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Respect from one Doctor to another... Dr. Oleg Vyrva tells of his appreciation for Dr. Ana Scopu

By Dr. Ana Scopu

espite being an orthopedic surgeon who regularly performs complex surgeries, I've never been particularly fond of dentistry! I've faced

my fair share of demanding surgeries to remove huge tumors and replace joints, but dental procedures have always made me anxious. I dislike the numb feeling from anesthesia and the discomfort that follows dental work. Yet, as a doctor, I know the importance of oral health in maintaining overall well-being.

In today's circumstances, with my home country, Ukraine, in a state of war, my ability to receive regular dental care became nearly impossible. My life now involves constant travel and daily stress, with limited access to consistent medical support. So, it was no surprise that while spending Christmas in Naples at the end of 2022, I suddenly found myself with severe tooth pain and an urgent need for dental help. And although I wasn't thrilled at the thought of going to a dentist, I had no choice.

I remembered seeing a large ad for Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry along US-41, so I called them up. To my surprise, they managed to fit me in within two hours. I was immediately struck by the efficiency and professionalism of the staff. After a quick and thorough examination, Dr. Ana Scopu and her assistant, Laura Lee, quickly diagnosed the problem. Dr. Scopu took the time to explain everything clearly and ensure I was as comfortable as possible.

Despite my original expectation that the tooth would need to be removed, Dr. Scopu suggested an attempt to save it with a crown instead. I agreed, thrilled to keep my tooth, and was even more impressed when Dr. Scopu accommodated my unique situation, knowing that my schedule involved frequent travel, work commitments, and limited time in the U.S. Remarkably, they made the crown in just one day, which both surprised and relieved me. Every appointment was set up around my needs, with flexibility that felt like a true luxury.

About seven or eight months later, I returned for a follow-up. Unfortunately, the tooth's condition hadn't improved, and we decided to proceed with an extraction and implant. Dr. Scopu, along with the Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry team, organized a comprehensive examination and developed a clear, step-by-step treatment plan, complete with a convenient schedule for my follow-ups. Over the past year and a half, I've continued to visit the clinic regularly – and believe it or not, I even began looking forward to my appointments! Dr. Scopu and her team created such



a friendly, welcoming atmosphere that I began to feel at home. They even played my favorite soft rock music during procedures – a small but wonderful touch.

Dr. Scopu and her colleagues performed nearly every dental procedure I needed. Together, we completed the implant, applied veneers to my damaged incisors, and placed several fillings. Her team expertly treated my root canals, and I now regularly receive periodontal care as part of my treatment plan. It's no exaggeration to say I received the full spectrum of dental care, all thanks to the skilled hands of Dr. Ana Scopu.

An interesting discovery emerged from one of our conversations: Dr. Scopu and I both completed specialized training at the same institution – the University of Münster, Germany. I had undergone a fellowship there in orthopedic oncology, and Dr. Scopu had earned her master's degree in Specialized Orthodontics. This connection only strengthened our bond.

As a doctor, I have a habit of asking countless questions about each procedure, and Dr. Scopu was always ready with clear, precise answers. She understood my need to

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grasp every detail, from the biological integration of the dental implant to the likelihood of complications. Her readiness to explain these complexities demonstrated her high level of expertise and deepened my respect for her even more.

Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry exemplifies modern dentistry at its best. The management is outstanding, the staff is remarkable at every level, and the warm, family-like atmosphere is inviting. Thanks to the incredible professionalism of Dr. Ana Scopu and her team, I have overcome my fear of dentists. Today, my smile is bright and happy, and Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry has become not just a dental clinic to me, but a place I can genuinely call a second family.

Originally from Serbia, Dr. Ana Scopu moved to the United States with her family in 1990. In 2006, Dr. Scopu combined her artistic talent with her academic aptitude to become a dentist. Dr. Scopu struggled with dental fear at a young age due to a childhood memory of seeing another child have teeth extracted at the dentist. As a result of this experience, Dr. Scopu can empathize and comfort patients dealing with dental anxiety. She focuses on developing trusting relationships with her patients to minimize their fear.

Having received extensive training in orthodontics, Dr. Scopu understands the importance of proper alignment in both healthy oral function and aesthetics. She loves to combine orthodontic and cosmetic treatment to restore optimal function while creating beautiful smiles that truly impact her patients' lives.



Welcoming Dr. Elizabeth Arguelles: Redefining Breast Health Care in Collier County

Arguelles brings a wealth of experience to her role and embodies our mission to deliver compassionate and cutting-edge healthcare.

A Leader in Advanced Breast Surgery

Dr. Arguelles is renowned for her expertise in treating both benign and malignant breast conditions. Her dedication to enhancing patient outcomes has led her to achieve Hidden Scar Certification, making her the first breast surgeon in Collier County to offer this advanced technique. The Hidden Scar approach enables surgeons to remove breast cancer or benign tumors through small, strategically placed incisions, minimizing visible scarring. Patients benefit from this state-of-theart technique, which preserves not only their health but also their confidence in their appearance.

In addition to Hidden Scar surgery, Dr. Arguelles' training in oncoplastic surgery includes techniques that prioritize both oncologic outcomes and cosmetic considerations, ensuring patients receive personalized, comprehensive care. This approach underscores her commitment to holistic treatment, addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of recovery, while collaborating with colleagues specializing in plastic and reconstructive surgery when needed.

A Distinguished Career

Dr. Arguelles' career reflects her dedication to advancing the field of breast surgery. She is an active member of The American Society of Breast Surgeons (ASBS), an organization that ensures rigorous training and the highest standards of care for its members. Through her involvement, she remains at the forefront of advancements in breast surgery and patient care.

Her impact extends beyond the operating room. In Connecticut, Dr. Arguelles was instrumental in establishing the Lawrence + Memorial Breast Health Center, guiding it from concept to full accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC). This accomplishment reflects her leadership and her commitment to ensuring patients have access to comprehensive, accredited breast care services.

As a fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS), Dr. Arguelles consistently demonstrates her commitment to clinical excellence and patient advocacy. These achievements make her a trusted partner for patients navigating breast health concerns and a respected leader among her peers.

A Personalized Approach to Care

What truly sets Dr. Arguelles apart is her personalized approach to patient care. She understands that each patient's journey is unique and works closely with them to develop customized treatment plans that address their specific needs and goals. From the moment patients meet Dr. Arguelles, they experience her compassionate demeanor and unwavering dedication to their well-being.

Whether addressing a benign condition or guiding a patient through a cancer diagnosis, Dr. Arguelles emphasizes education and empowerment. She takes the time to ensure her patients are fully informed, helping them feel confident and supported in making decisions about their health.



A Commitment to the Collier County Community

Dr. Arguelles' arrival at Magnolia Breast Center marks a new chapter for breast health care in Collier County. Her expertise and innovative techniques provide patients with access to advanced treatment options, supported by a team of highly skilled professionals.

Her practice at Magnolia Breast Center is supported by a multidisciplinary team dedicated to delivering comprehensive breast health services. From risk assessment and genetic counseling to treatment and survivorship care, Magnolia Breast Center is committed to being a trusted partner in every step of a patient's breast health journey.

Balancing Work and Family

Outside of her professional achievements, Dr. Arguelles enjoys spending time with her family, including cheering on her boys at their sports games and supporting their musical pursuits such as guitar. In her downtime, she loves reading, crafting, and creating handmade projects—activities that reflect her creative and nurturing nature. This balance between her personal and professional life reflects her approachable demeanor and her dedication to meaningful connections with patients and colleagues alike.

Transforming Breast Care in Collier County

Dr. Arguelles' arrival at Magnolia Breast Center is a testament to our commitment to providing the best in breast health care. With her advanced surgical techniques, extensive experience, and patient-centered philosophy, she is poised to make a profound impact on the lives of patients throughout the community.

We invite you to learn more about Dr. Arguelles and the comprehensive breast health services available at Magnolia Breast Center. To schedule an appointment or for more information, visit magnoliabc.com or call us at 239.758.PINK(7465).



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THE USE OF ROBOTICS IN BRAIN AND SPINE SURGERY:

Revolutionizing Precision and Patient Outcomes

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

dvancements in medical technology have transformed the way surgeries are performed, with robotics emerging as one of the most significant innovations in the field. In particular, the use of robotic systems in brain and spine surgery has revolutionized the precision, efficiency, and safety of complex procedures. These technologies are not only enhancing the capabilities of surgeons but also improving patient outcomes, reducing recovery times, and minimizing the risk of complications.

The Role of Robotics in Brain and Spine Surgery

Both brain and spine surgeries involve intricate procedures where precision is critical. The human nervous system is delicate and highly sensitive, requiring surgeons to navigate through narrow spaces and avoid damaging surrounding tissues. Robotics offers a solution to these challenges by providing enhanced visualization, greater accuracy, and improved control during procedures.

One of the most significant advancements in robotic-assisted surgery is the development of minimally invasive techniques. Traditionally, brain and spine surgeries often required large incisions, which could lead to longer recovery times and increased risk of infection. Robotic systems allow surgeons to perform these complex surgeries through smaller incisions, reducing trauma to the body and enhancing recovery rates.

Robotic Systems in Brain Surgery

In Neurosurgery, robotic systems have gained prominence in procedures like brain tumor removal, aneurysms, hemorrhagic stroke, deep brain stimulation (DBS), and epilepsy surgery. The complexity of these surgeries often involves navigating the brain's intricate anatomy while avoiding critical structures, such as blood vessels and nerves. Robotics provides a level of precision that human hands alone cannot match.

The ExcelsiusGPS robotic system provides a 3D high-definition view of the surgical area and allows for precise, controlled movements of instruments, even in challenging locations. This system is particularly valuable in guiding surgeons during brain tumor resections, as well as in procedures like stereotactic biopsies and DBS implantations. It uses a combination of pre-operative imaging and real-time navigation to map the brain and assist surgeons in achieving accurate and optimal results. This robotic assistance allows for smaller incisions, less tissue disruption, and a more precise removal of tumors, which ultimately improves the chances of preserving healthy brain tissue.

Robotic Systems in Spine Surgery

Spine surgery is another area where robotics is making a transformative impact. Spine procedures, including spinal fusions, disc replacements, and scoliosis correction, often

require the surgeon to align the spine with millimeter precision. Traditional methods of spinal surgery rely on the surgeon's skill and experience to manually guide instruments into place, which can be challenging due to the complexity of the spinal column and the surrounding nerves.

The ExcelsiusGPS robotic system has become a game-changer in the field of spine surgery. This system integrate advanced imaging and navigation capabilities with robotic assistance to enhance the surgeon's precision during the procedure. It provides real-time feedback based on 3D imaging and enables the surgeon to place screws and other implants with unparalleled accuracy.

One of the primary benefits of robotic spine surgery is the ability to perform minimally invasive procedures. Surgeons can plan and execute the surgery with increased accuracy, whether they are performing a simple disc replacement or a more complex spinal deformity correction. Using smaller incisions and precise robotic control, surgeons can access the spine with less disruption to surrounding tissues. This translates into reduced blood loss, shorter hospital stays, and faster recovery times. Additionally, the reduced risk of complications, such as nerve damage or misplacement of screws, enhances patient outcomes.

Advantages of Robotic-Assisted Brain and Spine Surgery The use of robotics in brain and spine surgery offers several key advantages:

- Enhanced Precision: Robotic systems provide a level of precision that is difficult to achieve with human hands alone. The ability to make minute adjustments and operate with extreme accuracy is crucial in delicate areas like the brain and spine.
- Minimally Invasive Techniques: With smaller incisions, robotic systems reduce trauma to the body, leading to less pain, reduced risk of infection, and faster recovery times for patients.
- 3. Better Visualization: Robotic platforms often come with advanced imaging systems, such as 3D visualization and real-time tracking, which allow surgeons to view the surgical site in greater detail and make informed decisions during the procedure.
- 4. Reduced Risk of Complications: By improving the accuracy of surgical procedures, robotics can reduce the likelihood of complications, such as nerve damage, blood loss, or misplacement of surgical instruments.
- 5. Improved Patient Outcomes: Minimally invasive surgery, faster recovery times, and reduced risks of complications all contribute to better long-term patient outcomes, including shorter hospital stays, less postoperative pain, and quicker returns to normal activities.

The Future of Robotics in Neurosurgery

While robotic systems have already demonstrated significant benefits in brain and spine surgery, the future promises even more innovations. As technology continues to evolve, we can expect robots to become more autonomous, with artificial intelligence (AI) playing an increasing role in decision-making and surgical planning. AI-powered robotic systems may assist surgeons in predicting outcomes, optimizing surgical approaches, and personalizing treatment plans for each patient.

Moreover, the integration of robotics with other emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and advanced imaging techniques, will further enhance the precision and effectiveness of brain and spine surgeries. Surgeons may one day use AR to visualize the patient's anatomy in 3D during the procedure, allowing for even more accurate navigation and real-time adjustments.

Conclusion - The integration of robotics into brain and spine surgery has undoubtedly transformed the landscape of these complex procedures. With its ability to enhance precision, reduce recovery times, and minimize risks, robotic-assisted surgery is improving patient outcomes and shaping the future of Neurosurgery. As technology continues to evolve, the role of robotics in healthcare will only expand, offering even greater opportunities for innovation and advancement in brain and spine surgery.

About Amanda Sacino MD, PhD

Dr. Sacino completed her neurosurgical training at Johns Hopkins Hospital. During that time she pursued extensive training in brain, spine, and peripheral nerve surgery. From there, she completed two spine fellowships at Johns Hopkins Hospital and Swedish Neuroscience Institute. She trained under Dr. Nicholas Theodore, the inventor of the Globus ExcelsiusGPS robot. She was present during the first robotic spine and DBS surgeries at Johns Hopkins Hospital and trained extensively with the robot for both brain and spine surgeries. She is in the top 1% internationally for number of robotic cases completed. She has also written research papers and given lectures on robotics for Neurosurgery. Her goal is to provide patients with case-specific solutions so they have all the information and options they need to make informed decisions.



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Sclerotherapy: The Effective Solution to Eliminate Unsightly Veins Before Summer Arrives

clerotherapy is a minimally invasive medical procedure that has revolutionized the treatment of unsightly and sometimes painful venous conditions. This specialized technique offers patients an effective solution for addressing varicose and spider veins, providing both cosmetic and medical benefits.

Understanding Venous Conditions

Varicose and spider veins are common vascular issues that affect millions of people worldwide. Varicose veins are enlarged, twisted veins that typically appear blue or dark purple and often protrude from the skin's surface, most commonly in the legs. Spider veins are smaller, web-like networks of blood vessels visible just beneath the skin's surface. While often considered a cosmetic concern, these conditions can sometimes cause discomfort, pain, and potential health complications.

The Sclerotherapy Procedure

During sclerotherapy, a skilled medical professional injects a special solution directly into the problematic veins. This solution, called a sclerosing agent, causes the vein walls to irritate, collapse, and eventually fade from view. The procedure is typically performed in a doctor's office and requires no anesthesia, making it a convenient option for many patients.

The process begins with the patient lying down, and the treatment area cleaned and prepared. Using a fine needle, the physician carefully injects the sclerosing solution into the targeted veins. Patients may experience mild discomfort or a slight burning sensation during the injection, but the procedure is generally well-tolerated.

Benefits and Advantages

Sclerotherapy offers numerous benefits for patients struggling with venous conditions:

- 1. Minimally Invasive: Unlike surgical alternatives, sclerotherapy requires no incisions and minimal recovery time.
- 2. Cosmetic Improvement: The procedure effectively reduces the appearance of unsightly veins, improving skin aesthetics.
- 3. Symptom Relief: Many patients experience reduced pain, swelling, and discomfort associated with varicose veins.
- 4. Quick Procedure: Most treatment sessions last between 15 to 45 minutes.



5. High Success Rate: The majority of treated veins respond positively to the procedure.

Considerations and Preparation

Before undergoing sclerotherapy, patients must consult with a qualified healthcare provider. A comprehensive medical evaluation helps determine the most appropriate treatment approach. Candidates typically include individuals with:

- · Visible varicose or spider veins
- No significant underlying vascular diseases
- · Good overall health
- Realistic expectations about treatment outcomes

Potential patients should inform their doctor about any medications, allergies, or existing health conditions. Certain individuals, such as pregnant women or those with specific circulatory issues, may not be suitable candidates for the procedure.

Recovery and Results

Following the procedure, patients can typically resume normal activities immediately. However, medical professionals often recommend wearing compression stockings for a specified period to support healing and optimize results. Some temporary side effects may include:

- Mild bruising
- Slight swelling
- Temporary skin discoloration around treated areas

Most patients require multiple treatment sessions to achieve optimal results, with improvements becoming progressively visible over several weeks to months.

