, the individual would end up in a cycle of low testosterone and depression.

In addition to the above potential causes, yet another common cause of low testosterone is aging, with testosterone production declining as we get older.

While women produce less testosterone than males, they can still experience the effect of its imbalance, with possible symptoms such as lack of motivation, lowered mood, tiredness, and loss of sex drive.

Unfortunately, since women produce lower testosterone levels, it can be harder to diagnose low testosterone. However, a doctor may look into it if you have had ovaries removed, lost your menstrual period, experience adrenal insufficiency, or are on oral estrogen therapy.

For those of both genders, reaching out to your doctor if you experience any symptoms of low testosterone is a crucial first step for determining its cause and restoring balance to this essential hormone.

## Menopause

Menopause is a time in a woman's life characterized by a dramatic drop in the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. This decline can trigger mood changes and may cause some women transitioning into menopause to experience episodes of depression.

## Other symptoms of menopause include:

- hot flashes
- sleep problems
- irregular periods
- vaginal dryness
- weight gain



Of note, menopause can cause sleep problems, and a difficulty with sleeping can also increase the risk of someone experiencing depression by ten times.

Those with a history of depression may also be more likely to experience depression during menopause.

### **Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)**

PMDD is a more severe version of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) with symptoms that include:

- severe anxiety or depression
- tension
- severe anger or irritability
- difficulty focusing
- mood changes
- panic attacks
- difficulty sleeping
- fatigue
- binge eating or food cravings

Those with PMDD may notice these symptoms appear 1 to 2 weeks before their period starts, which is around the time that hormone levels drop.

Those with PMDD are often more sensitive to hormonal changes that occur throughout the menstrual cycle, including a change in serotonin levels, which can contribute to episodes of depression. Those with depression due to PMDD often notice an improvement in their symptoms once their cycle progresses and hormone levels even out again.

### **Postpartum Depression**

Throughout pregnancy, the body increases its production of allopregnanolone, which is a steroid produced by the brain when progesterone is broken down. Up to the third trimester, allopregnanolone levels steadily increase, but after childbirth, these levels quickly decline. Research suggests that this quick change in allopregnanolone levels can significantly contribute to postpartum depression, or depression that develops after giving birth.

Allopregnanolone levels usually increase a few days after giving birth, but for those experiencing postpartum depression, these levels do not rise.

Yet another link between hormones and depression has to do with GABA receptors in the brain, which play a role in many mental health conditions. When hormone and allopregnanolone levels change during pregnancy, they may affect the functionality of the GABA receptors, potentially contributing to depression.



### **Hormonal Contraceptives**

In some people, hormonal contraceptives may cause depressive episodes or contribute to their severity, according to a 2022 research article, but the influence of the contraceptive depends upon the amount and type of progesterone contained within.

Both estrogen and progesterone are hormones that affect the nervous system, brain function, and certain neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin. These two neurotransmitters influence your mood, and when they are low, depression can occur.

Research has shown that estrogen may help to protect against mood disorders, but progesterone may have the opposite effect by lowering serotonin levels. Since oral contraceptives often contain progesterone, they may cause a decline in serotonin levels and lead to mood changes and depression.

### **Thyroid Problems**

While thyroid disorders may not cause depression, research has shown that they may have symptoms that are similar to depression.

There is also a moderate link between overt hypothyroidism and clinical depression in females, likely due to the decline of thyroid hormones in the body and its more significant influence on the female body.

### **Treating Hormonal Depression**

When it comes to treating hormonal depression, the best course of action is generally to treat the hormonal imbalance, with the best method depending on the underlying cause.

Your doctor will first need to check hormone levels through a blood test and match the results with your physical symptoms to help determine the cause of your depression. Once they know the reason for your imbalanced hormones, they can then work on treating it.

### **Some possible treatments for hormonal imbalance include:**

- hormone replacement therapy
- antidepressants, if HRT is not suitable
- hormonal birth control for those with PMDD
- thyroid hormone replacement medications
- over-the-counter pain relievers for physical aches and pains
- testosterone therapy
- alternative contraceptive methods, such as nonhormonal contraception, lower dose progesterone options, or estrogen-based contraception
- lifestyle strategies (e.g., eating a balanced diet, exercising, practicing relaxation techniques)

### **Don't Ignore Hormonal Depression**

If you ever experience moments of sadness, hopelessness, or a general loss of interest in the activities you used to enjoy, check in with your doctor about treatment for depression. Your doctor can help you work out the cause of your depression and offer treatment options that help address it.

