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December 2024

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contents **DECEMBER 2024**

- 6** Confronted with a Non-Healing Wound?
- 7** Smooth Skin, Simplified: The Ultimate Guide to Laser Hair Removal
- 8** Avoiding the Flu During Holiday Travel
- 9** The Healing Power of Holiday Traditions
- 10** Gout and Podiatry: Understanding the Connection and Treatment Options
- 11** FCGU Addresses Growing Demands of Medical Device Industry
- 12** Holiday Travels: How You Can Prepare Your Eyes
- 13** Lymphedema and Vein Disease
- 14** The Inside Scoop: Naples Soap Company
- 16** Hormonal Harmony: Balancing Body and Mind Through a Holistic Approach
- 17** Stem Cell Awareness
- 18** Wound Care and Lymphedema
- 19** If You Have Stiff Ankles This Article is for You!
- 20** TBS: Osteo - Because Bone Structure Matters
- 21** Navigating Holiday Travel with Hearing Loss: Tips for a Seamless Journey
- 22** Revolutionary Weight Loss: The Future of Body Transformation
- 23** The Daily "Grind"
- 24** MRI vs EMG: Which is More Accurate?
- 25** Appointment of Personal Representative - Rules
- 26** Sleep Solutions: Achieve Better Rest
- 27** Spiritual Wellness: It's a Wonderful Life

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CONFRONTED WITH A NON-HEALING WOUND?

A chronic wound is a type of wound that fails to heal in a timely manner, typically lasting for more than 12 weeks despite appropriate and consistent treatment. Chronic wounds can occur for various reasons, such as diabetes, venous insufficiency, arterial insufficiency, pressure ulcers, and other underlying conditions. These wounds often result from a disruption in the normal healing process due to factors such as poor blood circulation, inflammation, infection, and impaired immune response. The key characteristic of chronic wounds is the body's inability to progress through the normal stages of wound healing, including hemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, and remodeling.

This delay in healing is often caused by a combination of factors, such as impaired blood flow, excessive inflammation, bacterial infection, and tissue necrosis. Chronic wounds are typically classified based on their underlying causes, with the most common types being diabetic ulcers, pressure ulcers, venous ulcers, and arterial ulcers. To prevent chronic wounds from developing, it is essential to address the underlying risk factors and promote optimal wound healing.

This includes maintaining good hygiene, managing underlying health conditions such as diabetes and vascular diseases, avoiding prolonged pressure on vulnerable areas, ensuring adequate nutrition, and implementing appropriate wound care techniques. Additionally, regular monitoring and prompt intervention are crucial in preventing acute wounds from progressing into chronic wounds. In recent years, advancements in medical technology have revolutionized the treatment of chronic wounds, with amniotic technology emerging as a promising approach.

Amniotic technology utilizes the human amniotic membrane, a biological material derived from the placenta, to promote wound healing and tissue regeneration. The amniotic membrane is rich in growth factors, cytokines, and extracellular matrix proteins that have been shown to enhance the healing process and reduce inflammation. One of



the key benefits of amniotic technology is its ability to modulate the inflammatory response, reduce pain, promote angiogenesis, and stimulate tissue regeneration.

By applying amniotic membrane products to chronic wounds, healthcare providers can create a conducive environment for healing and accelerate the closure of non-healing wounds. Clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of amniotic technology in treating various types of chronic wounds, including diabetic ulcers, venous ulcers, and pressure ulcers. These products can be applied topically to the wound site or used in conjunction with other therapies to enhance their effectiveness.

In-home wound care is becoming more popular because it is a cost-effective and convenient way to treat chronic wounds. This method allows trained healthcare professionals to provide care in the patient's home. There are many advantages to in-home care, including a lower chance of infections from hospitals, increased comfort for patients, and a better quality of life for those with chronic wounds. Additionally, recent modifications to Medicare eligibility allow seniors to access amniotic technology and enjoy the benefits of these advanced wound care solutions from the convenience of their own homes.

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. RxWound offers an impressive range of tissue alternatives and tailored treatment plans that cater to the unique needs of each wound and patient. As a result, 95% of patients achieve full wound closure in less than 6 weeks.

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810 Diode Laser

Our 810 diode laser offers precision and efficiency, targeting hair follicles with remarkable accuracy. This technology is renowned for its ability to provide quick treatments with minimal discomfort, making it a popular choice for those seeking effective hair reduction.

Inclusive Treatment: Celebrating All Skin Types

One of our most significant advantages is our ability to treat all skin types. Unlike many traditional hair removal methods that work best on specific skin tones, our advanced laser systems are engineered to provide safe, effective treatments for everyone. Whether you have fair, olive, or dark skin, our technology can help you achieve the smooth, hair-free skin you desire.

Membership Program: Affordable Luxury, Convenient Results

We understand that consistent hair removal can be an investment, which is why we've designed a membership program that makes smooth skin accessible and affordable:

Membership Benefits

- **Base Membership: \$100 per Month**
 - Includes treatment of one selected area
 - Professional, personalized service
 - Access to our cutting-edge laser technology



• Flexible Add-On Options

- **Additional Areas: \$75 per Session**
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How Laser Hair Removal Works

The process is simple yet sophisticated. Our lasers emit concentrated light that is absorbed by the pigment in hair follicles. This light energy is converted to heat, which damages the hair follicles, inhibiting future hair growth. Over a series of treatments, we can significantly reduce hair growth, leaving your skin smoother and more refined.

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Avoiding the Flu During Holiday Travel

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

The holiday season is a time of joy, reunions, and travel. However, it's also peak flu season, with millions of people crisscrossing the country and potentially spreading infectious diseases. Navigating crowded airports, train stations, and family gatherings while staying healthy requires strategic planning and proactive measures.

Understanding the Risks

Holiday travel dramatically increases your exposure to flu viruses. Airports and other transportation hubs are breeding grounds for germs, with thousands of people from different regions passing through confined spaces. Close proximity to strangers, shared surfaces, and recycled air create perfect conditions for virus transmission.

Vaccination: Your First Line of Defense

Getting a flu shot before traveling is the most effective preventive strategy. The annual vaccine is designed to protect against the most prevalent strains predicted for the season. Ideally, you should get vaccinated at least two weeks before your trip to allow your body to develop necessary antibodies. Many pharmacies and healthcare clinics offer convenient walk-in vaccination services.

Pre-Travel Preparation

Before embarking on your journey, prioritize your overall health:

- Maintain a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables
- Get adequate sleep to support your immune system
- Stay hydrated and minimize alcohol and stress
- Consider taking immune-boosting supplements like vitamin C and zinc

Protective Strategies During Travel

Personal Hygiene: Frequent hand washing is crucial. Carry an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol and use it regularly. Avoid touching your face, particularly your mouth, nose, and eyes, which are entry points for viruses.

Mask Protection: While mask mandates have relaxed, wearing a high-quality mask in crowded spaces like airports and on public transportation can

significantly reduce your risk of contracting respiratory viruses. Choose masks like N95 or KN95 that provide superior filtration.

Social Distancing: When possible, maintain some physical distance from other travelers. In waiting areas, choose seats away from large groups and avoid prolonged close contact with strangers.

Airplane and Public Transportation Precautions

Air travel presents unique challenges for flu prevention:

- Choose a window seat, which typically offers less exposure to passing passengers
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean your seating area, including armrests, tray table, and seat belt
- Direct air vents to create a personal airflow that can help deflect potential airborne particles
- Avoid using bathroom facilities during turbulence when possible, as these areas are high-traffic zones

Post-Travel Health Monitoring

After returning home, monitor your health closely. If you develop any flu-like symptoms such as fever, body aches, or respiratory issues, isolate yourself and consult a healthcare professional. Consider getting tested to confirm whether you've contracted the flu or another respiratory illness.

Additional Recommendations

- Pack a small health kit with basic medications
- Bring extra masks and hand sanitizer
- Consider travel insurance that covers medical emergencies
- If you're feeling unwell before travel, reschedule your trip

When to Seek Medical Attention

Some individuals are at higher risk for complications from the flu, including:

- Pregnant women
- Young children
- Older adults
- People with chronic health conditions
- Individuals with compromised immune systems



These groups should be especially cautious and consult healthcare providers before and after travel.

