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March 2025

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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★ Attended the University of Florida before graduating in 1983 from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa

★ Established Carle Chiropractic Clinic in 1985 + Renewed Life Wellness Center in 2015

★ Highly qualified and experienced practitioner

★ Pursued postgraduate diplomate status in Scoliosis & Thermography and is board-certified in both categories



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING AS SMOKING CESSATION TOOLS

Are you looking to quit smoking? Have you tried to quit several times with little to no success? Are you frustrated and running out of ideas that could help you kick the habit for good? You are not alone! In fact, 7 out of 10 tobacco users want to quit and may struggle with these same questions. Some tobacco users might be tempted to turn to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, vape pens, and other vaping devices) to ease the transition from traditional cigarettes to not smoking at all.¹ Though this may seem like a novel option for some, the question we must ask is whether using e-cigarettes or vaping is better for you than using tobacco products. According to Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H., director of clinical research at the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, there are several important factors to consider:

1. E-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless "water vapor."²

The aerosol used in e-cigarettes contains chemicals that can be harmful to health, including:

- Nicotine²
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs²
- Flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease²
- Volatile organic compounds²
- Cancer-causing chemicals²
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead²

2. The nicotine in tobacco and vaping products is addictive.

According to Dr. Blaha, nicotine is a toxic substance that raises your blood pressure and spikes adrenaline which increases your heart rate and the likelihood of having a heart attack.¹ Emerging data also suggests links to chronic lung disease and asthma.¹

3. Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional ones.¹

Many e-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a combustible tobacco product as many vaping devices offer extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine to get a greater hit of the substance. ¹ This can be counterproductive to an individual's goal to quit as higher doses of nicotine result in a stronger nicotine addiction.

4. E-cigarettes are not an FDA approved cessation tool.¹

E-cigarettes have not received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval as smoking cessation devices.¹ There are many FDA approved products on the market that are effective for quitting nicotine including the nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges.

If you are a tobacco user looking to quit smoking, help is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Tobacco Free Florida AHEC Cessation Program—offers free tobacco cessation sessions that are available to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group cessation sessions, held virtually and in-person, provide information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, 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*) are provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

References:

1. Blaha, M. J. (2022, January 20). 5 vaping facts you need to know. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Retrieved August 5, 2022, from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/5-truths-you-need-to-know-about-vaping#:~:text=2%3A%20Research%20suggests%20vaping%20is%20bad%20for%20your%20heart%20and%20lungs.&text=it%20causes%20you%20to%20crave,of%20having%20a%20heart%20attack>.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, June 23). Quick facts on the risks of e-cigarettes for kids, teens, and young adults. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved August 5, 2022, from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html?s_cid=OSH_emg_GL0004&gclid=Cj0KCQjw_7KXBhCoARIsAPdPTfcsghfeM1Nt942E9T9NEC5ZacheqTfaRJoU10p52M2wpiyEe8h9pQaAqhPEALw_wcB#why-is-nicotine-unsafe

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Advancements in Hip Replacement Surgery Giving Patients Their Mobility Back.

Hip arthritis is a common ailment that affects many Americans. After exhausting nonsurgical treatments without relief, many decide to have joint replacement surgery of the hip or knee to achieve and maintain an active lifestyle.



David Rubins, MD,
BSME, FAAOS

David Rubins, MD, BSME, FAAOS, orthopedic surgeon specializing in hip, knee, and shoulder replacements at Manatee Memorial Hospital, provides important information about hip replacement surgery and the potential benefits to patients.

What makes someone a good candidate for hip replacement surgery?

Individuals may be a good candidate for hip replacement surgery if they have hip pain that:

- Persists, despite pain medication, anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy, or weight loss
- Worsens with walking, even with the use of a cane or walker
- Interferes with sleep
- Persists in the groin or frontal thigh
- Interferes with getting dressed

What conditions can damage the hip joints?

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteonecrosis

Can someone of any age have a hip replacement?

When hip pain begins to interfere with activities and hobbies you enjoy, it makes sense to seek out an orthopedic surgeon who can help determine the available options. Hip replacements in younger patients have increased over the past 10 to 15 years, as the technology has advanced.

What are the types of hip replacement surgeries?

Traditional hip replacement involves making an incision on the side of the hip (lateral approach) or the back of the hip (posterior approach). Both techniques involve detachment of muscles and tendons from the hip in order to replace the joint.