Some cases of depression result from hormonal imbalances, and the optimal way to manage these instances is by regulating your hormones. The best way to do this is by reaching out to a hormone specialist who looks at all aspects of your hormone health and physical symptoms. With this information, they can help you better understand what is going on internally and devise a plan to help keep your mental health high.

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# Revolutionizing Medical Treatment: Harnessing the Power of Umbilical Stem Cells with Biogenix

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

In the realm of regenerative medicine, the utilization of umbilical stem cells through Biogenix has emerged as a groundbreaking therapeutic approach. These remarkable cells have the potential to address a wide array of medical conditions, and their administration, either intravenously or by injection, is proving to be a game-changer in the field. In this article, we delve into the innovative use of umbilical stem cells via Biogenix for the treatment of various conditions, shedding light on the promises and possibilities of this cutting-edge medical breakthrough.

## Umbilical Stem Cells:

### Nature's Healing Powerhouses

Umbilical stem cells are an abundant source of undifferentiated cells found within the human body. These cells are renowned for their incredible versatility and ability to transform into a variety of cell types, making them a potential solution for numerous medical conditions. When harnessed through Biogenix, these stem cells are processed and administered to patients to stimulate the body's natural healing mechanisms.

## Intravenous Administration:

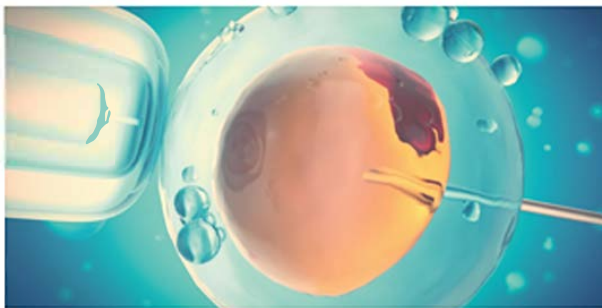
### A Systemic Approach to Healing

One of the key methods for delivering umbilical stem cells via Biogenix is intravenous administration. This method involves injecting stem cells directly into the patient's bloodstream. The systemic distribution of these cells allows them to reach various parts of the body, which is particularly beneficial for conditions with systemic or multiple organ involvement. This approach holds promise for conditions like autoimmune disorders and neurodegenerative diseases.

## Injection Delivery:

### Targeted Healing for Specific Conditions

In addition to intravenous administration, Biogenix offers the option of delivering umbilical stem cells through injections. This targeted approach is well-suited for conditions that require localized treatment. Whether it's joint pain, orthopedic injuries, or skin conditions, the precise injection of stem cells can offer a more direct and effective solution.



## The Biogenix Advantage:

### Quality and Safety

Biogenix, as a leader in the field of regenerative medicine, places a strong emphasis on the quality and safety of the umbilical stem cells they provide. These cells are meticulously screened and processed to meet the highest standards, ensuring that patients receive the best care possible. Moreover, Biogenix adheres to strict ethical guidelines, making sure that these cells are sourced responsibly.

## Conditions Treated with Umbilical Stem Cells

The potential applications of umbilical stem cells via Biogenix are vast and continue to expand as research progresses. Some of the conditions that have shown promise with this innovative approach include:

- 1. Orthopedic Injuries:** Stem cell injections can help repair damaged cartilage, ligaments, and tendons, providing relief to individuals suffering from conditions like osteoarthritis.
- 2. Autoimmune Disorders:** Intravenous administration of umbilical stem cells may help modulate the immune system and reduce inflammation in conditions such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis.
- 3. Neurodegenerative Diseases:** Stem cells have shown potential for slowing the progression of diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, offering hope to patients and their families.
- 4. Cardiovascular Diseases:** Umbilical stem cells may contribute to cardiac tissue regeneration and improved heart function in patients with heart disease.
- 5. Skin Conditions:** Stem cell injections are being explored as a treatment for various skin conditions, including scars and burns, with the aim of improving skin quality and appearance.

## The Future of Regenerative Medicine

The use of umbilical stem cells through Biogenix marks a significant step forward in regenerative medicine. As research continues to uncover new applications and refine treatment protocols, the possibilities for utilizing stem cells in healthcare are truly exciting.

In conclusion, the application of umbilical stem cells with Biogenix, whether through intravenous administration or injection, has the potential to transform the way we approach medical treatment. The regenerative power of these cells offers hope to countless individuals battling various conditions, and as science and technology progress, the future holds even more promise. With Biogenix leading the way, the healthcare landscape is on the cusp of a remarkable transformation that could redefine the boundaries of what is medically possible.