Choosing a Qualified Professional

Selecting an experienced, Board Certified Physician and Physician Assistants specializing in vascular treatments is crucial for successful sclerotherapy. Patients should research potential providers, review credentials, and discuss their specific concerns during initial consultations.

Conclusion

Sclerotherapy represents a sophisticated, patient-friendly approach to addressing venous conditions. By offering a combination of cosmetic improvement and potential symptom relief, this procedure continues to gain popularity among individuals seeking effective vascular treatments.



Board Certified Physician Assistant
Aesthetic Medicine

Christina Everswick Espineta is a Board-Certified Physician Assistant with multi-specialty experience in Aesthetic Medicine, Hormone Replacement Therapy, Family and Emergency Medicine. Christina graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's in Health Science from Florida International University. She went on to earn her master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies at Nova Southeastern University.

Christina began her career as a Physician Assistant in the emergency department. After dedicating many years to emergency medicine, Christina craved patient continuity and found her home in family medicine. During this journey, and with a passion for medicine and art, Christina developed a keen interest in Aesthetic Medicine and has been incorporating this into her practice for the past several years.

Christina enjoys using aesthetic medicine to help patients feel their best. She utilizes a thoughtful and conservative approach to yield natural results. As a practitioner passionate about continued education, she has extensive training and certifications in neurotoxins, dermal fillers, and non-surgical skin rejuvenating procedures.

The experience she has gained throughout her career has allowed Christina to develop vital clinical knowledge and skills needed to ensure overall patient wellness and safety. Christina is excited to join the team at the Naples Aesthetic Institute and be a part of your aesthetic journey.



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LEARN HOW YOU CAN FIND RELIEF FROM THE DEBILITATING PAIN OF

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY WITHOUT ADDICTIVE DRUGS

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

ver 116 million people suffer from various types of chronic pain disorders, and 20 million of those individuals have peripheral neuropathy; that number is speculated to be much higher due to patients not getting a proper diagnosis. Peripheral nerves run from the spinal cord to the arms, hands, legs and feet.

UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Peripheral Neuropathy is a complex condition, but nerve damage and signaling are the issue, finding the root cause is how a comprehensive plan is customized to regenerate a patients nerves, cells and tissues. Having high blood sugar levels, along with low blood oxygen supply, nutrient deficiency, high toxicity and inflammation damages the nerves throughout the body. This damage generally affects the long peripheral nerves that feed sensations to the legs, feet, and toes from the spinal cord, through communication with the brain. If your condition has progressed, you may feel nerve damage sensations in your upper extremities as well.

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY SYMPTOMS

- Numbness
- · Tingling
- Burning sensations
- · Painful aching
- · Joint inflammation
- Joint damage
- Balance issues
- · Skin discoloration & texture changes
- Muscle cramps
- · Feelings of stiffness
- · Non-healing foot & ankle ulcers

STOP MASKING SYMPTOMS AND PAIN

The most common treatment for nerve pain and numbness is to mask it with narcotic prescription pain medications. Narcotics like Opioids are highly addictive, and our state is currently leading the country in abusing the drug and overdose episodes.

There are better alternatives to Peripheral Neuropathy that do not include addictive drugs.



Physical medicine provides alternative therapeutic and rehabilitating procedures can significantly improve the condition, offer pain relief and limit drug dependency.

FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE'S ALTERNATIVE CARE

- · Red LED and Low Level Infrared Light Therapy help to heal and regenerate the small nerve endings that are damaged in peripheral neuropathy
- · Gentle electrical stimulation therapy improves nerve function, reduces pain, and improves movement.
- Stem Cell Allografts Biologics
- Platelet Rich Plasma
- Spinal Decompression Therapy
- · Ozone Therapy
- · Peptide Therapy
- Therapeutic Shockwave/Soundwave
- · Natural supplementation to regenerate myelin sheath

WHAT KINDS OF EFFECTS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE NEUROPATHY TREATMENT AT FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE?

Clinical studies show that 88% of the people who undergo the treatment experience excellent results with one or more of the following: Reduced pain and cramps, reduced tingling and numbness, ability to experience normal touch without pain, reduced cold or burning sensations, improved balance and coordination, lowered dependency on medications, improved sleep, reduced sensation of restlessness in

the legs. Several people also experience reduced local swelling and inflammation, increased range of motion, increased blood flow to the extremities, decreased tension, and decreased muscle spasm.

An important side benefit to the treatment is that it reduces the risk of falls significantly by improving balance and position awareness of the feet.

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- · Severe neck & back pain
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- · Hip, knee pain treatment, ankle, or foot pain
- · Arm or leg pain, or numbness
- · Peripheral Neuropathy pain or numbness
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- · Headaches, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- · Disc bulge or herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

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STRESS MANAGEMENT: A KEY TO BOOSTING IMMUNITY AND MAINTAINING OVERALL HEALTH

By Theresa Vergo, PA-C

n today's fast-paced world, stress has become an unavoidable part of our lives. Whether it's work pressure, personal relationships, or unforeseen challenges, stress can take a toll on our mental and physical well-being. One aspect often overlooked is the impact of stress on the immune system. Chronic stress can weaken the immune response, making individuals more susceptible to illnesses. Therefore, understanding and implementing effective stress management techniques is crucial for maintaining a robust immune system and overall health.

THE LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND IMMUNITY

The connection between stress and the immune system is well-documented. The "fight or flight" response is triggered when the body perceives a threat, releasing stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. While these hormones are essential for short-term survival, chronic exposure can harm the immune system.

Prolonged stress suppresses the immune system's ability to fight off antigens, leaving the body vulnerable to infections and diseases. Also, stress can exacerbate existing health conditions, contributing to declining well-being.

EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Regular Exercise: Engaging in regular physical activity is a powerful stressbuster. Exercise helps release endorphins, the body's natural mood lifters, improves circulation, and promotes better sleep. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.

According to Better Health Channel, exercise can improve your sense of control, coping ability, and self-esteem. People who exercise regularly often report how good achieving a goal makes them feel.¹

A list of health benefits from regular exercise that should be emphasized and reinforced by mental health professionals include:

- · Improved sleep
- · Increased interest in sex
- · Better endurance
- · Stress relief.
- · Improvement in mood
- · Increased energy and stamina
- Reduced tiredness that can increase mental alertness
- · Weight reduction
- Reduced cholesterol and improved cardiovascular fitness²

Also, among the theories about how exercise affects immunity is that the brief rise in body temperature during and right after exercise may prevent bacteria from growing. This rise in temperature may help the body fight infection better.

Another theory is that exercise slows down the release of stress hormones. Some stress has been shown to increase the chance of illness. Therefore, lower stress hormones may protect against illness.³

Mindfulness and Meditation: Mindfulness practices like meditation and deep breathing exercises can help calm the mind and reduce stress. These techniques have been shown to lower cortisol levels, promote relaxation, and improve overall mental well-being.

Healthy Nutrition: A balanced and nutritious diet plays a crucial role in supporting the immune system. Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in your diet. Avoid excessive caffeine and sugar intake, which can increase stress levels.

Adequate Sleep: Quality sleep is essential for overall health and stress management. Establish a consistent sleep routine, create a comfortable sleep environment, and aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep can impair the immune system's ability to function optimally.

Social Connections: Maintaining strong social connections and fostering positive relationships can provide crucial support during stressful times. Share your thoughts and concerns with trusted friends or family members, and be open to seeking professional help if needed.

Tying this idea in with exercise, as mentioned above, the Mayo Clinic reminds us that exercise and physical activity may give us the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as we walk around the neighborhood can help our mood.⁴

Time Management: Effectively managing time and setting realistic goals can reduce feelings of overwhelm. Prioritize tasks, break them into smaller, more manageable steps, and delegate when possible. This approach can help prevent chronic stress from accumulating.

Hobbies and Leisure Activities: Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading, gardening, or pursuing a creative hobby, dedicating time to things you enjoy can be a powerful antidote to stress.

In conclusion, incorporating effective stress management strategies into your daily routine is not just a luxury but a necessity for maintaining a healthy immune system and overall well-being. By prioritizing activities that promote relaxation and adopting a holistic approach to health, individuals can build resilience against the adverse effects of stress. Remember, taking care of your mental health is integral to safeguarding your immune system and living a fulfilling life.

Queforance:

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Theresa has been a board-certified Physician Assistant since 2011. She graduated with her master's in medical science from Nova Southeastern University. Since then, she has been working in medical oncology as an inpatient hematologist/oncology physician assistant.

She looks forward to supporting your efforts at Inspire Exercise Medicine.

Early Detection of Alzheimer's:

Screening as a Lifeline for Cognitive Preservation

n the landscape of modern healthcare, few challenges are as complex and emotionally charged as Alzheimer's disease. As our population ages and medical research advances, a critical paradigm shift is emerging: the importance of early detection and intervention in managing this devastating neurological condition. Just as mammograms and colonoscopies have become standard preventive cancer screening tools, memory screenings should be viewed as an equally essential component of comprehensive healthcare.

The traditional approach to Alzheimer's has been reactive, typically addressing the disease only after significant cognitive decline has occurred. However, groundbreaking research is rapidly changing this perspective. Scientists and medical professionals are now understanding that the most effective strategy lies in identifying and addressing the disease's earliest indicators, potentially years before noticeable symptoms manifest.

Recent advances in clinical research, particularly through initiatives like those at Aqualane Clinical Research, are paving the way for transformative approaches to Alzheimer's management. The focus is shifting from treatment to prevention, with cutting-edge research developing targeted interventions that can potentially halt or significantly slow the disease's progression before irreversible brain damage occurs.

The Critical Window of Early Intervention

Memory screenings should be approached with the same regularity and importance as other critical health screenings. Just as it is routine to have regular preventative care screening at specific age milestones, for a myriad health conditions comprehensive memory assessments should become a standard part of routine healthcare, particularly for individuals over 50.

Early detection offers multiple significant advantages:

1. Cognitive Preservation: By identifying subtle changes in memory and cognitive function early, medical professionals can implement strategies to slow cognitive decline. This might include targeted therapies, lifestyle modifications, and early pharmaceutical interventions designed to protect neural pathways.



- 2. Treatment Optimization: Early diagnosis provides patients and their families more time to plan, make informed medical decisions, and explore emerging treatment options. It allows for a proactive approach to managing the disease rather than a reactive one.
- 3. Lifestyle and Preventative Strategies: Identifying risk factors early enables individuals to make meaningful lifestyle changes. This can include targeted nutrition plans, cognitive exercises, physical activity regimens, and stress management techniques specifically designed to support brain health.

The Emerging Landscape of Alzheimer's Research

The medical community is experiencing a renaissance in Alzheimer's research. Advanced neuroimaging techniques, genetic testing, and sophisticated biomarker analyses are providing unprecedented insights into the disease's early stages. Researchers are developing innovative diagnostic tools that can detect microscopic changes in the brain years before traditional symptoms emerge.

Pharmaceutical research is equally promising. Multiple clinical trials are exploring treatments that can target the underlying mechanisms of Alzheimer's, focusing on reducing beta-amyloid plaques, preventing tau protein tangles, and supporting neural plasticity. These potential treatments represent a beacon of hope for millions affected by the disease.

A Call for Proactive Healthcare

Transforming how we approach Alzheimer's requires a collective effort. Healthcare providers must integrate comprehensive memory screenings into routine medical care. Individuals must become advocates for their cognitive health, requesting these screenings and understanding their importance.

Insurance providers and healthcare policy makers need to recognize memory screenings as a critical preventative measure, ensuring they are accessible and affordable for all populations. At Aqualane Clinical Research, there is no cost to the individual, so the memory screenings are completely free. Contact our office to make an appointment,

Conclusion

The future of Alzheimer's management lies not in treating advanced stages of the disease, but in identifying and intervening at the earliest possible moment. By treating memory screenings as you do regular preventative care like cholesterol and diabetes tests, we can potentially transform the trajectory of this challenging neurological condition.

Early detection is not just a medical strategy—it's a lifeline of hope, offering the possibility of preserving cognitive function and quality of life for millions of individuals worldwide.

Aqualane Clinical Research is a comprehensive clinical research group focusing on advancing medical therapies in a wide array of human disease states. We provide patients with the opportunity to participate in the discovery of treatments where none currently exist or where there is an unmet need for safety and more effectiveness. By collaborating with our patients, their care partners, and sponsors in the industry, we focus on the safe and ethical study of these emerging therapies.



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UNLOCK YOUR WELLNESS:

Discover the Benefits of Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

By Sonny Grensing

For Perimenopause and Menopause

If you're navigating the changes that come with perimenopause or menopause, you've probably noticed how hormonal shifts can impact your quality of life. Hot flashes, mood swings, weight gain, and joint pain might feel like an unwelcome new normal. But it doesn't have to be this way. Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) offers you an effective way to regain balance, alleviate symptoms, and reclaim your vitality.

Here, you'll learn how BHRT works, why functional medicine makes it even more effective, and why many women are choosing pellet therapy as their go-to solution.

What is BHRT, and How Can It Help You?

Bioidentical hormones are derived from plant sources and are chemically identical to the hormones your body naturally produces. Unlike synthetic hormone therapies, BHRT focuses on restoring balance in a way that's as close to your body's natural processes as possible.

This approach is enhanced when combined with functional medicine. Functional medicine takes a holistic view of your health, looking at how your hormones interact with your lifestyle, diet, and overall well-being. It's about addressing the root causes of your symptoms—not just masking them.

Your Labs, Your Health: A Personalized Approach

To truly understand your hormonal health, a functional medicine practitioner will look at a range of lab results. These might include:

- Hormonal Panels: To assess levels of estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and thyroid hormones.
- Inflammatory Markers: To uncover hidden inflammation that could be causing joint pain or mood swings.
- Blood Sugar Regulation: To identify metabolic issues like insulin resistance, which can lead to fatigue and weight gain.
- Nutritional Status: To detect vitamin and mineral deficiencies that might be impacting your energy and overall health.

By reviewing these labs together, you and your practitioner can uncover the bigger picture. For example, if inflammation is driving your joint pain or poor blood

sugar control is making weight loss feel impossible, these underlying issues can be addressed alongside your hormone therapy for better, longer-lasting results.

Why Choose Pellet Therapy?

If you're looking for a convenient, effective way to balance your hormones, pellet therapy might be your best option. Here's why:

- Consistent Results: Unlike pills or creams that can cause hormone fluctuations, pellet therapy delivers a steady, sustained release of hormones. This means you'll experience fewer ups and downs and enjoy more consistent relief.
- Minimal Maintenance: Once the pellets are inserted under your skin, they typically last for several months. No daily pills, creams, or patchesjust simple, hassle-free treatment.
- Fewer Side Effects: Pellet therapy bypasses your liver, unlike oral medications, which can lead to fewer side effects. Plus, there's no risk of transferring hormones to loved ones, as can happen with creams.

How BHRT Can Improve Your Life

BHRT isn't just about easing menopause symptoms; it's about helping you feel like yourself again-mentally, emotionally, and physically. Here's how it can make a difference:

- Heart Health: Estrogen supports healthy blood vessels, reduces cholesterol, and protects your heart. BHRT helps reduce your risk of heart disease as you age.
- Stronger Bones: Declining estrogen levels can lead to osteoporosis, but BHRT helps maintain bone density, reducing your risk of fractures.
- Relief from Joint Pain: Hormonal imbalances often trigger inflammation and joint discomfort. BHRT can reduce pain, improve mobility, and help you move with ease.
- Better Mood and Mental Clarity: If you've felt anxious, depressed, or foggy lately, BHRT can stabilize your mood and sharpen your focus, so you feel more like yourself.

• Enhanced Libido and Intimacy: BHRT can restore your sex drive, improve lubrication, and help you feel confident and comfortable in your relationships again.

Take Back Control of Your Health

You deserve to feel vibrant, energetic, and healthy at every stage of life. BHRT, especially when paired with functional medicine, offers a path to not only alleviate menopause symptoms but also improve your overall well-being. With the convenience and effectiveness of pellet therapy, you can enjoy consistent results and more freedom to focus on what matters most to you.

If you're ready to reclaim your vitality, BHRT could be the solution you've been waiting for. It's time to prioritize your health and experience the benefits of a tailored, comprehensive approach to hormone balance.

Would you like to feel like yourself again? Call Well Infused to schedule a complimentary phone consultation to learn if this approach could be a fit for you. 239-331-7607

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

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TIPS TO AVOID DIGESTIVE HEALTH HAZARDS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

uring this holiday season, the steady onslaught of treats, holiday buffets, and tasty peppermint mocha latte topped with whipped cream can easily knock down the wall of resistance for even the most health-conscious eater.



While many of us are thinking about calories and possible weight gain, our attention should also be on our digestive health."The holidays can wreak havoc on the GI tract," says Afshin Khaiser, M.D., board-certified Gastroenterologist with

Physicians Regional Medical Group. "I see a large increase in indigestion, bloating, abdominal pain, and irregular bowel complaints during this time."