Direct anterior hip replacement is a minimally invasive surgical technique. This approach involves a three- to four-inch incision on the front of the hip that allows the joint to be replaced by moving muscles aside along their natural tissue planes, without detaching any tendons. This approach often results in quicker recovery, less pain, and more normal function after hip replacement.

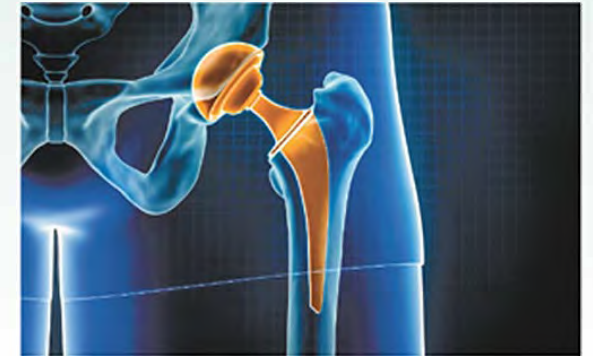
Because the tendons aren't detached from the hip during direct anterior hip replacement, hip precautions are typically not necessary. This allows patients to return to normal daily activities shortly after surgery with a reduced risk of dislocation.

Do patients go through physical therapy following surgery?

Most patients are able to go home the following day after their joint replacement surgeries. Rehabilitation follows, and places great emphasis on functionality and post-hospital care. Some patients may need to go to a skilled nursing facility before they are ready to return home or may need to use home health services for additional assistance. Many patients progress from these services to outpatient physical therapy. The interdisciplinary healthcare team will help direct your plan for discharge.

Hip replacement surgery has come a long way since its beginnings, with advances improving both its safety and longevity. As technology continues to evolve, the future of hip replacements holds promise for even better outcomes, providing relief and improved quality of life for those suffering from debilitating hip joint conditions.

Manatee Memorial Hospital has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Total Hip and Knee Replacement Certifications for a second time by demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards.



For more information on orthopedic surgery, visit manateememorial.com/ortho.

To make an Orthopedic appointment, visit manateephysicianalliance.com or call **941-900-4600**.



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Complications of Vein Disease

By Dr. TC Lackey II

Millions of people have varicose vein problems, yet only one half of 1 percent seek treatment. Vein disease goes undiagnosed and therefore undertreated. Patients tell us that their physicians have reassured them that the leg symptoms they experience are a part of aging and that it is “nothing to worry about.” Ignoring daily leg swelling, pain, cramping, leg heaviness, fatigue, itching, and discoloration can lead to permanent changes. Vein disease is progressive, meaning it will worsen at a rate of 4 percent every year. This article will discuss the other complications that can lead to serious problems including bleeding, swelling, phlebitis, cellulitis, blood clots, and skin ulcers.

Skin Changes

Chronic venous insufficiency (CVI) can cause skin changes resulting in discoloration of the lower legs, which is known as hyperpigmentation. It appears as a darkening of the skin often with a rusty-orange color. Stasis dermatitis is inflammation of the skin caused by damage to vein close to the skin's surface. This can appear as a red, violet, or brown rash between the ankle and the knee. Stasis dermatitis is a precursor for the development of cellulitis. Cellulitis is an infection of the skin caused by bacteria. Bacteria normally are present on the skin, but when injured, the bacteria can spread and grow beneath the surface which is made much worse by poor blood flow in the legs or feet. Cellulitis is treated with antibiotics.

Phlebitis

Thrombophlebitis, a blood clot in a superficial vein, is a common complication of varicose veins. This occurs because the dilated vein makes it easier to injure but can often occur without trauma. It presents as a hot, tender, thickened area along the length of the vein. It is very painful and associated

Stages of Vein Disease



with fever and fatigue. If phlebitis extends far enough up the leg it can cause a clot in the deep veins, which is a risk for pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal.

Bleeding

Bleeding from large varicosities is typically from a bump or scrape to the area. Many elderly people with thin-walled veins are at increased risk and may be completely unaware of a vein rupture until they see blood running down their legs or feel faint from blood loss. Bleeding can be life-threatening if unrecognized. If caught early, it can be controlled with leg elevation and compression. Repeated bleeding can occur in the same area until proper treatment of vein disease is performed.