Dr. DeStefano, of Root Causes Holistic Health & Medicine in Ft Myers, FL, incorporates IV & Chelation therapy with hyperbaric chamber sessions to combat multiple chronic conditions and disease states.



## Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

Dr. Doreen DeStefano holds a doctorate in natural health, an MPA in public business, MS (ABT) in criminal psychology, and a BS in exercise physiology and nursing. She previously held an EMT certification. Dr. DeStefano has been practicing in natural health for over ten years. Her area of interest is healthy aging and prevention and resolution of chronic symptoms associated with aging. She believes that growing old should not mean breaking down.

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# Stress Management

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

**H**ave you ever felt overwhelmed? Are you feeling stressed out? The holidays can sometimes be quite stressful, whether it be making the house ready, making sure you have gotten all the presents for your loved ones/friends, but you might want to take some time for yourself too. In fact, the holidays are known to bring out all sorts of ailments and health problems, more than any time of year. The stress of the holidays is real and not something to be ignored and brushed under the rug. Stress Management is truly something we all have to deal with at one point or another. Not all stress is bad, but when you start to feel overwhelmed and feel a loss of control, that's when stress can wreak havoc in your life.

The first part in managing your stress is to identify the stressor, for example-whether it be certain negative people, going through a divorce, being told of a new diagnosis or fear of losing your job. Whatever that stressor is, it's important to identify it, talk it over with a close friend/relative or perhaps write it in a stress journal. It is crucial to not keep the feelings/emotions bottled up because that in itself is truly, I believe the heart of many health problems. Stress has been linked to heart disease, depression/mental illnesses, inflammatory conditions (ie arthritis, autoimmune illnesses, etc) and even some forms of cancer.

The second part of stress management is coming up with a plan or solution to dealing with the problem that is creating the stress/turmoil in your life. This is where taking a step back for a moment can often help. Sometimes, taking a deep breath and talking out loud is all that may be needed. I also believe it is extremely important to have outlets or hobbies in your life. Some people find getting up early and meditating is a way to relax and recharge your mind. Others may find playing an instrument, listening to a Ted talk, gardening or reading a book keeps them relaxed and content. The point is, you have to find some activity that makes you happy and feel relaxed. This in itself, helps you think of the solution as a third party and coming up with a new perspective on the problem/situation creating the stress in your life.



*I think it is important to have general lifestyle principles and routines embedded in your life such as the 5 steps below:*

1. It is important to stay positive and surround yourself with people that will bring positivity in your life as well.
2. Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet also helps with keeping the stress levels manageable.
3. Staying well hydrated and avoiding excessive consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages also help you manage your stress.
4. Learn also how to say "no" to unnecessary requests. You need to know your limits and stick to them. It is important to know the difference between the "shoulds" and the "musts" and when needed to say "no" to taking on too much, whether

it be in your personal or professional life. Taking on too much is indeed a recipe for disaster and the root of stress for most people.

5. Lastly, getting enough sleep is also vital to stress management. Most of us are not getting the recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night.

In the end, it is always important to ask oneself, "Is this going to make a difference in the grand scheme of things?" "Is it really worth getting upset over?"

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# NeuroStar® TMS

## A BREAKTHROUGH IN DEPRESSION TREATMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS & ADULTS

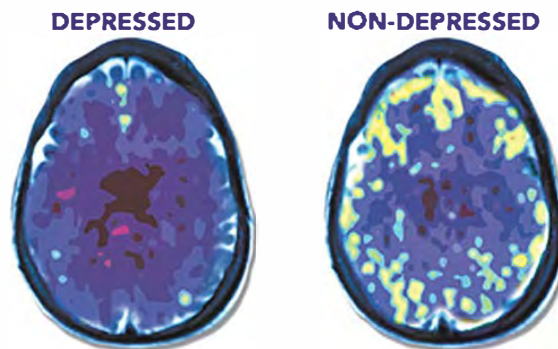
In a significant development for mental health treatment, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has expanded the approval of NeuroStar Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) therapy to include patients aged 15 and up for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD). This groundbreaking decision marks a crucial step forward in addressing the growing concern of adolescent depression while continuing to provide effective treatment options for adults.

NeuroStar TMS, developed by Neuronetics, Inc., is a non-invasive treatment that uses magnetic fields to stimulate specific areas of the brain associated with mood regulation. The therapy has been FDA-approved for adult depression since 2008, but this recent expansion to include younger patients opens up new possibilities for treating depression in adolescents who may not have responded well to traditional treatments.

The decision to extend the approval to patients as young as 15 comes after rigorous clinical trials demonstrated the safety and efficacy of NeuroStar TMS in adolescent populations. These studies showed promising results, with many young patients experiencing significant improvement in their depressive symptoms and overall quality of life.