Digestion affects us more than we may think, affecting mood, energy, sleep, general wellbeing, and overall health. Studies show that a big shift in digestive health can happen fast, sometimes within days of what we eat. However, there are ways to enjoy the holidays while keeping your waistline and digestive health in check.

"More people do their own cooking during the holidays, so it is a great time for people to challenge themselves to make healthier versions of their favorite foods," Khaiser says. "Look for recipes using lower fat and sugar content than the traditional version."

He adds having an eating game plan is also important. "If desserts are your thing, then map out a strategy to minimize the front end of the meal."

Khaiser recognizes that portion control is a big factor in keeping digestive health in line. He suggests eating smaller, frequent meals that will allow the body to process and digest food without discomfort. "It's tempting to eat that large holiday meal, but you always feel discomfort after."



He adds the following tips:

- 1) Limit cocktails to 1-2 servings of alcohol.
- 2) Schedule meals earlier and avoid fried or fatty foods.
- 3) Add fruits and veggies to each meal to ensure you're getting the fiber you need.
- 4) Chew your food well and eat slowly.
- 5) Drink plenty of water with each meal.

It can be hard to be mindful of the foods you are fueling your body with, especially during the holidays, but with a few tweaks, you can be on the road to better digestive health for the entire year.

Khaiser specializes in acid reflux/GERD, celiac/ gluten intolerance, colon cancer screening and prevention, pancreatic and gallbladder disease, liver disease, cirrhosis, hepatitis, Crohn's disease as well as ulcerative colitis.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (239) 348-4236, or schedule online at PhysiciansRegionalMedicalGroup.com.



Dr. Khaiser has office locations near both Physicians Regional Collier and Physicians Regional Pine Ridge.

One Dozen Holistic Hacks for Managing Common Winter Viruses

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

f you are afflicted with a viral cold or even a flu – the illness is going to run its course, and the best you can do is to allow your body to eliminate the virus naturally and efficiently (i.e. poop it out, pee it out and sweat it out). This means that you should create ideal conditions for your organ systems to function. Here are some things I commonly recommend:

- 1. Eliminate alcohol while you are sick.
- Get a good night sleep and allow yourself to curl up in bed in the middle of the day if you feel like it.
- 3. Hydrate generously
- **4.** Make fresh organic chicken soup. Sip on this warm soup throughout the day, here and there.
- 5. If you have a sore throat try this traditional Eastern European herbal gargling solution. The ingredients are: 1 tablespoon of eucalyptus, 1 tablespoon of calendula, 1 tablespoon of sage, 1/2 tablespoon of chamomile and 1/2 tablespoon of licorice - all dried herbs from a reputable herbal apothecary. To do: use any glass, ceramic or enamel-coated container which has a lid/cover. Pre-mix all the ingredients in a small cup. Take one tablespoon of this mix, place it in the above-mentioned container, and pour one cup of boiling water over it. After stirring well, cover tightly and wrap with a thick towel to preserve the heat. Steep for 40 minutes. Cover small strainer with a gauze, place it over a container with herbal infusion, and strain the gargle mixture into a mug. Gargle and spit 4 times/day. Note: you must make a new gargle mix every time you gargle. I find this to be an effective natural remedy, which you can alternate with sipping on organic chicken soup.
- 6. Another great gargle has ¼ teaspoon of sea salt and ¼ teaspoon of baking soda both dissolved in a glass of lukewarm water just gargle and spit. Try alternating this with the herbal gargle #5.



- 7. If you have a cold without a fever but with a nasal congestion and a sinus pain try this ancient Eastern European foot bath. To do: fill up a medium to a large foot bassinet with hot water. Make sure not to burn yourself but make it sufficiently hot, yet still comfortable. Dissolve one heaping tablespoon of dry mustard in the water and slowly lower your feet in make sure your ankles are fully submerged. Close your eyes and relax for 15 minutes. Rinse your feet under warm/hot running water, dry them thoroughly, put warm cotton or wool socks on, and get a good night sleep.
- 8. For any cold or flu-related cough or sore throat, try Gogol-Mogol a popular folk remedy in Eastern Europe. To do: Bring eight ounces of whole organic milk to a boil in a ceramic or a glass container. Stir in one uncooked egg yolk. Add 1/3 teaspoon of organic ghee and 1 teaspoon of organic honey. Stir vigorously. Swallow one teaspoon of Gogol-Mogol at a time, slowly, over several minutes. This concoction coats the back of the throat, calms the cough, and improves the hoarseness.
- 9. If you have a fever and do not feel like taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen, try this ancient remedy first: Add one teaspoon of raspberry preserves to a cup of hot black tea. Let is cool slightly to a comfortable temperature. Sip slowly. This provides a great fever-lowering effect for many people.

- 10. If you have an upper respiratory infection with a cough, you can ask a friend or a family member to paint a traditional Eastern European therapeutic iodine grid on your upper back (between the scapulae). Iodine grid can be painted by dipping a Q-tip into any iodine solution and painting a crisscross grid on the upper back, with 20 horizontal lines running in parallel ¼ inch from each other and 10-15 vertical lines crossing over them at a ¼ inch distance from each other. The iodine grid is painted once at the onset of the respiratory virus and can soak into the skin over the course of several days.
- 11. Additionally, there are some good homeopathic remedies I recommend keeping at home: Hevert Cough, Hevert Cold and Flu, and Hevert Sinusitis. These can be combined with any and all the above-mentioned home remedies, as necessary. Hevert homeopathic remedies are available at https://us.fullscript.com/welcome/skogan
- 12. Finally, do not underestimate the benefits of a sense of humor and positive attitude. Good mood and laughter are huge immune boosters. On the other hand, people who are depressed have much higher rates of seasonal infections. Keep in mind that you should always discuss your health with your doctor and let him or her examine and diagnose you properly. Have a healthy and joyful winter season!



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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

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THE LIGHT ADJUSTABLE LENS:

Give Yourself the Gift of Clear Sight

By Jon R. Berlie, M.D.

n the ever-evolving world of vision correction, the Light Adjustable Lens (LAL) stands out as a revolutionary breakthrough that promises to transform how we approach eye surgery and vision enhancement. This cutting-edge technology offers patients an unprecedented level of customization and precision in vision correction, making it truly a gift of clear sight that goes beyond traditional surgical options.

The Light Adjustable Lens represents a quantum leap in ophthalmological innovation. Unlike conventional intraocular lenses that are static once implanted, the LAL provides a unique post-surgical adjustment capability that allows for fine-tuning of vision after the initial procedure. This means patients can literally customize their vision with unprecedented accuracy, addressing vision problems in a way that was previously impossible.

How does this remarkable technology work? The LAL is made from a special photosensitive material that can be reshaped using ultraviolet light treatments after the initial implantation. During these precise light treatments, ophthalmologists can modify the lens's shape and focusing power, effectively allowing patients to "test drive" their vision and make adjustments until they achieve their optimal visual outcome.

For patients undergoing cataract surgery or those seeking vision correction, the benefits are substantial. Traditional lens implants require surgeons to select a lens power before surgery, based on preoperative measurements. This approach, while effective, can sometimes leave patients with less-than-perfect vision. The Light Adjustable Lens eliminates this uncertainty by providing a dynamic solution that can be refined after the initial procedure.

The adjustment process is remarkably simple and patient-friendly. After the initial lens implantation, patients receive a series of light treatment sessions where the lens is precisely modified. During these sessions, patients can experience different vision configurations, allowing them to provide direct feedback about their visual clarity. This interactive approach means that the final vision correction is truly personalized to each individual's unique needs and preferences.



Moreover, the technology is particularly beneficial for patients with complex vision issues or those who have previously struggled to achieve optimal vision through standard surgical procedures. Patients with astigmatism, irregular corneal shapes, or those seeking precise vision correction for both near and distance vision can benefit tremendously from this adaptive technology.

Safety is paramount with the Light Adjustable Lens. Extensively tested and approved by regulatory agencies, the lens undergoes rigorous clinical trials to ensure its effectiveness and reliability. The photosensitive material used in the lens is designed to be biocompatible, minimizing risks associated with traditional lens implantations.

While the technology may come with a higher initial cost compared to standard intraocular lenses, many patients find the investment worthwhile. The ability to fine-tune vision post-surgery can potentially reduce or eliminate the need for corrective eyewear, offering long-term value and improved quality of life.

For those contemplating vision correction, the Light Adjustable Lens represents more than just a medical procedure—it's an opportunity to truly customize one's vision. It embodies the promise of personalized healthcare, where medical technology adapts to individual needs rather than requiring individuals to adapt to medical limitations.

This year, consider giving yourself the most precious gift of all: the gift of clear, precisely tailored vision. The Light Adjustable Lens isn't just a technological marvel—it's a pathway to seeing the world with unprecedented clarity and confidence.



JON R. BERLIE, M.D. LASIK, Cataract & Lens Replacement Surgeon Dr. Berlie is a board-certified ophthalmologist who special-

cataract surgery. He has been serving the Naples community for over 20 years. Dr. Berlie achieves superior visual outcomes for his cataract patients by utilizing the latest lens technology combined with state of the art equipment. His expertise in this area has led the Center For Sight Naples office to be recognized as the "Best Eye Center" in Naples, FL for the past 15 years. In addition to laser cataract surgery, Dr. Berlie performs vision correction procedures including All Laser LASIK, Epi-LASEK, Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE) and Implantable Contact Lenses. He is also skilled in reconstructive and cosmetic eyelid surgery. He has been honored as one of America's "Top Doctors" by the prestigious Top Doctors list, published annually by Castle Connolly Medical, Ltd.

Dr. Berlie completed his undergraduate training at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada and the California State University of San Bernardino. He then attended Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska where he graduated Cum Laude, followed by an internship in internal medicine.

Dr. Berlie continued his education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center where he completed his ophthalmology residency followed by a fellowship in Oculoplastic and Aesthetic Laser Surgery at Saint Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City.

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CREATING HOLIDAY CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT AT THE CARLISLE NAPLES

By Jenny Bradley

The holiday season is in full swing! For many, this time of year brings cherished traditions and the chance to connect. Living at a senior living community like The Carlisle Naples adds a new layer of connection, making the season truly special. With friends and neighbors just steps away, residents find endless opportunities to celebrate together. Here's how the unique experience of a retirement community enhances the joy of the season, plus some helpful holiday tips for those celebrating at home.

1. Celebrate New Traditions Together

At The Carlisle Naples, the holidays are a time to come together in celebration. From trimming the Christmas tree as a group to lighting the menorah with friends, the spirit of the season is enriched by shared traditions and the chance to start new ones. Residents look forward to truly embracing the joys of the holidays, including exchanging cherished family recipes, reminiscing about past celebrations and enjoying festive get-togethers that make this time of year especially meaningful. For those celebrating at home, try creating a new tradition, such as inviting a friend over to bake holiday treats or hosting a holiday card exchange with loved ones.

2. Keep Connections Strong

Staying connected is essential for mental and emotional well-being, especially during the holidays. The Carlisle Naples' monthly calendar is filled with opportunities to be with others—from a cozy Hanukkah celebration to spirited holiday concerts. If you're living alone, consider joining local events or arranging small gatherings with friends or family to keep that feeling of connection alive. A simple holiday phone call or virtual meetup can also bring warmth and joy to the season.

3. Enjoy the Ease of Holiday Preparations

One of the biggest benefits of community life at The Carlisle Naples is the ease and simplicity residents enjoy. The maintenance-free lifestyle frees up time that would otherwise be spent on holiday shopping, meal prep or decorating, allowing more time for enjoyment. This year, residents can focus on what matters most—spending time with loved ones, attending holiday events or simply relaxing. If you're at home, try simplifying holiday tasks by prepping meals in advance or sharing responsibilities with friends or family members.



4. Take Time for Self-Care and Mindfulness

The holidays can be busy, and it's important to prioritize well-being. The Carlisle Naples offers wellness programs that include mindfulness and stress-relief activities to help residents unwind and stay present during the season. Even if you're not living in a retirement community, you can still take a few moments each day for self-care—whether it's a peaceful walk, a warm cup of tea or a few minutes of meditation. Embracing calm moments can enhance your holiday experience.

5. Stay Active and Healthy Together

The holiday season often includes special treats, and at The Carlisle Naples, residents enjoy a delicious yet nutritious chef-prepared menu. Here, it's easy to balance indulgence with an active lifestyle. With robust life enrichment and wellness programs focusing on wellbeing in mind, body and soul, residents can stay healthy while enjoying holiday fun. Experts suggest incorporating small activities like a morning stretch or a neighborhood walk, to keep active. Sharing these moments with a friend can also make the experience more enjoyable.

At The Carlisle Naples, the holidays are a season of connection, joy, and shared experiences, making every day feel festive. By prioritizing community, wellness and the joy of shared traditions, this season can be one of the most fulfilling yet—wherever you celebrate.

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



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For the Holidays: A Gift That Could Save Your Life

s a sleep medicine specialist, I am often asked about the role of wearables (Fitbit, Apple Watch and Aura Ring) in the identification and management of sleep disorders, and until recently, my answer had been the same: "Their role is limited to individuals with healthy sleep, and they cannot be used for the diagnosis and/or treatment of sleep disorders in the clinical setting."

In recent years, wearable technology has dramatically transformed from simple fitness and sleep trackers to sophisticated health monitoring devices that offer unprecedented insights into our personal well-being.

The Health Revolution on Your Wrist

Modern wearables represent a remarkable convergence of technology and healthcare, empowering users to take a proactive approach to their health. The latest innovations go well beyond basic activity tracking, now providing complex health diagnostics that were once exclusively the domain of medical professionals.

For many years now, devices like apple watch can detect heart rhythm abnormalities like atrial fibrillation, protect our hearing by tracking exposure to loud noises and can offer insight into our balance, telling us weather we are at risk of fall/injury. But one of the most significant recent developments is the ability to detect moderate to severe sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea is a potentially dangerous sleep disorder characterized by repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep, which can lead to serious health complications if left untreated such as heart disease, strokes, dementia and mood disorders (such as depression or anxiety).

Many of us have a loved one in whom we suspect may have sleep apnea. Most patients don't suspect having obstructive sleep apnea themselves, and in most instances the concern is reported by loved ones, or by primary care physicians when they assess for risk factors.

To complicate matters more, most patients have unfounded concerns about the treatments and avoid visiting the sleep doctor.

While sleep apnea detection is groundbreaking, it is just a tool that could help you or your loved ones make a decision to see a doctor about a suspected problem. It should never be used alone.

Another tool to help us identify sleep apnea is called the STOP-BANG questionnaire, which can be used to determine if there is a risk:

- Snoring
- Tiredness or Sleepiness
- Observed Apneas
- High Blood Pressure (even if treated with medications)
- Body Mass Index >35 (obesity)
- Age >50
- Neck >16"
- Male Gender.

If you or someone you know has 3 or more of the risk factors above, they are at risk of obstructive sleep apnea and may benefit from a sleep evaluation. If you can't convince them to see the sleep doctor, you may now be able to "gift" some help.

Sleep Apnea Detection:

A Breakthrough in Wearable Technology

Recent advancements in wearable technology along with strong collaboration with sleep medicine professionals have made it possible to detect potentially dangerous sleep apnea using sophisticated sensors and advanced algorithms. Devices like the newer Apple Watch and Some Samsung Galaxy watches can now detect cases of moderate to severe sleep apnea with exceptional accuracy.

The Apple Watch, for instance, has FDA clearance for several medical-grade features including sleep apnea detection, blurring the lines between consumer electronics and medical devices.

As an example, Apple has provided research and validating trials information demonstrating that if the Apple Watch suggests someone has obstructive sleep apnea, it is in agreement with a home sleep test more than 98% of the time. However, this technology has limitations, as it may miss 1 in 3 patients for whom it does not suggest the disease. Therefore, it is always recommended you see a sleep professional if sleep apnea is suspected.



Conclusion

As we shop gifts for our loved ones this holiday season, wearables with sleep apnea detection may offer a way to help our loved ones identify this potentially serious disease. Although it is always best to just go and see your local doctor, these devices can help in identifying these problems in those reluctant to visit a sleep doctor's clinic.

About Sleep & Apnea Institute of Florida

The Sleep and Apnea Institute of Florida's goal is to bring the best in service quality, speed, and technology to our community for the evaluation and management of sleep disorders.

To provide context, most sleep medicine services in the area have been using the same technology over the past 20 years to diagnose (and to treat) obstructive sleep apnea. SAIF will bring sleep medicine up to date with current and developing technologies to improve access, speed ana accuracy of the diagnostic and treatment options available to our community today.

Accepting New Patients!



