

S O U T H W E S T F L O R I D A ' S

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

January 2025

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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## LEARN HOW TO GET LASTING RELIEF FROM: PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY



- ✓ Pins and Needles
- ✓ Loss of Balance
- ✓ Burning Sensation
- ✓ Numbness/Tingling
- ✓ Pain in Feet/Hands
- ✓ Can't Feel The Ground

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- The underlying causes of peripheral neuropathy.
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- How neuropathy is diagnosed and when it can be successfully treated.
- A simple home therapy that is used by some of the largest hospitals to treat neuropathy.

- ★ Graduate of Riverview High School in Sarasota
- ★ Attended the University of Florida before graduating in 1983 from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa
- ★ Established Carle Chiropractic Clinic in 1985 + Renewed Life Wellness Center in 2015
- ★ Highly qualified and experienced practitioner
- ★ Pursued postgraduate diplomate status in Scoliosis & Thermography and is board-certified in both categories



Presented by:  
**Dr. Kenneth Carle**  
Chiropractic Physician



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By Dr. TC Lackey II

# Vein Disease: Underdiagnosed & Undertreated

**O**ur circulatory system keeps our body and its tissues healthy, but when that system goes awry, we develop a series of diseases, including vein disease and all its symptoms. Based on the latest scientific data, vein disease in the U.S. is underdiagnosed and undertreated, and it affects more than 40 million Americans. Unfortunately, less than one-half of one percent of Americans seek treatment and fewer than half a million ever receive treatment for vein disease.

Venous circulation in legs is a very important part of our overall daily health and can become a problem when vein reflux affects circulation. Vein reflux is a medical condition where leg veins are unable to properly transport blood back up to the heart. Medically, this is known as chronic venous insufficiency (CVI). Typically, CVI is associated with the development of spider veins or varicose veins in the legs. When CVI is not treated properly, it will lead to more serious consequences, such as ulcers, spontaneous bleeding, and life-threatening deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Here's some perspective, chronic venous insufficiency is twice as prevalent as coronary heart disease (America's #1 killer), and five times more common than peripheral artery disease.

## What Causes Chronic Venous Insufficiency?

The short answer is malfunctioning valves inside the veins. When blood circulates inside the body, the heart pumps blood down the leg. To get the blood back up to the heart, however, the body relies on a combination of valves and muscle contractions to push blood upward. Healthy valves within the veins act as backflow prevention device in the legs to keep the blood from flowing backward and pooling in the legs. Faulty veins don't close completely, resulting in varicose veins, swelling, heaviness, itching, and a whole host of other life-changing symptoms.



## Are You at Risk for Vein Disease?

Most likely, if you have any of these high-risk factors - a family history, obesity, prolonged sitting or standing, multiple pregnancies, you're older than 40 and/or you smoke or once did. Women are affected with vein disease more than men; however, men don't escape this dangerous disease.

## What are the Signs & Symptoms of Vein Disease?

More common symptoms that develop over time include pain, heaviness, fatigue, aching, itching, restless legs, burning, and cramping. Physical findings are large areas of spider veins, varicose veins, leg swelling, discoloration, skin thickening, and ulcers.

## What is the Treatment?

Luckily, treatment is in your favor. FDA-approved, minimally invasive treatments have a 99% success rate with far less risk and fewer side effects when compared to the now-antiquated vein stripping techniques of the past. At FloridaLakes Vein Center, all

treatments are performed in the office. There is no downtime, and normal activities can be resumed as soon as you leave our office.

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



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# New Year, NEW YOU

The bariatric surgery journey can be a life-changing, rewarding experience. What if a year from today you could look and feel like a new person? Sometimes the hardest part of this journey is the first phone call.



Cate Roskind, RN, CBN

Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS, is the director for Manatee Memorial Hospital Surgical Weight Loss Center. Bariatric coordinator, Cate Roskind, RN, CBN, shares the steps to surgery to help patients have a better understanding of weight-loss surgery.

### I would like more information about bariatric surgery. Where should I start?

Patients interested in bariatric surgery are encouraged to call their insurance company to see if they have medical benefits for bariatric surgery as an initial step. Then, if they would like to learn more about their weight-loss options, they should call our office. A knowledgeable patient advocate will provide an initial phone screening by asking patients a few questions to determine if the patient meets general insurance criteria for bariatric surgery.

If the patient meets the general insurance criteria, the patient will then be scheduled for the first initial consultation with Dr. Rekkas. The patient will meet with the experienced bariatric team at the consultation appointment to discuss the surgery.



Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if robotic surgery is right for you. Physicians are on the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Manatee Memorial Hospital. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website. 253043835-3058036 12/24

### What should I expect after the initial consultation appointment?

After the initial consultation appointment with Dr. Rekkas and the bariatric team, the patient will begin individualized steps to surgery, which typically include the following, but can vary depending on insurance:

- A psychological evaluation
- A dietitian supervised diet which is either three or six consecutive months in duration
- An evaluation with a physical therapist
- Lab work
- An EGD (camera study of the stomach)
- Cardiac or other specialty clearance depending on the patient's medical history
- Additional diagnostic testing may be required depending on the patient's history

Once these steps are complete, the patient will be scheduled for the preoperative consultation appointment with Dr. Rekkas, and if weight-loss goals are met, a surgery date will be scheduled.

### What else happens before surgery?

Patients will attend their hospital pre-testing appointment and pre-op instruction class, usually one week prior to surgery. The bariatric coordinator will meet the bariatric patient in preop the morning of surgery, and then the OR, recovery and the bariatric nursing care unit. Patients typically stay overnight, then go home the next day, whether they have a gastric sleeve or gastric bypass surgery.

### What are the most common postoperative concerns with weight-loss procedures?

Nausea, gas and pain are the most common side effects with these surgeries. Dr. Rekkas and his team follow best practice guidelines for medication options to keep patients as comfortable as possible in the postoperative period.

### What are the guidelines for recovery?

The bariatric coordinator will review the discharge instructions with the patient prior to discharge from the hospital. This includes activity restrictions, wound care, signs and symptoms of possible complications, diet instructions, medications and vitamins and when to call the office.

There is a structured post-op follow-up schedule to ensure we are meeting Center of Excellence (COE) criteria to ensure our patients are losing weight at a healthy rate. Generally, 4-6 weeks after surgery, patients can advance from their walking plan and start going to the gym or other activities. The post-procedure diet consists of five stages, including clear liquids, pureed foods, a soft diet and then a regular diet.

### What would you say to someone who may still be hesitant?

I invite them to attend a monthly patient support group meeting. Attendees can sit and listen or ask questions if they would like to participate. Attendees are recent post-ops, those who are 3-12 months post-ops and others who may be several years post-op. If an individual doesn't feel comfortable coming into a group setting, they can call me directly to discuss the surgery. As a former bariatric surgery patient myself, I understand the apprehension and anxiety individuals may have regarding surgical weight loss.

My goal as the bariatric coordinator is to ensure the patient is well educated and prepared for surgery. An important part of my job on the day of surgery is to provide emotional support to put the patient at ease before and after their surgery.

Dr. Rekkas is accepting new patients. For an appointment, call **941-254-4957** or visit [msaweightloss.com](http://msaweightloss.com)



Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS

 **Manatee Memorial Hospital**

206 2nd Street East  
Bradenton, FL 34208  
941-746-5111  
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# "He Saved My Life"

## Sarasota Resident Nancy C. Shares Her Neuropathy Journey

Dr. Kenneth Carle - Chiropractic Physician

**N**ancy C., a Sarasota resident, had been living with the painful side effects of peripheral neuropathy for years. "My feet and even my legs were extremely painful," she recalls. "My doctor said there wasn't anything that could be done—I'd have to take gabapentin for the rest of my life."

Frustrated and desperate for relief, Nancy stumbled upon an article about Dr. Kenneth Carle and Renewed Life Wellness Center. It turned out to be the lifeline she needed.

Peripheral neuropathy, which affects over 20 million people in the U.S., is caused by nerve damage to the peripheral nervous system. It often results in symptoms like burning, tingling, and numbness in the feet and legs. For many, the condition progresses to balance issues, making daily activities like walking, shopping, or even standing for extended periods nearly impossible.

Peripheral neuropathy (PN) is a condition characterized by damage to the peripheral nerves outside the brain and spinal cord, especially in the feet and hands. These nerves transmit signals between the body and the central nervous system, controlling movement, sensation, and organ function.

There are over 100 causes of Peripheral Neuropathy; the most common include: Diabetes, Trauma or Injury, and Toxicity-Related Neuropathy. Certain medications used in chemotherapy can cause peripheral neuropathy as a side effect. This can damage the nerves and cause symptoms such as numbness, tingling, and weakness in the hands and feet, which can significantly impact the quality of life. Other drugs, such as statins, can cause neuropathy. Statins reduce the fats that build up in your arteries, but they also reduce the fatty myelin sheath of the nerves, which will cause the nerve to die.

Nancy's condition was no different. Her feet were so sensitive that wearing shoes became unbearable. "I wore sandals most of the time because it felt like I was walking on tacks," she says. Nights were especially tough, as the burning and shooting pains in her feet kept her awake.



Like many others with neuropathy, Nancy tried gabapentin. But the medication's side effects were intolerable, and she stopped taking it after a few months. To make matters worse, it didn't provide the relief she had hoped for.

Fortunately, her discovery of Renewed Life Wellness Center changed everything. After undergoing their specialized treatments—safe, non-surgical therapies designed to alleviate neuropathy symptoms—Nancy began to see improvements. "Now when I go to bed, I don't have those shooting pains," she shares. "The burning and numbness are gone, and I can even wear socks and shoes with little to no problem."

The treatments, Nancy says, have been "life-changing." In fact, she insists, "As far as I'm concerned, Dr. Carle and Renewed Life Wellness Center saved my life."

Dr. Carle is no stranger to stories like Nancy's. "Unfortunately, many of my patients are told there's no solution beyond medication," he explains. At Renewed Life Wellness Center, however, patients benefit from cutting-edge technologies tailored to treat neuropathy and its debilitating effects without relying on drugs or surgery.

Since 2017, Renewed Life Wellness Center has been helping patients find relief and reclaim their lives. The clinic also offers regenerative medicine options, including stem cell treatments, for various conditions.