Conclusion

Preventing the flu during holiday travel requires a multifaceted approach combining vaccination, personal hygiene, and strategic precautions. By implementing these strategies, you can significantly reduce your risk of illness and enjoy a healthy, happy holiday season with your loved ones.

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Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

Dr. Stéphane Calvino, originally from Switzerland, moved to the U.S. with his American wife, Stacy, after completing medical school. He finished his residency in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Calvino family has called Punta Gorda home since 2003 and are raising two children here. An enthusiast of photography, scuba diving and yoga, Dr. Calvino is eager to support your health journey through personalized patient centered care and innovative treatments that promote physical wellness.



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The Healing Power of Holiday Traditions

Robert Hummer, M.D.

The holiday season is a time of celebration, warmth, and connection. Beyond the festive decorations, delicious treats, and gift-giving, holiday traditions have a profound impact on our emotional and physical well-being. For many, they provide a sense of continuity, comfort, and joy that can be incredibly healing.

The Joy of Familiar Rituals

Whether it's decorating the tree with family ornaments or baking your favorite holiday cookies, the familiarity of these rituals brings a sense of comfort and security. Holiday traditions often bring people together, creating special moments with loved ones that reinforce emotional bonds. These shared experiences help reduce feelings of loneliness or stress, promoting mental health and emotional resilience.

Stress Relief Through Fun and Creativity

The holidays are also a time to let go and have fun. Whether you're hanging up holiday lights, listening to your favorite holiday tunes, or crafting homemade gifts, these activities can reduce stress and spark creativity. Engaging in playful, low-pressure activities can give you a break from the daily grind and improve your mood.

These festive moments don't just benefit your mental health. Participating in holiday traditions can lower cortisol levels, helping to reduce stress and its harmful effects on the body. Activities like decorating, cooking, and gift-wrapping allow you to be present in the moment, providing a mental break and boosting overall well-being.

Reflecting on Gratitude and Giving

Holiday traditions often encourage us to reflect on the past year and express gratitude for the people and blessings in our lives. This practice of gratitude can have powerful benefits for both mental and physical health. Studies have shown that people who regularly practice gratitude experience lower blood pressure, improved immune function, and better sleep.

Traditions that focus on giving, such as volunteering or exchanging thoughtful gifts, can also foster a sense of purpose and joy. Acts of kindness, whether



big or small, have been shown to reduce stress, increase happiness, and even boost life expectancy. The holiday season reminds us that giving is often just as rewarding as receiving.

A Sense of Continuity and Comfort

For many, holiday traditions offer a sense of continuity, providing comfort through their familiarity. No matter how much life changes, these rituals remain, grounding us in what really matters—family, friends, and love. These traditions become the threads that connect generations, preserving memories and creating new ones.

Even simple traditions like watching holiday movies, going caroling, or visiting a local tree farm can anchor us during the often hectic holiday season, reminding us to pause and enjoy the present moment.

As you embrace the joy and healing power of holiday traditions this season, don't forget to prioritize your health. At VIPcare, we are committed to helping you feel your best all year long. Schedule an appointment with your local VIPcare provider today by calling 941-541-4812 and take the first step toward a healthier, happier you this holiday season!

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GOUT AND PODIATRY:

Understanding the Connection and Treatment Options

By Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

Gout is a form of arthritis that affects millions of people worldwide, often causing intense pain, swelling, and discomfort in the joints. One of the most common places for gout to strike is the feet, particularly the big toe. This is where podiatrists, specialists in foot and ankle health, play a crucial role in diagnosing, treating, and managing the condition. In this article, we will explore the relationship between gout and podiatry, the symptoms to watch for, and the various treatment options available to manage the condition.

What is Gout?

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis caused by a buildup of uric acid crystals in the joints. Uric acid is a waste product that the body produces when it breaks down purines, substances found in certain foods and drinks. Under normal circumstances, uric acid is eliminated from the body through urine. However, when there is too much uric acid in the blood, it can form sharp crystals that deposit in the joints, leading to sudden, severe pain, redness, and swelling.

Gout is typically associated with high levels of uric acid, often due to factors such as:

- **Dietary habits:** Consuming foods rich in purines, such as red meat, shellfish, and alcohol (especially beer), can increase uric acid levels.
- **Obesity:** Excess body weight can impair the body's ability to eliminate uric acid effectively.
- **Medical conditions:** High blood pressure, diabetes, and kidney disease can all contribute to gout development.
- **Genetics:** Family history plays a role in determining susceptibility to gout.

How Gout Affects the Feet

While gout can affect any joint in the body, it most commonly targets the feet, especially the big toe. This is the classic presentation of gout, and it typically results in intense pain, swelling, and heat around the affected joint. The pain often comes on suddenly, sometimes waking the person from sleep, and can last for hours or even days if untreated.

Other joints that can be affected by gout in the feet include the ankles, heels, and insteps. In some cases, gout can cause deformities in the joints, leading to long-term discomfort and disability if not properly managed.

Podiatrist's Role in Gout Management

Podiatrists are healthcare professionals who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of foot and ankle conditions, making them essential in the

management of gout. When a patient presents with symptoms suggestive of gout, a podiatrist can perform a thorough evaluation to confirm the diagnosis and help manage the condition effectively. Here's how podiatrists contribute to gout care:

1. Diagnosis and Evaluation

Podiatrists begin by taking a detailed medical history, including the patient's diet, lifestyle, and any family history of gout. A physical examination is then conducted, during which the podiatrist looks for signs of swelling, redness, and warmth in the affected joints. In some cases, joint aspiration (removal of fluid from the joint with a needle) may be performed to confirm the presence of uric acid crystals.

To rule out other conditions and confirm the diagnosis, podiatrists may also recommend imaging tests like X-rays or ultrasounds. These tests can show joint damage or the presence of tophi—small, hard lumps that form when uric acid crystals accumulate under the skin.

2. Medication Management

While podiatrists are not the primary prescribers of medications for gout (this responsibility usually lies with primary care physicians or rheumatologists), they often work closely with other healthcare providers to ensure proper treatment. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), colchicine, and corticosteroids are commonly used to manage acute gout flare-ups and reduce inflammation.

For long-term management, patients may be prescribed medications to lower uric acid levels in the blood, such as allopurinol or febuxostat. Podiatrists may help monitor the patient's progress and adjust foot care recommendations accordingly.

3. Foot Care and Pain Relief

During gout attacks, the pain can be debilitating. Podiatrists often recommend several strategies for managing pain and providing relief:

- **Rest and Elevation:** Resting the affected foot and elevating it above heart level can help reduce swelling.
- **Ice Packs:** Applying ice to the inflamed joint can help reduce swelling and numb pain.
- **Footwear Modifications:** Wearing supportive, cushioned shoes can help protect the feet and reduce pressure on the affected joints. Podiatrists may also recommend custom orthotics for better foot support.
- **Joint Protection:** In cases of chronic gout, joint deformities may occur, so podiatrists might provide recommendations for how to protect the joints from further damage.

4. Long-Term Preventative Measures

Preventing future gout attacks is an essential part of managing the condition. Podiatrists often work with patients to address lifestyle factors that can contribute to gout flares. These may include:

- **Dietary Counseling:** A podiatrist can work with the patient to help them understand foods that may trigger gout attacks (like red meat, organ meats, and alcohol) and recommend a low-purine diet to help reduce uric acid buildup.
- **Weight Management:** Maintaining a healthy weight can help reduce the risk of gout flare-ups and ease the burden on joints.
- **Hydration:** Drinking plenty of water can help flush excess uric acid from the body and prevent crystal formation in the joints.

Additionally, podiatrists may recommend ongoing monitoring to detect early signs of joint damage from repeated gout attacks. Preventing or managing joint damage is essential to maintaining foot function and mobility.

Complications of Untreated Gout

If gout is left untreated or poorly managed, it can lead to several complications, including:

- **Chronic Gout:** Recurrent gout attacks may cause long-term joint damage and deformities, including tophi (deposits of uric acid crystals in the skin) and joint deformities, which can affect mobility.
- **Kidney Stones:** High uric acid levels can also lead to the formation of kidney stones, which can cause pain and complications if left untreated.
- **Joint Damage:** Over time, repeated gout attacks can lead to permanent damage to the joints, causing deformities and reduced function.