Swelling

Vein disease causes swelling in the ankles and lower legs which appears worse after a day of standing. In advanced disease the swelling can be present all the time. Typically, just above the ankle is where the swelling begins. If left untreated, this can worsen to lymphedema which is more difficult to manage and treat.

Skin Ulcers

One of the most challenging vein complications is a skin ulcer. This is an open sore resulting from trauma to the skin. Trauma and chronic vein disease results in skin breakdown where the area around the open sore becomes red, swollen, tender, and painful.

These ulcers typically occur on the inner side of the ankle. Patients are often frustrated by these ulcers as they are frequently sent for lifelong wound care with multiple dressing changes for a wound that never seems to heal. Unless the root cause of the ulcer, vein disease, is treated, the ulcers will recur in under 2 years. Vein treatment involving ablation and sclerotherapy can help these chronic ulcers to heal.

Blood Clots

A study published by the Journal of American Medical Association suggests that the presence of varicose veins may significantly increase the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT), which is better known as blood clots. These can be life-threatening if they travel to the lungs or hearts. Some DVTs may not have any symptoms, but most cause dramatic pain, swelling, and warmth of the leg. Left untreated, people with extensive DVTs are at a higher risk of developing pulmonary embolism where a clot can break away and travel to the lungs where, it can be deadly.

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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Overcoming Neuropathy: Steven Faherty's Journey to Renewed Life

After spending a lifetime managing warehouses filled with orthopedic implants—hip and joint replacements—Steven Faherty never imagined he'd one day face his own debilitating condition. But after more than 25 years of working on hard concrete floors, he began experiencing numbness and tingling in his feet so severe that it kept him awake at night.

"I always thought it was just part of aging," Steven says. "But the pain was relentless, and it started taking away the retirement I had envisioned."

Originally from Indiana, Steven and his wife moved to Manasota Key to embrace an active coastal lifestyle filled with golf, beach walks, and time with family. Unfortunately, his worsening neuropathy made those simple joys almost impossible.

"I couldn't sleep. I couldn't walk without discomfort. I was struggling to do the things I loved," he recalls. "Then my wife saw an advertisement for Dr. Kenneth Carle's neuropathy program at Renewed Life Wellness Center."

Skeptical but desperate for a solution, Steven attended one of Dr. Carle's "Lunch and Learn" seminars, where he was introduced to a comprehensive approach to neuropathy treatment.

"I wasn't sure how a chiropractor could fix my feet," Steven admits. "But I decided to listen. Then, after the seminar, I did my own research. Eventually, I attended a one-hour informational session where Dr. Carle and his team laid out a personalized wellness plan for me."

At first, the commitment seemed daunting. The clinic was a 40-mile drive each way, and the program required two visits per week.

"I almost didn't do it," Steven says. "But then I thought—doing nothing wasn't going to make me better. And that was a future I wasn't willing to accept."

His treatment plan began with two weekly visits for one month, later tapering down to once a week,

then bi-weekly. Now, he is nearing the completion of his program, with his final evaluation scheduled for May 2025.

"The results have been incredible," Steven shares. "The numbness and tingling in my feet have improved dramatically. I've regained my active lifestyle—playing golf weekly, competing in pickleball matches, and taking long walks on the beach with my wife."

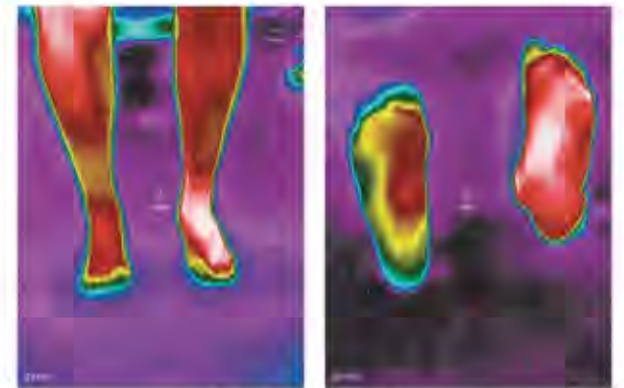
Part of Steven's success comes from his at-home regimen, which includes using a vibration machine, an electronic pulse stimulator, and taking targeted supplements.

"If you think a circulation drink sounds crazy, that's okay," he laughs. "I assure you, it's not. The thermography images prove it—my circulation has improved significantly in just three months."