Depression among teenagers has been on the rise in recent years, with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the issue. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 3.8 million adolescents aged 12-17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in 2021. The approval of NeuroStar TMS for this age group provides a much-needed alternative for those who have not found relief through traditional treatments such as psychotherapy and medication.

One of the key advantages of NeuroStar TMS is its non-invasive nature and relatively mild side effect profile compared to some pharmaceutical interventions. The treatment involves the patient sitting comfortably in a chair while a magnetic coil is placed against their head. The coil delivers magnetic pulses to stimulate nerve cells in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain



PET scan images show adult brain activity.  
Source: Mark George, MD, Biological Psychiatry Branch,  
Division of Intramural Research Programs, NIMH 1993.

involved in mood regulation. Each session typically lasts about 20-30 minutes, and a full course of treatment usually consists of 5 sessions per week for 4-6 weeks.

Parents and healthcare providers alike have expressed enthusiasm about this new option for adolescent depression treatment. Dr. Sarah Thompson, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, commented, "Having NeuroStar TMS available for our younger patients is a game-changer. It offers hope to those who haven't responded well to other treatments and can be a crucial tool in preventing the long-term impacts of untreated depression in adolescents."

The expansion of NeuroStar TMS to younger age groups also highlights the importance of early intervention in mental health treatment. Addressing depression in adolescence can potentially prevent more severe mental health issues in adulthood and improve overall life outcomes. By offering an effective treatment option earlier in life, healthcare providers can help set young patients on a path toward better mental health and well-being.

However, it's important to note that while NeuroStar TMS has shown promising results, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. The treatment is typically recommended for patients who have not achieved satisfactory improvement from antidepressant medications. As with any medical treatment, the decision to use NeuroStar TMS should be made in consultation with a qualified healthcare provider, taking into account the individual patient's medical history, symptoms, and overall treatment plan.

The approval of NeuroStar TMS for ages 15 and up also underscores the evolving landscape of mental health treatment. As our understanding of the brain and its functions continues to grow, new technologies and approaches are being developed to address mental health disorders more effectively. This progress offers hope to millions of people struggling with depression and other mental health conditions.

As the medical community continues to embrace innovative treatments like NeuroStar TMS, it's likely that we'll see further advancements in the field of mental health care. The expansion of this treatment to younger age groups is just one step in the ongoing effort to improve mental health outcomes for people of all ages.

In conclusion, the FDA's approval of NeuroStar TMS for patients aged 15 and up represents a significant milestone in the treatment of depression. By offering a non-invasive, effective option for both adolescents and adults, this therapy has the potential to transform lives and contribute to better mental health outcomes for millions of individuals struggling with depression. As research continues and technology advances, we can look forward to even more innovative and effective treatments in the future, bringing hope to those affected by mental health disorders.

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# REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LIFE WITH Emsella Chair

## A Solution to Incontinence

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Incontinence is a silent struggle faced by a third of the US population. This common condition, often stemming from causes like childbirth, weakened muscles, or the effects of aging, can disrupt daily life and self-confidence. Many of us have heard about kegel exercises as a solution, but how many actually commit to them? The Emsella Chair is here to change the game, offering the equivalent of 11,000 kegel exercises in a single session and a total of 66,000 exercises in a full 6-session treatment. If you've experienced the toll of childbirth or are starting to have those "close calls" when nature calls, it might be time to give your pelvic floor the workout it deserves.

Incontinence is not an issue to be taken lightly, as it can have a profound impact on one's quality of life. However, there is hope for those who have been struggling with this condition. The Emsella Chair is a revolutionary solution that is making waves in the world of pelvic health.

### Understanding the Causes

Childbirth, weakened muscles, and the natural aging process are some of the primary factors contributing to incontinence. Childbirth can weaken the pelvic floor muscles, making it challenging to maintain control over the bladder and causing leakage. Additionally, as we age, our muscles tend to lose their strength, including those in the pelvic region. This muscle weakening, combined with the impact of hormonal changes, can lead to incontinence issues. It's a common problem that many are hesitant to discuss, but it's essential to address it for a better quality of life.

### Kegel Exercises: Easier Said Than Done

Kegel exercises are often recommended as a way to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. However, despite their potential benefits, how many of us actually follow through with these exercises consistently? Life gets busy, and it's easy to forget or lose motivation. This is where the Emsella Chair comes in as a game-changer.