Conclusion - Gout is a painful and potentially debilitating condition that often affects the feet, especially the big toe. Podiatrists are essential in diagnosing, treating, and managing gout, providing strategies for pain relief during flare-ups, offering long-term prevention advice, and ensuring that the feet and joints remain as healthy as possible. Through early intervention, lifestyle modifications, and careful management, gout can be controlled, allowing individuals to maintain a good quality of life and reduce the risk of complications. If you experience symptoms of gout, especially in the feet, seeking the advice of a podiatrist can help ensure effective care and management.

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

Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

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With micro-credentials and digital badges, students and working professionals can now elevate their career prospects

The demand for specialized skills in the medical device field is growing rapidly due to significant expansion of the global market for these products. According to Fortune Business Insights, the market was valued at \$518 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach \$886 billion by 2032. This growth is driven by an increase in chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes, leading to more diagnostic and surgical procedures. The U.S. medical devices market alone is expected to reach \$314 billion by 2032, fueled by research and development investments and innovation.

With the rising prevalence of chronic conditions and advancements in medical technology, there is a clear demand for professionals with specialized skills to develop, manage and operate these advanced devices. Florida Gulf Coast University offers two digital badges to equip students for careers in this field: the Fundamentals of Medical Device Industry badge and the Medical Device Professional Sales badge. Developed in collaboration with Arthrex, a medical device company that specializes in orthopedics and minimally invasive surgery, these courses prepare students with in-demand skills for the industry.



Digital badges at FGCU are micro-credentials that enhance an individual's resume by verifying to employers that they have the skills wanted in the workplace.

By fostering strong partnerships with leading companies like Arthrex, FGCU ensures students gain practical skills that are directly applicable to their future careers. This collaboration enhances the students' learning experience and benefits Southwest Florida by preparing a skilled workforce ready to meet the needs of area employers.



Fundamentals of Medical Device Industry Badge

Launched in 2020, this digital badge immerses students in the industry, from the healthcare marketplace to product development and management and to the needs of healthcare and medical providers. With 36 graduates, this program offers a hands-on learning approach, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Open to all majors, it includes a guaranteed interview with Arthrex, making it a direct pathway to a career in the medical device sector.

Students gain a deep understanding of the healthcare marketplace, including health systems, healthcare payers and federal healthcare policy. They apply concepts and theories in product development and management specifically to the medical device industry, covering the entire product lifecycle, from concept to post-market. Additionally, students explore the critical aspects of clinical and regulatory compliance, including medical device quality system regulations, which are essential for staying competitive and reducing time to market. The badge also focuses on orthopedic research and the fundamentals of medical education, ensuring that students have the specialized knowledge necessary for success in the industry. Finally, they hone their communication skills, enabling them to effectively engage with healthcare providers, administrators and patients.

Medical Device Professional Sales Badge

Introduced in 2024, this badge focuses on essential sales competencies within the medical device industry. Designed by FGCU faculty in collaboration with Arthrex experts, the course equips students

with the knowledge and skills required to build a successful career in medical device sales. Like the fundamentals badge, this program also offers a guaranteed interview with Arthrex, giving graduates a significant advantage as they begin their professional journeys.

In this course, students develop a strong foundation in the sales processes specific to medical device products, applicable to both surgical and non-surgical procedures. They also learn to apply concepts and theories related to product development and management within the industry, navigating the various stages of the product lifecycle, from planning and design to validation and market introduction. The badge also delves into the regulatory and compliance requirements that govern medical devices, ensuring that students are well-versed in quality system regulations and competitive strategies that reduce time to market. Additionally, students assess the value of orthopedic research and gain the medical education necessary to thrive in the industry.

Why Choose FGCU's Digital Badges?

These digital badges enhance credentials and provide a strategic advantage in a competitive job market. With the healthcare industry continuously evolving, professionals with specialized skills are increasingly in demand. FGCU's partnership with Arthrex ensures that students are not just learning theory but also gaining practical, real-world experience that employers value. Earning one of these badges is a significant step toward a rewarding career in the medical device industry.

Whether current students are looking to enhance their education, or professionals are seeking to pivot into a new field, FGCU's digital badges offer the flexibility and relevance needed to succeed. This opportunity enables individuals to invest in their future and take the first step toward becoming leaders in the medical device industry.

Take the Next Step Today

Don't just graduate — graduate with a competitive edge. For more information, or to enroll, visit fgcu.edu/digital-badges.



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Holiday Travels: How You Can Prepare Your Eyes

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

The holiday season is a time of joy, reunions, and travel. Whether you're driving over the river and through the woods or flying across the country to visit loved ones, your eyes face unique challenges during this busy season. From dry airplane cabins to long hours on the road, travel can take a significant toll on your visual health. Understanding how to protect and care for your eyes can make your holiday journey more comfortable and enjoyable.

Understanding Travel-Related Eye Stress

Traveling exposes your eyes to multiple stressors that can cause discomfort and potential long-term issues. Air travel, in particular, presents unique challenges. Airplane cabins have extremely low humidity levels, often below 20%, which is significantly drier than most indoor environments. This dry air can quickly lead to eye fatigue, irritation, and increased tear evaporation.

Road trips bring their own set of eye challenges. Long hours of driving, especially during winter when daylight is limited, can cause eye strain from constant focus and potential glare from snow or oncoming headlights. The combination of artificial lighting, digital screens, and extended periods of concentrated visual work can lead to significant eye fatigue.

Practical Preparation Strategies

- **Hydration is Key:** The first line of defense for travel eye care is proper hydration. Before your trip, increase your water intake and consider using preservative-free artificial tears. These lubricating drops can help maintain moisture and provide relief during long journeys. Pack a small bottle in your carry-on or travel bag for easy access.

- **Protection from Environmental Factors:** Invest in quality sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays. During winter, sun glare can be intense, especially when reflecting off snow or ice. Wraparound styles offer additional protection from wind and environmental irritants. If you wear contact lenses, consider bringing your glasses as a backup and to give your eyes periodic breaks.



- **Digital Screen Management:** Modern travel involves significant screen time. Whether you're navigating with your smartphone, watching in-flight entertainment, or working during transit, digital screens can cause significant eye strain. Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This simple technique helps reduce eye fatigue and provides necessary breaks for your visual system.

- **Comfort and Comfort Accessories:** Consider packing eye-specific travel accessories. A good sleep mask can help protect your eyes during flights or in unfamiliar sleeping environments. Noise-canceling headphones can also indirectly benefit your eyes by reducing overall stress and tension.

Special Considerations for Different Travelers

Individuals with pre-existing eye conditions should consult their optometrist before traveling. Those with diabetes, dry eye syndrome, or wearing contact lenses might need additional precautions. Always carry your current prescription and extra contact lenses or glasses.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Lymphedema and Vein Disease

By Dr. TC Lackey II

What is Lymphedema?

The lymphatic system protects the body against harmful bacteria and transports fluid from body tissues into the vascular system. Lymph vessels are thin walled to absorb fluid, bacteria, and protein for transport to the lymph nodes which eliminate waste and bacteria. Together, lymph vessels and nodes help maintain a healthy fluid balance. Lymphedema occurs when there is impairment of the lymphatic system, which disrupts normal fluid transport. If the lymphatic system is overwhelmed, damaged, or blocked, chronic swelling can occur. Over time this swelling can cause thickening of the skin and recurrent skin infections (cellulitis). It is a permanent condition which worsens over time if not properly treated. There is no cure, but symptoms can be managed which improve the quality of life.

What Causes Lymphedema?

The leading cause of lymphedema is cancer and its treatment. However, chronic venous insufficiency may be the most important predictor of lymphedema in the legs. Primary lymphedema can be present at birth or inherited. Secondary lymphedema is more common and due to disruption of the lymphatic system from vein disease, cancer, radiation or chemotherapy, trauma, surgery, and obesity. Common symptoms include limb heaviness and fatigue, toenails that look like a ski jump, pitting edema, dry warm skin, and open venous ulcers.

How Can I Counteract Lymphedema?

Exercise is one of the first steps to improve lymphatic function and to improve fluid removal. Additional treatment can include



manual lymphatic drainage, compression stockings, and pneumatic compression devices. Improved function can reduce cellulitis as well as fibrosis, and edema. Identifying underlying vein disease is one of the most important steps. The two diseases exist together, and you must treat the underlying vein disease in combination with lymphedema treatments for the best result.