(239)788-6500 www.SAIFsleep.com

23421 Walden Center Dr, Suite 100 Bonita Springs, FL 34134



Understanding Bunions:

A Podiatrist's Guide to Treatment and Relief

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

unions, a common foot ailment, can cause discomfort and impact daily activities. As a podiatrist, I often encounter patients seeking effective ways to address this condition. Understanding bunions and exploring viable treatment options is crucial for those looking to alleviate pain and regain mobility.

Bunions, medically known as Hallux Valgus, manifest as a bony bump at the base of the big toe. They develop when the joint at the base of the big toe shifts out of place, causing the big toe to lean toward the second toe. This misalignment can lead to pain, inflammation, and difficulty finding comfortable footwear.

One primary cause of bunions is wearing ill-fitting shoes, especially those with a narrow toe box. Genetics also play a role; if bunions run in your family, you might be more prone to developing them. Additionally, conditions like arthritis and foot injuries can contribute to bunion formation.

For those experiencing bunion-related discomfort, consulting a podiatrist is crucial. A podiatrist can assess the severity of the condition and recommend appropriate treatment options. Here are some common strategies podiatrists employ to address bunions:

Footwear Modifications: Wearing shoes with a wider toe box and low heels can help reduce pressure on the affected area. Podiatrists often advise against high heels or shoes that squeeze the toes, as these can exacerbate bunion symptoms.

Orthotic Devices: Custom orthotic inserts can provide additional support and help distribute pressure more evenly across the foot. Podiatrists may recommend off-the-shelf or custom-made orthotics based on the patient's specific needs.

Padding and Taping: Applying pads or moleskin to the bunion can alleviate friction and reduce pain. Taping techniques may also be employed to help realign the big toe and relieve pressure on the bunion.



Physical Therapy: At times Physical Therapist are implemented as part of the post operative bunionectomy recovery to facilitate better range of motion in the joint. This is especially important for not all bunion surgeries are the same. Some include correction of the soft tissue, bone, or both, and the postoperative course and rehab depends on the type of surgery and exercise modification to be implemented.

Medications: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can help manage pain and reduce inflammation associated with bunions. However, long-term use should be monitored by a healthcare professional.

Bunion Splints: Splints or braces designed to hold the big toe in a corrected position may be recommended, particularly during sleep. These devices can help slow the progression of the bunion.

Injections: In some cases, corticosteroid injections may be administered to alleviate severe pain and inflammation. This is a short-term solution and is typically used when other conservative measures are insufficient.

Surgical Intervention: When conservative treatments fail to provide relief, surgical intervention

may be considered. A podiatrist can discuss surgical options, such as bunionectomy, to realign the affected joint and alleviate pain.

It's essential for individuals with bunions to address the condition promptly to prevent worsening symptoms. Regular check-ups with a podiatrist, along with proactive measures like choosing appropriate footwear and maintaining a healthy weight, can contribute to better bunion management.

In conclusion, bunions are a common foot condition that can impact daily life, but with the guidance of a podiatrist, effective treatment options are available. Whether through conservative measures or surgical intervention, addressing bunions promptly can lead to improved comfort and mobility. If you're experiencing bunion-related discomfort, don't hesitate to seek professional advice and take steps toward better foot health.

Collier Podiatry

It's important to be evaluated by an experienced podiatric professional if you're experiencing any type of foot pain. At Collier Podiatry, Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 29 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers, he and his staff see a countless number of patients with bunion pain in the Naples area.

Along with bunion treatment, Collier Podiatry will provide you with personalized instructions on the necessary amount of rest, stretching exercises and home care to get you back to doing what you love.

Please call Collier Podiatry, P.A. today if you are suffering from bunions to discuss the treatment you need to relieve the pain and correct deformities!



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



Do you experience accidental bladder leaks before making it to the restroom? Are you on the search for the best incontinence underwear?

lthough incontinence underwear may help conceal leaks you experience or prevent leaking to your clothes, it does not treat your underlying symptoms. If you struggle with bladder control or leaks, this may be a sign that you have overactive bladder.

What is Overactive Bladder?

Overactive bladder is an umbrella term that includes the frequent and urgent need to empty your bladder. One of the most common symptoms of overactive bladder is a sudden urge to urinate, resulting in unintentional urine loss which is referred to as inconti-

Overactive bladder can affect 1 in 3 people in the United States over the age of 40.1.2 Though this bladder control issue may occur more often as people get older, it is not a normal part of aging.

You may be suffering from overactive bladder if:

- Urgency You experience a sudden or compelling need to urinate with inability to hold urine or control it
- Urgency Incontinence You experience an urgent need to urinate and have urinary leakage accidents or trouble holding urine before making it to the restroom
- Frequency You go to the restroom to urinate so often that it disrupts your life—typically 8 or more times a day
- Nocturia You wake up more than 1 time per night because you need to urinate

The good news, there are treatment options available to help regain control of your bladder. The Florida

Bladder Institute is now offering Axonics® Therapy, a long-lasting solution that is clinically proven to help regain bladder control and deliver clinically meaningful improvements in quality of life*.

What is Axonics Therapy?

Axonics Therapy is an advanced treatment option that works by providing gentle stimulation to the nerves that control the bladder and bowel, which can help restore normal control and result in symptom improvement.

If you and your doctor believe you are a candidate for Axonics Therapy, you will first try the therapy for a brief test period that allows you and your doctor to see if the therapy provides satisfactory reduction of your symptoms. If it is determined that the therapy is right for you, you will have an outpatient procedure where a miniaturized Axonics implant is placed just beneath the skin in the upper part of your buttock.

What are the benefits of **Axonics Therapy?**

Axonics Therapy provides the possibility of saying goodbye to bladder leaks!

Long-lasting symptom relief: Designed to provide therapy for at least 15 years, providing a long-term solution for your symptoms

Clinically proven results:

- 93% of treated patients achieved clinically significant improvements* at 2-years3
- 94% of patients were satisfied with their

Important Safety Information: Implantation and use of the Avonics System incurs risk beyond those normally associated with surgery, some of which may necessitate surgical intervention. Results and experiences may vary and are unique to each patient. No promise or guarantee is made about specific results or experiences. For more information about safety and potential risks, go to: www.axonics.com/si. Caution: Federal law (USA) restricts this device to sale and use by, or on the order of, a physician. © 2020 Axonies Modulation Technologies, Inc. All rights reserved.



Brilliant. Amazing staff. Incredible results. Totally life changing. I am going to retire and work on my bucket list instead of settling for 'I have issues'.

- Tricia M., Patient -









www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com 1890 SW HEALTH PKWY., SUITE 20S, NAPLES, FL

info@floridabladderinstitute.com

'50% or greater reduction in symptoms

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

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

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

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

The Power of Early Detection

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

Recognizing the Warning Signs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Screening Process

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

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

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

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

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

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

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

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

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

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

The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of

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

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





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The Doctor Will See You Now.... At Home!

By Dennis J. Ruditser, MD

n an era where medical care is increasingly fast-paced and impersonal, the resurgence of doctor house calls is rekindling a vital connection between patients and healthcare providers. While house calls may seem like a relic of a bygone era, their growing popularity demonstrates the value of personalized, comprehensive medical care in the comfort of one's home. Beyond convenience, house calls offer several distinct benefits for patients, particularly those managing chronic diseases or limited by mobility challenges.

Unrushed and Thorough Care

One of the most significant advantages of doctor house calls is the time physicians can devote to each patient. Unlike traditional office visits, often constrained by tight schedules and waiting rooms full of patients, house calls allow the physician to focus entirely on the individual without the pressure of back-to-back appointments.

For patients managing multiple chronic conditions—such as diabetes, hypertension, or arthritis—this extended time is invaluable. A house call offers the opportunity for a thorough evaluation, allowing the physician to address multiple issues in a single visit. Complex medical histories, medication regimens, and ongoing symptoms can be reviewed in depth, ensuring no detail is overlooked. Patients often feel more comfortable discussing their concerns in the familiar surroundings of their home, further enhancing the quality of care.

Greater Accessibility to the Physician

House calls also improve patient access to their physician, particularly for individuals with mobility issues, elderly patients, or those living in rural areas. For these groups, traveling to a clinic can be challenging, often requiring assistance from family members or costly transportation services. Home visits remove these barriers, bringing care directly to the patient's doorstep.

This enhanced accessibility is especially crucial for patients who may delay or avoid seeking care due to logistical difficulties. By meeting patients where they are, house calls help bridge gaps in the health-care system, ensuring that those most in need receive timely and consistent medical attention.



A Holistic View of Patient Health

One of the unique benefits of house calls is the physician's ability to observe and assess the patient's living environment. Unlike traditional office visits, where the scope is limited to clinical discussions, home visits provide a more holistic perspective on the patient's health.

For example, a doctor can evaluate whether the home environment is safe and conducive to the patient's well-being. Are there tripping hazards for someone at risk of falls? Is there access to healthy food and adequate lighting? Are medications stored properly? These insights allow the physician to make tailored recommendations that address not just the patient's medical needs but also the social and environmental factors affecting their health.

In cases where chronic diseases are exacerbated by poor living conditions, the doctor can suggest practical changes or connect the patient with additional resources, such as social services or home health aides. This proactive approach can significantly improve health outcomes and reduce hospitalizations.

Building Trust and Strengthening Relationships

House calls foster a deeper level of trust and rapport between patients and their doctors. The one-on-one setting and the undivided attention of the physician create an environment where patients feel heard and valued. This strong relationship encourages patients to adhere to treatment plans, ask questions, and engage actively in their care.

For families caring for elderly or disabled loved ones, having a doctor visit the home can also provide much-needed reassurance. Caregivers can be involved in discussions about treatment options and receive guidance on how best to support their loved ones.

Modern Tools Meet Traditional Care

The resurgence of house calls doesn't mean healthcare is stepping back in time; instead, it's embracing the best of both worlds. Today's home visits are supported by modern medical tools and technology. Portable diagnostic devices, telemedicine platforms, and electronic health records enable physicians to deliver high-quality care comparable to that of a clinic.

With these advancements, doctors can perform routine tests, monitor chronic conditions, and even conduct minor procedures during home visits. This blend of traditional care and modern technology ensures patients receive comprehensive and convenient medical attention.

The Future of Personalized Healthcare

As healthcare systems worldwide continue to evolve, the return of doctor house calls represents a promising shift toward more patient-centered care. By offering unrushed appointments, greater access to medical professionals, and a holistic understanding of patients' lives, house calls are reshaping how we think about healthcare delivery.

For patients, particularly those managing chronic illnesses or facing mobility challenges, this approach provides not only medical care but also peace of mind. For physicians, it's an opportunity to reconnect with the foundational principles of medicine—listening, understanding, and healing.

In a world that often prioritizes efficiency over empathy, house calls remind us that the heart of healthcare lies in the human connection. Whether it's addressing complex medical issues, evaluating living conditions, or simply taking the time to listen, doctor house calls are a vital and meaningful way to ensure that every patient receives the care they deserve.

Dennis J. Ruditser, MD Board Certified Internal Medicine

Schedule Your Physician House Call Today!

239-402-5372 www.NaplesHomeMD.com



FGCU addresses growing demands of medical device industry

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

he 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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RELIEF FROM NECK AND BACK PAIN

By Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A.

or individuals seeking relief from spinal issues such as herniated, bulging, desiccated, or degenerative discs, non-surgical spinal decompression combined with deep tissue laser pain management therapy offers a safe and effective alternative. This advanced treatment combines spinal decompression with class 4 laser therapy to aid in the rehydration, repair, and healing of spinal discs and surrounding tissues—without the need for surgery or lengthy recovery periods.

Understanding Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression Non-surgical spinal decompression works by creating negative pressure within the spine, which encourages herniated or bulging disc material to retract back into the disc. This negative pressure also draws in essential water and nutrients from adjacent bones. Since discs lack their own blood supply and are composed of up to 85% water, this influx is critical for disc health and healing. The treatment helps the body release metabolic waste from the disc and combines with class 4 laser therapy to stimulate the body's healing mechanisms in the spine, joints, ligaments, muscles, and nerves.

This treatment can reduce the size of herniated or bulging discs, restore disc height in some cases, and promote natural healing—potentially improving function and alleviating pain in as little as a few sessions.

Who Can Benefit?

This treatment protocol is particularly beneficial for individuals with lower back or neck pain, sciatica, and associated symptoms such as radiating pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness in the arms or legs. These issues often stem from bulging, herniated, desiccated, or degenerative discs, but this therapy can be effective even for those with minor symptoms who want to address spinal health proactively.

Key Benefits of Non-Surgical Decompression

Unlike traditional spinal surgeries, spinal decompression therapy requires no anesthesia, has minimal to no downtime, and carries no risk of infection or surgical complications. With non-surgical methods, patients can avoid the risks and long recovery associated with spinal surgeries, which can often have low success rates and may require repeat procedures over time.



Studies have shown that combining class 4 laser therapy with spinal decompression yields high success rates, up to 86%, making this an effective and safe option for many patients. The advanced class 4 laser used in this treatment works by stimulating cellular repair and tissue regeneration without the risks associated with lasers designed to cut tissue, as used in surgeries.

What to Expect During Treatment

Every patient's experience is tailored to their specific needs. During an initial consultation, questions are asked about the pain's duration, intensity, and aggravating or alleviating factors. This helps determine whether this combined treatment protocol is suitable for the patient and, if so, outlines a personalized care plan. Most sessions are approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

The laser provides a gentle warmth that helps alleviate inflammation and pain, while the decompression table carefully supports the spine in positions that maximize comfort and relief. Some patients find the experience so relaxing they may even fall asleep during treatment. Many report improvements within the first few sessions, usually by the third or fourth visit.

How safe and effective is this treatment?

Class 4 laser and spinal decompression have been widely studied, demonstrating excellent safety profiles and impressive effectiveness for spinal and joint issues. The therapy's minimal risk and non-invasive approach are particularly beneficial for those seeking an alternative to surgery.



In our practice we utilize non-surgical spinal decompression, an innovative and practical approach to treating disc and degenerative related conditions. This treatment aims to create negative pressure within the discs reducing pressure on the nerve. By relieving pressure in the spine, increased circulation occurs in the disc which is a vital aid in the healing process. Understanding the common causes, recognizing symptoms and exploring advanced treatment options such as spinal decompression and laser therapy can pave the way to a pain-free and healthier life. Experience has shown that when nonsurgical spinal decompression is used in conjunction with laser therapy, our patients experience far better outcomes. If you suffer from neck and spine related conditions, call our office, we are here to help you.

Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation. Please call the office for more information. (239)793-3200.



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Holiday Travels: How You Can Prepare Your Eyes

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

he 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.



Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes,

and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times,

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

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

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

Retina Group of Florida

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 ophthal-mologist 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.

Please call (239) 325-3970 today to schedule your eye exam. When necessary same day appointments can often be accommodated.



Katia E. Taba, M.D., Ph.D. 3467 Pine Ridge Rd #103

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The Rejuvenating Power of Ozone IV Therapy and NAD+ at The DRIPBaR

n the ever-evolving landscape of modern healthcare, innovative treatments are emerging that promise to redefine the way we approach wellness and longevity. One such therapy that has gained significant attention is Ozone IV Therapy, and its synergistic part nership with the coenzyme NAD+ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide).

Ozone IV Therapy, offered by leading wellness centers like The DRIPBaR, is a cutting-edge treatment that harnesses the remarkable properties of ozone gas. Ozone, a highly reactive form of oxygen, has been found to possess numerous therapeutic benefits when administered intravenously. By introducing ozone into the bloodstream, this therapy can stimulate the body's natural healing processes, enhance oxygen delivery to cells, and promote the elimination of toxins and free radicals.

The mechanisms behind the efficacy of Ozone IV Therapy are multifaceted. Ozone has been shown to improve blood circulation, increase the flexibility of red blood cells, and boost the production of antioxidants within the body. These effects can contribute to improved oxygen utilization, enhanced nutrient delivery, and a more efficient removal of metabolic waste products. Additionally, ozone's ability to modulate the immune system and reduce inflammation has made it a valuable tool in the management of various health conditions.

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

By replenishing your NAD+ levels through an IV infusion, you can experience a wide range of benefits, including:

- 1. Increased Energy and Vitality: NAD+ is essential for the proper functioning of mitochondria, the powerhouses of our cells. By boosting NAD+ levels, this therapy can help combat fatigue, improve physical stamina, and leave you feeling energized and revitalized.
- 2. Enhanced Cognitive Function: NAD+ plays a vital role in maintaining the health and function of the brain. Elevated NAD+ levels have been linked to



improved memory, concentration, and overall cognitive performance, making this therapy a promising option for those seeking to enhance their mental faculties.

- 3. Reduced Signs of Aging: As we age, the gradual depletion of NAD+ can contribute to the visible signs of aging, such as wrinkles, loss of skin elasticity, and decreased cellular regeneration. The NAD+ Rejuvenation Drip can help counteract these effects, potentially resulting in a more youthful and radiant appearance.
- 4. Improved Metabolic Health: NAD+ is essential for the proper regulation of metabolism and the efficient conversion of nutrients into cellular energy. By replenishing NAD+ levels, this therapy can support weight management, enhance insulin sensitivity, and promote overall metabolic well-being.

