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February 2025

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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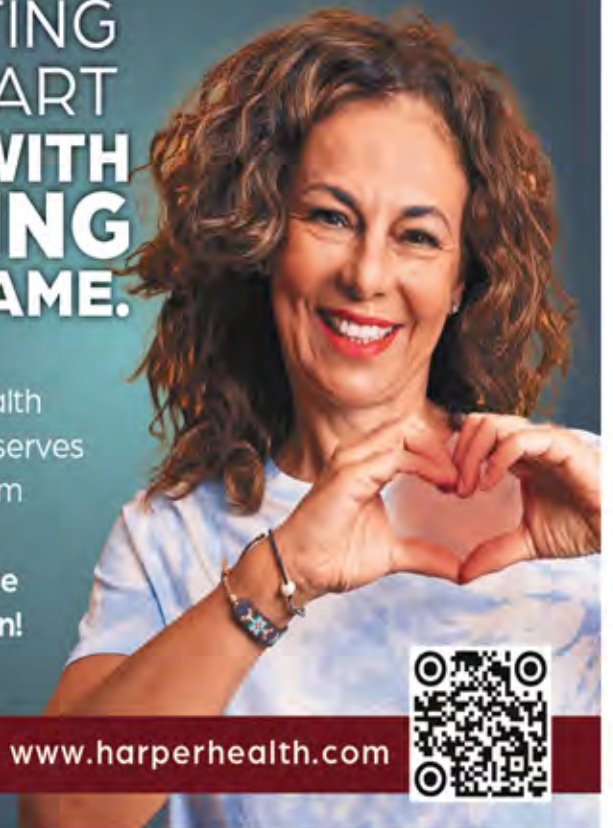
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✓ Loss of Balance

✓ Pain in Feet/Hands

✓ Burning Sensation

✓ Can't Feel The Ground

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- The underlying causes of peripheral neuropathy.
- The Nobel prize winning discovery that every neuropathy patient MUST know.
- 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
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Varicose Veins vs. Spider Veins

By Dr. TC Lackey II

Varicose veins are large, swollen, protruding blood vessels that twist and turn beneath the surface of your skin. Because they're raised and large, they're clearly visible. They will often cause swelling making your legs feel heavy or uncomfortable. They can also lead to more severe health conditions, like blood clots and leg ulcers.

Several patients who suffer from varicose veins often complain of a cramping or aching sensation near the veins. Other typical symptoms include fatigue, itching, throbbing, cramping, burning, and tingling.

Varicose veins, however, shouldn't be confused with spider veins. Spider veins are the much earlier, gentler version of varicose veins. They're best described as tiny, blue, red, or purple vessels near the surface of the skin. Like varicose veins, spider veins also twist and turn, but they don't bulge or swell. Generally, spider veins aren't painful, and they are not associated with blood clots.

While it's possible to have both spider and varicose veins, it's not necessarily true that spider veins will indefinitely lead to varicose veins. However, having varicose veins and spider veins indicates the presence of underlying vein disease, also known as chronic venous insufficiency.

How Varicose and Spider Veins Develop

Varicose and spider veins develop naturally when blood flow issues are present. A healthy vein will carry blood to the heart through valves that allow blood to flow in only one direction keeping the blood moving through the right pathways and preventing backflow. These healthy veins do their job by effectively delivering blood from superficial veins to deeper ones that eventually lead to the heart.

However, when veins don't function properly, it can cause blood to collect inside your veins. When this happens, the blood pushes



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up against the walls within your vein, creating pressure weakening the vessel wall. Ultimately, this pressure is what causes veins to twist and bulge.

Depending on how large the vein is and how swollen it gets, it will result in spider veins or varicose veins.

Treatment Options for Vein Disease

If you're eager to rid your legs of varicose and spider veins and regain your quality of life, there are several proven medical treatments for you to consider.

Polidocanol Injectable Foam (Varithena®) is a minimally invasive, nonsurgical treatment doesn't require incisions. The injection site is usually numbed, but no additional anesthesia is required. A catheter is inserted into the malfunctioning vein or sometimes a direct injection is used. The foam fills up the targeted part of the vein, and the diseased vein collapses. (For smaller branches with vein reflux, foam is injected directly into the vein to eliminate it.) Blood flow shifts to healthier veins nearby.

The VenaSeal™ Closure System uses an advanced medical adhesive to close and seal varicose veins. VenaSeal™ treatment minimizes patient discomfort and reduces recovery time, making it a good choice for many people. It's the only procedure approved for use in the United States that doesn't use heat, tumescent local anesthesia, or a sclerosant. Instead, VenaSeal™ uses a medical grade "glue" to shut down diseased veins.

Thermal Ablation, with this procedure, a small catheter is placed into the problematic vein, usually longer and larger veins. This catheter delivers radiofrequency into the vein wall, causing it to grow hot, collapse and close. It is an outpatient procedure that requires the administration of local anesthesia.

Ultimately, remember that vein disease is progressive and will get worse without treatment, so when you see signs of it, seek treatment.

Florida Lakes Vein Center offers convenient appointments in our Lakewood Ranch office Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 8am-5pm, Friday 8am-12pm.

Call **941.866.8989** to schedule your **free vein screening**.



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Heartfelt Care, Tailored Treatments: Cardiac Care for a Healthier Tomorrow.

If you have symptoms of, or have been diagnosed with, aortic stenosis, or have stroke and bleeding risks associated with atrial fibrillation, Manatee Memorial Hospital's Heart and Vascular Center, can help.

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- Reduced trauma to the chest wall and heart.

Common cardiac procedures performed include:

- **Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR):** Treats patients with aortic stenosis.
- **Left Atrial Appendage Closure (LAAC):** Blocks or closes the opening to your LAA to prevent blood clots and strokes in people with atrial fibrillation.
- **Transcarotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR):** A minimally invasive procedure that removes a blockage within the carotid artery (carotid stenosis).
- **Mitral Valve Clip:** Fixes or replaces a leaky or stiff mitral valve in the heart, which limits the amount of blood pumped to the rest of the body.

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Show your heart some love this Valentine's Day by quitting smoking!

We only have one heart, so we need to treat it with all the love, care, and attention we can. Quitting smoking will improve the health of your heart for many years to come.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the U.S. and can harm every organ and cell in the body. With over 7,000 toxic chemicals per cigarette, cigarette smoke damages one of the most vital parts of the body: the heart.¹

When you breathe air in, the lungs take the oxygen and deliver it to the heart, which then pumps the oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body. When you breathe in cigarette smoke, the blood that is delivered to the rest of the body is heavily concentrated with carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide decreases the blood's ability to carry oxygen which requires the heart to work much harder to pump oxygen through the body. The extra stress on the heart can cause damage to the heart and blood vessels and can lead to cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD is responsible for 800,000 deaths annually and, consequently, is the leading cause of all deaths in the United States.¹

In addition to causing damage to the heart and blood vessels directly, cigarette smoke can also cause CVD by changing the blood's chemistry, which results in thickened blood and plaque build-up in the walls of arteries. When this happens, it becomes difficult for blood to flow through the arteries and for blood vessels to get to the vital organs, such as your heart or brain, which can result in blood clots and ultimately lead to a heart attack or stroke.¹

The best way to protect your heart from smoking-related disease and death is to never start using cigarettes, but if you are a smoker, the earlier you quit, the better. Quitting smoking benefits your heart and your cardiovascular system now and in the future:

- Twenty minutes after you quit smoking, your heart rate drops.
- Just 12 hours after quitting smoking, the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal, allowing more oxygen to vital organs like your heart.
- Within four years of quitting, your risk of stroke drops to that of lifetime nonsmokers.¹

Although quitting smoking is difficult, it is certainly achievable, and cessation aids such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) may be able to help you on your quit journey. Many addicted smokers find that NRT helps them get through the hardest parts of quitting by lessening cravings and symptoms of withdrawal.¹ Gulfcoast South Area Education Center (GSAHEC) provides NRT for free to every individual who attends a tobacco cessation class (if medically appropriate and while supplies last).