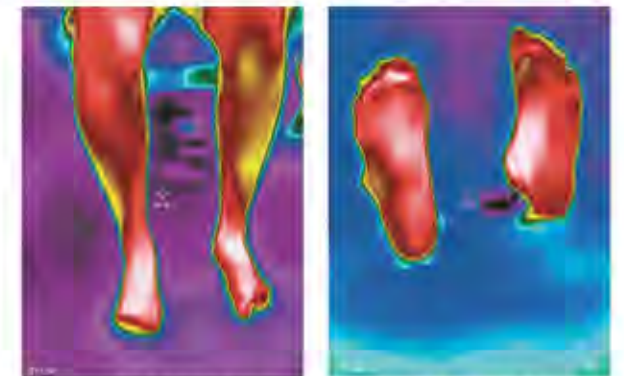
Looking back, Steven remembers the uncertainty he felt before starting the program.

"I had a knee replacement six years ago, and I thought that was the cause of my foot problems. But after hearing Dr. Carle explain neuropathy, I realized there was hope. That seminar changed everything for me."

Beyond physical improvements, Steven emphasizes how much his quality of life has changed.



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"When your circulation improves, so does your mental health. If you can move, if you can be outside, if you can enjoy time with family—life gets better," he says. "I didn't want to spend my retirement in a recliner, watching life pass me by. I wanted to be out living it."

Now, Steven encourages others to take that first step.

"If you're dealing with neuropathy, don't just accept it as your new normal. Go spend an hour with Dr. Carle. Have a bite to eat, do your research, and learn how this program can change your life."

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Presented by:
Dr. Kenneth Carle
Chiropractic Physician



HOW TO MAXIMIZE OUTCOMES AFTER MOHS SURGERY ON LOWER EXTREMITIES

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

Podiatrists frequently encounter patients who have undergone Mohs surgery for skin cancer, particularly on the lower extremities. Mohs surgery is a highly precise technique for treating skin cancer, ensuring complete removal of cancer while preserving as much healthy tissue as possible. This method is incredibly effective for basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and certain melanomas, with success rates as high as 99%. However, the healing process, especially when the wound is left to heal by secondary intention—requires careful management to prevent complications and ensure optimal recovery.

Key Considerations for Healing After Mohs Surgery

Healing by secondary intention can take 6-12 weeks or longer, depending on the wound's size and location. The wound should be reduced by at least 50% within the first month; otherwise, it may be considered chronic and require advanced intervention. Since open wounds are more susceptible to infection, keeping the wound clean and following prescribed care routines significantly reduces risks.

The Podiatrist's Role in Post-Mohs Wound Care

Your podiatrist plays a crucial role in wound management, particularly for wounds on the feet and legs. Your podiatrist will assess wound severity, considering factors such as blood flow, pressure, and the patient's overall health, to develop an individualized treatment plan. The approach often involves regular wound debridement to remove nonviable tissue and promote healing. If a wound is slow to heal, your podiatrist may incorporate advanced techniques such as bioengineered skin substitutes or negative pressure therapy. Your podiatrist will collaborate with your dermatologist, vascular specialist, and other healthcare providers to ensure comprehensive care is tailored to your specific case.

Advanced Healing Approach

- **Amniotic Tissue Grafts** – Applied immediately post-surgery to promote faster healing and reduce complications, especially for high-risk patients.
- **Surgical Closure Solutions** – Your team should include surgeons with hospital privileges who can perform split-thickness skin grafts (STSG) and muscle flaps for complex cases.



- **Preoperative Planning** – Your podiatrist will work closely with Mohs surgeons to ensure graft availability before surgery, allowing for same-day or next-day application.
- **Regular Wound Debridement** – Your podiatrist removes nonviable tissue and biofilm, enhancing recovery and encouraging healthy tissue formation.

Collaboration Opportunities

Family Foot & Leg Center remains at the forefront of wound care advancements, incorporating research-driven techniques to enhance healing outcomes. Patients who have recently undergone Mohs surgery and have concerns about wound healing can receive specialized support through personalized treatment plans. Appointments are available for those seeking expert care.

Dermatologists are invited to collaborate in optimizing post-Mohs wound management. Through partnership, patient care can be elevated, promoting efficient healing and reducing complications.

Working together ensures the best possible outcomes.