If you have any concerns of lymphedema or vein disease, it is important to be evaluated. Minimally invasive treatments are offered in our offices, and there's no downtime! Start your healing at Florida Lakes Vein Center with a FREE vein screening. Once the vein component is treated, we will recommend continued follow up or use of a lymphedema pump for best results with improved quality of life.



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Florida Lakes Vein Center offers convenient appointments in our Lakewood Ranch office Tuesday & Thursday 8am-5pm, Wednesday 8am-12pm. Call **941.866.8989** to schedule your *free vein screening*.

The Inside Scoop: Naples Soap Company

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My Story

See a problem. Solve a problem. I suffered from psoriasis and eczema for much of my life. My daughter was born with eczema as well. I tried many prescriptions and over-the-counter products on the market to relieve our itchy skin, but none were effective.

8 million
people in the U.S. have **psoriasis**

31 million
Americans have
some form
of **eczema**

16 million
suffer from the signs
and symptoms
of **rosacea**

millions
of people are just
like Deanna



Deanna Wallin,
Founder & CEO

As a former Registered Nurse with a background in healthcare and wound care, I started researching what we were putting on our skin that could be causing our skin irritations. I read product labels and researched ingredients used in many beauty products. It was a real eye opener. I was shocked to learn about the negative effects of ingredients like propylene glycol, parabens, hardening agents, phthalates and much more.

**15
Years &
Counting**

naturally better
skin care

Today, we operate 13 locations in Florida with over 600 different products. It has been a pleasure to meet and help so many people. I hope we can help you, too!

I knew there had to be a better alternative, so I started experimenting with natural skin care products made with coconut oil, shea butter and olive oil. Soon after, my daughter and I started to see real results. I was on to something life-changing and decided to use my skin care journey to help others as well.

In 2009, I opened Naples Soap Company in a 300 sq. foot shop in Naples, Florida. I created my own line-up of products for people just like me with sensitive skin.

Deanna

Sincerely,
Deanna Wallin
Founder & CEO, Naples Soap Company



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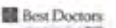
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HORMONAL HARMONY: Balancing Body and Mind through a Holistic Approach

BY DR. KAROLINA BAKER, MD

In the intricate dance of human physiology, hormones play a crucial dual role - both physiological and psychological. These powerful chemical messengers are the conductors of our most fundamental bodily experiences, simultaneously regulating critical functions like metabolism and growth while profoundly influencing our mood, behavior, and overall mental well-being.

The Complex World of Hormonal Interaction

Many patients arrive at our clinic unaware that hormonal imbalances could be the root cause of their health concerns. These invisible conductors of our body's symphony can trigger a wide array of symptoms, from persistent fatigue and unpredictable mood swings to unexplained weight fluctuations and sleep disturbances.

The endocrine system operates as an intricate, interconnected network where each hormone potentially impacts our mental state in nuanced and profound ways. Consider cortisol, often dubbed the "stress hormone" - when chronically elevated, it can cascade into a complex web of physical and mental health challenges:

- **Physical manifestations:** Fatigue, weight gain, high blood pressure, digestive problems
- **Mental health impacts:** Irritability, anxiety, depression, impaired memory

Similarly, thyroid hormone imbalances can create a perfect storm of symptoms affecting both body and mind. Reproductive hormones like estrogen and testosterone further demonstrate this intricate dance, with their fluctuations potentially triggering mood swings, anxiety, and cognitive difficulties.

The Aging Factor: Hormonal Decline

As we age, hormone levels naturally decline, increasing our vulnerability to degenerative diseases and systemic inflammation. This process typically begins during menopause but can start earlier. The consequences of hormonal deficiency are comprehensive:

- **Physical changes:** Decreased muscle mass, reduced bone density, skin transformations
- **Cognitive impacts:** Forgetfulness, potential cognitive decline
- **Long-term health risks:** Heart disease, osteoporosis, decreased libido

Rebalancing Hormones: A Holistic Approach

Addressing hormonal imbalances requires a multifaceted strategy. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) represents one approach, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. Comprehensive hormone management involves:

1. Lifestyle modifications
2. Stress management techniques
3. Nutritional optimization
4. Targeted medical interventions

Bioidentical vs. Synthetic Hormones: Understanding the Difference

Not all hormone replacement therapies are created equal. Bioidentical hormones, derived from plant sources like soy or yam, are molecularly identical to human hormones. Unlike synthetic alternatives, they are designed to restore normal physiological function with potentially reduced side effects.

The key differences lie in molecular structure and metabolic interaction. Bioidentical hormones are crafted to mimic the body's natural hormonal processes, potentially offering a more harmonious approach to hormone replacement.

The Evolving Landscape of Hormone Replacement

Historical perspectives on HRT have been complex and sometimes controversial. The landmark Women's Health Initiative study in 2000 initially raised concerns about increased health risks. However, subsequent research has refined our understanding, highlighting the importance of:

- Personalized treatment approaches
- Using natural, bioidentical hormones
- Considering individual patient profiles
- Employing appropriate delivery methods

A Holistic Well-being Framework

True hormonal harmony extends beyond medical intervention. It encompasses:

- Nutrition that supports endocrine function
- Regular physical activity
- Stress reduction techniques
- Quality sleep
- Emotional well-being practices

Mindfulness practices like meditation and yoga have demonstrated remarkable ability to regulate stress hormones and enhance emotional resilience. Regular exercise helps balance hormones like insulin and growth hormone while simultaneously releasing mood-enhancing endorphins.

ABOUT AVEN CLINIC

By using a combination of integrative medicine and functional medicine, we strive to give our patients a better understanding of the beautiful ecosystem that occurs within our bodies. When our bodies are not functioning optimally, this ecosystem is compromised. It is our mission to provide accurate knowledge on how to improve their health and lifestyle choices by identifying the root cause of "dis-ease" and healing the body with a balance of science and holistic modalities.

Aven Clinic is an Integrative Primary Care and Functional Medicine clinic. We specialize in addressing a full spectrum of health conditions, including: sexual health, aging, weight gain, hormone imbalance, chronic viral illness, immune system regeneration, autoimmune conditions, Lyme disease, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, and more. Our treatment services help to promote healthier cells and tissues for a better quality of life. We achieve this by improving energy and promoting overall well-being.

The functional Medicine approach addresses the underlying causes of disease by using a systematic approach while engaging both patients and practitioners in a therapeutic partnership. It is an evolution in the practice of medicine that better addresses the healthcare needs of the 21st century.

Functional Medicine addresses the whole person and sets out to treat the root cause of disease, not just mitigate symptoms with medication. This patient-centered approach involves a more thorough health evaluation, factoring in one's history, lifestyle, environment, genetic components, and emotional state, which is important to properly diagnose and treat. In this way, functional medicine supports the unique expression of health and vitality for each individual.

Our goal is to offer personalized and accessible functional medicine strategies for motivated, coachable, and committed individuals seeking to restore their health.



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Stem Cell Awareness

By Max MacCloud, DO, ND, PhD

December represents many things, now it is also recognized as Stem Cell Awareness month. It does make sense to stop and marvel at stem cells, the body's marvel of repair and regeneration.

All healing, repair, and regeneration are carried out by stem cells. Aging is associated with a decline in many things including stem cells, capillaries, digestive capabilities, immune system integrity, muscle & strength, physical performance, metabolic efficiency and many other functions.

The reality is that these declines do not have to be. Every one of those things can be mitigated and largely reversed with the right tools & strategies.

December presents a great opportunity to learn more about how stem cells might help you with virtually ANY health challenge. Stem cells are being used around the world for over 70 different conditions although they are only approved for a half a dozen types of cancer in the US. We are, however, allowed to use them in the US, contrary to what many people believe.

All stem cells and stem cell clinics are NOT the same.

As with everything, there are right ways and wrong ways to provide stem cell therapies. Here are a few things to consider.

Who is promoting and doing the treatments? Is it someone that is properly trained in the area as opposed to a chiropractor or nurse practitioner? While both can be extremely capable in their areas of expertise, neither are trained to perform such services as part of their profession. That typically means an online course or weekend training.

What type of stem cells are they using? Many still use bone marrow as it costs them significantly less to harvest than it does to purchase high quality stem cells from the top stem cell labs. Umbilical stem cells and related factors harvested from Wharton's Jelly are by far the best stem cells to use.