The synergistic effects of Ozone IV Therapy and the NAD+ Rejuvenation Drip create a powerful combination that can address a wide range of health concerns. By harnessing the regenerative properties of ozone and the cellular-level benefits of NAD+, this cutting-edge treatment can help you achieve a heightened sense of vitality, mental clarity, and overall well-being.

One of the key advantages of Ozone IV Therapy is its versatility in addressing various health conditions. It has been explored as a potential treatment for chronic pain, neurodegenerative diseases, cardiovascular issues, and even certain types of cancer. By modulating the immune system and reducing oxidative stress, this therapy can promote a more balanced and resilient physiological state, making it a valuable tool in the management of complex health challenges.

Moreover, Ozone IV Therapy is not limited to standalone applications. It can be combined with other complementary therapies, such as high-dose vitamin C infusions or glutathione supplementation, to enhance its therapeutic benefits and provide a more comprehensive approach to well-being.

As with any medical treatment, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional to determine if Ozone IV Therapy and the NAD+ Rejuvenation Drip are appropriate for your individual health needs. The skilled team at The DRIPBaR can guide you through the process, ensuring a safe and effective treatment experience tailored to your specific goals and requirements.

Embrace the transformative power of Ozone IV Therapy and NAD+ Rejuvenation, and unlock a new era of wellness, vitality, and rejuvenation at The DRIPBaR today. Take the first step towards optimal health, wellness, and the body you've always dreamed of. Your journey to a healthier, more vibrant you starts here.

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HORMONE THERAPY:

A Potential Shield Against Alzheimer's Disease

By Dr. Magdalena Kerschner

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

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

The Link Between Hormones and Brain Health

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

The Estrogen Connection

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

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

The Testosterone Link

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

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

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

Personalized Hormone Therapy

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

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

Ongoing Research and Future Directions

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

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

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



Dr. Kerschner

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

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

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

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

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"Take a Second" to Support HOPE This December

By Timothy Kinsella, MD - Naples Cancer Advisors

s 2024 comes to a close, the team at Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) would like to "take a second" to focus on one word that embodies the season and the mission that drives us every day: HOPE. Hope is more than just an emotion—it's a lifeline for those facing one of life's greatest challenges: cancer. Webster's Dictionary defines hope as "a desire accompanied by expectation of success," and at NCA, we strive to bring that expectation of success to the lives of cancer patients and their families.

This year, hope has been a cornerstone of everything we've done. Our mission is rooted in the belief that every cancer patient deserves access to the best care, cutting-edge research, and compassionate guidance—all without financial barriers. As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the individuals and families who have turned to NCA during their darkest moments, seeking clarity, direction, and hope.

Hope Through Progress

Before joining NCA, I spent 50 years working in cancer care and research, including seven pivotal years at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) from 1980 to 1987. During that time, and throughout my service on the NCI Board of Scientific Counselors and Board of Scientific Advisors, I witnessed tremendous progress in the fight against cancer.

In the 1990s, there were approximately 7 million cancer survivors in the United States. Today, that number has nearly tripled to over 20 million, thanks to advancements in treatment, prevention, and early detection. A significant driver of this progress has been the Cancer Moonshot Project, a groundbreaking initiative over the past decade that has accelerated research and improved outcomes. The Cancer Moonshot focuses on:

- 1. Expanding clinical trial access to make life-saving treatments more widely available.
- 2. Advancing precision medicine to create personalized prevention and treatment strategies.
- 3. Increasing availability of investigational drugs and immunotherapy for patients with limited options.
- 4. Facilitating open access to genomic data, enabling worldwide collaboration among researchers.

At Naples Cancer Advisors, we strive to bring these advancements to the Southwest Florida community, inspiring hope and offering patients access to cutting-edge innovations.

Hope Through Local Support

Naples Cancer Advisors provides second opinions and guidance to cancer patients at no cost to the patient or their insurance. For newly diagnosed patients, those with

recurrent disease, or anyone uncertain about their treatment plan, we offer clarity and peace of mind. We connect patients with state-of-the-art information, clinical trials, and the latest discoveries from the Cancer Moonshot Project.

Our impact goes beyond information. NCA's team collaborates with NCI- affiliated physicians and researchers across the country, creating a support network that extends far beyond our local office. This means our patients can access advanced care without leaving their community.

This year, we've seen how hope can transform lives. Patients overwhelmed by their diagnosis have found renewed purpose and new options. Families navigating the complexities of genetic testing, clinical trial enrollment, and financial challenges have been guided to solutions, allowing them to focus on healing and supporting one another.

Hope Through Giving

As we approach the end of the year, it's also a time to reflect on the power of giving. At NCA, all our services are provided free of charge to ensure that every patient, regardless of financial circumstances, has access to the care and resources they need.

When you give to NCA, you are giving more than just money— You are giving hope. You are helping a patient find the right treatment plan, a family navigate the challenges of a cancer diagnosis, and a community come together to fight this disease. Your support allows us to continue providing second opinions, clinical trial navigation, and precision oncology services to those who need it most.

This December, we invite you to "take a second" and join us in spreading hope. Whether through a one-time gift or ongoing support, your contribution makes a real difference. Every dollar raised goes directly toward providing care, expanding access to resources, and ensuring that no one in our community has to face cancer alone.

Looking Ahead with Hope

Cancer remains a formidable challenge, with over 2 million Americans expected to be diagnosed in 2024. But at NCA, we are optimistic about the future. With continued advancements in research, unwavering support from our community, and the resilience of the patients and families we serve, we believe hope can triumph over fear.

As we close out 2024, we are deeply grateful for the trust our patients have placed in us, the dedication of our team, and the generosity of our supporters. Together, we are building a foundation of hope that will carry us into the new year and beyond.

Hope is more than a word; it's a promise. It's the driving force behind everything we do at Naples Cancer Advisors. With your help, we will continue to bring hope to those who need it most.

To support our mission and make a year-end gift, please visit www.naplescanceradvisors.org or click on the QR code. Together, we can make 2025 a year filled with hope, healing, and progress!

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Tim Kinsella, Naples Cancer Advisors' newest Physician Advisor!

Board-certified in both Medical Oncology and Radiation Oncology, and with an impressive 50 years of experience, Dr. Kinsella is internationally recognized for his expertise in treating sarcomas, brain tumors, lymphomas, gastraintestinal cancers, and pediatric cancers.

Dr. Kinsella has an extensive background in groundbreaking research, including the development of intraoperative radiotherapy and radiation-sensitizing drugs. His laboratory was funded by The National Institutes of Health for over 40 years, and he has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards throughout his research career. He has published over 350 articles, chapters, and books.

Trained at the Mayo Clinic and Harvard University, he has served on the National Cancer Institute Board of Scientific Advisors and on advisory boards for the Johns Hopkins Cancer Center, the University of Miami Cancer Center, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other renowned institutions. He has held numerous leadership positions in cancer-related organizations as well as serving on the editorial boards of leading scientific journals, including his role as Editor-in-Chief of Frontiers in Radiation Oncology. Dr. Kinsello's career spans esteemed roles at institutions including the Notional Cancer Institute (NCI), University of Wisconsin, Case Western Reserve University, Brown University and more.

Dr. Kinsella and his wife, a pediatric oncologist, recently relocated to Bonita Springs, Florida, and we are excited to have him join our team to support those facing cancer in our Southwest Florida community!



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naplescanceradvisors.org

7 Common Examples of Premises Liability Claims in Florida

By F. Scott Pauzar, III, Naples Personal Injury Attorney

Ithough we rarely think about it, we all face a variety of injury risks on a daily basis. From slippery floors to cracked walkways and other construction and maintenance-related hazards, all types of premises-related dangers can (and often do) lead to severe injuries.

Dangerous Conditions that Qualify for a Premise Liability Claim

When you or someone you love suffers serious injuries in a premises-related accident, it is essential to speak with a lawyer about your legal rights. Florida's premises liability laws entitle accident victims and their families to just compensation in many cases. For example, the following types of accidents (among others) can all potentially support claims for just compensation:

Slip and Fall Accidents

Slip and fall accidents are among the most common causes of premises-related injuries. Spills, recently cleaned floors, slippery flooring materials and a variety of other issues can lead to sudden, unexpected and dangerous falls.

Trip and Fall Accidents

Trip hazards are a common injury risk as well. Cracked sidewalks, unmarked curbs, protruding roots, items left in hallways and stairwells, and numerous other hazards can lead to trip and fall accidents. Whether due to pedestrian traffic, poor lighting or other issues, accident victims often don't see these types of hazards until it is too late.

Falls from Heights

Falls from heights can be extremely dangerous for obvious reasons. Loose and missing handrails are among the most common causes of these serious premises-related accidents.

Elevator and Escalator Malfunctions

Elevator and escalator accidents are far more common than they should be. While property owners have a duty to inspect and service their elevators and escalators regularly, many fail to do so. Negligent inspections and maintenance work can lead to malfunctions as well.



Electrocutions

While the risk of electrocution is greatest at construction sites, faulty wiring and other issues at homes, businesses and government buildings can lead to electrocutions as well. Regardless of where it happened, if you or a loved one has been electrocuted, you should speak with a premises liability lawyer promptly.

Falling Objects

Falling objects can also cause serious injuries. Overstocked shelves and dangerous product displays are among the most common causes of these accidents. From amusement parks to grocery stores and home improvement stores, falling objects are a safety risk at many different types of locations.

Construction Defects

Regardless of whether a property has been properly maintained, construction defects can lead to falls, electrocutions and a wide range of other premises-related accidents. While property owners and tenants will be liable for premises-related issues in most cases, contractors and subcontractors will often be liable when a construction defect is to blame.

Speak with a Premises Liability Lawyer in Naples for Free

If you need to know more about filing a claim for a premises-related accident in Florida, we invite you to contact us. We represent accident victims and their families on a contingency fee basis, which means our clients pay nothing unless we win.

To learn more in a free and confidential consultation, please call 239-649-6555 or get in touch online today.



About the Author

F. Scott ("Scott") Pauzar, III is a litigation and personal injury law attorney in Woodward, Pires & Lombardo's Naples office. He has a broad base of

legal knowledge and skills cultivated through over 19 years of experience as a litigator in complex litigation in both state and federal courts. Previously, Scott was an Assistant State Attorney at the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office in Fort Myers. During his five years as a Prosecutor, Scott conducted over 30 jury trials. After leaving the Office of the State Attorney, Scott served as an insurance defense attorney for 11 years, where his practice focused on litigation of complex cases and catastrophic injuries. Scott now combines his jury trial and defense experience to successfully represent his clients in litigation and personal injury law matters.

Scott is a military veteran, having served on active duty in the United States Air Force between 1989 and 1993. He is a native of Naples, Florida. Scott received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Jackson-ville University in 1996 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2004. He is a member of The Florida Bar, and is admitted to practice in the U.S. Middle District and U.S. Northern District of Florida.



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Make This Holiday Season Special:

The Importance of Treating Hearing Loss for Your Health and Relationships

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

he holiday season is a time for gathering with loved ones, celebrating traditions, and creating memories. However, for those experiencing hearing loss, the joy of these moments can be diminished. Conversations may be missed, festive music can sound muffled, and the warmth of connection may be harder to enjoy. This is why now is the perfect time to prioritize your hearing health, ensuring that this holiday season—and your overall well-being—are as special as they can be.

The Impact of Hearing Loss on the Holidays

The holidays are centered around connection—whether it's sharing stories over dinner, playing games with grandchildren, or catching up with distant relatives. But for individuals with untreated hearing loss, these cherished moments can be challenging. Background noise, multiple conversations happening at once, and trying to hear from across the room can make it difficult to keep up. Often, this leads people with hearing loss to withdraw from conversations or social events.

This isolation can create a sense of loneliness, especially during a season focused on togetherness. Untreated hearing loss doesn't just affect your ability to hear; it impacts your emotional well-being and your relationships. When you miss conversations or struggle to participate, it can lead to frustration and a feeling of disconnection.

Addressing your hearing loss now can ensure you're fully part of the holiday experience. Getting your hearing tested and treated can help you stay engaged and connected with those around you.

Hearing Loss and Your Overall Health

Hearing health is closely tied to your overall health. Untreated hearing loss has been linked to several health issues, including cognitive decline, balance problems, and even an increased risk of dementia. When your hearing is compromised, your brain has to work harder to process sound, which can lead to mental fatigue and strain on cognitive functions over time.

Additionally, untreated hearing loss can increase your risk of falls. The inner ear plays an essential role in maintaining balance, and when hearing is



affected, it can impair your ability to stay steady on your feet. For older adults, falls are a leading cause of injury, and protecting your hearing can help reduce this risk.

By treating hearing loss, you're not only improving your ability to hear but also supporting your overall health. Better hearing helps keep your mind sharp, your balance steady, and your body functioning at its best.

Strengthening Relationships Through Better Hearing

Communication is essential in relationships, and hearing plays a key role in how we connect with others. When hearing loss goes untreated, it can lead to misunderstandings, missed moments, and frustration for both you and your loved ones. Over time, these communication difficulties can strain relationships.

During the holidays, the ability to communicate clearly is more important than ever. Whether it's listening to your grandchildren's excitement or joining in family discussions, hearing well allows you to be fully present. By addressing your hearing loss before the holidays, you can strengthen your relationships and create more meaningful connections with those you love.

Better hearing helps you stay engaged and confident in conversations, allowing you to participate fully in the experiences that matter most.

Why Now is the Perfect Time for a Hearing Test

As the year draws to a close, many people reflect on their health and set goals for the new year. Scheduling a hearing test is an easy way to prioritize your health and improve your quality of life. A hearing test is quick and simple, and it provides valuable insights into your hearing ability.

If treatment is recommended, today's hearing aids are highly advanced, offering a range of features to fit your needs. Whether you want discreet devices or hearing aids that connect to your smartphone, modern technology offers comfortable and effective solutions.

By addressing your hearing loss now, you'll be able to enjoy the holiday season to the fullest and set yourself up for better health and stronger relationships in the new year...

Don't Let Hearing Loss Hold You Back

The holiday season is about creating memories and strengthening connections with loved ones. Don't let untreated hearing loss prevent you from fully enjoying these moments. Scheduling a hearing test and exploring treatment options can transform your holiday experience and improve your overall well-being.

At Decibels Audiology, we understand the importance of hearing health. Our team of licensed audiologists is here to help you take control of your hearing and fully embrace the joy of the season. We offer complimentary comprehensive hearing evaluations, personalized treatment plans, and the latest in hearing technology to ensure you hear your best.

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of better hearing. Contact us today to schedule your hearing test and discover how improving your hearing can make your holidays-and your life—more special.



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The Transformative Potential of Stem Cell Injections: REVOLUTIONIZING MODERN MEDICINE

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

tem cell injections represent one of the most promising frontiers in modern medical treatment, offering hope and healing across a wide range of medical conditions. These remarkable therapeutic interventions harness the body's natural regenerative capabilities, providing innovative solutions for previously challenging medical challenges.

Understanding Stem Cell Technology

At the core of stem cell therapy is the unique ability of these remarkable cells to differentiate into multiple cell types. Unlike traditional treatment methods that primarily manage symptoms, stem cell injections aim to repair, regenerate, and restore damaged tissues at their fundamental cellular level. This approach represents a paradigm shift in medical treatment, moving from reactive to proactive healthcare strategies.

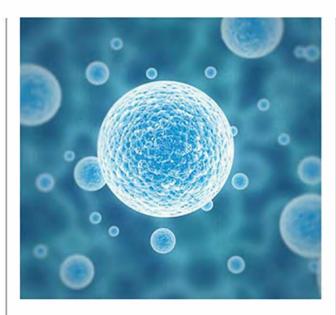
Orthopedic Regeneration and Pain Management

One of the most significant benefits of stem cell injections is in orthopedic medicine. Patients suffering from chronic joint conditions like osteoarthritis, tendon injuries, and ligament damages have found remarkable relief through these treatments. By introducing concentrated stem cells directly into damaged areas, physicians can stimulate natural healing processes, potentially reducing inflammation, promoting tissue repair, and alleviating chronic pain.

Athletes and active individuals particularly appreciate this approach, as stem cell injections offer a less invasive alternative to surgical interventions. The treatment can potentially accelerate healing time, reduce recovery periods, and provide long-term pain management without the risks associated with traditional surgical procedures.

Neurological Disorder Potential

Emerging research demonstrates promising applications of stem cell injections in neurological disorders. Conditions like Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and spinal cord injuries are being approached with renewed hope through stem cell therapies. These treatments aim to replace damaged neural cells, potentially restoring lost function and improving patients' quality of life.