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

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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March is National Nutrition Month—So What?

By Maximus MacCloud, [DO, ND, PhD]

March is National Nutrition Month, but does a single month of focus really change anything? Not really. People are too distracted by daily shiny objects and escalating threats—more than ever before. Nutrition isn't a once-a-year gimmick; it's something we must prioritize *every day*.

Nutrition is a cornerstone of health, disease prevention, and longevity, alongside sound body structure and proper exercise. Popping the latest overhyped "miracle" supplement won't cut it if your foundation is weak. Most people are deficient in multiple nutrients needed for basic function, that means that the pricey, specialty supplements aren't likely to work.

Here's a secret few talk about, optimum nutrition depends on a healthy **Microvascular System**. The Microvascular system consists primarily of our capillaries, the tiny blood vessels that deliver nutrients to our cells. There are an estimated 70,000 miles of blood vessels and the capillaries account for 99% of them. They become damaged as we age, and we lose 40-90% over our lifetime. The microvascular system is the only place that nutrient exchange takes place.

You can eat the best foods and supplements in the world—if your microvascular system is compromised, you're wasting your time, effort, and money.

At Age Reversal Technology Center in Sarasota, we're way ahead of the curve. We have the area's only **Glycocheck** equipment to test and evaluate your microvascular health. Better yet, we can help your body to repair and restore it to youthful levels with cutting-edge technologies and nutrients.

Nutrition and microvascular health are just the beginning. Your wellness also hinges on cell membranes, mitochondria, metabolic balance, and metabolic reserve (think muscle).

How often has your doctor discussed any of these factors? When did they last teach you about optimizing nutrition, maintaining joint integrity, exercising right (including resistance training), or restoring microcirculation, mitochondria, and muscle? Probably never. Sadly, medical schools skip these essentials, leaving most doctors clueless.

People are waking up to the shortcomings of modern medicine and the Medical Industrial Complex that is pulling its strings. Many turn to YouTube, social media, or the internet for answers. The trouble with that is that most of these health influencers lack proper training and spread misinformation—just like conventional medicine often does. Hopefully, you're starting to realize you need to educate yourself and find real guidance.

That's where we come in. I've dedicated 55 years to studying health, nutrition, fitness, medicine, and alternative approaches, practicing for 45 years and learning daily. I've built one of the most innovative health enhancement facilities on the planet right here in Sarasota.

Take our ARX equipment, for example—Adaptive Resistance Exercise. It's the most effective & efficient way to rebuild strength and muscle, which everyone loses with age. Muscle loss is a top driver of decline; reversing it takes effort. ARX makes it faster and easier—just one 15-minute session a week is enough for most to begin transforming your strength and physique. This March, we're offering a **FREE** introductory session to prove it.

Beyond that, we coach you on the pillars of health: nutrition, microvascular vitality, cell membrane integrity, mitochondrial function, metabolic balance, and muscle. Got joint pain? Our Regenerative Injection Therapy stimulates your body to repair the damage naturally. Let us help get you out of pain and back into the game!



Why trust us? Because we see what others miss. Modern medicine fixates on symptoms, not building health. Online "gurus" peddle quick fixes, not science. I've spent decades bridging those gaps, blending proven methods with breakthrough tech. Our goal is to build health so your body can work properly and repair itself.

What are you doing to help yourself? Your health, performance, and appearance goals are within reach, but it starts with the right foundation: optimized nutrition, a strong body, proper exercise, healthy microcirculation, robust cell membranes, thriving mitochondria, balanced metabolism, and solid muscle reserves. Ignore one, and the rest crumble.

Call us at **941-806-5511** today to learn more. Schedule your free ARX session and discover how we can help you take control of your own health. Whether you're battling fatigue, aging, or just want to feel your best, we've got the tools, expertise, and passion to get you there.

Don't settle for half-measures. You deserve health that lasts—not a fleeting March fad. Let's build it together.



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Colon Cancer: The Urgency of Awareness and Prevention

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

Colorectal cancer is a significant public health concern, ranking as the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide. While this statistic is alarming, there is good news—colorectal cancer may be prevented with early detection. Over the past few decades, overall colorectal cancer cases have been on the decline, thanks to increased awareness about screening and early intervention.