If you are a smoker and you are concerned about your heart health, contact GSAHEC today! GSAHEC, as part of the Group Quit option of Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program—offers free group quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. **Free** nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (if medically appropriate and while supplies last) is provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

Contact us today at 866-534-7909 or visit
www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar to schedule a class or learn more about the program!

Reference:

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-information/how-smoking-affects-heart-health>



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THE INTRICATE CONNECTION

TMJ, TMD, Tinnitus, Eustachian Tube Dysfunction, and the Crucial Role of the Neck

By Dr. Drew Hall

In the intricate web of human anatomy, the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD), tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction form a complex interplay, often closely correlated to the delicate mechanics of the neck. Understanding this interconnected relationship sheds light on the multifaceted nature of these conditions and opens avenues for comprehensive treatment strategies.

TMJ and TMD, commonly used interchangeably, refer to issues affecting the jaw joint and its surrounding muscles. These conditions can manifest in jaw pain, difficulty in chewing, and even headaches. Surprisingly, they frequently coincide with tinnitus, the perception of noise or ringing in the ears, and Eustachian tube dysfunction, which involves problems with the tube connecting the middle ear to the back of the nose.

The neck, a powerhouse of support and mobility, plays a pivotal role in this intricate dance of symptoms. When the neck's biomechanics are compromised, it can amplify the impact of TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction. This correlation emphasizes the importance of considering the neck in the evaluation and treatment of these interconnected conditions.

Research suggests that a misalignment in the cervical spine or tension in neck muscles can contribute to TMJ and TMD symptoms. The nerves and blood vessels that traverse the neck are closely linked to the temporomandibular joint, influencing its function. Addressing neck-related issues becomes paramount for a holistic approach to managing TMJ and TMD.

Similarly, the connection between tinnitus and neck issues is gaining attention in the medical community. The auditory pathway is intricately linked with the cervical spine, and disruptions in neck function can contribute to the development or exacerbation of tinnitus. Understanding and addressing neck-related factors may thus be a key aspect of managing tinnitus.



Eustachian tube dysfunction, responsible for ear pressure and related issues, is not exempt from this correlation. The Eustachian tube's alignment and function are influenced by the surrounding structures, including those in the neck. A holistic evaluation that considers the neck's role in Eustachian tube function can offer valuable insights into treatment strategies.

Effective management of these interconnected conditions often involves a multidisciplinary approach. Dentists, ear, nose, and throat specialists, and chiropractors may collaborate to address the diverse facets of TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction. A comprehensive assessment that includes an evaluation of the neck's biomechanics can guide targeted interventions.

Therapeutic interventions may encompass physical therapy, chiropractic adjustments, and exercises to enhance neck mobility and strength.

In some cases, lifestyle modifications, stress management, and relaxation techniques may also be beneficial. Customized treatment plans tailored to the individual's specific combination of symptoms can yield more effective results.

Patient education is a crucial component of managing these conditions. Empowering individuals with knowledge about the intricate links between TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, Eustachian tube dysfunction, and the neck encourages active participation in their well-being. Awareness of lifestyle factors, posture, and stress management can significantly contribute to symptom relief and prevention.

In conclusion, the correlation between TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, Eustachian tube dysfunction, and the neck underscores the complexity of these conditions. A comprehensive understanding of their interconnected nature is essential for devising effective treatment strategies. By recognizing the role of the neck in influencing these conditions, healthcare professionals can offer more targeted interventions, providing patients with a pathway towards improved quality of life.

Schedule a no obligation FREE consultation in our office today!



Dr. Drew Hall



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Breakthrough Treatments for Peripheral Neuropathy

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:

1. Diabetes: High blood sugar levels can damage the nerves over time, leading to numbness, tingling, and burning sensations, typically starting in the feet and gradually progressing up the legs and into the hands.

2. Trauma or Injury: Physical trauma, such as car accidents, falls, or sports injuries, can directly damage peripheral nerves and result in neuropathy. The extent of nerve damage and resulting symptoms can vary depending on the severity of the injury.

3. 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.

The symptoms of peripheral neuropathy can vary depending on the type of nerves affected and the underlying cause. Common symptoms may include:

- Numbness or tingling in the hands or feet
- Burning or shooting pain, often described as pins and needles
- Muscle weakness or difficulty moving the affected limbs
- Sensitivity to touch or temperature changes
- Loss of coordination and balance

These symptoms can range from mild to severe and will worsen over time if left untreated. It's essential for individuals experiencing symptoms of peripheral neuropathy to seek medical attention for proper diagnosis and management. Neuropathy is a progressive degenerative disease, meaning it continues to get worse over time.

Treatments for peripheral neuropathy can include:

1. Neuro-Electrical Treatment: These FDA-approved medical devices are designed to repair and regenerate damaged nerves in individuals suffering from peripheral neuropathy. It works by delivering electrical impulses to stimulate the nerves and promote healing. Clinical studies have shown promising results in reducing pain and improving nerve function in patients with peripheral neuropathy.

2. Red Light Therapy: Red light therapy, also known as low-level laser therapy (LLLT), is a non-invasive treatment that uses specific wavelengths of light to stimulate cellular repair and reduce inflammation. Research suggests that red light therapy may effectively relieve peripheral neuropathy symptoms by improving nerve function and reducing pain. A study published in the Journal of Diabetes Research found that red light therapy significantly reduced pain and improved nerve function in diabetic patients with peripheral neuropathy.

3. Vasodilator Supplements: Vasodilators widen blood vessels, which improves blood flow and oxygen delivery to tissues. Some vasodilator supplements can increase nitric oxide levels in the body, which help dilate blood vessels. Improved blood flow can alleviate peripheral neuropathy symptoms by enhancing nerve function and promoting tissue repair.

It's important to note that while these treatments may offer relief for some individuals with peripheral neuropathy, they may not be effective for everyone. In most individuals, just doing one of the above treatments may not be enough to receive a therapeutic benefit. Neuropathy is a complex disease that requires a multi-faceted approach.