Is the treatment being delivered in one session or spread out over several? Most do a single injection session which is not optimal. Our bodies heal best with repeated stimulation and support; think singles and doubles vs. homeruns.

What kind of support do they provide? Most of the 'stem cell mills' do not provide any support. It's basically wham, bam, thank you mam; shots, out the door,

and see you in a few months for a follow up. Our bodies heal best with proper, repeated stimulation and support over several weeks.

Should you consider going out of the country to get treated? Here's what you should know about offshore stem cell clinics. Although some are very good, they all use 'expanded cells' which means that the cells used are put in a bioreactor/bio incubator and stimulated to reproduce. The problem is that these bioreactors create a stressful environment that leads to increased amounts of DNA mutations. The point is that you may get more stem cells, but they will have some issues that may reduce their benefits.

Now, let's dive into a cutting-edge approach that's turning science fiction into reality: The Wolverine Healing Protocol.

Unleashing Your Inner Superhero

Most people know Wolverine, the X-Men character with his astonishing ability to heal from almost any injury. Well, we might not be able to give you adamantium claws, but our Wolverine Healing Protocol aims to supercharge your body's natural regenerative powers. Here's how we're combining stem cell science with a holistic approach to healing:

The Stem Cell Supercharge

At the heart of our protocol are advanced regenerative injection therapies. We're talking stem cells, exosomes, and other innovative solutions that make your cells say "Oh yeah, it's healing time!" These tiny powerhouses can help:

- Revive & Supercharge you own stem cells to repair damaged tissues
- Reduce inflammation & modulate the immune response
- Promote the growth of new, healthy cells via your body's natural healing process

But we don't stop there. Like any good superhero, we're bringing in some powerful allies.

Nutrition: Fuel for Your Cellular Superheroes

Our elite nutrition program isn't just about eating your veggies (though that's important too). We're talking about a scientifically designed diet & supplementation regimen that provides your body with the building blocks it needs for optimal cellular function and regeneration. Think of it as premium fuel for your inner Wolverine.

Shockwave Therapy: Good Vibrations for Healing

No, we're not talking about the Beach Boys. Shockwave therapy uses acoustic waves to stimulate blood

flow and cellular activity including collagen production. It's like giving your tissues a wake-up call, telling them it's time to kick healing into high gear.

Light Therapy: Illuminating the Path to Recovery

Basking in the glow of specific wavelengths of light can stimulate cellular energy production and promote healing. It's not quite like Wolverine's healing factor kicking in, but it's pretty close!

Joint Decompression: Enhancing joint space & fluid exchange

As a joint degenerates the joint space and fluid exchange decline. Decompression therapies have been known to help for over a century but few 'stem cell clinics' provide proper joint decompression, we do.

The Wolverine Healing Protocol in Action

Imagine you're recovering from an injury or managing a chronic condition. Here's how our protocol might work:

1. Targeted regenerative injections to kickstart the healing process
2. Customized nutrition plan to fuel your cellular repair crew
3. Regular shockwave therapy sessions to keep those cells on their toes
4. Light therapy to boost energy production and reduce inflammation
5. Ongoing monitoring and adjustments to optimize your healing journey

Join the Regenerative Revolution

This Stem Cell Awareness Month, we're not just talking about the potential of regenerative medicine – we're putting it into action. The Wolverine Healing Protocol is our way of combining cutting-edge science with a holistic approach to health and healing. Remember, while we can't promise you'll be able to survive an adamantium bonding process, we can help you tap into your body's incredible capacity for healing and regeneration. Who knows? With the power of stem cells and our comprehensive approach, you might just feel like a superhero after all. So, are you ready to unleash your inner Wolverine? Let's heal, regenerate, and thrive – no mutant genes required!

Take action and call us today. We offer a brief free phone consultation and a discounted live consultation to see if you are a good candidate for what we do. This month we are opening our new, expanded facility at 6968 Professional Parkway in Lakewood Ranch; it is just around the corner from Ruth's Chris's Steak House (University & LWR Blvd). We have expanded services including **Hyperbaric Oxygen therapy**, the latest **Aesthetic Laser therapy**, **Focused, rapid cryotherapy (helps with joint regen and body sculpting)**, and state of the art **ARX (Adaptive Resistance Exercise)**. We are one of, if not **THE TOP Regenerative Wellness facilities in the world** and we're right in your backyard.

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Wound Care and Lymphedema: The Transformative Power of Compression Garments

By James Ferrara - Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

Navigating the complexities of wound care and lymphedema can be a daunting challenge, but the dedicated team at Functional Transformation Clinic is here to guide you through the process with compassion and expertise. By leveraging the power of compression garments, they are helping patients reclaim their quality of life and achieve remarkable results.

Wound care is a delicate and intricate process, requiring a personalized approach to address the unique needs of each patient. The experts at Functional Transformation Clinic understand that proper wound management involves more than just dressing the affected area. They take a holistic approach, considering the underlying factors that contribute to the development and healing of wounds. This includes evaluating factors such as circulation, nutrition, and overall skin health, which can all play a crucial role in the healing process.

One of the key tools in their arsenal is the strategic use of compression garments. These specialized garments apply targeted pressure to the affected limbs, promoting proper circulation and facilitating the efficient drainage of excess fluid. This, in turn, helps to reduce swelling, alleviate pain, and create an optimal environment for wound healing. Additionally, the compression provided by these garments can help to prevent the formation of new wounds by improving overall skin health and reducing the risk of further complications, such as skin breakdown and the development of pressure ulcers.

Lymphedema, a chronic condition characterized by the accumulation of fluid in the body's tissues, is another area where compression garments shine. Left untreated, lymphedema can lead to a host of complications, including increased risk of infection, reduced mobility, and a diminished quality of life. The clinicians at Functional Transformation Clinic understand the profound impact of this condition and are dedicated to providing comprehensive care.

Through a personalized assessment, the team at Functional Transformation Clinic works closely with each patient to identify the underlying causes of their lymphedema and develop a tailored treatment plan. By incorporating custom-fitted compression



garments into the regimen, they empower patients to take an active role in managing their condition and achieving long-term success. These garments not only help to reduce swelling and improve circulation, but they can also prevent further progression of the condition, minimizing the risk of infections and other complications. The team at Functional Transformation Clinic also educates patients on proper self-management techniques, ensuring they have the knowledge and tools to maintain their progress even after the initial treatment.

The transformative power of compression garments extends beyond just wound care and lymphedema management. These versatile tools can also be employed to address a wide range of other circulatory and vascular issues, such as deep vein thrombosis, chronic venous insufficiency, and even the prevention of further complications in individuals with diabetes. By promoting proper blood flow and reducing the buildup of fluid, compression garments can play a crucial role in managing these conditions and improving overall cardiovascular health. In some cases, the use of compression garments can even help to delay or prevent the need for more invasive interventions, such as surgery or the use of pharmaceutical medications.

At Functional Transformation Clinic, the patient's well-being is at the heart of everything they do. Their team of dedicated healthcare professionals collaborates seamlessly to ensure that each individual receives the personalized attention and

support they deserve. From registered nurses and physical therapists to certified lymphedema therapists and wound care specialists, the experts at Functional Transformation Clinic work together to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that addresses the unique needs of each patient.

By combining the latest advancements in compression therapy with a compassionate, patient-centered approach, the team at Functional Transformation Clinic is transforming the lives of those they serve. If you or a loved one are struggling with wound care, lymphedema, or any other circulatory or vascular condition, they are here to help. Schedule a consultation today and unlock the life-changing benefits of compression garments, where specialized care and compassion converge to empower you on your journey towards optimal health and wellness.



**New Lymphedema Clinic in Sarasota
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IF YOU HAVE STIFF ANKLES THIS ARTICLE IS FOR YOU!

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS

The ankle (Talocrural) is one of, if not THE most complex joint in our body. If you do not have enough dorsiflexion motion in the ankle (bringing the foot up towards your face) then you will have to compensate when squatting down by sticking your butt out, increasing the lordosis or arch in your low back, and flexing forward at the hips!

These compensations will cause more load to be put through the low back and knees. This improper direction of forces through the low back and knee joints can cause early degenerative changes (osteoarthritis, meniscal fraying, disc herniation, stenosis etc.).