If you or someone you love has missed too many tee times, or you passed on a walk on the beach because of pain or afraid of falling, it is time to call Renewed Life Wellness Center invites you to learn more at a free informational lunch on **Wednesday, January 15th**. Attendees will hear about the latest advances in neuropathy treatments and how they can take the first steps toward a pain-free life. Dr. Kenneth Carle and the team at Renewed Life Wellness Center is ready to help.



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# NEW YEAR - NEW YOU!

## Jump Start Your Journey to Wellness at Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness

**A**s the calendar turns to 2025, millions of Americans will firmly resolve to finally lose weight and work towards wellness. Most will fail. Why? Because they do not develop the tools and support required to stick to a sustainable plan and develop the discipline required to reach their weight loss goals.

Our message - don't get frustrated. The proven framework for success is now affordably and conveniently offered by Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness at our three Manatee/Sarasota locations in Bradenton, Sarasota and Lakewood Ranch.

### Announcing our New Year, New You - 60-DAY JUMPSTART WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAMS

These discounted programs are available for a limited time to get you moving on your journey through weight loss to wellness in 2025. These plans feature the highly effective GLP-1 medications, semaglutide and tirzepatide. These proven treatment programs include a comprehensive health assessment, introductory session with a certified wellness coach, Harvard Public Health Institute Nutrition Plan, 60-day supply of our GLP-1 companion supplement and a 12-pack sample of our lean muscle-promoting Nirvana Super Water. After 60-days of treatment, you will receive a complimentary follow-up health assessment to set your course for sustainable success.

These affordable, prepaid plans offer all the tools and support our customers need to succeed while saving participants hundreds of dollars.

For two decades, Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness has empowered clients across Southwest Florida to achieve sustainable weight loss through personalized care and clinically proven treatment programs.

Embarking on a weight loss journey can be both exciting and daunting. While the initial motivation to shed those extra pounds may come easily, maintaining consistency proves to be the true challenge. Sticking to your weight loss plan requires dedication, strategic planning, and a solid support system.

#### 1. Set Realistic Goals

One of the most important steps on your weight loss journey is to set achievable and realistic goals. Rather than aiming for a drastic weight loss target, strive for gradual changes that are manageable over time. Experts suggest aiming to lose 1-2 pounds per week, which allows your body to adjust to the changes without feeling overwhelmed.

#### 2. Create a Structured Meal Plan

A well-thought-out meal plan is integral to a successful weight loss strategy. Planning your meals in advance helps you stay organized and reduces the temptation to opt for unhealthy options when hunger strikes. Focus on incorporating a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats.

#### 3. Find Physical Activities You Enjoy

Exercise is a vital component of weight loss, but it's also essential to find activities you genuinely enjoy. This will increase your chances of sticking with a routine. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate cardio each week, incorporating strength training exercises twice a week.

#### 4. Foster a Supportive Environment

Creating a supportive environment is key to sustaining your weight loss journey. Surround yourself with family, friends, or support groups who encourage your efforts and share similar goals. Whether it's cooking healthy meals together or participating in group workouts, having a support system can provide motivation and accountability.

#### 5. Monitor Your Progress

Tracking your progress not only helps in holding yourself accountable but also in celebrating your achievements—no matter how small. Use various methods to monitor your weight loss, including weekly weigh-ins, measuring your body measurements, or taking progress photos. Remember, the



scale is just one measure of progress; improvements in energy levels, mood, and overall well-being are equally important and validating.

#### 6. Overcome Obstacle Mindsets

Weight loss is not devoid of setbacks; recognizing and addressing these potential obstacles is crucial. Stress, emotional eating, or social situations can hinder your commitment. Developing a repertoire of coping mechanisms to handle cravings, stress, or triggering environments can empower you.

#### 7. Educate Yourself

Knowledge is power when it comes to weight loss. Understanding the nutritional content of foods, the science behind metabolism, and the principles of portion control can empower you to make informed decisions. Consider attending workshops, reading books, or following credible dietitians or health influencers who share evidence-based information.

#### 8. Stay Patient and Adaptable

Lastly, patience is crucial in your weight loss journey. Results may not always manifest as quickly as you desire, but maintaining a long-term perspective is essential. Weight loss is not solely about numbers; it's about adopting healthier habits that lead to a balanced lifestyle. Be prepared to adjust your approach based on what works or doesn't work for you.

#### Let's Get Started!

Are you ready to start your 2025 wellness journey? Book a consultation today at one of our Florida locations in Bradenton, Sarasota, or Lakewood Ranch. Each Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness clinic is ready to support you with compassionate care, proven results, and personalized wellness plans tailored to you.

For more information on our New Year, New You Specials visit:  
<https://www.premiereweightloss.com/>



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# DRY JANUARY:

## REFRESH YOUR BODY & MIND WITH THE POWER OF EXFOLIATION

**A**s we transition into a new season, it's the ideal time to delve into the art of exfoliation—a transformative skincare ritual that symbolizes renewal, rejuvenation, and a fresh start. Exfoliation transcends beyond achieving a radiant complexion; it's a holistic experience that physically, mentally, and emotionally promotes personal growth and self-care. Dry January is the perfect time to start afresh - and start your year aglow!

### 1. The Physical Gratification:

By gently removing dead skin cells, unclogging pores, and promoting circulation, exfoliation reveals a fresh, vibrant complexion beneath. Incorporating exfoliating products into your skincare routine enhances the skin's natural renewal process, helping to prevent breakouts and improving the absorption of other skincare products. Beyond its physical benefits, the act of exfoliating provides a refreshing boost to confidence and self-esteem, as glowing skin is truly a source of pride.

To maximize the benefits of a body apply it liberally in the shower or bath on wet skin using gentle, circular motions. Pay special attention to dry areas like feet, legs, arms, and hands, where exfoliation can be particularly effective. After scrubbing, rinse thoroughly with water and pat your skin dry with a soft towel. For more intense hydration, allow the scrub's moisturizing ingredients to soak in for 1-2 minutes before rinsing.

Moreover, the rhythmic motion of scrubbing the skin can be a therapeutic experience. This mindful practice encourages relaxation and serves as a moment to reconnect with oneself amidst a busy day. By intentionally caring for your skin, you not only improve its health but also nurture your overall well-being, making exfoliation a cherished self-care ritual that revitalizes both body and mind.



### 2. An Emotional Transformation:

The art of exfoliation transcends mere skin care; it emerges as a therapeutic practice that fosters mindfulness and promotes self-connection. By dedicating time to this ritual, you can release not only physical impurities but also emotional burdens. Opt for products crafted with care, as their soothing scents and natural ingredients come together to create a serene pause in your hectic day, uplifting your mood and enhancing your overall sense of well-being.

Naples Soap Company's Vitamin C Orange Blossom & Vanilla Sugar Scrub offers a refreshingly light scent of orange blossoms, oranges and sweet vanilla. The fresh aroma of orange blossoms and oranges provides uplifting citrus aromatherapy, reducing stress and anxiety while boosting energy and motivation. Meanwhile, the sweet, warm scent of vanilla evokes comfort and tranquility, creating a calming atmosphere that fosters well-being.

### 3. The Mental Reset:

The act of exfoliation brings with it a mental reset. In a world filled with chaos and constant change, incorporating this simple yet effective practice can serve as a grounding routine. As individuals scrub away the old layers of skin, they can metaphorically release negative thoughts, stressors, and worries that weigh them down.

A-scented face scrub, such as Naples Soap Company's Coffee Face Scrub, is a fantastic addition to your morning routine, providing a refreshing start and serving as a mental reset. The invigorating aroma stimulates the senses, awakening your mind and boosting your energy for the day ahead. Gently massaging our Coffee Face Scrub polishes the skin and enhances circulation, giving your complexion a radiant glow. Formulated with finely ground coffee beans, cocoa butter, and fractionated coconut oil, it cleanses away dullness and rehydrates for a fresh look.



We invite you to explore the therapeutic benefits of exfoliation can facilitate this holistic journey of self-renewal. By integrating these practices into daily routines, individuals can refresh not only their skincare regimen but also their overall mindset and emotional well-being.



[www.naplessoap.com](http://www.naplessoap.com)

Naples Soap Company has carefully curated a huge assortment of gift sets to make your gift giving a breeze this holiday season. From our coastal-inspired "Christmas on the Beach Box" to our all-new "Self Care Essentials Sets" to our fan favorite "Soap Stacks," we have something for every budget and for everyone on your list. Naples Soap Company has 13 stores across the state of Florida. Visit us at [naplessoap.com](http://naplessoap.com) to find a store near you or shop online and ship for free with orders over \$50.





# LAPIPLASTY: A NEW WAY TO FIX YOUR BUNION

By Dr. Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, FACFAS, DABPM

**B**unions or hallux valgus (medical term) is a “bump” on the side of the big toe, but did you know the root cause of a bunion is located in the middle of the foot. Its causes from an unstable joint in the middle of the foot that allows your toe to become misaligned creating the visually and commonly painful “bump”.



Traditionally, bunions were corrected by a 2-D osteotomy (cutting the bone). This procedure had a high recurrence rate meaning that the bunion would most likely return within a few years. Today, many people fear having their bunion corrected because they know people or have heard of people who's bunion returned after surgical correction. The good news is: there are new and innovative ways to correct your bunion. One new method is a procedure called the Lapiplasty by Treace Medical.

### The 3 dimensions of your bunion problem



The Lapiplasty is a 3-D bunion correction procedure. The patented procedure is designed to permanently correct your bunion. This means your bunion will not return. A 3-D bunion correction means the procedure corrects the deformity in all 3 planes by addressing the root cause, resulting in permanent



correction of the bunion. Another advantage of this procedure is the patients can resume walking with a boot in two weeks. The surgery is performed under general anesthesia, allowing patients to return home that same day. Minimal pain is associated with recovery, but everyone is different. Your experience may not always be the same as someone's else's. During the recovery period, you will be placed in a boot during your first post op appointment.

Patients will avoid walking and putting pressure on the foot for 1 – 2 weeks. Again, the patient will use a boot following the procedure for a duration of 6-8 weeks. If your right foot is the surgical foot, no driving for at least 4 weeks. Swelling and numbness are the most common complaints after surgery. Swelling is expected after any foot surgery and can last for a year. Numbness should resolve over time, but permanent numbness to areas around the surgical site or your big toe can be permanent. This should not affect your daily activities if you do develop any numbness.

To learn more about bunion correction procedures and if you are a candidate for the Lapiplasty procedure, please contact your local foot and ankle surgeon.

### Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, FACFAS, DABPM

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



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



# The Overlooked Role of *Thyroid Health*: A Call to Self-Advocacy

By Migdalia Merida, MD, Lead Physician for Harper Health Sarasota

**R**aising awareness about thyroid health is essential, especially for women over 50. Women are five to eight times more likely than men to experience thyroid issues, according to the American Thyroid Association. I've learned this firsthand. My own journey showed me how easily thyroid symptoms can be overlooked, even by healthcare providers.

Several years ago, I began to lose weight unexpectedly, despite no changes in diet or exercise. Anxiety and restlessness followed. I initially attributed it to work stress. But my symptoms escalated rapidly. After a visit to the ER, I was sent home with a diagnosis of anxiety. Within 24 hours, my mental state deteriorated, and I experienced uncontrollable shaking. I was rushed back and diagnosed with a *thyroid storm* — a life-threatening condition — confirmed by a simple blood test.

The diagnosis brought relief. Finally, I had an explanation for the unexplained weight loss, disrupted sleep, and mood swings. Reflecting on my experience, I realized I'd ignored these subtle changes. My hope in sharing this story is to inspire other women to listen to their bodies and advocate for themselves.

Thyroid disease is *common* and can affect anyone. However, women over 50 are at higher risk, particularly for hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's disease. Symptoms like fatigue, weight changes, anxiety, and sleep disturbances can easily be mistaken for menopause, aging, or stress. According to the Mayo Clinic, these overlapping symptoms often delay diagnosis.

The key is to pay attention to your body. If something feels off, even subtly, don't dismiss it. A simple blood test measuring TSH (Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone) can reveal thyroid issues. Early detection leads to effective treatment, often with medication.

Thyroid health impacts everything from metabolism to mood. By staying informed and proactive, you're taking a crucial step toward overall wellness. Remember, you are your own best advocate. Trust your instincts, ask questions, and don't hesitate to seek a second opinion.



**Your thyroid might be small,  
but its role in your health is  
monumental. Don't let its  
signals go unnoticed.**

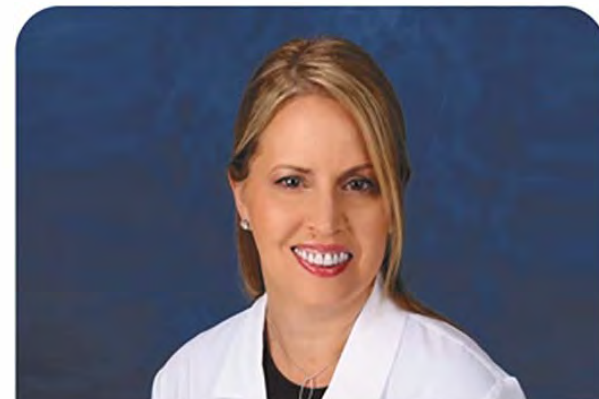
#### About Harper Health Concierge Primary Care

Harper Health is different. Founder Will Harper often invokes the famous early 20th century physician, William Osler, to students when teaching about patient care. Osler said, "Listen to the patient, (s)he's telling you the diagnosis." Dr. Will tells his students, "If you're not sure what's going on with a patient at the end of an encounter, go back and listen some more."

Harper Health is designed so physicians can channel Osler's vision. We give you our time and full attention—and that means helping you create a healthier, more vibrant life.

Harper Health physicians attend to you as a complete person. Our diagnostic approach, treatment plan and communication system are all designed to be integrated into what is going on in your life.

What would it feel like to have a true partner when it comes to maximizing your health, your time, and your ability to live the life you want?



#### About Migdalia Merida, MD

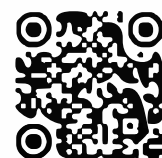
Dr. Migdalia Merida's birthplace is New York, she is an internal medicine doctor in Florida and has over 28 years of experience in the medical field. She attended New York University where she graduated with a degree in biology. That then led to Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in 1994 where she earned her medical degree. She then completed an internal medicine residency at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

After 14 years of invaluable experience in the emergency room, Dr. Merida embarked on an adventurous chapter, accepting challenging doctor assignments in the picturesque Pacific Northwest. Here, she honed additional medical expertise in a different setting, embracing the beauty of the region while ensuring the provision of crucial healthcare services to those in need.

Beyond the medical realm, she is an avid advocate for physical fitness. Equally passionate about home decor, Migdalia enjoys creating spaces that reflect her personality and offer a comforting retreat. However, amidst all these interests, Migdalia cherishes moments spent with her partner John and their beloved two pups. Family and companionship are anchors in Dr. Merida's life, providing balance and solace in a demanding profession.



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# FGCU's Transformative Impact on Community Health

The university's Marieb College prepares resilient professionals and resourceful caregivers for the well-being of Southwest Florida

**R**ehabilitation science is a multidisciplinary field that studies human function and disability and aims to help people achieve optimal health. It is a field evolving constantly and rapidly, resulting in therapeutic advances that professionals can apply in hospitals, clinics, fitness centers and other healthcare settings.

With that in mind, Florida Gulf Coast University prepares and inspires resilient professionals and resourceful caregivers capable of transforming community health and well-being through the latest best practices and technology in rehabilitation science.

FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services offers highly successful degree programs in exercise science, occupational therapy and physical therapy that instill the kind of solutions-oriented curiosity that makes our students lifelong learners. Intensive fieldwork, community involvement and inter-professional learning guarantee students in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences have everything they need to deliver forward-thinking care — no matter what changes in the industry.

This approach enables our graduates to achieve licensure pass rates well above the statewide average — 100% in most cases — as well as 100% employment rates. Healthcare leaders consider our graduates Florida's best-prepared therapists, trainers and educators.

## Occupational therapy: A record of success

Occupational therapists assess, plan and organize rehabilitative programs that help build or restore vocational and daily living skills and general independence to people with disabilities or developmental delays. The first occupational therapy students at FGCU enrolled in 1999, pursuing a bachelor's program that later transitioned to a master of science degree.

After they complete their studies and 24 weeks of fieldwork, graduates participate in a licensure exam hosted by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. For 10 consecutive years,



Marieb OT graduates have upheld a 100% pass rate for this high-stakes exam. In fact, FGCU was the only state school to achieve that milestone for the most recent exam.

The program's outcomes, paired with FGCU's affordability and student support mechanisms, are truly second to none. The occupational therapy department is well-supported with eight full-time faculty members boasting over 200 years of practice experience combined. They have built a fully-accredited, cohesive curriculum, improved student learning outcomes and built collaborative relationships with practicing therapists in the community.

## Physical therapy: Practitioners teaching practitioners

As with occupational therapy, graduates of Marieb College's physical therapy program maintain a 100% pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Examination. All states require physical therapists to be licensed, and a doctor of physical therapy degree like FGCU's is a standard requirement to practice in the field.

Many aspects set Marieb's doctorate apart from other schools. Smaller class sizes mean a better student-to-faculty ratio and more personalized learning. Problem-based learning promotes lifelong active learning skills. Classes are taught by

faculty, rather than teaching assistants or graduate students. And the majority of faculty members are still practicing clinicians, so they bring experience from the field directly into the classroom.

What's more, the college's state-of-the-art labs provide hands-on experience with current technology. Students perfect various therapeutic and diagnostic assessment techniques in cutting-edge sports medicine, human performance, musculoskeletal, neuromuscular and aquatics rehabilitation labs.

As a result, Marieb graduates are exceptionally prepared to help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain in settings that include hospitals, clinics, private practices, patients' homes and nursing homes.

## Exercise science: Promoting lifelong wellness

Exercise science embraces the study of the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of movement. At FGCU, students in this bachelor's degree program learn how the body responds to activity and exercise over the course of one's life and how individuals can attain a higher level of all-around wellness.

Interdisciplinary but strongly based in science, Marieb College's exercise science program emphasizes applied and critical thinking that prepares students for graduate studies in health-related fields or to start careers helping people improve their health and physical capabilities. In the college's human performance laboratory, students learn to use resistance training equipment, body composition analyzers, cardiac stress systems, anti-gravity and underwater treadmills and other state-of-the-art technology.

Graduates sit for national certification exams through the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the American College of Sports Medicine.

*For more information about Marieb College's Department of Rehabilitation Sciences or other programs, go to [fgcu.edu/mariebcollege](http://fgcu.edu/mariebcollege).*



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# Illuminating Vision: Understanding the Miracle of the Retina During National Eye Health Month

George Skopis, M.D.

In the intricate landscape of human biology, few structures are as remarkable and complex as the human eye, with the retina standing as a true marvel of natural engineering. As we observe National Eye Health Month, it's crucial to shed light on this extraordinary tissue that serves as the window to our visual world, transforming light into the vibrant images we perceive daily.

The retina is far more than a simple photographic surface. It is a sophisticated neural network that acts as an extension of our brain, processing visual information with incredible precision. Located at the back of the eye, this thin layer of tissue is approximately the size of a postage stamp but contains over 10 million photoreceptor cells that capture light and convert it into electrical signals our brain can interpret.

These photoreceptor cells, known as rods and cones, play distinctly different roles in our vision. Rods are responsible for low-light and peripheral vision, allowing us to navigate in dimmer environments. Cones, on the other hand, enable color perception and detailed central vision. This intricate system works seamlessly, allowing us to distinguish between subtle color variations, detect motion, and perceive depth with remarkable accuracy.

However, the retina is also vulnerable to numerous conditions that can compromise vision. Diseases like diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, and retinal detachment can significantly impact visual health. These conditions often develop gradually, making regular eye examinations critical for early detection and prevention.

Lifestyle factors play a significant role in maintaining retinal health. Nutrition, for instance, is paramount. Nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, lutein, zeaxanthin, and vitamins A, C, and E are essential for supporting retinal function. Foods such as leafy green vegetables, fish, nuts, and colorful fruits can provide these crucial nutrients.



Technological advances have revolutionized our understanding and treatment of retinal conditions. Sophisticated imaging techniques like optical coherence tomography (OCT) now allow physicians to obtain detailed, cross-sectional images of the retina, enabling early diagnosis and precise monitoring of various eye diseases.

Protecting your retinal health extends beyond medical interventions. Simple practices can make a substantial difference. Wearing UV-protective sunglasses, maintaining a balanced diet, staying hydrated, avoiding smoking, and managing chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension can significantly contribute to preserving retinal integrity.

For individuals with a family history of eye diseases or those experiencing vision changes, proactive medical consultation is crucial. Annual comprehensive eye exams can detect early signs of retinal issues, potentially preventing significant vision loss.