***Patient Testimony:** Bill Watrous had suffered from pain, numbness, and tingling as a result of peripheral neuropathy for several years. His symptoms were getting worse. After receiving the multifaceted neuropathy treatment at Renewed Life Wellness Center, Bill claims, "My neuropathy symptoms haven't gotten worse; they have only gotten better, thanks to Renewed Life Wellness Center with Dr. Carle."*

Treatments such as the neuro-electrical device, red light therapy, and vasodilator supplements show promise to relieve symptoms and promote nerve regeneration in individuals with peripheral neuropathy. However, individual responses to these treatments may vary, and consultation with a healthcare provider is recommended for personalized treatment recommendations.



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Presented by:
Dr. Kenneth Carle
Chiropractic Physician





INGROWN TOE NAIL

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

An ingrown toenail is defined by a nail growing into the skin. Typically, the sides of the nail begin to curve or grown into the skin at one or both sides of the nail border. Mostly commonly seen in the big toe, but it can occur in other toes as well. Once the nail begins to dig into the skin pain, swelling and redness will soon follow. These are early symptoms of an ingrown that should be aware of. Other symptoms include worsening pain when in closed toed shoes. Overtime, the nail can pierce the skin creating an open wound and possible infection if not treated. Signs of infection are worsening pain, redness, swelling and foul smelling drainage or pus.

Ingrown toe nails can be genetic meaning it runs in your family (hereditary). Trauma can also be a cause. An example of trauma includes stubbing your toe, having something fall on it, and activities that cause repeated pressure on the toes like kicking or running. One of the most common causes is improper trimming of the toe nails. You don't want to cut your nails too short as this allows the skin next to the nail to fold over the nail. Another common cause is improper shoe size or socks that are too small/tight. Furthermore, nail fungus can also contribute to the development of ingrown nails. If you develop pain at the sides of the nail with redness, swelling and drainage you should seek treatment. The ingrown nail can progress into an infection if the ingrown nail is not removed. If you have diabetes, nerve damage or poor circulation you should not attempt to self-treat and seek professional treatment right away.

If you are not high risk or do not have an infection you can try to soak the foot in room-temp water with Epsom salt. Do not attempt to cut the nail yourself as repeated cutting of the nail can cause it become worse over time. If you pain continues, than seek treatment by a foot and ankle specialist. Your physicians will exam your toe and determine the best treatment based on the severity of your condition. If an infection is present you will require oral antibiotics. A minor procedure is often required for treatment of an ingrown nail. The procedure is performed in the office. First local anesthetic will be used, followed by cleaning the toe and removal of the portion of the nail that has become ingrown. In order to prevent recurrence a chemical may be used to kill the root of the nail so the ingrown



portion of the nail does not return. The entire nail is not removed but only the corner that has become ingrown. A bandage will then be applied that will remain in place for 24 hours. You may experience mild soreness on the 2nd or 3rd day but you are able to walk right away.

Some methods for prevention include proper trimming. Cut your nails straight across and do not cut them too short. Make sure to wear properly fitting shoes and socks. Do not use shoes that are too big/loose as this can cause pressure to the toe when engaging in physical activity as well. Avoid trying to trim the nail border or having a pedicurist trim the border as this can make the condition worse and does not change how the nail grown. Over the counter treatments do not typically work as they do not address the underlying cause. If you have sings of ingrown nail, contact your local foot and ankle specialist who can treat the underlying issue.

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 to make an appointment. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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Your Heart, Your Power:

A Guide to Women's Heart Health

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

As a Concierge primary care physician with a passion for preventive care, I often find myself sitting across from women who don't realize the heart is their most vital ally—until something goes wrong. Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of women, causing 1 in 3 deaths each year, according to the American Heart Association.¹ Yet, the narrative surrounding women's heart health often feels overshadowed by other wellness conversations. It's time to change that.

Over the past decades, studies have highlighted significant differences in how heart disease manifests in women.

While chest pain is a common symptom of a heart attack in both genders, women can experience unusual fatigue, shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea, back pain or even jaw pain as warning signs, but they're often dismissed. That's why awareness is crucial.

So, what can women do to protect their hearts? First, know your numbers. The importance of regular screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar are of vital importance. These are key indicators of heart health. But numbers alone won't keep your heart healthy.

Lifestyle choices play a pivotal role. The power of consistent physical activity—aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. A Mediterranean diet, rich in vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean proteins, can also reduce heart disease risk.

Stress management is another essential component. Chronic stress can have many long-term effects on the heart. Stress can lead to an increase in Cortisol levels, which can impact your blood sugar, Blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Consider mindfulness techniques such as yoga, meditation, or even a simple daily walk to ease your mind.

Lastly, prioritize regular check-ups with your physician. Too often, women put their own health last. Don't wait for symptoms to appear. Prevention begins with understanding your unique risks and taking proactive steps to safeguard your heart.



**Your heart is your power.
Let's honor it by giving it the
care and attention it
deserves.**

About Harper Health Concierge Primary Care

Harper Health is a concierge primary care practice where we support our patients' mind, body, and spirit. We provide our patients with a full picture of their health by offering 24/7 direct access to board-certified physicians, same-day or next-day appointments, and in-suite testing and labs. We support our patients' heart health by providing several health assessments, including in-office EKGs, cholesterol testing, comprehensive blood work (with insulin and inflammatory markers), body composition analysis for visceral fat, and Vo2 max testing to evaluate cardiovascular fitness and endurance.

1. The American Heart Association's. (n.d.). The Facts about Women and Heart Disease. www.goredforwomen.org. <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/about-heart-disease-in-women/facts>



About Migdalia Merida, MD

Dr. Migdalia Merida 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 lead 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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Exploring Senior Living Options: 55+ Communities vs. Independent Living

Unless you're one of the rare people who enjoys mowing the lawn, unclogging a drain, or doing other household upkeep and maintenance, you're probably exploring your senior living options. As you've done your research, you have likely come across terms like "active senior living," "55+ communities" and "independent living." While they may all sound similar, there are quite a few differences between 55 plus and independent living communities.

WHAT IS A 55+ COMMUNITY?

55+ communities, also called active adult communities, are like typical residential communities except they have a minimum age requirement and are designed with a retirement-friendly, low-maintenance lifestyle.

This type of community can be made up of single-family houses, duplexes, condominiums, or townhomes, with units that are owned by the residents. Interior maintenance and daily upkeep are the responsibility of the homeowner, but exterior maintenance is usually covered by your monthly Homeowners' Association (HOA) dues. Other than the HOA dues (and possible mortgage payment), there are no other monthly fees required for residents in an active adult community.

PROS AND CONS OF 55+ COMMUNITIES

Since these types of communities are residential neighborhoods designed to attract active adults who want to downsize from a bigger home, they offer an array of opportunities for enjoying life to the fullest.

Pros include:

- **Social life:** You'll live around people close in age with similar interests and goals.
- **Resort-style amenities:** Some outside maintenance may be provided, and community services and amenities — such as a tennis court, golf course, swimming pool, fitness center, etc. — may be available as part of your monthly service fees.