HOW TO FIX

1. Short term - Place a small weight plate or on an incline when squatting. If you have ever looked at a weightlifter's shoe you will notice that they have a bigger heel. This assists them in getting low during their lifts.



The raised heel will allow you to reach 90 degrees or even go past 90 degrees when squatting but be advised that it will increase the amount of force through the knee! We advise squatting with low weight when elevating the heels due to this increased force on the knees.

"Remember the best way to increase motion in any joint is to actively move and load that joint."

LONG TERM

Easy at home ankle mobility exercises:

1. Eccentric heel raises

This exercise increases the strength and the length of the calf muscles which are the culprits of limited ankle movement. Simply stand up on your toes, lifting one leg up, so you are standing on the tight

ankle, then slowly lower your heel back down to the floor for a count of 5 seconds. Repeat this for 30 repetitions.

2. Standing straight calf stretch

This exercise targets the big calf muscle that you see called the gastrocnemius. Stand with arms against a wall in a tandem stance with the ankle to be stretched in the rear. Keep the rear foot flat and the rear



knee straight. Slowly sink your hips forward and flatten your rear foot into the floor. This stretch should be felt in the meat of your calf muscle. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds for a count of 3.



3. Standing bent leg calf stretch - This exercise targets a muscle deeper in the leg that in most cases is the main culprit of limited ankle motion called the soleus. This is the same as the exercise above but with the back knee bent. This stretch should be felt at the base of the heel. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds for a count of 3.

4. Kneeling ankle pulses with a towel

This is a self mobilization exercise for the ankle joint. This exercise is simple yet effective! Begin by kneeling on the ground with the tight ankle in front. Wrap a towel around the front of the



ankle (make sure the towel is between the two bones on either side of your ankle). Pull the towel towards your butt so the towel is pulling on the front of your ankle. Then slowly shift your body weight forward and backward keeping the front heel down.

We recommend pulsating back and forth with no hold. It is more effective if this is done with the front ankle on a step or a 5-7 inch elevated surface as this will better target the ankle joint! Complete for 30 repetitions.



5. Big toe and bent knee stretch

This exercise will stretch the plantar fascia and the Soleus muscle at the same time! Everyone forgets about the importance of not only first toe mobility in normal ambulation but also the importance it has on limited ankle motion and Achilles tendinopathy.

The plantar fascia connects indirectly to the Achilles tendon through fascial lines and is one of the main contributors to ankle stiffness. Begin by placing the toes of the stiff ankle on the wall, bend the front knee and lean forward into the wall, a stretch should be felt in the sole of the foot and the base of the heel. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds for a count of 3.



These are exercises that can be easily done at home while watching TV. The ankle joint is the strongest joint biomechanically in our body. Just think, it can lift your whole body weight up with relatively small muscles! If the ankle is too stiff to move the body, the body will adapt and those forces will be applied elsewhere to other joints; that are not as well equipped to deal with the load applied to them.

If you have any questions or these exercises are too difficult/painful to perform do not hesitate to email us. We are here to help you feel better through movement!



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TBS: Osteo – Because Bone Structure Matters

Osteoporosis is a condition characterized by the weakening of bones, leading to an increased risk of fractures. Early detection and management of osteoporosis are crucial for preventing fractures and maintaining bone health. One innovative technology that has been integrated into imaging services for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis is TBS iN Insight™.

TBS iN Insight™ is a software solution designed to assess bone microarchitecture, providing valuable insights into bone quality beyond what traditional bone density measurements can offer. TBS stands for Trabecular Bone Score, which refers to the evaluation of the microarchitecture of trabecular bone, the spongy bone tissue that makes up the interior of bones.

This technology enhances the screening process for osteoporosis and fracture risk by offering a more comprehensive understanding of bone health. Traditional methods, such as Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) scans, primarily focus on bone mineral density. While bone mineral density is important in assessing bone strength, it doesn't provide a complete picture of bone quality.

TBS iN Insight™ works by analyzing the texture and pattern of trabecular bone in the spine. Trabecular bone is vital for maintaining bone strength, and changes in its microarchitecture can indicate osteoporosis-related issues. The software generates a TBS score, which is then used with bone mineral density measurements to assess overall bone health.

The integration of TBS iN Insight™ into imaging services brings several advantages to the table:

1. Improved Fracture Risk Prediction: By assessing trabecular bone microarchitecture, TBS iN Insight™ enhances the fracture risk prediction beyond what traditional methods can achieve. This additional information is valuable for healthcare providers in identifying individuals at a higher risk of fractures.

2. Personalized Treatment Approaches: Understanding bone mineral density and trabecular bone quality allows for more personalized approaches to osteoporosis management. Healthcare providers can tailor interventions based on a more comprehensive patient bone health assessment.



Ask your medical provider about Advanced Bone Densitometry with TBS!



50% of patients at risk of fracture are potentially missed by bone densitometry alone! You need additional information about your bone quality! This can be assessed by TBS.

3. Early Detection: TBS iN Insight™ contributes to the early detection of changes in bone microarchitecture, enabling proactive measures to be taken before significant bone loss occurs. Early intervention is crucial in preventing fractures and maintaining overall bone health.

In addition to the exciting integration of TBS iN Insight™ into our imaging services for osteoporosis diagnosis and management, some key points enhance the overall patient experience and accessibility to this advanced technology:

- **Availability Across Locations:** TBS iN Insight™ will be available at all three of our locations by mid-December. This widespread implementation ensures that patients can conveniently access this innovative screening technology, making it a seamless part of their healthcare journey.

- **Patient Empowerment:** To maximize the benefits of TBS iN Insight™, we encourage patients to proactively ask for TBS when scheduling their annual Bone Density/DEXA exams. This prompts a discussion between patients and healthcare providers about the relevance of TBS in their specific bone health assessment.

- **Insurance Coverage:** Good news for patients—insurance is covering the cost of TBS iN Insight™. While we have taken steps to facilitate insurance coverage, we still encourage patients to inquire with their insurance providers to ensure a clear understanding of the coverage details.

- **Efficiency and Safety:** Integrating TBS iN Insight™ into the screening process comes with no additional time requirements for the exam. Patients can expect the same efficiency level during their Bone Density/DEXA scans while gaining the added benefits of TBS iN Insight™. Importantly, there is no increase in radiation exposure associated with the inclusion of TBS iN Insight™, ensuring the safety of the screening process.

By disseminating this information, we aim to empower patients to participate in their bone health actively. The ease of access across our locations,

insurance coverage, and the seamless integration of TBS iN Insight™ into existing screening procedures underscores our commitment to providing comprehensive and patient-friendly healthcare services.

As always, readers are encouraged to discuss the inclusion of TBS iN Insight™ in their screenings with their healthcare providers. This collaborative approach ensures individuals receive personalized guidance based on their unique health needs and circumstances.

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Navigating Holiday Travel with Hearing Loss: Tips for a Seamless Journey

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

The holiday season is a time of joy and togetherness, often involving travel to be with loved ones. However, for individuals with hearing loss, navigating the hustle and bustle of holiday trips can present unique challenges. From bustling airports to family gatherings, here are some strategies to ensure a smooth and enjoyable travel experience:

1. Plan Ahead: Before embarking on your journey, plan meticulously. Research your travel routes, accommodations, and any hearing-impaired services available. Notify airlines or transport services in advance about your needs; many provide accommodations for passengers with hearing loss.

2. Pack Essentials: Bring spare hearing aid batteries, a cleaning kit, and any other necessary accessories. Having extras on hand can prevent disruptions caused by equipment failure.

3. Utilize Technology: Embrace technology to enhance your travel experience. Apps offering real-time captioning or speech-to-text services can assist during conversations or announcements, ensuring you catch every detail.

4. Inform Travel Companions: Educate your travel companions about your hearing loss and effective communication techniques. Encourage them to face you directly when speaking and to speak clearly without shouting.

5. Prep for Security Checks: Inform security personnel about your hearing devices before going through screenings. Request visual cues if necessary during security procedures.

6. Stay Connected: Stay connected with loved ones during the journey. Utilize texting or messaging apps to communicate important details or changes in plans.

7. Choose Accommodating Destinations: Opt for destinations and accommodations that prioritize accessibility and cater to individuals with hearing impairments. Many hotels and venues offer hearing-impaired services or facilities.

8. Advocate for Yourself: Don't hesitate to advocate for your needs. Whether it's requesting captioning for in-flight entertainment or asking for an assistive listening device at a venue, advocating ensures a more inclusive experience.