As we commemorate National Eye Health Month, let us celebrate the remarkable complexity of the retina and commit to understanding and protecting this vital sensory organ. Our eyes are not just windows to the world but intricate biological systems that deserve careful attention, respect, and ongoing care.

Vision is a precious gift, and the retina is its masterful curator. By embracing knowledge, practicing preventive care, and seeking timely medical guidance, we can ensure that our visual journey remains clear, vibrant, and full of wonder.



George Skopis, M.D., is a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship trained vitreoretinal surgeon. Dr. Skopis specializes in surgical and medical diseases of the retina and vitreous. He strives to utilize the most advanced imaging, medical and surgical techniques to diagnose and treat patients. Dr. Skopis has expertise in age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular occlusions, macular holes, macular pucker/epiretinal membranes, retinal detachments, proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and scleral fixated intra-ocular lenses.

Dr. Skopis grew up in Tarpon Springs, FL and graduated from Tarpon Springs High School. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The University of Florida where he graduated cum laude.

Dr. Skopis earned his medical degree from the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami, FL where he was elected to the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha medical honors society for his academic achievement. While in medical school, Dr. Skopis received multiple teaching awards. He completed his internship in internal medicine at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, FL where he was voted "intern of the year" by both his co-residents and hospital medical faculty. Dr. Skopis completed his ophthalmology residency at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC where he served as chief resident. During residency, Dr. Skopis volunteered with the Prevention of Blindness Society of DC to perform glaucoma screening examinations and back-to-school eye exams for children in underserved communities. Following residency, he completed a 2 year fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery and medical retina at the combined Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary of University of Illinois Chicago/University Retina program.

Dr. Skopis is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and is an active member in the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Society of Retina Specialists, and Vit-Buckle Society. He has published manuscripts in peer-reviewed medical journals and authored multiple book chapters. During his time in fellowship he participated in clinical trials for the treatment of diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema, retinal vascular occlusions, and age-related macular degeneration.

As a Florida native, Dr. Skopis is thrilled to return to southwest Florida and serve the community. He enjoys watching and playing soccer, cheering on the Florida Gators and grilling anything he can get his hands on. He is fluent in English and Greek.



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# MORE THAN A NEW HOME:

## What You're Investing in When You Move Into a Community with Life Care

**N**o matter what phase of life you're in – first home, raising a family and yes, even your retirement years – where you live can have a big impact on your goals and overall happiness. After you retire, you might think moving to a senior living community is only about your residence's floor plan or view. However, the reality is that the importance of your move goes beyond the home's walls and extends well into the future, affecting not only your nest egg but your health and wellness.

Picking a Life Plan Community with Life Care, like Freedom Village of Bradenton, can provide you with the residence options, amenities, services and social opportunities you want, while also providing you with financial security and peace of mind.

### WHAT IS LIFE CARE?

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 7 out of 10 adults will need long-term care at some point for an average of 3 years. Life Care is a type of financial contract that allows you to better predict the future cost of long-term care, if ever needed. This is done by paying for some of your potential care costs in advance through an entrance fee. At Freedom Village, no matter which floor plan you choose, our entrance fee includes all the cost saving benefits of Life Care. Plus, we offer several contract options to meet your financial situation and long-term goals.

### MONTHLY LIVING EXPENSES

Your monthly fee combines all the bills and costs of living in a house and covers all maintenance, house-keeping, your meal plan, water, cable, electricity, unlimited use of common spaces and campus amenities and much more. The monthly service fee amount is based on the contract option, size of your floor plan and whether or not you live with a second person. (Note: a second person pays a significantly lower monthly fee.) It's also important to remember that when you choose an independent living floor plan, you're locking in your rate. So, picking a smaller floor plan now might be a better long-term financial move.

### VALUE OF LIFE CARE

Life Care has profound advantages and guarantees, but at first glance, it can seem a little complex. To help, here's a high-level explanation of how Life Care works:



- **Savings:** You'll see substantial savings compared to the average cost of private assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing.
- **Asset preservation:** By paying lower prices for higher levels of care, you're preserving your assets over your lifetime.
- **Tax savings:** A portion of your entrance fee and monthly fee could be tax-deductible as a prepaid health cost. As with all financial decisions, check with your financial and tax advisors first before you decide.
- **Peace of mind:** Your family members won't have to worry about what your next move will be if your physical or mental health changes. Plus, by pre-planning your future now, you're maintaining control over those decisions.

### EXPLORE OUR LIFE CARE COMMUNITY

We know that moving to a senior living community is an important decision, and we want you to feel confident that you're making the right choice for you. Start your new year off right by visiting [FVBradenton.com/events](http://FVBradenton.com/events) to attend one of our upcoming luncheons, or schedule a tour today by calling 941-231-7434.



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# FLORIDA FOOD FORCE

**F**lorida Food Force is a nonprofit initiative aimed at addressing food insecurities in Florida. It is a part of a broader effort to alleviate hunger and ensure that all residents in their area have access to nutritious food.

**Key efforts of Florida Food Force include:**

**Food Distribution and Access:** This initiative works to improve access to food for underserved communities by establishing food banks, emergency food distribution, and a weekly supplement food program that doesn't have any income restrictions or county restrictions.

**Collaboration with Local Partners:** By teaming up with various organizations, businesses, and government agencies, Florida Food Force creates a more efficient system to provide these programs to a wider audience. These collaborations help to provide sustainable, long-term solutions to food insecurity.

**Emergency Response:** In times of crisis – such as natural disasters or economic downturns – Florida Food Force can quickly provide immediate food assistance to affected areas. The ability to respond quickly is especially crucial in a state like Florida, which frequently faces hurricanes and other natural disasters.

**Community Education and Advocacy:** The initiative also focuses on educating communities about nutrition, health eating, and available assistance programs. By raising awareness about food insecurity, Florida Food Force aims to provide immediate relief and create lasting change through public awareness campaigns.

Through these efforts, Florida Food Force plays a critical role in fighting hunger, improving public health, and building stronger, more resilient communities in west Florida.

As of recent data, food insecurity remains a significant issue, with millions of residents facing challenges in accessing enough nutritious food. Below are some 2024 statistics regarding food insecurity in Florida:

- 2.3 million Florida residents have food insecure households.



- Children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. In Florida, 1 in 6 children (about 800,000 children) are food insecure, which can have long term effects on their health, education, and development.
- 22 out of 67 counties in Florida have a food insecurity rate that exceeds the national average of 15%.
- 10.5% of Tampa Bay residents face food insecurity.
- 71% of lower income families of K-12 public school students in Florida reported signs of food insecurity in the past twelve months.
- 92% of rural Floridians say that affording groceries has become harder in the last twelve months and 72% of Floridians report that they find it more difficult to afford groceries compared to just a year ago. This isn't surprising when you consider that the cost of groceries has increased 25.8% since November 2020. Specifically, the same basket of groceries that cost you \$100 at the end of 2020 now costs you \$125.80.

Florida Food Force's two most popular programs are the Emergency Food Box, and the Weekly Supplemental Food Program.

*"One of the greatest feelings in the world is knowing that we as individuals can make a difference. Ending hunger in America is a goal that is literally within our grasp."*

~ Jeff Bridges

If you find yourself needing or know of someone who needs an emergency food box, please contact Florida Food Force. There are no income restrictions, and you do not need to reside near the food bank to benefit from the programs. Emergency food boxes are available Monday- Wednesday, 9:00 am to 2:30 pm by appointment. You can make an appointment by calling 727-261-7422. Please bring a photo ID. While you are there, ask about our Weekly Supplemental Food Program. Florida Food Force is located at 11523 Prosperous Drive, Odessa, FL 33556.

**Florida  
Food Force, Inc.**  
*"Uniting Forces To Combat Hunger"*

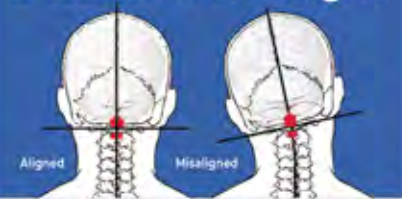
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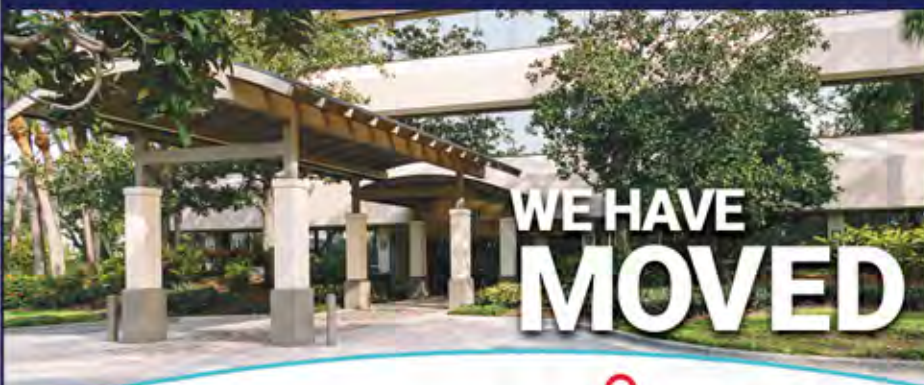
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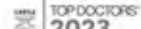
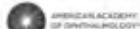
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# The 7 Keys to Health:

## How to Make 2025 the Year You Restored Your Health

By Max MacCloud, [DO, ND, PhD] aka The Nutrition Ninja Doc

**W**ith each new year people set new health resolutions. Unfortunately, they are seldom kept. There are many reasons and excuses, but the bottom line is that health is complicated, and resolutions are inadequate to really make the kind of difference people would like.

As we begin the new year, it's time to set resolutions that can truly transform our health and reverse the aging process (if your goals involve living life to the fullest).

By focusing on the 7 key areas of health, we can turn back the clock and restore vitality. Let's explore how to make 2025 the year you invest in your health & future self.

### THE 7 KEYS TO HEALTH AND AGE REVERSAL

#### Key # 1. Sound Body & Joint Structure

Maintaining a strong musculoskeletal system is crucial for healthy aging. Incorporate weight-bearing & resistance exercises along with flexibility training to keep your joints supple and your bones strong.

The biggest impediment to performing the appropriate exercise to maintain your joints is pain and degeneration. This often starts a major downward health spiral.