Cardiovascular Health Innovations

Stem cell injections are showing remarkable potential in cardiovascular medicine. Researchers have documented instances where these treatments can help regenerate heart tissue after heart attacks. potentially reducing scarring and improving cardiac function. This approach offers hope for patients with previously irreversible heart damage, representing a significant breakthrough in cardiac care.

Autoimmune Disease Management

For patients battling autoimmune disorders, stem cell injections provide a novel therapeutic approach, By modulating the immune system and promoting cellular regeneration, these treatments can help manage conditions like lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and type 1 diabetes. The ability to potentially reset or repair dysfunctional immune responses represents a groundbreaking development in treating these complex medical conditions.

Safety and Ethical Considerations

While stem cell injections offer immense potential, it's crucial to approach these treatments with informed perspective. Most modern stem cell therapies utilize autologous stem cells-meaning cells harvested from the patient's own body-which significantly reduces rejection risks and ethical concerns. Patients should always consult qualified medical professionals and undergo comprehensive evaluations to determine their suitability for these treatments.

Future Outlook

The field of stem cell therapy continues to evolve rapidly. As research advances and technological capabilities expand, we can anticipate increasingly sophisticated and targeted treatments. The potential to repair, regenerate, and restore human tissues at the cellular level represents one of the most exciting frontiers in contemporary medical science.

Stem cell injections are not just a treatment; they represent a fundamental reimagining of medical intervention. By harnessing the body's inherent healing capabilities, these therapies offer hope, healing, and the potential for transformative medical outcomes.

KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP- C

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

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CONFRONTED WITH A NON-HEALING WOUND?

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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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 sign and symptoms of rosacea millions

of people are just like Deanna

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.

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.

15 Years & Counting

eanna Wallin

Ouncer & CEO

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!



Sincerely,
Deanna Wallin
Founder & CEO, Naples Soap Company

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EPIDURAL INJECTIONS:

A Beacon of Hope for Sciatic Back Pain Sufferers

By Dr. Magdalena Kerschner

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

Understanding Sciatic Back Pain

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

The Role of Epidural Injections

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

The primary goals of epidural injections are:

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

The Procedure

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

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



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

Benefits and Effectiveness

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

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

Who Should Consider Epidural Injections?

Epidural injections may be recommended for patients who:

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

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

Conclusion

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



Dr. Kerschner

Dr. Magdalene Kerschner, a graduate of Wayne State University School of Medicine, completed her Anesthesiology residency at The University of Kentucky. Her experience in spine sur-

gery anesthesia led to her specialization in chronic pain management. As a Board Certified Interventional Pain Physician, Dr. Kerschner believes that while pain is undeniable, suffering is optional. She aims to help patients reclaim their joy through interventional techniques and complementary therapies.

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

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

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

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

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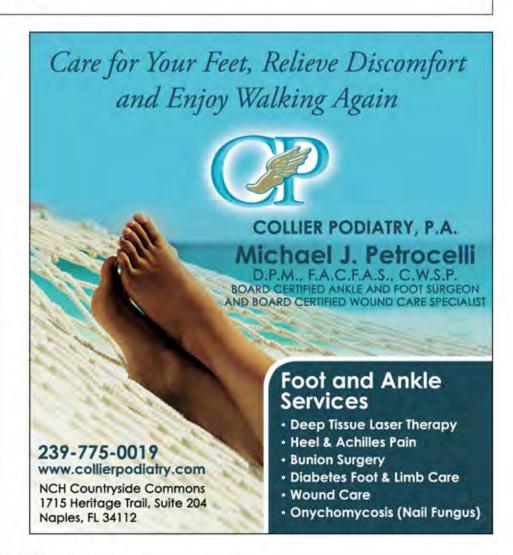


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The Importance of Giving Back

iving is contagious. Have you ever noticed that when the people around you are being generous, you feel compelled to join in? When you see someone drop their coins into the Salvation Army bucket, don't you start to search your pockets too? Why is this?

One study conducted by the Harvard Business School reports that people who give charitably to organizations felt greater happiness, but that there was no correlation between spending on oneself and happiness. (1) This study seems to prove the old saying, "'Tis better to give than to receive". If this is true, then how can I get in on the fun? Below is a list of some practical ways we can all give back not only during the holidays, but throughout the year as well.

5 WAYS TO GIVE BACK

- 1. Give money to an organization. Find an organization and research where the money goes. Who are you interested in giving to? Children? Funding research for curing an illness? Feeding the homeless in your area? There are hundreds of organizations asking for donations. Do a quick search and find out where they money goes. Does it go to the people they claim to help or does most of the money stay within the organization and its million-dollar-salaried CEO? Make sure your money is being used for what you intend it to be used for.
- 2. Give to people you know. Does the neighbor have trouble making ends meet? Does your coworker need help buying gifts for their kids' birthdays? Listen to the people around you talk and look for ways that you can jump in and meet a need they may have.
- 3. Give your time. Every city across our nation has a soup kitchen or a clothing closet. Volunteer to serve meals or to wash donated clothes. Does the single mother down the street need help with the kids and would be willing to let you watch them a couple of hours a week? Could the elderly couple next door use help mowing the lawn? Look around you. Need is everywhere and it often won't cost you a dime.
- **4. Give your talent.** Volunteer to play and sing at the local nursing facility. Help the neighbor paint the fence. Change the oil a single mom's car. Paint a



picture of a sunset for someone who isn't able to get out of the house much. Are you a dentist? Offer free dental care to someone in need. Are you a makeup artist? Give free makeovers to high school girls who can't afford it at prom time.

5. Give your possessions. That car that you have sitting in the garage that hasn't seen the light of day in more than a year could be a huge blessing to someone else. If you're not using that set of dishes, why not give it to someone who could use it?

There are plenty of ways for us to make an impact on the world around us. Each day we can do small acts of kindness that may have a great impact on the receiver. Often, we don't see the full results of what we have done, but we can feel happy knowing that in some way, we have improved another person's day or even life. Look for ways to give back in your community and in the world. It is up to us to create a culture of generosity. A small spark can ignite a blazing inferno of generosity. Take the time to give back today.

"They may forget what you said—but they will never forget how you made them feel."

- Carl W. Buehner

ource:

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Dr. Ricardo Martinez

Dr. Ricardo Martinez is an internist in Naples, FL and is affiliated with NCH Baker Hospital. He received his medical degree from Superior Institute of Medical Sciences of

Santiago de Cuba and has been in practice 20 years. He also speaks multiple languages, including Spanish. He specializes in hospital medicine, ambulatory care and is experienced in hospice and palliative medicine, bariatric medicine, diabetes mellitus, food allergy, and infectious disease. As of March 16th, 2020, Dr. Martinez has founded Well-Being Medical center in Naples Florida. He is looking forward to providing Medical care within primary care settings and urgent care service throughout the Naples Florida area.



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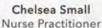
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The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

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

f the many hormones in the body, a select few are typically categorized as being for one gender or for the other. Many people are often surprised to learn, though, that despite these hormones being more prominent in one gender, they are essential for proper body functioning in both.

One example of these hormones is progesterone, which is often considered for women, although it has many essential roles in men. However, progesterone can decline in both genders for a number of reasons, including with age or due to health conditions. When progesterone levels fall, unpleasant symptoms can occur, which is why progesterone replacement is a crucial treatment for those with unbalanced hormones.

What Is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone most often known to be released by the corpus luteum after a woman has ovulated. Also referred to as the "pregnancy hormone," progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy by thickening the lining and preventing muscle contractions that would expel an egg.

Despite its primary role in preparing the female body for pregnancy, though, progesterone is also vital for men, albeit with different roles.

Let's further discuss the role of progesterone in both genders and why it is crucial for men and women to have balanced progesterone levels.

The Role of Progesterone in Women

Progesterone varies considerably through a woman's menstrual cycle, with it being produced in low levels during the first half but rising considerably following ovulation. If a woman becomes pregnant, progesterone remains high throughout the pregnancy and aids in breast milk production upon delivery of the baby.

While the ovaries initially produce progesterone, the placenta begins producing progesterone at a higher rate after 8 or 10 weeks of pregnancy. This increase in progesterone keeps the body from releasing more eggs and prepares the breasts to produce milk.



Despite the role of progesterone in pregnancy, it can also be used to prevent pregnancy. In fact, progesterone is often used by itself or in combination with estrogen in hormonal contraceptives. When in this format, it helps the cervical mucus thicken, making it difficult for sperm to reach and fertilize an egg. It can also cause the uterine lining to thin, or it may stop ovulation entirely.

Because of these extremes in the body, promoting an ideal amount of progesterone is critical for healthy fertility, if pregnancy is a woman's goal.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Women

Some signs of low progesterone in women include:

- missing periods or having abnormal periods
- uterine bleeding
- repeated miscarriages
- spotting and pain while pregnant
- infertility

Progesterone and estrogen are also closely related, so if progesterone is too low, it may cause estrogen levels to become high, which can cause weight gain, headaches, or mood swings.

The Role of Progesterone in Men

Despite being considered the "pregnancy hormone," progesterone is also an essential hormone in men.

In men, progesterone plays a vital role in mood regulation and keeping the mind calm. It also impacts libido and promotes fertility from the man's side. This is because progesterone influences spermiogenesis, or the creation of sperm; if the amount of progesterone in a man is too low, the body might not be able to produce as much sperm, which can influence a couple's ability to conceive.

Progesterone is also crucial for the biosynthesis of testosterone, otherwise known as the male sex hormone, which is responsible for the development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair, muscle growth, and a deeper voice.

Progesterone also plays an essential role in the male body regarding counteracting the effects of estrogen, which can cause testosterone levels to decline. Proper progesterone levels ensure that these sex hormones are in the correct balance.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Men

Some of the signs of low progesterone in men include:

- hair loss
- low libido
- fatigue
- weight gain
- depression
- breast growth
- muscle lossbone loss
- erectile dysfunction

Low progesterone levels can also increase the risk of certain health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and prostatism.

Estrogen Dominance and Progesterone

Progesterone is an antagonist to estrogen, giving it an important role in keeping estrogen levels in check. However, this also means that if progesterone levels are too low, estrogen levels can become high without anything to keep them in the correct range, a condition called estrogen dominance.

While estrogen dominance is most often referred to in women, it can affect men as well, with both genders having shared and also different symptoms.

Women with estrogen dominance may have symptoms that include:

- $\boldsymbol{\mathsf{-}}$ swelling and tenderness in the breasts
- low libido
- bloating
- weight gain
- mood swings
- headaches
- increase premenstrual syndrome symptoms
- fatigue
- cold hands or feet
- memory problems
- anxiety and panic attacks

Men can share some of the above symptoms in addition to experiencing infertility issues, breast tissue growth, or erectile dysfunction.

Normal estrogen levels in adult, menopausal women range from 15 – 350 pg/ml. In adult men, estrogen levels should range from 10 - 40 pg/ml. Estrogen counts higher than these ranges may signify low progesterone.

What Causes Low Progesterone?

There are many causes of low progesterone, some due to a temporary situation, whereas others may be more chronic.

Hypothyroidism

Many of the hormones in the body interact, which is evident between the thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and progesterone. With hypothyroidism, the thyroid does not produce enough hormones, and since the thyroid is responsible for regulating the endocrine system, this can then influence how well the body is able to produce progesterone.

It is also possible for low progesterone to lead to hypothyroidism, so this connection is bi-directional.

Low Cholesterol

Cholesterol is needed by the body in order to make progesterone. So, if your cholesterol is low, your body does not have enough of the building blocks required to produce enough progesterone.

Stress

Stress contributes to many health conditions, and low progesterone is one of them. This is because the hormone secreted by the body when in a perceived stressful situation, cortisol, utilizes the resources needed to make progesterone.

Essentially, when the body is stressed, it halts progesterone production in order to increase the amount of cortisol produced. For those experiencing chronic stress, this means that cortisol continually interferes with progesterone production.

Anovulatory Cycle

An anovulatory cycle is a menstrual cycle where ovulation does not occur. Since a rise in progesterone is triggered by the release of an egg and the empty follicle it leaves behind called the corpus luteum, an anovulatory cycle results in no increase in progesterone.

Anovulatory cycles are common in those on certain types of birth control or with PCOS.

Abnormal Bodyweight

Your body weight can play a prominent role in progesterone production because of its impact on the menstrual cycle. This is because women need a certain amount of body fat in order to have a regular cycle, which leads to ovulation and a rise in progesterone. Because of this, low body weight may impede ovulation, leading to no progesterone production.

Problems can occur at the other end of the spectrum as well, though. This is because fat cells produce estrogen, so high body fat can result in an overproduction of estrogen, which can lead to low progesterone. Studies have shown this correlation between obesity and low progesterone in men as well.

Prolactin Disorder

Prolactin is a hormone produced by the pituitary, and it negatively affects the production of sex hormone precursors. Those with hyperprolactinemia produce too much prolactin, which can disrupt the menstrual cycle, keeping progesterone from being produced.

Correcting Low Progesterone

Progesterone replacement therapy involves progestins, which are synthetic compounds mimicking the effects of progesterone on the body.

Some reasons why someone may be treated with progesterone hormone therapy are to:

- correct a low amount of progesterone due to underproduction
- bring on menstruation
- reverse low progesterone resulting from certain medications
- replace progesterone that is limited due to specific medical procedures

There are many different forms of progesterone hormone therapy, such as:

- injections
- oral capsules
- vaginal gels
- vaginal inserts
- vaginal suppositories

The ideal method of progesterone replacement will depend on gender, symptoms, and personal preferences.

The Importance of Progesterone Replacement

Besides helping to address problems with fertility, progesterone replacement can also be essential for a healthy pregnancy in women. For example, women who are pregnant, but have low progesterone, may be at a greater risk of preterm delivery or miscarriage. Replacing progesterone can help prevent these complications from occurring.



Progesterone replacement produces similar benefits in men regarding improving fertility due to its role in spermatogenesis and the fact that low progesterone can lead to erectile dysfunction.

Progesterone can also help with other symptoms affecting well-being, including those that appear in men with low progesterone. These benefits can include an improvement in mood, better sleep, and stronger bones.

Some cases of low progesterone are temporary, but for those suffering significantly from low progesterone, it is likely due to a chronic cause, and the only way to find relief is by addressing the hormonal imbalance.

Progesterone can be supplemented in many forms, such as injections, pills, or creams, which help raise progesterone levels and assist the body in functioning correctly, reversing unpleasant symptoms. Working with a doctor who specializes in hormones can also ensure that you get just the right amount of progesterone, as too much can also cause problems, especially for those looking to conceive.

By adequately balancing progesterone, all other hormones in the body can work in balance again, significantly improving your quality of life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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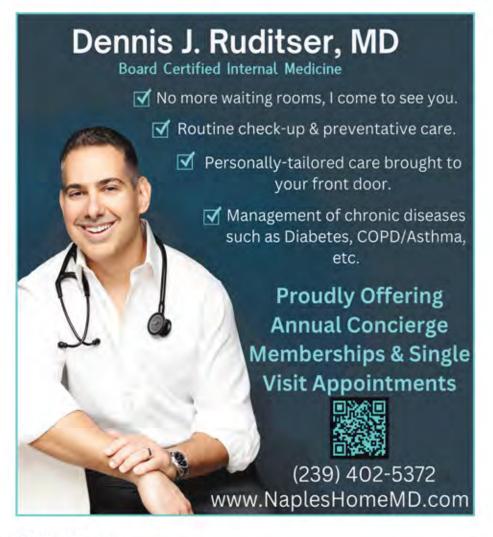
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Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

PKD Treatment

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

How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

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

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

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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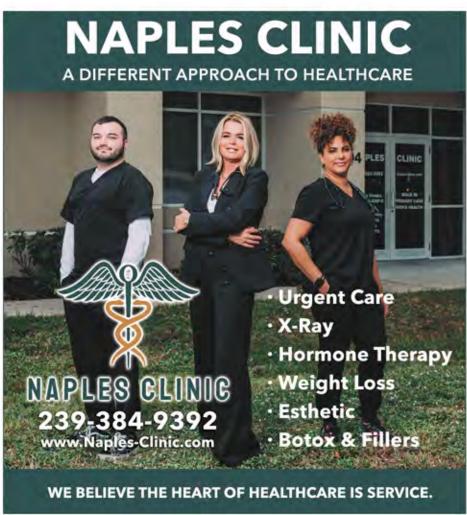
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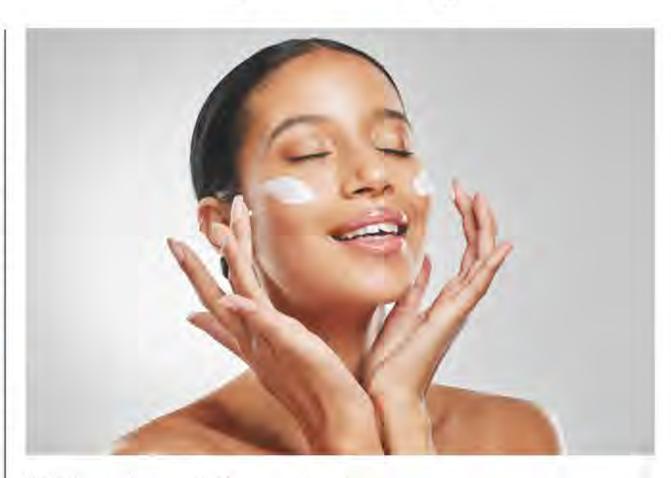
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UNDERSTANDING DIZZINESS, **VERTIGO & BALANCE DISORDERS**

What Is a Balance Disorder?