### Emsella Chair: The Ultimate Pelvic Workout

The Emsella Chair is a non-surgical, non-invasive treatment that can greatly improve incontinence.



Each 28-minute session is the equivalent of 11,200 pelvic floor exercises. The Emsella™ chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder sometimes as quickly as the first treatment

The full treatment, consisting of about six sessions, delivers an incredible 66,000 kegel exercises to your pelvic floor. This innovative technology is designed to strengthen your muscles, increase bladder control, and ultimately improve your quality of life.

### Who Can Benefit from Emsella?

Whether you've recently given birth and are experiencing postpartum incontinence, or you've started having those "close calls" when heading to the restroom, the Emsella Chair can be a game-changer for you. It's not just for women; men dealing with incontinence issues can also benefit from this non-invasive, FDA-approved treatment.

### The Future of Pelvic Health

Incontinence can be an isolating and embarrassing condition, but it's crucial to remember that you're not alone. The Emsella Chair is reshaping the way we address pelvic health issues, offering a more efficient and convenient solution than traditional exercises. You don't have to accept incontinence as an inevitable part of aging or motherhood. With the Emsella Chair, you can regain control, confidence, and, most importantly, your life.

In conclusion, the Emsella Chair is a groundbreaking solution that promises to change the lives of many who have been silently suffering from incontinence. Don't let this condition hold you back any longer;

longer; take charge of your pelvic health and experience the benefits of this innovative treatment. You'll thank yourself for making the choice to improve your quality of life and regain control over your bladder.



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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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# What is Rhinitis?

## An In-Depth Look at This Common Nasal Condition

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

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

### The Hallmark Symptoms

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

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

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

### Two Main Types

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

### Allergic Rhinitis: The Usual Culprit

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

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

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

### The Diagnostic Process

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

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

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

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

### Treating the Nuisance

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

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

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


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

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

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

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## CYPRESS WELLNESS PHARMACY

# A Vital Partner in Diabetes Care During American Diabetes Month and Beyond

By Justin Ceravolo, PharmD

**N**ovember marks American Diabetes Month, a time to raise awareness about a condition affecting millions of Americans. As we shine a spotlight on diabetes, it's crucial to recognize the pivotal role that local pharmacies play in supporting individuals living with this chronic condition. Your neighborhood pharmacy is more than just a place to pick up prescriptions; it's a valuable resource in managing diabetes effectively.

### Understanding Diabetes: A Growing Concern

Diabetes is a complex metabolic disorder characterized by high blood sugar levels. In the United States, over 37 million people have diabetes, with type 2 diabetes being the most common form. The condition can lead to serious health complications if not properly managed, including heart disease, kidney problems, and vision issues.

American Diabetes Month serves as a reminder of the ongoing battle against diabetes and the importance of education, prevention, and proper management. It's a time when healthcare providers, including pharmacists, intensify their efforts to support those affected by diabetes and raise awareness about the condition.

### Your Pharmacy: A Hub for Diabetes Care

Local pharmacies are uniquely positioned to provide comprehensive support for individuals with diabetes. Here's how your pharmacy can be an invaluable partner in your diabetes care:

#### 1. Medication Management

Pharmacists are experts in medication management. They can ensure you understand how to take your diabetes medications correctly, explain potential side effects, check for drug interactions, and help you establish a medication routine that fits your lifestyle.

#### 2. Blood Glucose Monitoring

Many pharmacies offer services related to blood glucose monitoring, including selling glucose meters and testing supplies, demonstrating their correct use, and helping interpret blood glucose readings and trends.

#### 3. Diabetes Education

Pharmacists can provide valuable education on various aspects of diabetes management, such as the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise, meal planning, and foot care.

#### 4. Vaccinations

People with diabetes are at higher risk for certain infections. Your pharmacy can administer important vaccinations, keep track of your vaccination history, and remind you when it's time for booster shots.

#### 5. Continuous Support and Monitoring

Pharmacies offer ongoing support for diabetes management, including regular medication reviews, blood pressure and cholesterol checks, weight management advice, and access to diabetes-friendly products.

#### 6. Liaison with Healthcare Providers

Your pharmacist can serve as a link between you and your healthcare team, communicating with your doctor about medication-related concerns and helping coordinate care among different healthcare providers.

#### 7. Diabetes-Specific Services

Many pharmacies now offer specialized diabetes care services, such as diabetes management classes, one-on-one consultations, access to diabetes educators or nutritionists, and foot screenings.