Once joint pain and degeneration set in, more aggressive intervention is often needed to turn things around. That's where Regenerative Injection Therapy comes in. It has been used for almost 90 years to help repair & restore proper joint integrity. The newer solutions (stem cells, exosomes, PRP, etc.) take the regeneration to the next level to help get you out of pain and back into the game.

#### Key # 2. Proper Nutrition

Fuel your body with nutrient-dense foods that support cellular health. Aim for a diet rich in healthy proteins & fats, while limiting excess carbohydrates, empty calories, highly processed and junk foods. Nutrient dense vegetables, limited fruits, seeds, and nuts help to round this out while providing many additional vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.



Many people would benefit from some detailed nutritional coaching due to the huge amount of misinformation propagated by both mainstream media and online sources including the many influencers who are often misguided.

#### Key # 3. Exercise

Physical activity is a cornerstone of health and age reversal. Resistance training and High-intensity interval training (HIIT) have been shown to dramatically slow cellular aging by boosting muscle mass & mitochondrial regeneration. Combine this with endurance training to improve cardiovascular health and maintain muscle mass.

A little know exercise system called EWOT (exercise with oxygen training) is perhaps THE most important single type of exercise to do. It is the ONLY type of exercise documented to open & reset the body's microvascular system to youthful levels.

Although home EWOT systems are available, coming to our center for a series of sessions is really the best way to implement EWOT under proper guidance.

We also have the latest & greatest Resistance exercise equipment called ARX (Adaptive Resistance Exercise). It is the most effective way to restore strength and lean body mass (muscle) known.

#### Key # 4. Microvascular Health

Support your body's smallest blood vessels through regular exercise and specific nutrients that help to restore the Glycocalyx (proteoglycans (sugar-protein chains) that protect the inside of our body's blood vessels).

The microvascular system (primarily capillaries) accounts for 99% of the entire circulatory system. Conventional medical practitioners do not address



these vessels at all, and we've only been able to test the health of the Microvascular system for a short time. We have the only testing equipment in the entire region that can test it. It is called the **Glycocheck**, google it to learn more.

#### Key # 5. Mitochondrial Health

Protect and enhance your cellular powerhouses that also regulate apoptosis (programed cell death), stem cells, calcium channels, and more. We use **EWOT & HIIT (high intensity interval training including altitude training)** to significantly boost mitochondrial function and mitogenesis. Additionally, managing oxidative stress through a balanced diet and targeted supplements (like our **Mito Energy & Mito Boost**) can support mitochondrial health.

#### Key # 6. Metabolic Health

Maintain a healthy weight and blood sugar levels to support overall metabolic function. A healthy, balanced metabolism is much more complicated than just balancing blood sugar; however, it is impossible to balance overall metabolism without first balancing blood sugar.

We evaluate and support blood sugar and insulin levels, adrenal function, thyroid function, and sex hormone levels (testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone) to help support a healthy, balanced metabolism.

Overall lifestyle is vital to a balanced & healthy metabolism. We also use various detoxification strategies, dietary modifications, intermittent fasting, calorie manipulation, and more as part of our approach to help balance and support a healthy metabolism.

#### Key # 7. Building Metabolic Reserve

**Our metabolic reserve is best represented by our lean body mass which is mostly comprised of muscle.** Our other organs make up the rest, however, they are more difficult to measure and modify. **By focusing on muscle, both maintaining it and building it, we can dramatically enhance our overall health and metabolic reserve.**

Everyone loses muscle, and therefore metabolic reserve as we age, UNLESS we actively work to maintain it. That's right, losing muscle is NOT inevitable, it is just the norm. We can prevent this from happening and rebuild muscle/metabolic reserve with a combination of... the 6 other keys already discussed! Loss of muscle mass is called **sarcopenia**, it is a key indicator of premature aging.

Proper nutrition & resistance exercise (which requires healthy joints), along with healthy micro-circulation, mitochondria (muscles have among the highest concentration of mitochondria in the body along with nerve tissue), and metabolic balance are all involved in maintaining &/or rebuilding our metabolic reserves.

#### Putting It All Together

Understanding how these elements interconnect is vital to developing an effective health enhancement & age reversal program. At the Age Reversal Technology Center, we specialize in creating personalized plans that address all seven keys to health. Our comprehensive approach ensures that you're not just treating symptoms but actively reversing the aging process at a cellular level.

#### Take Action Now

The journey to optimal health and age reversal begins with a single step. Schedule an initial consultation at the Age Reversal Technology Center to determine the most efficient path for your unique needs and health goals.

Why listen to me? I'm Max MacCloud and I have 3 doctorate level degrees in the health sciences (DO, ND, PhD) with over 45 years of clinical experience in the areas of health enhancement & age reversal. I've been studying & personally practicing these principles since 1969 and I'm as strong and fit at 67 as I was at 17 (really). I've damaged and repaired multiple joint injuries including neck, thoracic spine, low back, sacroiliac joint, shoulder, wrist, ankle, and most recently a meniscus tear and ligament sprain in my knee. The therapies I employ work and I'm constantly tweaking them to make them even more effective.

We are constantly adding new things to help people's bodies heal better. Most recently we've add Adaptive Resistance Training with the ARX, Hyperbaric Oxygen therapy, the Xeo+ laser & intense pulsed light system (photo-rejuvenation, reduction/elimination of pigmented spots & spider veins, as well as hair removal), and a special rapid Cryo freezing system that helps with spot reduction and skin tightening.

I will work with you to design & guide you through a custom-tailored program that integrates all aspects of health optimization.

Remember, age reversal isn't about quick fixes or miracle cures; it's about making consistent, science-backed choices that compound over time.

Since I mentioned 'science-backed,' please note that I distinguish between 'real & fake' science. (As a quick aside, most of what conventional doctors rely on, and mainstream media report on, is 'fake & biased' science that is sponsored by the Medical Industrial Complex that is much more focused on profit than building health.) This is not a conspiracy theory; it is a well-documented fact. Our health (actually 'disease') care system has been hijacked and it's time to take back control of our health.

By committing to the right resolutions and working with professionals who understand the intricacies of building health and reversing the deleterious effects of premature aging, you can make 2025 the year you truly invest in your long-term health and vitality. Start your journey today and look forward to a future where you feel as young as you aspire to be.

**Health is a function of your intention and the effort you put into building & preserving it.** Unfortunately, most of us have been trained to treat our body like a car instead of the miraculous organism it is. We wait until there is a problem with our car, a check engine or oil pressure light, a strange new noise, etc. Then we ignore it for a while and eventually take it to the mechanic for repair. STOP treating your body this way, BE PROACTIVE and build health to optimize function and prevent breakdowns.

### YOUR BIOLOGICAL CLOCK IS WAITING TO BE RESET – ARE YOU READY TO TURN IT BACK?

**We are now located at our new, expanded facility in LWR at 6968 Professional Parkway. Just 30 seconds from University & LWR Blvd. Call 941-806-5511 to learn more. [www.ARTC.health](http://www.ARTC.health)**

#### Footnotes

1. *Sound Body & Joint Structure: Incorporating weight-bearing exercises helps maintain bone density (National Institute of Health).*
2. *Proper Nutrition: A diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids has been linked to reduced inflammation (American Heart Association).*
3. *Exercise: HIIT has been shown to enhance mitochondrial function significantly (Journal of Physiology).*
4. *Microvascular Health: Regular cardiovascular exercise improves microvascular function (Circulation Research).*
5. *Mitochondrial Health: Antioxidants from diet play a crucial role in protecting mitochondrial integrity (Free Radical Biology & Medicine).*
6. *Metabolic Health: Intermittent fasting has shown potential benefits for longevity (Cell Metabolism).*
7. *Building Metabolic Reserve: Resistance training is essential for increasing lean muscle mass (American College of Sports Medicine).*

Make an appointment today!  
**Age Reversal Technology Center, LLC**  
**(941) 806-5511**

**ARTC.HEALTH**

6968 Professional Parkway,  
Sarasota FL, 34240 (Lakewood Ranch)



# PREMIERE WEIGHT LOSS OPENS THIRD LOCATION IN LAKEWOOD RANCH

**P**remiere Weight Loss + Wellness is proud to announce the grand opening of our third Sarasota/Manatee location in the heart of Lakewood Ranch. Conveniently located at 11532 Palmbrush Trail, our state-of-the-art weight loss and wellness clinic is open Tuesday-Friday from 9am to 5pm and Saturday from 9am-1pm.

For two decades, Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness has empowered clients across Southwest Florida to achieve sustainable weight loss through personalized care and clinically proven treatment programs.

Our affordable, expert-designed weight loss plans integrate the new-generation GLP-1 medications (semaglutide and tirzepatide), a comprehensive nutrition plan, and lifestyle coaching to ensure positive and sustainable outcomes. Clients benefit from comprehensive health assessments and individualized guidance, tailored to their unique goals.

At Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness, we know that achieving and maintaining a healthy weight can be challenging. Our southwest Florida clinics provide individualized, compassionate care designed to meet each patient's unique needs. With convenient locations in Bradenton, Sarasota, and now Lakewood Ranch, our weight loss and wellness centers are here to support you every step of the way.

Premiere is dedicated to helping Florida residents transform their lives. Since 2005, we have been providing science-based weight loss programs, nutrition counseling, and advanced health and wellness services. Our caring team of professionals works with each patient to create sustainable, realistic plans for achieving their goals.

Our certified wellness experts guide patients toward long-lasting health improvements. We offer custom health assessments, our Comprehensive Initial Health Assessment, and tailored treatment plans to support healthy, sustainable weight management. Each of our Florida locations is equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools like the Styku body composition analysis to ensure effective and accurate tracking of your progress.

At Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness, we focus on a holistic approach to health, addressing lifestyle, diet, and exercise habits. We take the time to understand your specific needs and goals. Our teams are here to guide and support you with a personalized roadmap to better health.



Our customers' journey through weight loss to wellness begins with our Comprehensive Initial Health Assessment, which provides a full understanding of your current health and helps shape your personalized wellness plan.