Cons include:

- **Selling your 55+ residence:** Since there's a limited number of people who can buy a home in a 55+ community, it may take you awhile to sell it. Rising interest rates and cost of homeowner's insurance also may contribute to difficulty selling your home in the future.
- **Taxes and utilities:** You're responsible for real estate taxes, insurance, garbage collection, inside maintenance, appliances, utilities, internet service and cable/satellite TV.

- **No on-site healthcare options:** If you or your spouse needs higher levels of care, you could have to move again or pay for both the 55+ community and any needed care.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

An independent living community is often called a retirement community for the simple reason that most of the people who live there are retired. However, they offer an active lifestyle and freedom from the hassles of home maintenance. You'll find residence options like senior apartments and villas in a variety of floor plans and sizes.

At a senior living community, you'll find helpful services and amenities to make things easier and more convenient. Housekeeping, linen service, dining plans, transportation services and security are common. Amenities often include a fitness center, heated indoor pool, multiple dining venues, full-service salon and barber shop, woodworking shop, arts and craft studio, and more.

PROS AND CONS OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living that's part of a Life Plan Community is ideal if you're in good health. You can continue to live life as you do now but without the concerns of maintaining a home and the worries about future health care if something were to happen to you or your partner.

Pros include:

- **Maintenance-free lifestyle:** Independent living communities have a knowledgeable team to take care of all your home's needs, inside and out.
- **One and done:** Your monthly fee covers a wide variety of services, amenities, wellness programs, indoor and outdoor maintenance, a calendar full of activities and a dining program.
- **Social opportunities:** Scheduled parties, happy hours, special events, and outings with friends and neighbors who share your interests ensure you're never at a loss for things to do.
- **On-site senior care:** If you or your spouse needs long-term health care, you won't have to make another move, and you'll be close to people you already know.
- **Tax savings:** A portion of your entrance and monthly fee could be tax-deductible. Consult your tax adviser to be sure.



Cons include:

- **Decisions, decisions:** With an activity calendar full of classes, events, committees and clubs, you may find it hard to squeeze everything in.
- **Unneeded care:** You could pay for care you don't end up needing. However, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 70% of seniors 65 or older will need some type of long-term care for an average of three years.

WHAT DOES "A CONTINUUM OF CARE" MEAN?

One of the biggest advantages of choosing independent living at a Life Plan Community is not having to move if you need help with daily activities or even round-the-clock care. That's because Life Plan Communities provide access to higher levels of care — assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation — right on-site. Plus, if you choose a Life Plan Community with Life Care like Freedom Village, you'll have guaranteed access to higher levels of care at predictable monthly rates.

SEE WHY LIFE IS BETTER HERE

You can learn more about why you should choose independent living at Freedom Village by calling us today at 941-798-8122, clicking on FVBradenton.com.



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Revolutionizing Heart Health: A Holistic Approach to Cardiovascular Wellness and the 'Don't Die' Prime Directive

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

50 years of intensive study, 45 years of clinical practice, 55 years of continuous exercise & clean eating, yielding a level of health, fitness and strength at 67 identical to that at 17. This isn't a brag; it is to show that the recommendations & protocols work!

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide, yet conventional approaches have largely failed. We have made little real progress, and in fact, people are developing cardiovascular diseases at younger ages than ever before.

This article explores innovative, holistic, and progressive strategies to optimize cardiovascular health that very few doctors know about. They are based on science and common sense.

#1: Microvascular Health is the first KEY: The heart is a fabulous organ, and our arteries & veins are a fantastic plumbing system, but the capillaries are the true 'heart of our cardiovascular system'. They make up 99% of it! They are the only place where nutrient exchange happens. Unfortunately, they get very little attention.

There is finally a way to assess them using The Glycocheck technology. It allows us direct visualization of the capillaries where you can watch your red blood cells stream through them. The test provides your Microvascular Health Score which helps us design a program to improve its function.

One intervention is Exercise with Oxygen Therapy* (EWOT): This is a special form of exercise that helps to Open & Reset the Microvascular System to youthful levels. It is the only thing documented to do this and it provides benefits for the entire body including the cardiovascular system and mitochondria. A Google search will turn up articles with the many benefits.

ARTC is the only facility in the region that offers EWOT therapy that includes both our proprietary Trifecta & Peak Performance Oxygen Training systems. We consider it to be THE MOST IMPORTANT EXERCISE that a person can do for their cardiovascular & overall health.

#2 Mitochondrial Health is the NEXT Key: Mitochondria are tiny bacteria-like organisms that joined forces with single celled organisms billions of years ago and allowed for the development of ALL higher life forms including plants and animals!

They perform many functions but are best known as the energy powerhouses of our cells. They need nutrients and oxygen to make energy at a much higher level than our cells can make without them. When was the last time your doctor discussed your mitochondrial health? That's right, NEVER.

Dr. Otto Warburg won the Nobel Prize in 1931 for his discovery that there is only ONE primary cause of CANCER, damage to mitochondrial respiration (energy production). Since then, scientists in the field of mitochondrial research have discovered that virtually ALL chronic diseases are a result of damaged mitochondrial function! That includes heart disease. Heart cells have one of the highest concentrations of mitochondria in the body along with nerve and muscle cells.

We have a variety of protocols to help to repair, regrow, and stimulate your mitochondria and microvascular system, they really go hand in hand. EWOT, HBOT, HIIT, and special nutritional support are the tools we use.

EWOT was already discussed; HBOT is hyperbaric oxygen therapy (it offers several different benefits than EWOT) and HIIT is high intensity interval training. Both have been documented to enhance mitochondrial health. There isn't enough space to go into detail about all of these therapies, most can be found via online search. The point is that we are well versed in all of these technologies and have them available to help you enhance your health at The Age Reversal Technology Center.

#3 Metabolic Balance & Hormone Levels are additional Key Factors: 'Metabolism' is a complex mix of thousands of biochemical reactions, regulated by hormones and the nervous system. When it works as it is supposed to, it maintains homeostasis which is crucial for our very existence. It consists of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of reactions every second of every day.

It is simply too complex for us to fully understand and consciously manage; all we can do is support it. Sometimes that means manipulating various hormones, neurotransmitters, and our autonomic nervous system.

Using bioidentical hormones can help regulate things while working to get our bodies to take back control. Common things that need support include our adrenals (cortisol), thyroid, pancreas (insulin), sex hormones, and neurotransmitters. The trick is to support it as gently as possible and to monitor and adjust appropriately.

#4 Muscle = Metabolic Reserve: The heart is obviously a muscle, a very specialized muscle that works with the rest of the muscles of the body. Muscular activity places the greatest stress load on the heart and that stress is vital to its long-term healthy function.

Exercise, including Resistance training, Endurance training, and HIIT: More Than Just Maintaining Muscle Mass:

Resistance training and Endurance/Cardiovascular training are crucial for maintaining muscle mass and supporting cardiovascular health. Regular strength training can improve overall fitness and contribute to better heart function.