#### Taking Action This American Diabetes Month

As we observe American Diabetes Month, consider taking these steps to optimize your diabetes care:

- Schedule a medication review with your pharmacist
- Ask about diabetes education resources available at your pharmacy
- Get your flu shot and other recommended vaccinations
- Check if your pharmacy offers diabetes management classes or consultations
- Review your blood glucose monitoring technique with a pharmacist
- Discuss any concerns or questions you have about your diabetes management



Remember, your local pharmacy is not just a place to fill prescriptions – it's a comprehensive resource for diabetes care. The expert knowledge and support provided by pharmacists can make a significant difference in managing diabetes effectively and improving overall health outcomes.

This American Diabetes Month, take advantage of the resources available at your pharmacy. By working closely with your pharmacist and healthcare team, you can take control of your diabetes and lead a healthier, more fulfilling life. Your pharmacy is here to support you every step of the way in your diabetes care journey.

#### Justin Ceravolo, PharmD - Owner & Pharmacist

Justin Ceravolo, also known as J.T., earned his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Florida A&M University's College of Pharmacy in 2012. That same year, Justin began working in Florida's Panhandle before becoming a new member of the Cypress Wellness Pharmacy family in October of 2012. Cypress Wellness Pharmacy believes that each patient, whether he or she is a human or pet, should be given their own special attention and service. In 2024 Justin became the owner of Cypress Wellness Pharmacy and is committed to advancing the pharmacy's phenomenal reputation for personalized service with a focus on education and well-being for all patients and customers. Whether you need your medication in another compounded form or you simply need advice, Justin and his team will ensure fast and efficient service that goes above and beyond your average pharmacy.



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# CBD AND COPD: EXPLORING POTENTIAL BENEFITS

**C**hronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) affects millions worldwide, causing breathing difficulties and reducing quality of life. As researchers explore new treatment options, cannabidiol (CBD) has emerged as a compound of interest. While more studies are needed, early findings suggest CBD may offer some benefits for COPD patients.

### Anti-inflammatory Properties

One of the primary ways CBD may help COPD patients is through its anti-inflammatory effects. COPD is characterized by chronic inflammation in the airways, which contributes to breathing difficulties. CBD has demonstrated anti-inflammatory properties in various studies, potentially helping to reduce airway inflammation in COPD patients.

### Bronchodilation

Some research indicates that CBD may have bronchodilatory effects, meaning it could help open up the airways. This property could be particularly beneficial for COPD patients who struggle with airway constriction and difficulty breathing.

### Anxiety and Sleep Improvement

COPD often comes with comorbidities such as anxiety and sleep disturbances. CBD has shown promise in reducing anxiety and improving sleep quality in some studies. By addressing these associated issues, CBD might indirectly improve the overall well-being of COPD patients.



### Potential Antioxidant Effects

Oxidative stress plays a role in the progression of COPD. CBD has demonstrated antioxidant properties in some studies, which could potentially help combat oxidative damage in the lungs of COPD patients.

### Pain Management

Chronic pain is another common issue for COPD patients. CBD's potential analgesic properties might offer a non-opioid option for pain management, potentially improving comfort and mobility for some patients.

### Considerations and Cautions

While the potential benefits of CBD for COPD are intriguing, it's crucial to approach this topic with caution:

1. More research is needed to fully understand CBD's effects on COPD.
2. CBD can interact with other medications, so patients should consult their healthcare providers before use.

3. The quality and purity of CBD products vary widely, so careful product selection is essential.

4. CBD is not a replacement for prescribed COPD treatments but could potentially be considered as a complementary approach.

In conclusion, while CBD shows promise for potentially alleviating some COPD symptoms, more clinical research is needed to establish its efficacy and safety for this specific condition. Patients interested in exploring CBD as a complementary treatment should always consult with their healthcare team to make informed decisions about their COPD management plan. As research progresses, we may gain a clearer understanding of how CBD could be integrated into comprehensive COPD treatment strategies.

### About Hemp Joi

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

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

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

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# Revolutionary Weight Loss: THE FUTURE OF BODY TRANSFORMATION

In the ever-evolving world of weight loss and body sculpting, a groundbreaking program has emerged, combining cutting-edge pharmaceutical interventions with state-of-the-art technology. This innovative approach integrates GLP-1 receptor agonists like semaglutide and tirzepatide, 3D body scanning, and advanced light therapy to offer a comprehensive solution for those seeking to shed pounds and transform their physique.

## The Power of GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

At the heart of this revolutionary program are GLP-1 receptor agonists, specifically semaglutide and tirzepatide. These medications, originally developed for type 2 diabetes management, have shown remarkable efficacy in promoting weight loss.