#### Our assessment includes:

- **Diagnostic Lab Work:** A full blood panel to evaluate key health markers.
- **Styku Body Composition Analysis:** Advanced technology to measure and track body composition changes.
- **Personal Health Coaching:** One-on-one coaching with a certified wellness expert to set and reach your health goals.
- **Nutritional Guidance:** From the Harvard School of Public Health

#### How GLP-1 Medications work:

GLP-1 antagonists are now well-known for their effectiveness in diabetes management and safe, sustainable weight loss. GLP-1 treatments stimulate the receptor for the hormone glucagon-like peptide 1, which increase insulin production and satiety (the feeling of fullness). GLP-1 agonists release into the digestive tract after a meal and also impacts the hunger center of the brain, sending signals that the user is full. GLP-1 treatments also slow the movement of food through the stomach (delayed gastric emptying). This helps the user to feel full longer.

Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness offers the GLP-1 medications - semaglutide and tirzepatide. Both have been shown to offer effective and sustainable weight loss when utilized in conjunction with a sensible diet and exercise plan.

#### Are you ready to start your wellness journey?

Book a consultation today at one of our Florida locations in Bradenton, Sarasota, or Lakewood Ranch. Each Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness clinic is ready to support you with compassionate care, proven results, and personalized wellness plans tailored to you.

Our Sarasota/Manatee Locations:

#### BRADENTON

4701 Manatee Avenue, West Bradenton, FL 34209  
Phone: 941-827-0024

#### SARASOTA

1961 Floyd Street, Suite C, Sarasota, FL 34239  
Phone: 941-381-8001

#### LAKEWOOD RANCH

11532 Palmbrush Trail, Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202

For plan and pricing information visit:  
<https://www.premiereweightloss.com/>



[www.PremiereWeightLoss.com](http://www.PremiereWeightLoss.com)



# Vertigo or Meniere's Disease?

## Aren't they the same?

By Dr. Drew Hall

If you've ever felt off-balance, dizzy, or like the room is spinning around you even though you're sitting down, you've probably experienced vertigo or Meniere's disease. The two are commonly confused since they both affect balance and/or hearing. But what's the difference? Aren't they the same thing?

### What is vertigo?

Vertigo is a sensation of feeling off balance. If you have dizzy spells, you might feel like you are spinning or that the world around you is spinning. Dizziness is an altered sense of balance that can make you feel unsteady or lightheaded. In contrast, vertigo is a false sense of motion that you may experience while sitting, standing or even lying still.

### Causes of Vertigo

*Vertigo is often caused by an inner ear problem. Some of the most common causes include:*

**BPPV (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo)** BPPV occurs when tiny calcium particles are dislodged from their normal location and collect in the inner ear. The inner ear sends signals to the brain about head and body movements relative to gravity. It helps you keep your balance. BPPV can occur for no known reason and may be associated with age. Meniere's disease. This is an inner ear disorder thought to be caused by a buildup of fluid and changing pressure in the ear. It can cause episodes of vertigo along with ringing in the ears (tinnitus) and hearing loss.

**Vestibular neuritis or labyrinthitis.** This is an inner ear problem usually related to infection (usually viral). The infection causes inflammation in the inner ear around nerves that are important for helping the body sense balance.

*Vertigo may also be associated with:*

- Head or neck injury
- Brain problems such as stroke or tumor
- Certain medications that cause ear damage
- Migraine headaches



### Symptoms of vertigo

*People with vertigo typically describe it as feeling like they are:*

- Spinning
- Tilting
- Swaying
- Unbalanced
- Pulled to one direction

*Other symptoms that may accompany vertigo include:*

- Feeling nauseated
- Vomiting
- Abnormal or jerking eye movements (nystagmus)
- Headache

### What is Meniere's Disease?

Meniere's disease is a disorder of the inner ear that can lead to dizzy spells (vertigo) and hearing loss. In most cases, Meniere's disease affects only one ear. It can occur at any age, but it usually starts between early to middle adulthood. It's considered a chronic condition, but various treatments can help relieve symptoms and minimize the long-term impact on your life.

### Causes of Meniere's disease

The cause of Meniere's disease is unknown. Symptoms of Meniere's disease appear to be the result of an abnormal amount of fluid (endolymph) in the inner ear, but it isn't clear what causes that to happen.

*Factors that affect the fluid, which might contribute to Meniere's disease, include:*

- Improper fluid drainage, perhaps because of a blockage or anatomic abnormality
- Abnormal immune response
- Viral infection
- Genetic predisposition

Because no single cause has been identified, it's likely that Meniere's disease results from a combination of factors.

### Symptoms of Meniere's disease

*Signs and symptoms of Meniere's disease include:*

- **Recurring episodes of vertigo.** You have a spinning sensation that starts and stops spontaneously. Episodes of vertigo occur without warning and usually last 20 minutes to several hours, but not more than 24 hours. Severe vertigo can cause nausea.
- **Hearing loss.** Hearing loss in Meniere's disease may come and go, particularly early on. Eventually, most people have some permanent hearing loss.
- **Ringing in the ear (tinnitus).** Tinnitus is the perception of a ringing, buzzing, roaring, whistling or hissing sound in your ear.
- **Feeling of fullness in the ear.** People with Meniere's disease often feel pressure in an affected ear (aural fullness).<sup>1</sup>

1. Meniere's disease (2020) Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menieres-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20374910>.

After an episode, signs and symptoms improve and might disappear entirely for a while. Over time, the frequency of episodes may lessen.

If you're looking for reliable vertigo treatment or relief from Meniere's disease symptoms, visit Dr. Drew Hall at Sarasota Upper Cervical Chiropractic. Visit Dr. Hall to get to the root cause of your vertigo. In their office they take 3D cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) that allows the doctor to view the neck and joints that may be misaligned causing your vertigo. Don't guess at the cause of your problems.

**Schedule a no obligation FREE consultation in our office today!**



Dr. Drew Hall

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# HORMONAL HARMONY: Balancing Body and Mind through a Holistic Approach

BY DR. KAROLINA BAKER, MD

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

## The Complex World of Hormonal Interaction

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

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

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

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

## The Aging Factor: Hormonal Decline

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

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

## Rebalancing Hormones: A Holistic Approach

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

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

## Bioidentical vs. Synthetic Hormones: Understanding the Difference

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

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

## The Evolving Landscape of Hormone Replacement

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

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

## A Holistic Well-being Framework

True hormonal harmony extends beyond medical intervention. It encompasses:

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

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

## ABOUT AVEN CLINIC

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

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

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

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

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



**AVEN CLINIC**  
FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

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# New Year, New You: Transform Your Body with EmSculpt NEO

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

**A**s the calendar turns and a fresh year begins, many of us are searching for innovative ways to reinvent ourselves and achieve our health and fitness goals. Enter EmSculpt NEO, a groundbreaking body contouring technology that's revolutionizing the way we approach personal transformation, offering a powerful solution for those seeking meaningful physical changes without invasive procedures.

## The New Year's Resolution Revolution

Traditional New Year's resolutions often fall into a predictable pattern: ambitious goals, initial motivation, and then gradual burnout. EmSculpt NEO represents a different approach—a scientific, targeted method of body sculpting that combines cutting-edge technology with tangible results. Unlike endless hours at the gym or restrictive diets, this treatment offers a strategic path to body transformation.

## How EmSculpt NEO Works

At the core of EmSculpt NEO's effectiveness is its innovative dual-action technology. The treatment simultaneously delivers radiofrequency heating and high-intensity electromagnetic energy, creating a unique approach to muscle building and fat reduction. This means you're not just losing fat; you're actively building muscle mass while eliminating stubborn adipose tissue.

## Muscle Building Mechanism

The electromagnetic energy triggers supramaximal muscle contractions that are impossible to achieve through conventional exercise. In a single 30-minute session, your muscles experience thousands of powerful contractions, equivalent to performing an intense workout. These contractions stimulate muscle fibers, promoting significant muscle growth and strengthening.

## Fat Reduction Process

Simultaneously, the radiofrequency heating raises the muscle temperature, creating a similar effect to a warm-up before exercise. This process disrupts fat cells, causing them to break down and be naturally eliminated by the body. The result? A more sculpted, defined physique without invasive surgical procedures.

## Targeting Problem Areas

EmSculpt NEO is remarkably versatile, addressing multiple body areas that often resist traditional diet and exercise:



- **Abdomen:** Reduce belly fat and create more defined core muscles
- **Buttocks:** Lift and enhance muscle tone without endless squats
- **Arms:** Build muscle definition and reduce excess arm fat
- **Thighs:** Sculpt and strengthen leg muscles
- **Love Handles:** Target stubborn side fat effectively

## Beyond Physical Transformation

The benefits of EmSculpt NEO extend beyond physical changes. As individuals see tangible results, they experience a significant boost in confidence and motivation. This psychological transformation is often as powerful as the physical one, inspiring continued health and wellness efforts.

## Clinical Proven Results

Clinical studies have shown impressive outcomes:

- Up to 30% fat reduction in treated areas
- 25% increase in muscle mass
- Visible results after just four 30-minute sessions
- No downtime or recovery period required

## A Personalized Approach to Wellness

What sets EmSculpt NEO apart is its personalized approach. Each treatment is tailored to individual body composition, fitness goals, and physical condition. This means whether you're an athlete looking to enhance muscle definition or someone beginning their fitness journey, EmSculpt NEO can be customized to your needs.

## Making Your New Year's Resolution Stick

EmSculpt NEO offers more than a quick fix—it's a catalyst for lasting change. By providing visible, measurable results, it motivates individuals to maintain their health and fitness commitments.

The treatment works best when combined with a balanced diet and regular exercise, creating a holistic approach to personal transformation.

## Consultation is Key

Before beginning any EmSculpt NEO treatment, a thorough consultation with a certified professional is crucial. They can assess your individual needs, discuss expectations, and create a personalized treatment plan.

As you embrace the "New Year, New You" mantra, consider EmSculpt NEO not just as a treatment, but as an investment in yourself. It's a powerful tool that bridges the gap between aspiration and achievement, helping you sculpt not just your body, but your confidence and potential.

## Start Your Health Journey with Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness is committed to providing innovative wellness solutions that go beyond traditional healthcare approaches. The practice now offers cutting-edge body contouring and pelvic floor health treatments through EmSculpt Neo and Emsella technologies. EmSculpt Neo helps patients build muscle and reduce fat through advanced electromagnetic and radiofrequency treatments, while Emsella provides a non-invasive solution for improving pelvic floor strength, which can benefit both men and women experiencing urinary incontinence or seeking enhanced core muscle performance. By integrating these state-of-the-art treatments, Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness demonstrates its dedication to comprehensive patient care, empowering individuals to achieve their wellness and body confidence goals through advanced, non-surgical medical technologies.

## Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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



Calvino Family Medicine  
& WELLNESS

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# IV VITAMIN THERAPY: A Wellness Trend to Watch in 2025

As we step into 2025, wellness enthusiasts are increasingly turning to IV vitamin therapy as a means to optimize their health and vitality. This growing trend, once reserved for hospitals and celebrity circles, has become more accessible to the general public through specialized wellness clinics and mobile services. But what exactly is IV vitamin therapy, and why is it gaining such momentum in the wellness space?

IV vitamin therapy involves the direct administration of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients into the bloodstream through an intravenous drip. This method bypasses the digestive system, allowing for maximum absorption of nutrients at the cellular level. While oral supplements typically have an absorption rate of 50% or less, IV therapy boasts a near 100% bioavailability, making it an attractive option for those seeking optimal nutrient delivery.

Different formulations target specific wellness goals. The classic Myers' Cocktail, developed by Dr. John Myers in the 1960s, remains a popular choice. This blend typically includes magnesium, calcium, B vitamins, and vitamin C, aimed at boosting energy levels, supporting immune function, and reducing inflammation. Modern clinics now offer specialized formulas for athletic recovery, immune support, hangover relief, beauty enhancement, and stress management.

The treatment process typically takes 30-60 minutes, during which patients can relax, work remotely, or meditate while the nutrients are slowly infused. Many report feeling immediate benefits, such as increased energy, mental clarity, and improved hydration. However, it's important to note that experiences can vary significantly among individuals.

Medical professionals emphasize that while IV vitamin therapy can be beneficial, it's not a magical solution or replacement for a healthy lifestyle. Dr. Sarah Chen, a functional medicine specialist, explains: "IV therapy works best as part of a comprehensive wellness approach that includes proper



nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management. It's particularly useful for individuals with absorption issues or those recovering from illness or intense physical activity."

The treatment's growing popularity has sparked important discussions about safety and regulation. Potential candidates should undergo proper medical screening and ensure treatments are administered by qualified healthcare professionals in sterile environments. While generally safe, risks can include infection at the injection site, vein irritation, or allergic reactions.

Cost considerations also play a role in the therapy's accessibility. A single session can range from \$150 to \$400, depending on the formulation and location. Some clinics offer membership packages or treatment bundles to make the service more affordable for regular users. While insurance typically doesn't cover these treatments, some FSA and HSA accounts may reimburse the cost when prescribed for specific medical conditions.

Looking ahead, the IV vitamin therapy industry is expected to continue evolving. Innovations in formulations, improved delivery methods, and more personalized approaches based on individual health data are on the horizon. Mobile services are also expanding, bringing the convenience of in-home treatments to more communities.

However, experts advise potential users to maintain realistic expectations. While many people report positive results, scientific research on the long-term benefits of regular IV vitamin therapy for healthy individuals is still limited. Dr. Michael Roberts, a clinical nutritionist, suggests: "Consider IV therapy as a complementary tool rather than a primary health solution. It's particularly valuable during periods of high stress, intense physical demands, or when recovering from illness."

As we progress through 2025, IV vitamin therapy represents a fascinating intersection of traditional medical practice and modern wellness trends. While not a panacea, it offers an innovative approach to nutrient delivery that may benefit those seeking to optimize their health and performance. As with any health intervention, potential users should consult healthcare providers to determine if IV vitamin therapy aligns with their individual health needs and goals.

*\*Disclaimer: Always consult with healthcare professionals before starting any new health treatment or therapy.*

## South Sarasota Prime IV

As a premier IV Hydration Therapy clinic, we formulate IV vitamin therapies that help maximize your overall health and wellness. So whether you are looking to instantly reverse a hangover, boost your immune system through the flu season or are looking for a supplement to other therapies, Prime IV is the answer. We offer a clean, comfortable and relaxed environment and utilize only the latest in cutting-edge IV therapies.



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# Diagnostic Imaging Saves Lives

**M**edical imaging technology has revolutionized health care over the past 30 years, allowing doctors to find disease earlier and improve patient outcomes. Whether you are a young child with cancer or a grandmother who just wants to make sure she's in good health, medical imaging helps you detect and diagnose disease at its earliest, most treatable stages and guides physicians and patients in determining the most appropriate and effective care.

Radiology Associates physicians are board certified radiologists with training in all aspects of diagnostic imaging, including CT, Mammography, MRI, Ultrasound, X-ray, and Nuclear Medicine. Additionally, each has advanced subspecialty training in one or more areas of medical imaging or interventional radiology that we believe provides the basis for providing the highest level of patient care.

Our goal is to provide high quality patient care in a comfortable environment, using the latest imaging and interventional technology and working in close collaboration with referring physicians.

Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood is pleased to offer the following diagnostic imaging services:

**MRI Scan**  
Magnetic resonance imaging, commonly known as MRI is a medical test that aids physicians in diagnosis and treating medical conditions. This is a non-invasive and typically painless test.

**Breast MRI**  
Breast MRI uses Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to look specifically at the breast. It is a non-invasive procedure that doctors can use to determine what the inside of the breast looks like without having to do surgery or flatten the breast (as in a mammogram).

**MRA**  
Magnetic Resonance Angiography - Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA) uses the same MRI scanner to get its images, however it is a special type of MRI scan that looks at blood vessels and blood flow. MRA can help diagnose aneurysms, and also detect narrowing or blockages of blood vessels. If there is decreased or blocked flow leading to the brain this can be the cause of a stroke. Additionally, it can be an ideal aid to the physician for surgical planning. Some MRA's, as with MRI's, require a contrast medium.

**CT Scan**  
CT Scan sometimes called CAT scanning is a painless and a non-invasive medical test that helps physicians diagnose and treat medical conditions.

**Ultrasound**  
A process that uses high-frequency sound waves to produce pictures of the inside of the body. Because ultrasound images are captured in real time, they are able to show blood flowing through the blood vessels, as well as the movement of the body's organs and its structure.

**Nuclear Medicine**  
Nuclear medicine is a specialized form of radiology. Patients are given a radioactive substance either by mouth or intravenously that collects in specific body organs. Then the gamma camera detects the energy being emitted from that substance and an image can then be captured.

**Digital X-Ray & Fluoroscopy**  
An X-ray is a painless and quick test for the patient to endure. It involves exposing the part of the body that is being examined to a small dose of ionizing radiation to produce pictures of the inside of the body.

**3D Mammography**  
3D mammography is a new technology in the fight against breast cancer that allows doctors to examine your breast tissue one layer at a time. 3D mammography uses high-powered computing to convert digital breast images into a stack of very thin layers or "slices"- building what is essentially a "3-dimensional mammogram".

**Bone Density DEXA**  
Bone density scanning, also called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) or bone densitometry, is an enhanced form of x-ray technology that is used to measure bone loss.

**PET Scan**  
Positron emission tomography, also called PET imaging or a PET scan, is a type of nuclear medicine imaging.

For more information about the diagnostic imaging services available at Radiology Associates of Venice, Englewood and Sarasota. Call the Venice office at 941-488-7781 or the Englewood office at 941-475-5471 or the Sarasota office at 941-342-7283.

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# Wound Care and Lymphedema: The Transformative Power of Compression Garments

By James Ferrara - Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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# How Fluoride Helps to Prevent Tooth Decay

By Dr. Amanda Rizner and Maria Guzman Garcia, RDH

The use of fluoride has been a major public health initiative for decades, and has been proven to be a safe and effective way to improve oral health for people of all ages. When incorporated into dental care products and community water supplies, fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay and promote overall dental health. In the following article we will explore how fluoride aids in the cavity prevention process. We will discuss the mechanisms by which it works and how it is used in both community water and topical commercial dental products. Finally, we will address current criticisms and risks associated with fluoride and compare it with other up and coming products and their possible future benefits.

One of the primary advantages of fluoride is its ability to prevent tooth decay. To understand how fluoride aids in cavity prevention, it's essential to discuss the mechanism of tooth decay. Cavities, also known as dental caries, occur when bacteria in the mouth produce acids from sugar that erode the enamel, leading to the formation of tiny holes or cavities in the teeth. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel, making it more resistant to the acid attacks that can lead to cavities. This protective effect is especially important for children, whose developing teeth can greatly benefit from the strengthening effects of fluoride. By using fluoride toothpaste and receiving fluoride treatments from a dentist, both children and adults can significantly reduce their risk of developing cavities.

Fluoride can also help reverse the early stages of tooth decay. One of fluoride's primary mechanisms of action involves its interaction with hydroxyapatite, the main component of tooth enamel. Through a process called fluorapatite formation, fluoride ions replace some of the hydroxide ions in hydroxyapatite,

resulting in the creation of fluorapatite. Fluorapatite is more resistant to acid attacks than hydroxyapatite, making the enamel more robust and less prone to decay. By promoting remineralization, fluoride can stop the progression of cavities and even reverse the damage that has already occurred, preserving the natural structure of the teeth.

Community water fluoridation is a particularly effective way to ensure that people receive the benefits of fluoride, regardless of their access to dental care. By adjusting the fluoride content of public water supplies to an optimal level, entire communities can receive the protective benefits of fluoride in a cost-effective and equitable manner. This approach has been widely recognized as one of the most successful public health measures in history, dramatically reducing the incidence of tooth decay and improving oral health on a population level.

In addition to water fluoridation, fluoride is commonly added to dental products such as toothpaste, mouthwash, and professional treatments. These fluoride-containing products provide individuals with an easy and practical way to incorporate fluoride into their daily oral hygiene routine. By using these products regularly, people can consistently maintain the protective benefits of fluoride and support their overall oral health.

It is important to note that the use of fluoride is safe and has been extensively researched and endorsed by leading health organizations. When used as directed, fluoride is a valuable tool for preventing tooth decay and promoting oral health.

However, it is essential to use fluoride products responsibly and to follow the recommendations of dental professionals to ensure optimal benefits and safety. Excessive fluoride intake can lead to dental fluorosis, a condition characterized by discoloration or mottling of the teeth. In very high dosages, it has also been shown to have negative cognitive effects. Recently, despite the fact all of this has been known for decades, there is a growing movement to completely discredit all benefits of fluoride using false information, conspiracy theories and scare tactics. As dental professions we will continue to present the current facts from actual scientific research and to educate the public about all of the possible variables. If individuals choose to be fluoride free, they must come to terms with the fact that they may be forgoing an easy and affordable defense against tooth decay.