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

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

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

Balance and the Inner Ear

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

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

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

Common Vestibular Disorders Autoimmune Inner Ear Disease (AIED)

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



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

Acoustic Neuroma

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

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

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

Mal de Debarquement Syndrome (MdDS)

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

Ménière's Disease

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

Vestibular Neuritis

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

Perilymph Fistula

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

Diagnosing Vestibular Disorders

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

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



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

Treating Vestibular Disorders

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

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

Be Safe When Feeling Dizzy

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

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

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

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

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

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A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO NEW YEAR WELLNESS SCREENINGS

s we embrace the new year, making a commitment to comprehensive health becomes more than just a resolution – it's a strategic investment in your most valuable asset: your well-being. Any Lab Test Now offers an innovative approach to personal health management, providing accessible and comprehensive testing that empowers individuals to take proactive control of their health journey.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SCREENING

Health is a complex, multifaceted aspect of life that goes far beyond simply feeling "okay." True wellness requires a deep understanding of your body's unique characteristics, potential risks, and underlying health conditions. Any Lab Test Now provides a holistic approach to health screening, offering an array of tests that cover virtually every aspect of personal health.

TARGETED HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Men's Health Screening

Men face unique health challenges that require specialized attention. Comprehensive testing can evaluate:

- Testosterone levels
- · Prostate health
- · Cardiovascular risk factors
- Hormonal balance
- · Overall metabolic health

Women's Health Screening

Women's health involves intricate hormonal and physiological systems that demand comprehensive care:

- Reproductive health markers
- Hormone balance
- Bone density
- · Thyroid function
- Cardiovascular risk assessment

ADDRESSING SPECIFIC HEALTH CONCERNS

Anemia and Fatigue

Persistent tiredness isn't just an inconvenience – it's a potential sign of underlying health issues. Comprehensive testing can identify:

- Iron deficiency
- · Nutritional imbalances
- Potential chronic conditions
- Metabolic disorders

Arthritis and Inflammation

Understanding inflammatory markers can provide crucial insights into:

- · Chronic pain management
- · Potential autoimmune conditions
- · Early detection of inflammatory diseases
- · Personalized treatment strategies

CRITICAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

Cancer Screening

Early detection is the most powerful weapon against cancer. Comprehensive screening can:

- · Identify potential risk factors
- · Detect early-stage abnormalities
- · Provide peace of mind
- · Guide preventative strategies

Diabetes and Blood Sugar

With diabetes rates continuously rising, comprehensive testing is crucial:

- Assess blood glucose levels
- Identify pre-diabetic conditions
- · Monitor insulin sensitivity
- · Provide early intervention opportunities

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SPECIALIZED TESTING

Chemical and Metal Exposure

Our modern environment presents unique health challenges:

- · Detect toxic metal accumulation
- · Assess environmental chemical exposure
- · Identify potential long-term health risks
- · Guide detoxification strategies

Digestive Health

A healthy digestive system is fundamental to overall wellness:

- · Food sensitivity testing
- · Nutrient absorption analysis
- Gastrointestinal disorder screening
- · Microbiome health assessment

COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS APPROACH

Heart Health

Cardiovascular wellness goes beyond simple cholesterol testing:

- · Advanced lipid panel
- Inflammation markers
- · Heart disease risk assessment
- · Personalized prevention strategies

Hormone Health

Hormonal balance impacts every aspect of well-being:

- · Thyroid function
- Stress hormone levels.
- · Reproductive hormone balance
- · Metabolic health

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Ten Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Take control of the holidays

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- 2. Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious, or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups, social media sites, or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship.

If you're feeling stressed during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call, or a video chat. Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.



- 3. Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails, or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.
- 4. Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
- 5. Stick to a budget. Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.
- 6. Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends, and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.

- 7. Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
- 8. Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese, or drinks. Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and limit alcohol.
- 9. Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing, and restoring inner calm.
- 10. Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or mental health professional.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of a mood disorder, there is help in SWFL. Dr. Richard Capiola, MD is a Board Certified Psychiatrist with specialty certifications in addiction and forensic psychiatry with over 32 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1990. Be sure to call ahead with Dr. Capiola to book an appointment toady at 239-649-7494.

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



Senior Driving:Navigating the Road Ahead

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

nevitably, there comes a time when roles reverse, and we find ourselves concerned about the well-being of our aging parents, particularly when it comes to their ability to drive safely. Addressing this issue is often as challenging as it is necessary. AARP, a trusted resource for individuals aged 50 and above, notes, "Driving is often linked to independence for seniors, but there may come a time when it's no longer safe." This acknowledgment is a crucial starting point for the conversation about senior driving. To help you discern whether your loved one may be reaching a point where driving is no longer safe, consider the following:

Observe for Possible Changes

• Changes in Driving Habits

Watch for alterations in your loved one's driving habits. Frequent close calls, increased traffic violations, unexplained scratches on the car, or a noticeable decline in overall driving skills may indicate a need for further evaluation.

• Diminished Executive Functions

Executive functions are cognitive processes which enable us to regulate, control, and manage our thoughts and actions. These functions are critical for safe driving, as they involve decision-making, adapting to changes, and staying focused on the task at hand. As we age, executive functioning naturally declines, and in cases of dementia, this decline can be more pronounced. When executive functioning is diminished drivers' often lack the ability to make quick decisions on the road.

• Memory Concerns

Memory lapses or forgetfulness can be red flags. If your loved one struggles to remember familiar routes, becomes disoriented while driving, or forgets the purpose of a trip, it's time to consider the impact on their driving abilities.

As you can imagine, any conversation about driving is not just about the act of driving or giving up a set of car keys. It is about addressing cognitive and physical changes that impact a person's ability to operate a vehicle safely. But it is also about a loss of independence for the driver

and additional responsibility for whomever will provide transportation. Realization may make broaching the subject even more daunting.

Approaching this conversation with empathy and sensitivity is crucial. Here are three ways to initiate the dialogue with your loved one.

1. Express Concerns from a Place of Love

Begin by expressing your love and concern for their well-being. Share specific instances that have raised worries about their safety on the road. Emphasize that the goal is to ensure their continued well-being and independence.

2. Highlight Alternative Transportation Options

Instead of framing the conversation solely around giving up driving, focus on alternative transportation options available in your family or your community. Highlight the convenience of rideshare services, public transportation, or family and friends willing to assist with transportation needs.

3. Involve a Neutral Third Party

Sometimes, having a professional guide the conversation can be beneficial. Consider involving a doctor, a driving specialist, or a member of the Beyond Driving with Dignity program to provide an objective assessment and recommendations.

Introducing Beyond Driving with Dignity

Beyond Driving with Dignity is a program that offers a comprehensive approach to addressing concerns about senior driving. Developed by Matt Gurwell, a retired Ohio State Trooper, this program equips families with tools for early intervention, identifies signs of decline, and suggests lifestyle changes to enhance safety. This one-hour self-assessment program covers the role of dementia, memory, and executive functioning in older driver safety. It sheds light on the importance of addressing cognitive decline for the well-being of our senior drivers. Beyond Driving with Dignity aims to save lives while preserving the dignity and independence of older drivers.



Should you Consider Beyond Driving with Dignity? If you answer yes to more than one of these questions, please reach out to us for a free consultation.

- Do you live away from your loved-one and aren't completely sure of his or her ability to continue driving safely?
- Could you use some help and direction plotting the future of your loved one's safe driving career?
- Are you unsure of how to address the issue with your loved one, or confused about how to initiate "the talk"?
- Not sure what resources are available to you?
- Do you want a skilled and experienced professional to help bring or maintain calm and stability to what can be a very complex and sensitive family issue?
- Are you looking for a program that will help further your loved one's ability to remain a safe driver, and to continue to monitor their skills as they progress through the aging process?

Conversations about senior driving are delicate yet necessary. By recognizing signs of decline, understanding the impact of diminished executive functioning, and approaching the topic with empathy, you can navigate this transition with care and consideration. The Beyond Driving with Dignity program stands as a valuable resource, offering guidance and support to families as they address the complexities of senior driving.

For more information please call (239) 330-2133 or email cynthia@seniorcareauthority.com.



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The Matterhorn Method: Eliminating Pain and Inspiring Hope

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

s we age, we are constantly fighting an uphill battle of pain and physical limitations. When our body starts to break down, we are unable to perform the activities that we want and the mental burden becomes as great as the physical one. Many patients bounce from doctor to doctor without ever getting to the root cause of their problem. This can be extremely frustrating and causes many to lose hope.

Naples based Matterhorn Fit, has a solution. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat over 70 professional athletes, 11 Olympians, and thousands of SW Florida residents in as little as two weeks. In their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it quickly, and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods and are still in pain.. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are fast and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain.



The team spent the next five years compiling various techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan's rehabilitation. The results were fast and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.

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

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

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

> To schedule an initial evaluation visit matterhornfit.com or call the office at 239.676.5342.

Matterhorn Fit

239-676-5342 www.matterhornfit.com

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Inflammaging Part 3: Menopause and the Role of BHRT in Managing Inflammatory Markers

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

s we age, the interplay between hormonal shifts and chronic low-grade inflammation, known as inflammaging, can significantly impact overall health. For women, the menopause transition is a pivotal time when fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels contribute to increased inflammation, accelerating the aging process. Understanding this connection and exploring the potential benefits of Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) offers a path to better manage inflammatory markers and enhance well-being during and after menopause.

The Menopause Transition and Inflammatory Markers Menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of menstrual cycles, typically occurring around age 50. However, the menopause transition (perimenopause) can last 4 to 8 years, during which hormone levels fluctuate before eventually declining. These hormonal changes are accompanied by shifts in systemic inflammation, contributing to the following:

1. Increased Levels of Pro-inflammatory Cytokines:

Estrogen has anti-inflammatory properties, modulating the immune response and reducing the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as interleukin-6 (IL-6) and tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α). As estrogen levels drop, these cytokines increase, promoting inflammation in tissues throughout the body.

2. Oxidative Stress and Inflammaging:

The menopause transition exacerbates oxidative stress, a driver of inflammaging. This can result in cellular damage, contributing to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and neurodegenerative conditions.

3. Changes in Adipose Tissue:

Hormonal shifts during menopause often lead to changes in fat distribution, particularly an increase in visceral fat. This type of fat is metabolically active and releases pro-inflammatory substances, further contributing to the inflammaging process.

4. Decline in Vaginal and Urinary Tract Health:

Decreased estrogen levels affect the vaginal and urinary tract lining, leading to increased susceptibility to infections, which can trigger localized inflammation that contributes to systemic effects.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) offers a tailored approach to restoring hormone balance using plant-based hormones that are chemically identical to those produced by the human body.

By addressing the hormonal imbalances of menopause, BHRT can mitigate inflammation and support overall health.

Key Benefits of BHRT on Inflammatory Markers:

1. Reduction in Pro-inflammatory Cytokines:

BHRT has been shown to decrease the production of IL-6 and TNF- α , reducing systemic inflammation. This improvement in inflammatory profiles can lower the risk of chronic conditions associated with inflammaging, such as cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes.

2. Improved Bone Health:

Estrogen plays a crucial role in maintaining bone density. BHRT can slow bone turnover and reduce markers of inflammation that contribute to osteoporosis, protecting against fractures and improving long-term skeletal health.

3. Enhanced Cardiovascular Health:

Postmenopausal women are at increased risk of heart disease, partly due to inflammatory changes and lipid profile shifts. Estrogen replacement via BHRT has been linked to improved vascular function and reduced arterial inflammation.

4. Support for Neurological Function:

Chronic inflammation and estrogen deficiency are implicated in the progression of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. BHRT can reduce neuroinflammation and oxidative stress, supporting brain health during aging.

5. Balanced Immune Response:

Hormonal replacement can help recalibrate the immune system, reducing the overactive inflammatory response often seen during the menopause transition.

At Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy, we specialize in creating customized BHRT formulations tailored to individual needs. Our approach includes:

- Precision Dosing: Using detailed lab results to ensure the exact hormonal balance necessary to alleviate symptoms and reduce inflammation.
- Quality Ingredients: Providing bioidentical hormones sourced from plant-based compounds to mimic natural estrogen, progesterone, and other essential hormones.
- Ongoing Monitoring: Partnering with healthcare providers to adjust therapy as needed, ensuring optimal outcomes.

Additional Steps to Combat Inflammaging

While BHRT can be a cornerstone of managing inflammaging, lifestyle interventions can enhance its benefits. These include:

- Nutrition: Incorporate anti-inflammatory foods such as fatty fish, leafy greens, and berries.
- Exercise: Regular physical activity reduces inflammation and supports hormonal health.
- Stress Management: Chronic stress exacerbates inflammation; techniques like meditation and yoga can help.
- Sleep Hygiene: Poor sleep increases inflammatory markers. Establishing a consistent sleep routine is crucial

Take Charge of Your Health

If you're navigating the menopause transition and experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, or brain fog, it could be time to consider how BHRT might help. Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy is here to guide you through the process, offering individualized support to restore hormone balance, reduce inflammation, and enhance your quality of life.

Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy custom builds medication, one patient at a time. We use the highest quality pharmaceutical-grade ingredients, state-of-the-art bases, equipment, and technology. Continual training on the newest techniques, advances in therapy, and regulations allows our pharmacists and technicians to provide the safest, most effective medications for you AND your pets. In addition to compounded medications, we offer pharmaceutical-grade nutritional supplements, health advice, and hormone consults. Creative Scripts specializes in veterinary compounding, dermatology, bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), pain management, and more. Pharmacists Jerry and Lisa Meloche have served Naples and surrounding communities since 2005.

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Natives Serving Naples Since 2005

Gainswave: Revolutionizing Sexual Health Through Advanced Shockwave Therapy

exual health is a critical aspect of overall well-being that many men hesitate to discuss. Gainswave represents a groundbreaking treatment that addresses erectile dysfunction and sexual performance challenges through innovative shockwave technologies, offering hope and renewed confidence to men seeking natural, non-invasive solutions.

At the core of Gainswave's effectiveness are two distinct shockwave technologies: Focal and Radial, each designed to optimize sexual health and performance through precise, targeted treatments. These cutting-edge approaches harness the body's natural healing mechanisms to address underlying physiological issues that contribute to sexual dysfunction.

Focal shockwave technology delivers concentrated, high-energy waves directly to specific areas, enabling precise treatment of localized tissue. This method allows for deep penetration and targeted healing, specifically addressing areas of reduced blood flow and tissue damage. By stimulating cellular regeneration and promoting increased blood vessel formation, focal shockwaves help restore natural erectile function at a microscopic level.

Radial shockwave technology, in contrast, disperses energy across a broader area, creating a more diffuse treatment approach. These waves spread outward from the application point, providing comprehensive stimulation to larger tissue regions. This method is

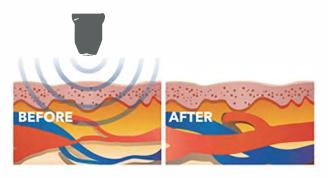
particularly effective in addressing broader circulatory issues and promoting overall tissue health and regeneration.

The combined approach of Focal and Radial technologies sets Gainswave apart from traditional treatments. Unlike pharmaceutical interventions that offer temporary solutions, these shockwave therapies aim to address the root causes of sexual performance challenges. The treatments stimulate natural healing processes, encourage new blood vessel growth, and break down potential scar tissue that might impede optimal sexual function.

Clinical studies have demonstrated promising results, with many patients experiencing improved erectile function, increased sensitivity, and enhanced sexual performance. The non-invasive nature of the treatment means minimal discomfort and no downtime, making it an attractive option for men seeking sustainable sexual health solutions.

Patients typically undergo a series of treatment sessions, with each approach customized to individual needs. The regenerative process continues even after the treatments conclude, offering long-term potential for improved sexual wellness.

For men struggling with erectile dysfunction, reduced sexual performance, or seeking proactive sexual health maintenance, Gainswave represents a scientifically advanced, holistic approach to restoring confidence and intimate well-being.



Orchidia Medical Group is Here to Help

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

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

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

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CARDIOVASCULAR WELLNESS

What is Cardiovascular Wellness???