Semaglutide, marketed under brand names like Wegovy for weight loss, works by mimicking a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1). This hormone plays a crucial role in regulating appetite and food intake. By activating GLP-1 receptors, semaglutide helps individuals feel fuller for longer periods, naturally reducing calorie intake.

Tirzepatide, a newer entry in this class of medications, goes a step further. It acts as a dual GIP (glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide) and GLP-1 receptor agonist. This dual-action approach not only suppresses appetite but also enhances metabolic function, potentially leading to even more significant weight loss results.

## Precision Tracking with 3D Body Scanning

To complement the pharmaceutical approach, this program incorporates cutting-edge 3D body scanning technology. This non-invasive imaging technique provides a detailed, three-dimensional representation of an individual's body composition.

The 3D scanner captures hundreds of measurements in just seconds, offering a level of precision that far surpasses traditional methods like calipers or tape measures. This technology allows participants to:

1. Visualize their progress in vivid detail
2. Track changes in body composition, including muscle mass and fat distribution
3. Set more precise, personalized goals based on their unique body structure

By providing such detailed insights, the 3D body scanner serves as a powerful motivational tool, helping individuals stay committed to their weight loss journey.



## The Magic of Light: Red Light Therapy and Invisa-RED

To further enhance body contouring and skin tightening, the program incorporates advanced light therapy techniques:

### Red Light Therapy

Red light therapy, also known as low-level laser therapy (LLLT), uses low-wavelength red light to treat various skin issues and promote overall skin health. In the context of weight loss, red light therapy offers several benefits:

1. Increased cellular energy production, potentially boosting metabolism
2. Reduced inflammation, which can aid in recovery from workouts
3. Improved circulation, enhancing the delivery of nutrients to skin cells

### Invisa-RED Technology

Invisa-RED takes light therapy to the next level. This non-invasive treatment combines multiple wavelengths of light with gentle electrical stimulation to:

1. Target and shrink fat cells
2. Tighten and tone skin
3. Reduce the appearance of cellulite

The Invisa-RED system is particularly effective for spot reduction and body contouring, helping to refine areas that may be resistant to diet and exercise alone.

## A Holistic Approach to Body Transformation

What sets this program apart is its comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to weight loss and body sculpting. By combining the appetite-suppressing

and metabolic effects of GLP-1 receptor agonists with the precise tracking of 3D body scanning and the toning benefits of light therapy, participants can achieve remarkable results.

The program doesn't just focus on weight loss; it's designed to reshape the body, improve skin texture, and boost overall confidence. Participants benefit from:

1. Significant and sustainable weight loss through medication-assisted appetite control
2. Precise progress tracking and goal-setting with 3D body scanning
3. Enhanced skin tightening and body contouring through advanced light therapies
4. A more comprehensive understanding of their body composition and how it changes over time

As with any medical intervention, it's crucial for individuals to consult with healthcare professionals before starting this program. The use of GLP-1 receptor agonists should be carefully monitored, and the entire regimen should be tailored to each participant's unique needs and health status.

In conclusion, this innovative weight loss program represents a paradigm shift in how we approach body transformation. By harnessing the power of cutting-edge pharmaceuticals, precise imaging technology, and advanced light therapies, it offers a holistic solution for those seeking not just to lose weight, but to comprehensively reshape their bodies and boost their confidence.

Call Simply U MedSpa today to find out how our clinically proven, doctor-prescribed weight-loss medication can help you. We can help you schedule an appointment or answer any questions you may have about the program.

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# 5 Ways Invisalign® Clear Aligners Can Improve Your Smile and Your Life

## INVISALIGN, ORTHODONTIC ADVICE

By Ricardo S. Bocanegra, D.D.S.

Invisalign® is a household name in the world of clear aligners, and there's a good reason for that. In fact, there are five good reasons!

### Can Improve Your Smile and Your Life

However, before we dive into the benefits of Invisalign® for kids, teens, and adults, it might be a good idea to give a general overview of how this treatment works.

With Invisalign® (or any other clear aligner brand), we will start by taking a 3D scan of your mouth. Once we have that, we can create personalized aligner trays that fit your mouth. You'll wear each tray for about two weeks, then you'll switch to the next one in the series. Each tray is slightly different, and they work by slowly guiding your teeth to the correct position in your mouth.

Because Invisalign® is integrated with 3D technology, we are actually able to show you what your future smile will look like! Our patients absolutely love this feature. Want to hear more great things about Invisalign clear aligners? Read on!

### Five Benefits of Invisalign® Clear Aligners

#### 1. Boost Your Confidence

Invisalign® aligners are more aesthetically pleasing and less noticeable than braces. Since they are clear, you can smile with confidence for photos and special occasions. Adults who have public-facing jobs love the fact that they can get their dream smile without a mouth full of metal braces.