Due to some of the controversy surrounding fluoride, newer products have come onto the market that claim to aid in remineralization of teeth. Some of these products include calcium phosphate, casein proteins, xylitol, or hydroxyapatite (the substance which enamel is comprised of) which claim to make the enamel stronger. However, it's crucial to note that the effectiveness of these alternatives might vary, and more research is needed to validate their long-term benefits and compare them to fluoride-based interventions.

In conclusion, fluoride offers a wide range of benefits for oral health, including preventing tooth decay, promoting remineralization, and improving overall dental health. With its proven safety and effectiveness, fluoride remains a cornerstone of preventive dentistry and a valuable resource for maintaining healthy teeth and gums.

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# Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

**V**AX-D, short for Vertebral Axial Decompression, is a patented non-surgical therapy proven to successfully treat chronic low back pain, caused by prolapsed, bulging, herniated or degenerative discs, facet syndrome, stenosis and sciatica. Even post-surgical patients and those suffering from central canal or foraminal stenosis have reported significant pain relief with VAX-D therapy. Over a series of relaxing treatment sessions, patients experience powerful pain reduction and healing. Some patients even notice relief after just one visit.

VAX-D's proven and patented technology is currently being utilized by leading physicians in orthopedic medicine, pain medicine, neurology and other specialties in hundreds of clinics around the world. Many doctors choose VAX-D over other devices because it employs the original, patented technology from which decompression therapy was born. VAX-D effectiveness is backed by clinical research. Back pain has grown to be a \$54 billion industry and has literally become a national epidemic. Due to the astounding array of varied treatment options, finding a back pain solution can be a daunting task. Knowing that a product backs its claims with clinical research makes all the difference, and that is what VAX-D offers. A recently completed 2 1/2 year study has demonstrated that VAX-D achieved a remarkable 88% success rate in the 283 chronic back pain patients studied! The patients selected for the study had been unsuccessful at finding relief with at least two previous non-surgical treatments.

VAX-D is not to be confused with traction. VAX-D lengthens and decompresses the spine, reversing high intradiscal pressure through the application of negative pressure via a patented "slow ramp-up" process. This reversal of pressure creates a vacuum inside the discs that not only takes pressure off of pinched nerves, but helps to reposition bulging discs and pull extruded disc material back into place. Simultaneously, nutrients, oxygen and fluids are drawn into the disc to create a revitalized environment conducive to healing. VAX-D stimulates the body's repair mechanism, providing the building blocks needed to actually mend injured and degenerated discs. VAX-D's process is the only patented treatment clinically proven to decrease disc pressures to the negative levels needed to facilitate healing!

### How does VAX-D work?

High intradiscal pressures cause discs to bulge out and press painfully on nerve roots. They also make for a compressed, anaerobic environment unsuitable for healing. Decompression produces and sustains negative pressures within the disc, creating a vacuum effect which draws in nutrients and fluids to promote the repair of injured discs and surrounding tissues. This vacuum has also been shown to aid in the retraction of escaped cushioning gel from herniated discs. Much like gauging the air pressure in a car tire, scientists have been able to use pressure sensors to



measure the various pressures put on spinal discs while lifting, standing, sitting, lying down, undergoing traction, and during VAX-D Therapy. Like other pressures found in the body such as blood pressure, intradiscal pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). While traction, physical therapy and manipulation may reduce disc pressures to as low as 40mmHg, only VAX-D has been shown to achieve negative pressures within the spine. Clinical studies have shown that, with VAX-D Therapy, negative pressures as low as -160 mmHg\* are created within the injured disc during the treatment session!

The key to the "distraction" of VAX-D is achieved through an intricately timed series of pulls, holds, and releases over the course of a treatment session. VAX-D's biofeedback system adjusts this curve of tension specifically to each patient's needs, making every session a truly individualized treatment.

VAX-D Therapy involves three phases that repeat fifteen times throughout a treatment session: the Decompression Phase, the Retraction Phase, and finally, the Rest Phase. During the Decompression Phase, tension slowly mounts, lengthening the spine; up to 99 pounds of tension may be exerted directly on the injured discs. This is where spinal pressures drop and decompression actually occurs. During the Retraction Phase, tension is slowly decreased and the spine is retracted slowly. This is followed by a short Rest Phase.

### Is VAX-D Right for Me?

You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:

- You have chronic and/or severe back and/or neck pain caused by bulging or herniated discs. Degenerative disc disease, sciatica, and/or facet syndrome.
- You have been diagnosed with a clinically unstable low back.
- You have failed back surgery syndrome.
- You have been told to consider surgery.

Many patients have experienced more than a 50% reduction in pain after their first treatment! For those suffering from herniated and degenerated discs, the escaped nucleus pulposus may be partially or completely retracted back into the disc after just the first session (though usually it takes longer), relieving a great deal of pain. However, pain reduction does not indicate full recovery, and a full

recovery is essential to preventing re-injury. Each treatment session lasts approximately 45 minutes. A typical VAX-D treatment regimen consists of about 20 sessions. Some conditions require fewer visits; some require more. Many patients report relief from their pain and other symptoms during the first few treatment sessions, and most experience dramatic pain relief after completion of their prescribed VAX-D Therapy program.

VAX-D therapy is a non-surgical procedure to reduce pain by decompressing your spine and reducing the stress and pressure on your discs and spinal nerves. Contact Dr. Craig Aderholdt, at 941-756-5528 for a **free consultation** to see if you are a candidate for this revolutionary procedure. We hope you enjoy the information within and share it with others.

Contact Dr. Aderholdt today to find out if you can finally relieve your pain and suffering with this proven safe and effective nonsurgical breakthrough for neck and back pain.

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### Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



At Back Pain Institute of West Florida, located in Bradenton, FL, our number one concern is to help our patients with a natural approach to pain treatment. Dr. Craig Aderholdt, BSc, DC, received his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State

University State College, and his Doctor of Chiropractic from life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA. He then later graduated Cum Laude.

Dr. Aderholdt also holds certification in chiropractic adjunctive physiotherapy from New York Chiropractic College and completed extensive postgraduate training in therapeutic modalities at National-Lincoln School. He is a member of the Florida Chiropractic Association and American Chiropractic Association and is a certified VAX-D consultant. He was also voted a Bradenton Herald People's Choice Awards Winner for 2008, 2022 and is the Manatee Herald-Tribune Awards winner for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2021 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune finalist for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023 and winner in 2019 and 2024.



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# GainsWave Therapy:

## Understanding the Benefits of Acoustic Wave Treatment for Men's Health

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

**G**ainsWave therapy has emerged as a promising non-invasive treatment option for men seeking to improve their vascular health and overall wellness. This innovative procedure utilizes low-intensity extracorporeal shockwave therapy (LI-ESWT) to enhance blood flow and stimulate natural healing processes within the body.

The primary mechanism behind GainsWave therapy involves the application of high-frequency, low-intensity sound waves to targeted areas. These acoustic waves trigger a process called neovascularization, which promotes the formation of new blood vessels and improves circulation. Additionally, the treatment stimulates the release of growth factors and stem cells, contributing to tissue regeneration and repair.

One of the most significant advantages of GainsWave therapy is its potential to address blood flow issues without the need for medications or invasive procedures. The treatment sessions are typically brief, lasting about 20-30 minutes, and patients can return to their daily activities immediately afterward. Unlike traditional treatments, GainsWave doesn't carry the risk of side effects associated with oral medications or surgical interventions.

Research has shown that GainsWave therapy may provide long-lasting results. Many patients report experiencing benefits for up to two years following a complete treatment protocol. The therapy typically involves a series of 6-12 sessions, with maintenance treatments recommended periodically to sustain the results.

The versatility of GainsWave therapy extends beyond its primary applications. While commonly known for addressing vascular health concerns, the treatment has shown promise in improving overall performance and vitality. The enhanced blood flow and tissue regeneration can contribute to increased energy levels, improved physical function, and better overall well-being.

Athletes and active individuals have also reported benefits from GainsWave therapy. The treatment's ability to promote healing and improve circulation can aid in recovery from sports-related injuries and enhance athletic performance. The non-invasive nature of the therapy makes it an attractive option for those seeking natural performance optimization methods.

Another advantage of GainsWave therapy is its potential to complement other wellness treatments. Many healthcare providers integrate this therapy into comprehensive treatment plans, combining it with lifestyle modifications, nutritional support, and other therapeutic approaches to maximize results.

The treatment process itself is straightforward and well-tolerated by most patients. During a session, a trained healthcare provider applies the acoustic wave device to specific areas, delivering precise energy pulses that penetrate the tissue. While some patients may experience mild discomfort during treatment, the procedure generally doesn't require anesthesia or downtime.

As with any medical treatment, results can vary among individuals, and success often depends on factors such as overall health, age, and lifestyle habits. Patients considering GainsWave therapy should consult with qualified healthcare providers to determine if they are suitable candidates and to develop appropriate treatment plans tailored to their specific needs.

The non-invasive nature, minimal risk profile, and potential for long-lasting results have made GainsWave therapy an increasingly popular option for men seeking to improve their vascular health naturally. As research continues and technology advances, this innovative treatment continues to demonstrate its value in the field of men's health and wellness.

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# Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**R**emember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

*In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.*  
Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *'But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, *"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'*" Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:



- My life is a rat race.
- I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.
- I am just so exhausted.
- I don't know how much more of this I can take.
- I just want to escape.

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.



*Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church in Naples, Florida. Venture Church meets on the campus of FSW State College on Lely Cultural Blvd. in East Naples. For times and directions, visit [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com).*



# Transform Your Life with Medicare-Covered Lymphedema Therapy Compression Garments at Functional Transformation Clinic

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### Why Choose Our Compression Garments?

#### Exceptional Quality

Crafted with the finest materials and precise measurements, our compression garments deliver superior comfort, durability, and therapeutic benefits. Experience relief from swelling, discomfort, and the risk of complications. We carry Medi, Jobst, Sigvaris, Juzo and Solaris.

#### Personalized Fitting

Our experienced staff will guide you through a comprehensive fitting process, ensuring a customized and comfortable fit tailored to your unique needs. Achieve optimal compression and support for your lymphedema management.

#### Comprehensive Support

At Functional Transformation Clinic, we offer more than just compression garments. Our team of dedicated healthcare professionals is committed to providing you with comprehensive lymphedema therapy, education, and support every step of the way.

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Our compression garments are Medicare-approved, ensuring that you receive the financial assistance you need to manage your condition effectively. We handle the paperwork, so you can focus on your health.

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