Resistance Training Benefits:

Resistance training offers profound cardiovascular advantages beyond muscle development and increased bone density. Research demonstrates significant improvements in multiple heart health markers:

- 15% lower mortality risk
- 17% lower heart disease risk
- Improved blood pressure (reduction of -4/-2 units)
- Enhanced lipid profiles
- Reduced inflammation
- Better insulin sensitivity
- Improved blood vessel flexibility

Endurance/Cardiovascular Training Benefits:

Traditional aerobic exercise provides critical cardiovascular advantages:

- Reduced heart attack and stroke risks
- Improved cardiovascular endurance
- Enhanced metabolic efficiency
- Better overall cardiovascular conditioning

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) Advantages:

HIIT combines the best of resistance and endurance training:

- Rapid metabolic improvements
- Increased mitochondrial density
- Enhanced cardiovascular performance
- Time-efficient cardiovascular conditioning

At ARTC, we understand exercise and are the only facility in the region offering ARX (Adaptive Resistance Exercise) resistance training along with EWOT, PPOT & HIIT.

#5 Additional 'Alternative' Therapies that support both cardiovascular and overall health: Most conventional doctors tend to be limited in their approach by the accepted standards of care and what insurance will pay for.

Here are several things that have been shown to be quite effective yet are not provided by conventional practitioners and 'so-called' health insurance.

Plaquex™ and the PK Protocol*: Provides potential benefits for the entire body especially the cardiovascular and nervous systems.

Both use **phosphatidyl choline** as the main active component. Phosphatidyl choline is the primary component of our cell membranes. These treatments are believed to help improve blood flow and reduce the risk of cardiovascular events. Plaquex has been promoted more for its CV benefits, while the PK Protocol has been promoted more for cell membrane detoxification, repair, and neurodegenerative conditions. Both have a long history of use spanning decades.

Plaquex Therapy: Plaquex is a phosphatidylcholine-based treatment administered intravenously. It's designed to reduce plaque buildup in arteries and improve cardiovascular health.

PK Protocol: The PK protocol also uses phosphatidylcholine plus a few other nutrients and is aimed at cellular detoxification and repair.

We have recently developed an oral version of this protocol that is a fraction of the cost of IVs*.

EDTA chelation therapy* is another somewhat alternative therapy that has shown potential benefits for cardiovascular health in numerous studies and thousands of case studies over several decades. It is also considered the treatment of choice for several types of heavy metal detoxification by conventional medicine.

Cardiovascular Benefits:

The Trial to Assess Chelation Therapy (TACT) found cardiovascular benefits that were more pronounced for patients with diabetes. Diabetes accelerates

vascular damage, and it therefore makes sense that a relatively short duration study like TACT would show stronger effects on those with diabetes and therefore more systemic vascular damage.

Patients with diabetes experienced:

- **41% reduction** in overall cardiovascular events
- **40% reduction** in heart disease, stroke, or heart attack risk
- **52% reduction** in recurrent heart attacks; statins only provide a 1% reduction.
- **43% reduction** in overall mortality over approximately 5 years

Does EDTA Chelation help improve Cardiovascular health? No one can say for sure, although there are tens of thousands of people that swear by it. EDTA is off patent so it is unlikely that there will be significant additional studies of its use for cardiovascular health. A 2022 systematic review found that **17 out of 24 studies reported improvements in various cardiovascular outcomes** following EDTA treatment.

Classically, EDTA Chelation is done intravenously 1-3 X/wk. for a series of 20-40+ sessions; that makes it fairly pricey, although cheap compared to the alternatives. **We now have a liposomal EDTA delivery system that allows for convenient oral administration at a fraction of the cost of IVs.**

Temperature Therapies: Both Hot & Cold Therapies have been used for hundreds of years. Modern science has verified many of those benefits ranging from enhanced detoxification to stimulation of regeneration.

We use both **Far Infrared Saunas and Whole-Body Cryotherapy Chambers** to elicit the body's 'hormetic/healing response.' Hormesis is simply a beneficial or adaptive response by cells and tissues to moderate stress. Both hot &/or cold exposure, when properly applied, can **activate heat shock proteins that initiate a beneficial healing and regenerative response.**

A True Heart-Healthy Diet: Contrary to conventional wisdom and modern medical consensus, a heart-healthy diet is NOT about restricting fats, eggs, dairy, meat, and eating lots of veggies and grains. There's a lot more to it and several of those things have been proven to be dead wrong.

We have developed the **ARTC Healthy Eating Reset** to help guide you through the confusion of what to eat.

The Conventional Medical Conundrum: We spend more on health care than any other nation by far, yet we rank well below other industrialized nations in most health parameters. We are among the sickest people on the planet; clearly our healthcare system has failed us, and it is time for it to be reinvented.

My sincere hope is that RFK, Jr. will shake things up and move us in the right direction. He is up against the biggest cartel on the planet and will get a LOT of pushbacks. I urge you to contact your representatives to support him.

The Prime Directive: Optimizing Cardiovascular Health: Given that heart disease is the leading cause of death, optimizing cardiovascular health should be a top priority for everyone given that **the prime directive is to survive, AKA 'Don't Die.'**

Conclusion: By embracing these non-conventional, alternative, and progressive approaches, individuals can take significant steps towards optimizing their cardiovascular health. It's time to move beyond outdated paradigms and embrace a more comprehensive, personalized approach to heart health. Remember, the goal is not just to avoid dying from cardiovascular disease, but to thrive with a robust and resilient cardiovascular system.

***Please note:** These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. None of the therapies or products discussed are intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. ARTC operates as a Private Membership Association in the Private Sector. Our focus is on building health vs. fighting disease. We make NO CLAIMS, as no claims can be made based on the existing FDA regulations as dictated by the Medical Industrial Complex. All in all, the Medical Industrial Complex is the largest combination of industries on the planet accounting for over 12 trillion dollars in annual revenue. For comparison, the Oil & Gas Exploration & Refining Industry generates about \$4.5 trillion annually.

If you'd like the unabridged article complete with references via email, please let us know. Call or email us.

Make an appointment today!
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Love Your Eyes This Valentine's Day: A Focus on Retinal Health and Prevention

George Skopis, M.D.

February brings hearts and flowers, but it's also an ideal time to show love to one of our most precious gifts – our eyes. While we exchange cards and chocolates this Valentine's Day, let's take a moment to focus on eye health, particularly retinal diseases that can impact our vision and quality of life.

The retina, a light-sensitive layer of tissue at the back of the eye, plays a crucial role in transforming light into signals that create the images we see. Like a delicate film in a camera, our retina requires proper care and attention to maintain its function. Several conditions can affect this vital tissue, including age-related macular degeneration (AMD), diabetic retinopathy, and retinal detachment.

Age-related macular degeneration particularly affects the central portion of the retina called the macula, which is responsible for sharp, detailed vision. As we age, the risk of AMD increases, making it essential to monitor any changes in vision. Early symptoms might include difficulty reading or recognizing faces, or noticing straight lines appearing wavy.

Diabetic retinopathy, another common retinal condition, affects people with diabetes when high blood sugar levels damage the delicate blood vessels in the retina. Regular blood sugar control and comprehensive eye examinations are crucial for prevention and early detection. Like nurturing any relationship, maintaining eye health requires consistent attention and care.