However, it's not just ideal for adults! Teenagers often opt for Invisalign® (there's actually a version made specifically for teenagers called Invisalign Teen®) and younger kids can also get a more confident smile with the Invisalign® First option.

#### 2. Eat Whatever You Want!

One of the biggest advantages Invisalign® has over metal braces is the lack of dietary restrictions. With metal braces, there's a list of foods you have to avoid because they're too sticky or hard. When you consider that most people have braces for at least two years, that can be a real bummer, especially if you're being asked to give up your favorite foods!

With Invisalign® clear aligners, you can simply take your tray out whenever you want to eat something that's sticky or otherwise potentially damaging to the aligner trays. While we recommend keeping your aligners in for at least 22 hours per day, you definitely can still remove them here and there when you want a special treat.

#### 3. Take Care of Your Smile

Easily Oral hygiene is so much easier with Invisalign® too, because you can take the aligners out to brush and floss normally rather than having to navigate around brackets and wires! This leads to healthier teeth once your orthodontic treatment is done, which is always a win.

#### 4. Less Pain, More Gain

A straight smile doesn't have to mean pain and discomfort. With traditional orthodontic appliances (like metal braces), the sensitive cheek and gum tissue can get irritated, and whenever the braces are tightened or adjusted, there can be soreness or pain for a few days. Not so with Invisalign® clear aligners!

The aligner trays gently shift your teeth into place and because you're getting new trays every few weeks, the movement is subtle enough that you shouldn't feel any discomfort.

#### 5. Fewer (and Faster) Check-Ups

No one wants to spend more time in the orthodontist's office. We totally get it! For adults, more appointments means you have to take time off work and possibly commute across town. This lost time (and money) adds up! For kids, taking time off school is never convenient.

Invisalign® allows you to enjoy more time between your orthodontic appointments, and your appointments will take less time. That's a huge win, especially for those with busy schedules!

Have you been thinking about improving your smile with Invisalign® clear aligners? Maybe you simply have questions that you would like to ask before making a decision. Either way, the team at Porto Fino Dental is here to help! Schedule your consultation today.

You may reach us at 239-482-8806 or email us at [info@portofinodental.org](mailto:info@portofinodental.org)

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# What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

**W**eight-watchers. Nutrisystem. Mediterranean diet. Paleo. Living healthy has become a craze, although obesity in our country, rather legitimizes it. For many people it is about looking and feeling better, living longer, stronger and disease-free. These are all important reasons for eating clean, exercising, and learning to rest our bodies sufficiently.

For Christians, however, trying to maintain healthy habits finds its motivation in more than adopting diet fads to longevity and better quality of life. Taking care of our bodies is stewardship. That is, it is a reflection of our recognition of having been created by God, and how our lives can be instruments in his hands to serve and honor him on earth. Of course, God can use both the healthy and the unfit for his purposes, including the sick, feeble, and dying. Human worth and value is not in question.

The reality is that our earthly lives are only a speck in the sands of eternity. However, Christ followers understand that life doesn't belong to them. It is a gift from a Good Father who entrusted them with a brief span of years that should be invested in loving others and making our world a better place. For those who have believed in Christ and experienced God's forgiveness of sin, the reason for taking care of their bodies goes beyond living

longer and healthier. It's about honoring Jesus Christ with all of life, including the way they take care of their bodies.

In his book, *"The Unknown God: Searching for spiritual fulfillment,"* Oxford University professor, Alister McGrath, describes the parable of Plato's Cave, a story about people enslaved inside the cave oblivious to the reality that existed on the outside beyond the flickering shadows which they knew. That is, until the day someone was able to find their way out and discover a world beyond description, a world of beauty and splendor. McGrath writes, "Our desires have become attached to things that are little more than shadows, when they are meant to be attached to something which cannot decay or disappoint" (32).

How does this relate to healthy living? Focusing on living healthier and longer, like any other pursuit we might obsess about, really reveals a spiritual longing in our souls for something more: *eternity*. Whether is it longing for a "perfect" relationship that often disenchant, earthly riches that can quickly vanish, or a healthy and strong body that is suddenly brought to a standstill due to an unexpected medical report, our hearts are longing for something beyond what this world can provide.



McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfillment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfillment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

May you achieve physical well-being and wholeness. But may you also discover the gift of eternal life which Jesus promises to all who believe and trust in him alone. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). I would enjoy exploring with you the meaning of life and God.

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