By James V. Talano, MD, MBA, FACC

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

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

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

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

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

If you are symptomatic, you could have:

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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UNWINDING THE KNOTS:

Massage as a Sanctuary of Healing During Stressful Holidays

he holiday season, often romanticized as a time of joy and connection, can paradoxically become a crucible of stress and anxiety. As festive obligations mount and emotional expectations intensify, our bodies and minds bear the brunt of this complex energy landscape. Massage therapy emerges as a powerful intervention, offering not just physical relief, but a profound energetic reset that can transform our holiday experience.

Stress manifests in our bodies as more than just mental tension. It creates physiological responses that can disrupt our nervous system, immune function, and overall well-being. The holidays amplify these challenges, introducing financial pressures, family dynamics, social expectations, and disrupted routines that can trigger significant emotional and physical strain.

Massage operates on multiple levels of healing. Physiologically, it stimulates the parasympetic nervous system, which counteracts the "fight or flight" stress response. Deep tissue manipulation releases muscle tension, improves circulation, and encourages the body to shift from a state of chronic stress to one of relaxation and recovery. The therapeutic touch triggers the release of oxytocin and serotonin, neurotransmitters associated with comfort, bonding, and emotional regulation.

Beyond physical mechanics, massage represents an energetic exchange. Each session becomes a sacred space where accumulated emotional residue can be



processed and released. The intentional, compassionate touch creates a container for emotional processing, allowing individuals to metabolize stress and recalibrate their internal landscape.

During the holidays, when emotional intensities run high, regular massage can serve as a crucial self-care strategy. It provides a deliberate pause, a moment of intentional stillness amidst the seasonal chaos. This isn't mere indulgence, but a necessary recalibration that supports mental health, emotional resilience, and physiological balance.

Different massage modalities offer varied approaches to stress management. Swedish massage promotes overall relaxation, deep tissue work addresses chronic muscle tension, and aromatherapy massage can provide additional emotional support through carefully selected essential oils. Each technique offers a unique pathway to releasing accumulated stress.

Ultimately, massage during the holiday season is more than a luxury—it's a profound act of self-compassion. By prioritizing this therapeutic intervention, individuals can transform their relationship with stress, cultivate inner peace, and approach the holidays with greater emotional bandwidth and physical vitality.

At Moonlight Wellness Spa, we offer a range of massage therapies designed to relax your mind, rejuvenate your body, and enhance your overall well-being. Our skilled massage therapists are committed to providing you with a personalized and soothing experience, tailored to your specific needs. Explore our diverse selection of massage treatments to find the perfect one for you.

Whether you're looking for relaxation, stress relief, or therapeutic bodywork, Moonlight Wellness Spa has the perfect massage therapy for you. Contact us today to schedule your massage and embark on a journey to complete relaxation and rejuvenation.

Let us be your guides on the path to relaxation and self-care.



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2025 Annual Enrollment is Here!

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

edicare Annual Enrollment is October 15-December 7th for January 1st, 2025, effective. What can be changed at this time is Medicare Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. You should have received your Notification of Change from your current insurance plan. This outlines the current year to the new year changes, as an example if your specialist provider cost \$20 now it might say \$35 in 2025 (no correlation just an example).

Substantial changes to Medicare Part D, standalone drug plans as well as Advantage Plans, won't have to pay more than \$2,000 in out-of-pocket costs, which include deductibles, co-pays, coinsurance. It is especially important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. 2025 RX deductibles will be capped at \$590.00. As a reminder the cost of the plan is not as important as the cost plus your medications, that is what you look at, the total cost. It is important to know what the medication is used for to determine if it is covered by the plan. Example Wycovy may be covered but in order to be covered it must be used for certain heart conditions or diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time. Many carriers are consolidating Part D plans or eliminating them completely. As a reminder if you choose NOT to ENROLL in a Part D drug plan and in later years you will have to wait for Annual Enrollment and then you will assed a penalty for every month you did not have a drug plan, that penalty will last for the REST OF YOUR LIFE! Careful not choosing a drug plan.

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



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

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

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

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare, once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A". Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D, and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue, you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 5-month on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! Especially important: when you move you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

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

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How Do Mycotoxins from Mold Spread?

American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC

What are mycotoxins?

Many of you may not have heard about mycotoxins, so let's start at the beginning. Many common molds produce a byproduct called mycotoxins. As the name implies, these are toxic chemical molecules (non-living) produced by mold in a colony. For mold, they serve two purposes: a) as a waste product, similar to how human bodies produce waste, and b) the poison helps the mold thrive against competitors in their environment, such as bacteria.

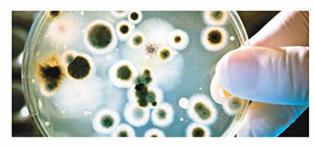
But how do they spread and cause problems for humans?

They become aerosolized. Think about hairspray or spray paint—these are particles distributed by compressed air.

Mold in your home, even inside your walls, can be affected by air as well. Many things can create airflow in your home, including walking around, vacuuming, running a fan, temperature changes, storms, and running the AC or heater.

A mold colony releases spores, as well as many spore fragments and mycotoxins that can travel on these spores and fragments or even solo. Once released, mycotoxins can also float around and end up stuck to dust, dander, smoke, and other particles in your home.

Because mycotoxins are incredibly small, they end up everywhere and can easily travel through your HVAC system. They can lodge in your books, clothes,



appliance motors, and more. They can even travel with you if you move to a new house.

They cannot be 'killed,' but they can be cleaned or transformed into harmless compounds by things like enzyme formulations.

How can you keep yourself safe? Evaluate your home:

- 1. Is your humidity controlled and always under 55-60%? Purchase several humidity meters and place them throughout your home to keep a regular check. During our Florida cooler months, the HVAC may not run as much, and that is the main vehicle that dehumidifies our home.
- 2. Do you see any visible mold? Mold in our shower is common, but if you see mold on drywall or furniture, then you need to be concerned. Mold is microscopic, and by the time you see a 1" square, it contains millions of spores.
- 3. Clean your home regularly. Mold loves to feed off

- 4. Check for leaks under sinks and around the house. Mold starts to form colonies between 48-72
- 5. Living in Florida, I personally do not have any raw wood, wicker baskets, wreaths, or rattan furniture-mold loves it.

This is not an exhaustive list but a few items to keep in mind. If you have had previous mold remediation but still have possible health issues, it might be mycotoxins still lurking around. Traditional mold remediation (biological remediation) does not address the remediation of mycotoxins (chemical remediation). Very few companies address both mold and mycotoxins.



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Scott Briggs

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Is Your Home Making You Sick?

- Mold is microscopic. By the time you see it, a 1 inch square has over a million spores!
- Mold produces a by-product called MYCOTOXINS, a light-weight vapor molecule that easily travels through your HVAC, is easily inhaled and absorbed through your skin.
- It is well know that mold and MYCOTOXINS cause health issues.
- A water issue even years earlier could still be haunting your home.

The most common mold that affect our health can often appear as dust!



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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

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

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

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

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

Dr. Martha Clare Morris, an expert in nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, introduced the MIND diet meal plan in 2015. Her studies on the diet tested and compared the effects of the Mediterranean, DASH, and MIND diets in adults aged 58-98 years. The study found that diligently sticking to all three diets was associated with a reduced risk for Alzheimer's disease, but only the MIND diet showed lower risk even with moderate adherence. Another study showed that participants who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk for Alzheimer's by 54%. In addition to the MIND diet's effect on Alzheimer's prevention, Dr. Morris and her colleagues recently studied the diet's effect on the cognitive decline of stroke survivors.

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

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

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

AT LEAST THREE SERVINGS OF WHOLE GRAINS EACH DAY AT LEAST ONE DARK GREEN SALAD AND ONE OTHER VEGETABLE EACH DAY AST A ONE-DUNCE SERVINO OF MUTS LACH DIO POULTRY AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK drink alcohol. FISH AT BEANS OR LEGUMES EAST DNGE purple grape juice AT LEAST EVERY OTHER DAY A FIVE-DUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY NO MORE THAN ONE CHEESE, FRIED FOOD TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK OLIVE OIL INSTEAD PASTRIES AND SWEETS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES A WEEK

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

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

Berries: aim for two or more servings a week. Smoothies are great for seniors to get their weekly servings of berries. Nuts: at least five servings per week. Nuts are also a great source of protein and healthy fats.

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

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

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

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

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

Phone: 239-776-1758 Email: bill.springer@chefsforseniors.com



chefsforseniors.com

Navigating the Holidays: A Pet-Friendly Guide to Stress-Free Travel

he holiday season is a time of joy, family, and festivities. For many, it also means embarking on journeys to visit loved ones or explore new destinations. However, for pet owners, the excitement of holiday travel often comes with the added challenge of ensuring their furry friends have a safe and comfortable experience. In this guide, we'll explore tips and tricks to make holiday travel with pets a breeze.

Plan Ahead for Pet-Friendly Accommodations

Before hitting the road, ensure your accommodations are pet-friendly. Many hotels and rental properties now cater to pet owners, offering amenities such as pet beds, food bowls, and even designated pet-friendly areas. Researching and booking in advance will help you find the perfect spot for both you and your pet.

Familiarize Your Pet with Travel Gear

If your pet isn't accustomed to travel, introduce them to the experience gradually. Begin by letting them explore their carrier or travel crate in a calm environment. Reward positive behavior with treats to create a positive association. This preparation can reduce anxiety when it's time to hit the road.

Keep Pets Comfortable During Transit

Whether you're traveling by car, plane, or train, prioritize your pet's comfort. Pack familiar items such as their favorite toys and blankets to create a sense

of familiarity. For longer journeys, schedule breaks to allow your pet to stretch their legs, hydrate, and relieve themselves.

Update Identification and Microchip Information

The hustle and bustle of holiday travel can increase the risk of pets getting lost. Ensure your pet's identification tags are up to date with your current contact information. Additionally, consider having your pet microchipped for an extra layer of security. In the event of separation, these measures can greatly improve the chances of a happy reunion.

Be Mindful of Pet-Friendly Attractions

While planning your holiday itinerary, look for pet-friendly attractions and activities. Many parks, hiking trails, and even some festive events welcome well-behaved pets. Incorporating these into your plans ensures that your pet can share in the holiday joy and create lasting memories with the family.

Prioritize Health and Safety

Before embarking on your journey, schedule a visit to the veterinarian. Ensure your pet is up-to-date on vaccinations and discuss any specific travel-related concerns. Pack a travel-sized pet first aid kit that includes necessary medications, a copy of their medical records, and contact information for a local veterinarian at your destination.



Establish a Safe Haven at Your Destination

Upon reaching your holiday destination, set up a designated area for your pet. This provides a familiar space where they can retreat if the holiday festivities become overwhelming. Pack their favorite toys, bed, and a few comforts from home to help them feel secure.

Holiday travel with pets can be a delightful experience with the right preparation and considerations. By planning ahead, prioritizing your pet's comfort and safety, and seeking out pet-friendly accommodations and activities, you can create a memorable holiday season for both you and your four-legged companion.

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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

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

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

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

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

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

"Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things." What will constitute "success" for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

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

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

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

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

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

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

What Is Your Definition of "Enough"?

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

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

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

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

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

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

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How to ENJOY Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

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

Remember that you're hiring human beings

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

Leave your home while it's being cleaned

Do you like when someone looks over your shoulder while you work? Neither do housecleaners. Relax. Professional house cleaning services screen their employees, conduct background checks, and are bonded and insured. Get the most out of your cleaning service by getting out of



your house during the cleaning process. Not only will you enjoy the great feeling of walking into a clean home, but the cleaning staff will be better able to focus on their job. While leaving isn't a requirement, you just might find out how great it feels to abandon all thoughts of cleaning!

Leave a tip

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

To clean or not to clean

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

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

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

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

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ELEVATE YOUR WELL-BEING: ENHANCE YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM WITH AIT AND ACUPUNCTURE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

By Dr. Mary Lambert, AP, DOM

he holiday season is a time of joy, celebration, and connection with loved ones. However, amidst all the festivities, family gatherings, and travel plans, it's crucial to prioritize your health and well-being. As the colder weather and increased exposure to colds, flu, and other illnesses loom, keeping your immune system strong becomes paramount. Fortunately, natural therapies like acupuncture and Acupuncture Injection Therapy (AIT) can serve as powerful allies in supporting your health during this busy and demanding time.

The Immune System Unveiled:

Your immune system acts as your body's frontline defense against harmful pathogens such as viruses and bacteria. When operating optimally, it identifies and eliminates invaders, safeguarding your health. Yet, various factors like stress, inadequate sleep, and nutrient deficiencies—common occurrences during the holiday season—can compromise immune function, leaving you vulnerable to illnesses.

Research has shown that holistic therapies like acupuncture possess the capacity to bolster immunity by modulating immune responses, mitigating stress, and fostering overall balance in the body. A study published in Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine revealed that acupuncture can stimulate the production of immune cells like T-cells and white blood cells, thereby enhancing the body's ability to combat infections.

The Magic of Acupuncture Injection Therapy:

Acupuncture Injection Therapy (AIT) represents a modern approach that melds traditional acupuncture with the targeted delivery of natural substances—such as vitamins, minerals, herbal extracts, and ultra-high dilution medicines—into specific acupuncture points. This dual technique amplifies the benefits of acupuncture while ensuring that vital nutrients reach the areas where they are most

A Dynamic Duo: Acupuncture and AIT in Immune Health:

Strengthens the Immune System: Acupuncture
can balance the immune system by regulating
cytokine levels, while AIT can deliver immune-boosting substances directly to enhance immunity further

- Reduces Stress: Acupuncture is known to lower cortisol levels, a stress hormone that impairs immune function, thereby alleviating stress and promoting overall well-being.
- Combats Fatigue: AIT combined with B-complex vitamins or magnesium can replenish energy stores and reduce fatigue, providing you with the vigor to navigate the demands of the holiday season.
- 4. Addresses Health Concerns: From allergies and respiratory issues to digestive challenges, acupuncture and AIT can target underlying health issues, fostering overall health and creating a robust foundation for immunity.

Unveiling the Potency of Glutathione Injections:

Glutathione is a potent antioxidant naturally produced by the liver, essential for detoxifying harmful toxins, chemicals, and free radicals. Given that our bodies deplete glutathione faster than they produce it, injections offer a swifter and more effective method to replenish levels compared to oral supplementation.

The Wealth of Health Benefits from Glutathione Injections:

Glutathione injections bestow a myriad of health benefits, particularly in detoxifying the liver and cells, neutralizing harmful free radicals, toxins, and heavy metals, reducing inflammation, and fortifying the immune system. This antioxidant prowess of glutathione also shields cells from oxidative damage, augments the body's resistance to infections, and bolsters overall immune function.

Glutathione also aids in managing chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, and Parkinson's disease by regulating blood sugar levels, enhancing respiratory function, and alleviating symptoms.

In terms of skin health, glutathione can help lighten uneven skin tone, reduce hyperpigmentation, smooth wrinkles, sunspots, and acne, and foster glowing, youthful skin by improving hydration, minimizing oxidative damage, and promoting cellular repair.

Practical Strategies for a Healthy Holiday Season: In conjunction with acupuncture and AIT, integrating

In conjunction with acupuncture and AIT, integrating healthy lifestyle practices can optimize your immune system:

- Nourish your body with nutrient-dense foods, focusing on fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and immune-boosting ingredients like garlic, ginger, and citrus.
- Stay adequately hydrated, as proper hydration supports lymphatic drainage and detoxification processes.
- Prioritize sleep, aiming for 7 to 8 hours of quality rest each night to support immune function and overall well-being.
- Embrace stress management techniques like mindfulness, yoga, or meditation to cultivate inner peace and resilience during the holiday whirlwind.

Embark on Your Immune-Boosting Journey:

At Lambert Wellness, we are committed to empowering you to thrive and flourish during the holiday season. Our holistic treatments, including acupuncture and AIT, are personalized to cater to your unique needs, nurturing immunity, alleviating stress, and reinstating equilibrium.

Don't wait for illness to strike—take proactive steps to safeguard your health and well-being. By scheduling a wellness session with us, you can embark on a transformative journey towards feeling strong, calm, and energized during the holiday season and beyond.

Now is the time to take charge of your health and well-being. Elevate your immune system naturally with the potent combination of acupuncture and AIT. Don't let the holiday hustle compromise your health—schedule your wellness session at Lambert Wellness today and step into the season feeling empowered and revitalized. Call or text us at 239-776-4055 to secure your consultation and start your journey towards a vibrant and fulfilling holiday season and jump start your new year!



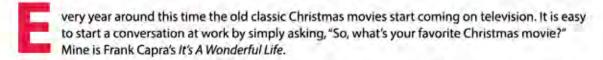
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It's A Wonderful Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune



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 by 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.