However, a troubling trend has emerged: a sharp rise in colorectal cancer cases among individuals under 50. This shift challenges previous assumptions that colorectal cancer primarily affects older adults. While researchers continue to investigate potential reasons, family history remains a pivotal risk factor, particularly for younger patients. Understanding your genetic predisposition and proactively discussing your risk factors with a physician could mean the difference between early detection and a late-stage diagnosis.

Colorectal cancer awareness isn't just about statistics—it's about empowering individuals to take control of their health. Knowing the risk factors, recognizing the early warning signs, and getting screened can save lives.

Who Is at Risk? Recognizing Key Factors

While colorectal cancer can affect anyone, certain risk factors significantly increase the likelihood of developing the disease. Some of the most important to consider include:

- Age over 50 (although cases in younger individuals are rising)
- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Diet rich in red and processed meats
- Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption
- Obesity and a sedentary lifestyle

Many of these risk factors are modifiable, meaning lifestyle changes can lower a person's likelihood of developing colorectal cancer. A balanced diet, regular exercise, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol are important preventive measures that can support long-term health.

Recognizing the Symptoms:

When to Seek Medical Attention

Despite its serious nature, colorectal cancer often develops silently, with few or no symptoms in its early stages. This is why routine screening is crucial. However, when symptoms do appear, they can include:

- Rectal bleeding (with or without pain)
- Blood in the stool or on toilet tissue after a bowel movement
- Changes in bowel habits (such as persistent diarrhea or constipation)
- Bloating, cramping, or a feeling of fullness
- Changes in stool shape or size
- Unexplained weight loss
- Chronic fatigue or reduced stamina

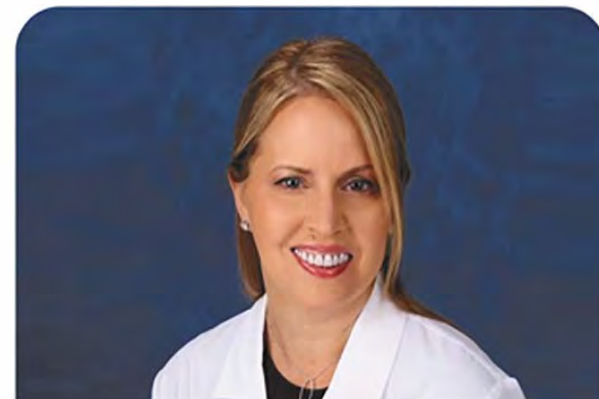
Anyone experiencing these symptoms—especially those with a family history of colorectal cancer—should consult a doctor about getting tested as soon as possible. Early detection allows for a much wider range of treatment options and significantly improves outcomes.

By understanding risk factors, recognizing symptoms, and prioritizing regular screenings, individuals can take meaningful steps toward preventing and detecting colorectal cancer early. As research continues to uncover why colorectal cancer is rising in younger populations, one fact remains clear: awareness and proactive healthcare choices are the key to reducing its impact.

About Harper Health Concierge Primary Care

At Harper Health, we believe in a better way to experience healthcare—one that prioritizes personalized, proactive, and patient-centered care. As a concierge primary care practice, we offer a tailored healthcare experience designed to support long-term wellness, disease prevention, and longevity. With locations in Illinois and Southwest Florida, we provide unrushed, highly attentive care from board-certified physicians who take the time to truly understand each patient's health goals.

Our members enjoy same-day or next-day appointments, 24/7 direct access to their physician, extended visits, and a comprehensive approach to health. Whether you're focused on aging well, optimizing health, or managing chronic conditions, Harper Health is your trusted partner in lifelong wellness.



About Migdalia Merida, MD

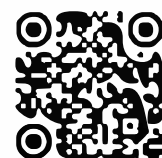
Dr. Migdalia Merida's birthplace is New York; she is an internal medicine doctor in Florida and has over 28 years of experience in the medical field. She attended New York University where she graduated with a degree in biology. That then led to Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in 1994 where she earned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

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

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



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March is Save Your Vision Month: Protecting Your Eyes in a Digital World

George Skopis, M.D.

In an era where screens dominate our daily lives, protecting our vision has never been more crucial. March, designated as Save Your Vision Month, serves as a vital reminder to prioritize eye health and implement preventive measures to safeguard our precious sense of sight.