9. Be Mindful of Noise Levels: Holiday gatherings can be noisy affairs. Position yourself in quieter areas or wear noise-canceling headphones to manage overwhelming noise levels.

10. Enjoy the Moment: Amidst all the planning and precautions, remember to relax and enjoy the holiday moments. Embrace the spirit of the season and cherish the time spent with friends and family.



By preparing in advance, leveraging technology, and advocating for your needs, individuals with hearing loss can make holiday travel a smoother and more enjoyable experience. The key is to plan, communicate effectively, and make use of available resources to ensure a memorable and stress-free holiday season.

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Noël Crosby
Doctor of Audiology



Karen Draper
Doctor of Audiology

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.

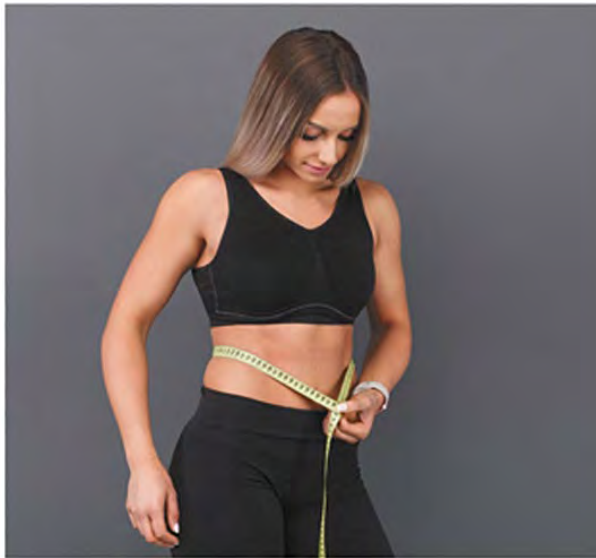
Precision Tracking with 3D Body Scanning

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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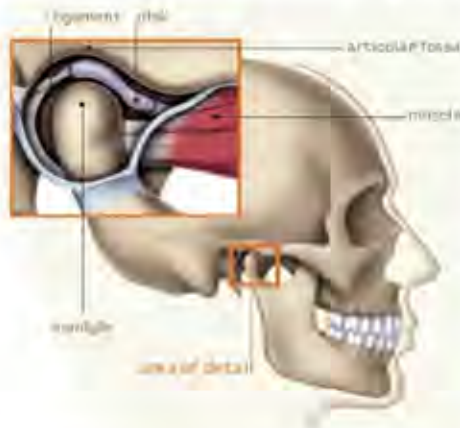
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The Daily "Grind"

By Dr. Joseph Farag

Too much stress can contribute to a wide range of health problems. From a dental perspective, stress often plays a role in the development of Temporomandibular Disorders, or TMD. Grinding of teeth which causes headaches, jaw soreness and pain, among many other symptoms can be exacerbated during times of high stress. The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is the hinge joint that connects the lower jaw to the temporal bone of the skull, which is immediately in front of the ear on the side of your head. The cause of TMD is not clear, but dentists believe that symptoms arise from problems with the muscles of the jaw. Severe cases can be caused by injury to the jaw. In more common cases, grinding or clenching of the teeth puts a lot of pressure on the TMJ and people feel tooth sensitivity, earaches, and neck tension and pain.



Treatment Options

If stress is causing you to grind your teeth, ask your doctor or dentist about options to reduce your stress. Also, avoid foods and drinks that contain caffeine, alcohol, and do not chew gum. Relax your jaw muscles at night by holding a warm washcloth against your cheek. When these

options do not relieve your pain, your dentist can offer a variety of treatment modalities for your specific case. An occlusal guard, often called a nightguard, can be fabricated by your dentist to allow your muscles to rest and protect your teeth from further wear.

Patients who present with TMD should also have an occlusal analysis

This helps determine if there are any bite discrepancies that may be corrected with a simple procedure to reshape how the teeth come together when you bite. Medications such as over the counter ibuprofen are helpful because they reduce inflammation to aid in the healing process. Occasionally, a mild muscle relaxant may be prescribed for a few days or weeks to help relieve pain. Surgery for TMD should only be considered after all other treatment options have been tried and you are still experiencing severe, persistent pain.

Relaxation Techniques May Help Alleviate TMJ Symptoms

Simply becoming more aware of tension-related habits — clenching your jaw or grinding your teeth — will help you reduce their frequency. Because stress can contribute to TMJ disorders, relaxation techniques like yoga, meditation and deep breathing may also help alleviate TMJ symptoms.

This season, survive the holiday grind with a little planning, prioritizing and perhaps a trip to your dentist. To learn more about TMD or to schedule an appointment, please call Dr. Joseph Farag at Port Charlotte Dentalcare, 941-764-9555.



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MRI vs EMG

WHICH IS MORE ACCURATE?

By Dr. Scott Bradley PT, DPT, ECS

An electromyography (EMG) is a diagnostic test used to detect the nerve impulses sent to the muscles and sensory input to the skin. EMG is done by physicians, neurologists and physical therapists with a electromyograph. The electromyograph tool picks up the specific action potential of the nerve by inserting

Review of Literature

Electroneuromyography has long been considered the “gold standard” test to determine nerve injury and function. In recent years, it has become more and more popular to attempt to predict nerve injury by the use of MRI. This paper reviews the published literature to compare the abilities of MRI and ENMG in predicting several common nerve injuries.

Radiculopathies

In 1993, Buirski et al. used magnetic resonance imaging to evaluate abnormal lumbar disc's in 115 symptomatic patients and 63 symptom-free control patients. This study tried to determine which abnormal disc's would be painful using MRI. Results showed no significant difference between the two groups. In 1998, Saifuddin et al. tried to determine the sensitivity of MRI to painful annular tears. They found that MRI had a specificity of 95.2%, however, showed only 26.7% sensitivity to painful annular tears. Toyokura et al. found EMG/NCS to have 70% sensitivity to radiculopathies, but no specificity was mentioned. Additional studies, with Ito et al. and Horton et al. (8) further stated that MRI is a poor predictor of cause for patient's symptoms.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Jarvik et al. showed that MRI had a sensitivity of 96% for determining carpal tunnel syndrome, however demonstrated a specificity of only 33 to 38%. Deryani et al. found a 33% sensitivity of MRI in predicting carpal tunnel syndrome. No specificity was mentioned. This group determined that MRI was most helpful in determining cases of suspicious clinical and electrophysiological diagnoses. Stevens published a paper in 1998 in which he determined conventional nerve studies had approximately a 90% sensitivity and a 90% specificity for predicting carpal tunnel syndrome. In 2003, Chang et al. evaluated the sensitivities of the most commonly used nerve conduction tests. They determined the sensitivity for median to ulnar motor



comparison to be 70%. Additionally, they found sensitivities of 68.8% for median motor distal latency, 73.8% for median sensory distal latency, and 77.5% for second lumbrical to second dorsal interosseous comparison. Furthermore, they determined that a combination of these tests increased the sensitivity for predicting carpal tunnel syndrome to 91.9%.

Cubital Tunnel

Grant et al. performed a small pilot study in 2002 evaluating 21 ulnar nerves. They found that MRI had a 100% sensitivity in determining cubital tunnel however did not determine specificity. They also determined that standard nerve conduction studies provided a sensitivity to cubital tunnel syndrome of 71% preoperatively and 90% sensitivity intraoperatively. Many other studies have reported electrophysiological testing sensitivities of 20% to 100% for determining ulnar neuropathy at the elbow.

The Future of MRI and Nerve Injury

Bendszus et al. determined that MRI can detect changes in denervated muscle within 24 hours post injury. Aagaard et al. demonstrated the potential of MRI to noninvasively differentiate between axonotmetic and neurotmetic nerve injuries.

Conclusions

While MRI has made significant inroads with its ability to identify peripheral nerve injury, electrophysiological testing continues to be the “gold standard.” MRI is a relatively new area of medicine and has been used clinically in medicine for only two and a half decades. As further research is conducted and improved techniques for evaluating anatomical structures are developed, MRI will become more commonly used for evaluating nerve injuries because of its noninvasive nature. Perhaps the defining limitation for MRI in evaluating peripheral nerve injury is its inability to provide more than a visual image of anatomical structures and cannot truly evaluate nerve function.