This Valentine's Day, consider giving yourself the gift of eye health. Start by scheduling a comprehensive eye examination, especially if you haven't had one in the past year. Regular check-ups can detect early signs of retinal diseases before they cause significant vision loss. Remember, prevention is always better than treatment.

Lifestyle choices play a significant role in maintaining retinal health. A diet rich in antioxidants, particularly leafy greens, fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, and colorful fruits and vegetables, can support eye health. Think of it as treating your eyes to a healthy Valentine's feast every day. Additionally, protecting your eyes from harmful UV rays by wearing sunglasses and maintaining a healthy blood pressure can help preserve retinal function.



For those already diagnosed with retinal conditions, modern medicine offers various treatment options. From medications and laser therapy to advanced surgical procedures, ophthalmologists can help manage these conditions effectively when caught early. Support groups and educational resources are also available to help patients understand and cope with their diagnosis.

Digital eye strain has become increasingly common in our screen-dominated world. This Valentine's Day, show your eyes some love by practicing the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away. Consider it a moment of meditation for your eyes.

Don't forget that smoking significantly increases the risk of developing retinal diseases and can accelerate their progression. If you smoke, quitting is one of the most loving gifts you can give your eyes – and your overall health.

As we celebrate love this February, remember that self-care includes caring for our vision. Schedule that eye appointment you've been postponing, adopt healthy habits that support eye health, and pay attention to any changes in your vision. Early detection and treatment of retinal diseases can help preserve your sight for all the Valentine's Days to come.

After all, our eyes help us see not just the world around us, but also the faces of those we love. This Valentine's Day, make a commitment to protect and cherish your vision, ensuring many more years of seeing life's beautiful moments clearly.



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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BEYOND WEIGHT LOSS - HEART HEALTH BENEFITS OF GLP-1 MEDICATIONS

In recent years, America's approach to healthy and sustainable weight loss has seen a transformative shift with the introduction of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists (semaglutide and tirzepatide). Not only do these medications aid in glycemic control, control appetite and reduce cravings, they also boast significant cardiovascular benefits that are crucial for overall health and longevity. To raise awareness of these benefits, it's important to explore the relationship between GLP-1 medications and heart health, highlighting their mechanisms of action, benefits, and the latest research findings.

At Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness, we take a medically driven, diagnostic approach in our GLP-1 Treatment Programs. Our Medical Director regularly meets with our team of weight loss counselors to update our plans and educate our staff on the many studies showing the increasing health benefits of GLP-1 medication beyond the treatment of Type 2 diabetes and obesity. It is important to understand just how GLP-1s work and the promise they offer for improved heart health.

Understanding GLP-1 Medications

GLP-1 is a hormone that plays a critical role in glucose metabolism. It is released in response to food intake and stimulates insulin secretion while inhibiting glucagon release, leading to decreased blood sugar levels. Additionally, GLP-1 slows gastric emptying, which contributes to a feeling of satiety, promoting weight loss. While the benefits of GLP-1 medications are compelling, they are not without considerations. Common side effects include gastrointestinal issues like nausea and diarrhea, particularly during the initial phases of treatment. Therefore, it's essential for healthcare providers to evaluate the risks versus benefits uniquely for each patient. At Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness, our weekly, face-to-face interactions with our clients ensures our plans are calibrated to their specific needs and we can address any adverse side effects quickly and safely.

Cardiovascular Benefits of GLP-1 Medications

1. Reduction in Cardiovascular Events

Numerous clinical trials have demonstrated that GLP-1 medications significantly reduce the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events, including



heart attacks and strokes. The LEADER trial, which studied liraglutide, showed a 13% reduction in cardiovascular risk among patients with type 2 diabetes and high cardiovascular risk factors. Similarly, the SUSTAIN-6 trial found that semaglutide also reduced the risk of cardiovascular events by 26%. These findings underscore the importance of GLP-1 medications not only for glycemic control but also for their protective effects on heart health.

2. Weight Management and Heart Health

The advent of the use of GLP-1 medications for weight loss can further enhance heart health. Obesity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and even modest weight loss can significantly improve the risk profile of individuals with comorbidities related to being overweight. GLP-1s have been shown to facilitate weight loss by curbing appetite and enhancing satiety, making them beneficial for overweight or obese individuals, especially those managing type 2 diabetes. Improved body weight can lead to better blood pressure control, reduced cholesterol levels, and decreased insulin resistance, all contributing to enhanced cardiovascular health.

3. Improved Blood Pressure and Lower Cholesterol

GLP-1 medications have been associated with reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Elevated blood pressure is a key risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Studies demonstrate that GLP-1 receptor agonists can lead to meaningful reductions in blood pressure, potentially reducing the overall cardiovascular risk.

Use of GLP-1s often results in an improved lipid profile, characterized by reductions in LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. Healthier cholesterol readings can help diminish the risk of atherosclerosis, a condition where arteries become narrowed and hardened due to cholesterol buildup, leading to heart disease.

4. Direct Cardiac Benefits

Recent research suggests that GLP-1 medications may offer direct benefits to the heart beyond their effects on weight and metabolic health. These healthy mechanisms are still being investigated. Studies also indicate that GLP-1 has a protective effect against myocardial ischemia and can promote myocardial repair.

As research continues to unfold, the potential of GLP-1 receptor agonists will likely expand, underscoring their role not only in glycemic control but also in promoting overall cardiovascular health. Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness will remain vigilant in educating our team and our clients on the heart-healthy benefits of these medications as a critical component of comprehensive weight loss management.

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www.PremiereWeightLoss.com

Florida Gulf Coast University: The Leader in Healthcare Education

FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services prepares well-rounded practitioners

The healthcare industry is booming. It's projected to add more jobs than any other field in the next several years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A growing and aging population, technological advancements and changes in the way healthcare is delivered are among the primary reasons the industry is expanding so rapidly.

That translates into a wealth of career opportunities for well-trained professionals, and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is Southwest Florida's leader in educating these caregivers — your caregivers. With comprehensive academic programs, rigorous clinical training and faculty grounded in professional practice, FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services prepares well-rounded practitioners to meet the mounting health and wellness needs of Southwest Florida.

Our graduates are your nurses, counselors, social workers, lab scientists and physical and occupational therapists. They are breaking new ground in research, clinical and leadership roles in public health throughout the region and beyond.

Marieb College Continues to Grow

When FGCU welcomed its first students in 1997, what was then the College of Health Professions enrolled 178 students in a nursing bachelor's degree program and bachelor's and master's degrees in health science. Today, Marieb College of Health & Human Services educates more than 2,700 students a year in 15 degree programs in its School of Nursing and Departments of Social Work, Rehabilitation Sciences, Health Science and Counseling. The college also houses FGCU's Counseling and Psychological Services for students as well as the Community Counseling & Education Center.

And Marieb College continues to grow. In the 2024 legislative session, FGCU secured final funding for the construction of a new health sciences building on campus, Academic Building 10. The facility will complement Marieb Hall, the college's home, where students learn in state-of-the-art classrooms and practice laboratory facilities. The new building will support further expansion of the college and further cement its ability to train the needed healthcare workforce.