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APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE - RULES

By James W. Mallonee

Florida is liberal when it comes to who can serve as the personal representative of an individual's estate following their death. The law concerning the appointment is initially based on whether a Will exists or does not (intestate). A decedent's Will takes precedence, but if there is no Will (intestate) then Florida's statutes are the driving force that assist in selecting a personal representative to manage a decedent's estate.

NO WILL: If the decedent dies without a Last Will and Testament, the court will look to see who has preference in appointment when selecting a personal representative. Preference in appointment simply means that class of persons who has the legal right to serve as personal representative. The first person to receive preference in appointment is the surviving spouse (if any). If there is no surviving spouse, then the next person with preference is a person who is selected by a majority of the persons who have an interest in the estate. Those persons making the selection are usually beneficiaries of the estate who have consanguinity with the decedent. In addition, a guardian may also serve provided the Ward selected is an heir of the estate. In the unique situation where there is no heir requesting appointment, the court may appoint a person who is capable of handling the estate and is a citizen of Florida.

A WILL EXISTS: Naturally, the person nominated in a decedent's Will has preference in appointment and if such person is not alive or refuses to serve, then in such event, the secondary person nominated



in the Will can serve. If all of the nominated personal representatives refuse to serve, then in such event, the person selected by a majority of the beneficiaries of the estate may serve in such role. Should the decedent not have named a personal representative, the court may select one of the devisee's who in its opinion is best qualified to serve in such role.

NOT QUALIFIED: In some cases, a personal representative may not be qualified to serve who has been nominated as personal representative. Examples might be a person with no relationship to the decedent at the time of death and/or is not a Florida resident. In addition, those persons who were convicted of a felony, are mentally or physically unable to perform or is under the age of 18 years of age may not serve. The law does differentiate between a person who has been charged with a felony and those convicted. It specifically uses the word convicted, thus you may be charged with a crime, but until it results in conviction, the individual can continue to serve.

In the case of ARAGUEL v. BRYAN, the decedent's Will appointed Jerry D. Sanders as personal representative. The decedent's son, Lesley Ladon Bryan, objected which resulted in a hearing on who would be appointed personal representative. The Court after listening to the parties arguments determined that Mr. Saunders was eligible to serve using the factors listed above. Mr. Saunders was appointed personal Representative; the court noted the distinctions between a testate and intestate estate with regard to the rules when appointing a personal representative.

In the present case, the court fell back on the words of the statute and not on the emotions of the beneficiaries. Mr. Saunders was a Florida resident; it did not matter what his relationship was to the decedent as-long-as he was not a felon and was alive, he could serve as personal representative.

The message to learn is to read the decedent's Last Will and Testament and see if it fits in the above paragraphs, and if not, then seek out the attorney of your choice to discuss alternatives.

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

James W. Mallonee, P.A.

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SLEEP SOLUTIONS: How Your Pharmacist Can Help You Achieve Better Rest

By Justin Ceravolo, PharmD

December is Better Sleep Month, a crucial time to focus on one of the most fundamental aspects of our health—quality sleep. In our fast-paced, always-connected world, achieving restful and consistent sleep has become increasingly challenging for many individuals. Fortunately, your local pharmacist can be an invaluable partner in your journey towards improved sleep hygiene and overall well-being.

Sleep is not merely a luxury but a critical component of health maintenance. Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to numerous health complications, including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, weakened immune function, mental health challenges, and decreased cognitive performance. Recognizing the importance of addressing sleep issues, pharmacists have evolved from being medication dispensers to comprehensive health consultants.

One of the primary ways pharmacists can assist you is through personalized medication reviews. Many individuals are unaware that certain medications, including over-the-counter drugs, can significantly impact sleep patterns. Your pharmacist can conduct a thorough review of your current medications, identifying potential sleep disruptors and suggesting alternatives or complementary approaches to minimize nighttime disturbances.

For those struggling with occasional or chronic insomnia, pharmacists can recommend appropriate over-the-counter sleep aids. They can guide you through various options, explaining the pros and cons of different products, potential side effects, and proper usage. Whether you're considering melatonin supplements, herbal remedies like valerian root, or temporary sleep medications, a pharmacist can provide expert advice tailored to your specific needs.

Beyond medication, pharmacists can offer comprehensive lifestyle and sleep hygiene recommendations. They can provide practical strategies for establishing consistent sleep routines, creating



optimal sleep environments, and managing stress—all crucial elements in achieving restorative sleep. From suggesting relaxation techniques to recommending sleep-tracking apps, their guidance extends far beyond pharmaceutical interventions.

For individuals with underlying health conditions that affect sleep, such as sleep apnea, anxiety, or chronic pain, pharmacists can be instrumental in developing holistic management strategies. They can collaborate with your healthcare providers, help you understand potential interactions between sleep medications and other treatments, and offer insights into managing multiple health concerns simultaneously.

Many pharmacists are also trained to recognize when sleep issues might indicate more serious health problems. They can help you determine whether your sleep challenges warrant further medical investigation and provide referrals to appropriate healthcare specialists.

This Better Sleep Month, take a proactive approach to your sleep health. Schedule a consultation with your local pharmacist, view them as a trusted health ally, and work together to develop a comprehensive strategy for achieving the restorative sleep your body and mind deserve.

Remember, quality sleep is not a luxury—it's a fundamental pillar of good health. Your pharmacist is ready to help you unlock the secrets to better, more restful nights.

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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It's A Wonderful Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Every year around this time the old classic Christmas movies start coming on television. It is easy to start a conversation at work by simply asking, "So, what's your favorite Christmas movie?" Mine is Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Some of you might be able to relate to George Bailey this holiday season—lost, confused, stressed out, or at the end of your rope. Perhaps you are even thinking that it would be much easier to die than to go on living as you are.

Perhaps for you life isn't a joy right now. Maybe the debts are high and funds are low. It might even be difficult for you to even enjoy your family as you know you should. You may be wondering, "Is it really possible to live a wonderful life?"

I think the idea of a wonderful life is not that you can attain a wonderful life, but that it is an attitude that results from having certain issues settled in your life.

Truthfully, no one's life is wonderful—even Christ's life was filled with pain, hurt, loneliness, rejection, and sorrow. It is your attitude that determines how you "feel" about your life. You are the one responsible for settling the issues in your life and having an attitude of wonderment. So, what are the issues that need to be settled?

The first issue is to determine **what you are going to love**. To have a wonderful life, you start by having an attitude of love toward God and others. I say this first because where you choose to direct your love is going to affect every other area of your life. Love is a decision we make to place a high value on someone or something.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. Jesus died to prove how much He loved us. God desires more than anything else to have a loving relationship with His creation. We were created to love God and other people. Maybe this Christmas it would be good for you to find a person or family in need and help them by buying some food or gifts. If you want to feel loved... start by loving others.

The second issue to settle is... **how am I going to live?** To have a wonderful life, you need an attitude of joy. This attitude deals with how you look at life. Are you a positive person or a negative person? If you are a person with joy, it simply means that you are cheerful. Over 350 times the Bible talks about us having a spirit of joy or rejoicing.

Joy isn't a feeling that is produced only when good things happen. Joy is the attitude by which we look at the things that happen to us and then respond in a way that lets everyone know we are trusting in God's grace in spite of our circumstances. Remember the disciples in the Bible... they had many negative things happen to them, yet in spite of it all, they had joy.

I've heard it said that you don't feel your way into an action but rather act your way into a feeling. If you want to be a joyful person... start acting joyful around others and you will most likely begin to genuinely feel joyful.



The third issue to settle is...**who are you going to help?** If you want to have a wonderful life, you've got to get beyond serving yourself, and start serving others. Isn't that the lesson that George Bailey learned? His life was wonderful because of all the people he was able to help in his lifetime.

When Clarence showed him what life would have been like had he never been born he realized that he really was making a difference in the world! His life did have purpose! Mr. Potter only cared about making money. Violet only cared about pleasure. But George understood a greater truth: life is better when you are working to make other people's lives better.

Understanding these things can make all the difference in the world. You are not here to fall in love with money and things—you're here to love God. You're not here to point out all the things that are wrong with the world—you're here to spread the joy that God has placed in your heart. You're not here to serve yourself—you're here to serve God and others—thus making a huge difference in the world.



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