With support from community partners in the healthcare industry and matching state funds, the college's School of Nursing has also been able to expand its programs and faculty to address the widespread shortage of professionals in the field.

Generous gifts from private foundations have also fueled growth in specialty research and outreach initiatives that have broad regional impact, leading to the establishment of the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging and the Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability Initiative.

We Create Well-Rounded Practitioners

Compassion. Skill. Discipline. Critical thinking. Professionalism. The healing professions require all in equal degree. Marieb College delivers the preparation practitioners need through hands-on learning, intensive clinical experience and personalized attention.

Our graduates consistently score higher than peers from other institutions on national licensure exams, achieving 100% first-time pass rates in six program areas. It's no wonder Marieb boasts a 100% six-month employment rate for new graduates.

Last year marked the seventh time that Marieb's bachelor of science nursing students led the state university system in first-time licensure pass rates. In fact, ours was the only such program to claim a 100% first-time pass rate.

But Marieb College's licensure success do not end there. For the 10th year, our master of science occupational therapy program maintained a 100% overall pass rate. Moreover, the doctor of physical therapy program secured a 100% first-time pass rate on the Florida Board of Physical Therapy licensing examination, with four students posting perfect scores. Our master of physician assistant studies program also secured a 100% overall pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination, marking five consecutive years with this success.

To build on this history of success while preparing graduates to work in fields that are quickly and constantly changing, Marieb College is committed to pursuing innovation in educational practices and experiences. We have a renewed focus on interprofessional education that has been accelerated with gracious gifts from the Marieb Foundation and the hiring of our first director of interprofessional education and emerging technology.

Interprofessional education is a strategic learning approach that brings together healthcare professionals from diverse backgrounds within a simulated setting to enhance collaboration and communication among practitioners. This fosters an environment where they can learn from one another to effectively improve health outcomes.

Marieb College is committed to advancing this initiative by establishing an Interprofessional Simulation Center in the coming years that will serve as a hub for collaborative efforts among various programs, academia and partners, thus facilitating preclinical and simulation-based training.

As always, our mission is to advance the education, health and well-being of our students through teaching excellence, impactful scholarship and service. By achieving this mission, we help improve our community and make Southwest Florida the best place for education and living.

Learn more about FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services at fgu.edu/marieb.



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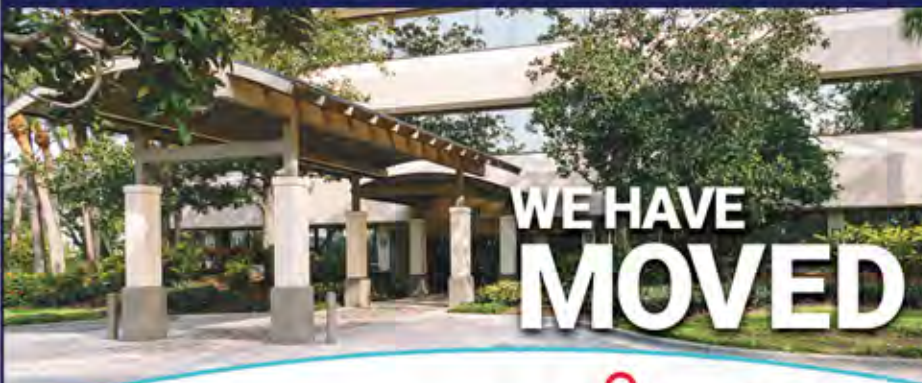


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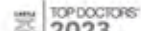
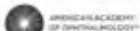
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Cleerly Heart Scan Analysis

For more than half a century, the cardiology field has primarily operated as "sick-care," concentrating on addressing symptoms of heart disease rather than delving into the core issue—atherosclerosis. Remarkably, over a decade of clinical trial data has underscored the paramount importance of the type of atherosclerotic plaque buildup in understanding and managing cardiovascular health. The prevailing approach of waiting for signs of reduced blood flow or blockages is being redefined. It is imperative to take a proactive stance, assess the underlying disease precisely, and pioneer a new era of cardiovascular care that targets the root cause before symptoms manifest. This paradigm shift brings forth the transformative potential of technologies like the Cleerly heart scan, enabling a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to heart health assessment and management.

The Cleerly heart scan represents a groundbreaking advancement in cardiovascular imaging technology, offering unprecedented insight into the intricacies of atherosclerotic plaque composition. Unlike traditional methods focusing solely on identifying blockages, this innovative scan provides a detailed analysis of the type of plaque in the arteries. By characterizing plaques based on their composition and vulnerability, medical professionals can tailor interventions more precisely, addressing the specific nature of the atherosclerotic disease. This shift from a symptom-centric to a disease-focused approach marks a significant leap forward in cardiac care, empowering healthcare providers and patients with the knowledge needed to initiate targeted and proactive treatment strategies.

Cleerly goes beyond conventional cardiovascular assessments by furnishing your physician with a comprehensive analysis of your heart scan, delivering a profound understanding of your specific heart disease and individual risk factors. This invaluable insight equips your heart care team with the knowledge to make informed decisions tailored to your unique condition. By guiding them toward a more effective and personalized treatment plan, Cleerly transforms the landscape of heart health management. The innovative Track Your Plaque™ feature enables physicians to monitor the progression of the disease over time, facilitating a dynamic and adaptive approach to care.



Moreover, Cleerly recognizes the significance of empowering individuals in their journey to heart health. The Cleerly Patient Report is a user-friendly resource, offering straightforward educational materials about heart disease and presenting analysis results in understandable language. This accessible platform ensures that you receive the correct information at the right time, aiding you in adhering to the treatment plan crafted by your physician. Cleerly's commitment to patient-centric care is reflected in its ability to demystify complex medical data, fostering a collaborative and informed approach to managing heart health.

The rationale behind embracing the Cleerly heart scan is rooted in compelling statistics that underscore the limitations of traditional methods in identifying and preventing heart attacks. Shockingly, 50% of individuals who suffer a heart attack do so without exhibiting any prior symptoms, emphasizing the elusive nature of cardiovascular risks that may go undetected. Moreover, a staggering 70% of heart attack victims are categorized as low risk by conventional methods of assessing heart disease, highlighting the inadequacy of existing risk evaluation strategies.

Traditional stress testing methods also face significant shortcomings, as 75% of lesions responsible for heart attacks only result in a mild narrowing of the arteries, making them easily overlooked. This critical insight underscores the importance of adopting a more sophisticated and precise approach to cardiovascular assessment.

In response to these challenges, Cleerly offers rapid reporting of non-invasive Coronary Computed Tomography Angiography (CCTA) with turnaround times of less than one hour, available 24 hours a day. This unprecedented efficiency makes crucial diagnostic information accessible, enabling timely interventions and personalized treatment plans. Cleerly's commitment to providing rapid and accurate insights directly addresses the limitations of traditional methods, offering a transformative solution to enhance the early detection and management of heart disease.

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Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

VAX-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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The Season of Love: Give Yourself and Your Partner the Gift of GAINSWave

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

Is your relationship lacking? It's common to experience lulls in the romance department, especially if you are suffering from erectile dysfunction. ED can not only inhibit performance, but it often takes its toll on men and their partners emotionally and mentally.

With remarkable outcomes, GAINSWave is growing in popularity in regard to treating erectile dysfunction (ED) and Peyronies Disease, yet it's also used as a preventative treatment. GAINSWave treatment is available for any man looking to enhance sexual health and performance. A medical condition like ED or Peyronies disease does not have to be present for men to benefit. In fact, many healthy men without an issue opt for treatment to "biohack" or optimize their performance as a prevention method.¹

How Can GAINSWave Prevent & Treat ED?

The GAINSWave is a revolutionary, non-invasive treatment that addresses the underlying causes of ED. GAINSWave uses scientifically proven technology through soundwaves to stimulate blood circulation, tissue regeneration, and removes plaque build-up. These soundwaves or 'shockwaves' also are beneficial in preventing the buildup of plaque and increasing blood vessel growth and circulation. Traditional treatments for ED, such as pills or injections, lose effectiveness over time and have to be used every time a man wants to engage in sexual activity. GAINSWave helps men to feel like themselves again and to enjoy their lives.



GAINSWave utilizes high frequency, low-intensity soundwaves to improve blood flow to the penis, remove micro-plaque, and stimulates the growth of new blood vessels. GAINSWave uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety, and results. Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by reduced blood flow. GAINSWave has developed a protocol to treat ED and Peyronies disease (scar tissue) as well as enhance sexual performance.

Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

Men who are just beginning to see ED warning indicators should seek the earliest treatment possible. The reason is that it has been well documented that if early diagnosis and treatment are started when a man is younger (the 30s, 40s, 50s) there is an increased chance that the ED will very likely no longer need medical treatment and their arteriosclerosis can dissipate. There have been multiple peer-reviewed studies that indicate that

GAINSWave treatment can potentially cure ED in some patients. The sooner you intervene with treatment, the better your outcome will be.

Men are Preventing ED with GAINSWave

Many men are now understanding the importance of this technology and how it can benefit them in the long term. GAINSWave offers immediate results that are cumulative. Much like living a healthy lifestyle, starting GAINSWave treatments early is another way men can be proactive about their health.

SEEK EARLY TREATMENT & DON'T JUST MASK YOUR SYMPTOMS—TREAT THE ROOT CAUSE!

Source: GainesWave
<https://www.biospace.com/article/releases/mobility-spine-and-sports-is-helping-men-wave-goodbye-to-erectile-dysfunction-with-cutting-edge-gainswave-treatment/>

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Wound Care and Lymphedema: The Transformative Power of Compression Garments

By James Ferrara - Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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Did You Know?

A hearing loss is noticed more than a hearing aid.

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

Let's imagine you're playing golf, pickleball or doing any physical activity that you love, and you injure yourself. What do you do right away? You go see a specialist to diagnose the problem so you can quickly get on the mend. What would you do if one day you noticed a drastic change in your eyesight and it affected your ability to drive, watch TV, or cook your favorite meal? Most likely you'd go see an eye specialist as soon as possible. I think we'd all agree that our health and wellness is the foundation for everything and taking care of ourselves allows us to maintain a quality of life we deserve.

Now, let's try these scenarios. What if you started misunderstanding what people say? What would you do if you couldn't enjoy conversations with family and friends? What if fun activities like pickleball and golf stopped being fun because your hearing affected conversation? Sadly, people wait 4-7 years before doing anything about their hearing when they notice hearing issues. They try to cope for as long as possible and delay even visiting an audiologist to understand what's happening.

Here's an interesting fact: hearing loss is the third most common health issue faced by older adults and only 1 in 4 people with hearing challenges do anything about it. People just don't treat their hearing health with the same sense of urgency as they do other health issues.

So why is this the case? While there can be several reasons, the research and my experience show that the main reason people delay addressing their hearing challenges is the stigma associated with hearing loss and the self-perception people have about hearing devices. The role of a hearing professional, such as a Doctor of Audiology, is to not just test for and treat hearing loss, but it is also to educate people and guide them towards a solution.

Every day I find myself educating people about hearing difficulty and the effects it has on one's overall health - from our psychological and physical well-being to interpersonal relationships. In addition I inform people as to the many options available to help someone hear better. This is such an incredible time to consider improving your hearing! There are virtually invisible hearing devices, OTC options, Bluetooth connectivity, and more.

The Internet is a familiar stop for most people when researching hearing care choices, but there are an overwhelming number of options as you explore. I've seen too many people become "stuck" looking at the Internet and become paralyzed to the point of inaction. I pride myself on staying up-to-date with the different choices and I can be a valuable resource to help you cut through the clutter.

My suggestion is this - first make sure you have a comprehensive hearing evaluation because the degree and type of hearing issue will narrow down

your options greatly. Afterwards, together we can discuss the options that fit your hearing needs, your budget, your lifestyle, and what you'll be comfortable using to improve your hearing.

Lastly, please don't wait. Take care of your hearing health as you would any other health issue you might face. You deserve to live the best quality of life possible and it starts with a simple phone call and visit.



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What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

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

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

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

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



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

McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfillment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy

is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfillment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

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

www.venturenaples.com

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

Unlock Superior Comfort and Support with Our Lymphedema Therapy Compression Garments

At Functional Transformation Clinic, we understand the challenges of living with lymphedema. Our mission is to provide effective, high-quality compression garments that are covered by Medicare, making advanced lymphedema management accessible and affordable for you.

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.

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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.

Transform your life and reclaim your confidence with our Medicare-covered lymphedema therapy compression garments. Contact us today to schedule a consultation and experience the Functional Transformation Clinic difference.

James Ferrara

Occupational Therapist and
Certified Lymphedema Therapist



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In Matters of the Heart, Manatee Health is Here for You!

Ernie Withers, 68, suffered a cardiac arrest while attending an event at Pirate City, Roberto Clemente Field. Thanks to the quick response by Pirates' Medical Director Dr. Patrick DeMeo, who performed CPR and applied the Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and care he received at Manatee Memorial Hospital, he is here to tell his story. He was rushed into the Cardiac Catheterization Lab where four stents were placed to open blocked arteries, and a dual pacemaker/defibrillator was implanted. A week later, he threw out the first ball at the Pittsburgh Pirates spring training game.



The doctors and staff are best in class.

- Ernie Withers

On Christmas Eve 2023, Newlyweds Lauren and **Kahler Cox** were headed back from vacation on the Gulf Coast of Florida when Kahler, 29, started to experience a severe case of acid reflux, which turned into chest pain and difficulty breathing.

The Coxes went to the ER at Manatee Memorial Hospital where, within minutes, he went into cardiac arrest and CPR was started. In less than an hour, Kahler was taken to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab where four stents were placed to open his arteries. Kahler was discharged the next day.



We were so pleased with his care.

- Lauren Cox

The Manatee Heart and Vascular Center and the Valve Institute at Manatee Memorial Hospital provide patients with an individualized approach to heart care that includes assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention and evaluation.

For more information, please visit
manateememorial.com/heart

Award-winning cardiac care right in your community.



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. 253043835-3056845 1/25



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