Digital eye strain has become increasingly prevalent as adults and children spend countless hours in front of computers, smartphones, and tablets. Studies indicate that the average American adult spends over seven hours per day looking at screens, while children's screen time has doubled since the pandemic began. This prolonged exposure to digital devices can lead to a constellation of symptoms known as Computer Vision Syndrome, including dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches, and neck pain.

Fortunately, eye care professionals recommend several effective strategies to maintain optimal vision health. The 20-20-20 rule stands as a cornerstone of digital eye wellness: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This simple practice helps reduce eye muscle fatigue and maintains visual flexibility.

Proper workplace ergonomics also play a crucial role in vision health. Positioning your screen at arm's length and slightly below eye level can significantly reduce strain. Additionally, ensuring adequate lighting that doesn't create glare on your screen helps prevent unnecessary eye stress. Many eye care professionals recommend using blue light filtering glasses or screen protectors to minimize exposure to potentially harmful blue light emissions from digital devices.

Regular comprehensive eye examinations remain the foundation of preventive eye care. While vision screenings at school or work are helpful, they don't replace the thorough evaluation provided by an eye care professional. These examinations can detect early signs of serious conditions like glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy before they cause significant vision loss.

Nutrition also plays a vital role in maintaining healthy vision. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, lutein, zinc, and vitamins C and E can help prevent



age-related vision problems. Dark leafy greens, fish, eggs, nuts, and colorful fruits and vegetables should be regular components of an eye-healthy diet.

Outdoor activities offer another layer of vision protection, particularly for children. Research suggests that spending time outdoors may help prevent or slow the progression of myopia (nearsightedness) in young people. However, proper UV protection is essential during outdoor activities, as excessive sun exposure can increase the risk of cataracts and other eye conditions.

As we observe Save Your Vision Month, it's important to remember that vision care extends beyond March. Implementing these protective measures year-round can help preserve our eyesight for years to come. The American Optometric Association emphasizes that approximately 80% of visual impairment worldwide is preventable with proper care and regular examinations.

This March, take the opportunity to schedule a comprehensive eye exam, assess your digital device habits, and make necessary adjustments to protect your vision. Remember, our eyes are irreplaceable, and investing in their health today will pay dividends throughout our lives. By raising awareness and taking proactive steps to protect our vision, we can work together to reduce the incidence of preventable vision problems and ensure clearer, healthier sight for generations to come.



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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HEALTHY NUTRITION IS KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS

NEWS FLASH! – GLP-1 Medications don't "make you lose weight." When combined with proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices, these medications help suppress your appetite, reduce cravings, and slow stomach emptying so that you eat less. The only way to lose weight is through a calorie deficit. When you consume food and beverages, your body metabolizes them to provide energy, which is used for your daily activities. If you consume more calories than your body burns, the extra is stored as primarily fat, and you gain weight.

At **Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness**, our goal is to help our clients find a healthy diet that fits their preferences and needs and leads to genuine satisfaction. We provide evidence-based nutritional guidance and the reasoning behind our recommendations. We fully recognize that each person is different and has a unique combination of genetic factors, food preferences, metabolism, and individual needs. We want to collaborate with our clients to create a precision weight loss and wellness plan tailored to their goals.

Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness is honored to partner with Dr. Walter Willett, a nutrition and epidemiology professor at Harvard University. Dr. Willett has studied the relationship between food and health for over 40 years. These studies, analyzing the dietary habits of tens of thousands of subjects, form the foundation for our common-sense nutritional guidance. These guidelines ensure that healthy habits are sustainable, doable, and benefit overall health. Our main objective is to assist our customers in incorporating these proven healthy eating strategies into everyday life, guiding them through their weight loss journey.

Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness offers face-to-face, in-person guidance to help our clients stay focused on their nutritional goals. We also offer virtual support and online expertise through our partnership with the Health and Wellness Coaches from Concorde Health. Through the Concorde Health App, clients can benefit from expert coaching to monitor diet and exercise, optimize the benefits of GLP-1 medications, reinforce positive habits and track progress on their journey through weight loss to wellness.

Keys To Success - Find an eating strategy that works for you and brings you joy.

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and cover approximately half your plate with these nutritious foods. Add more plant-based fats such as vegetable oils, nuts, and fish to your diet. Choose whole grains over refined grains. Incorporate more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, and yogurt.

Get moving. Try brisk walking for heart health. Incorporate at least 30 minutes of exercise into your daily life.

Make decisions about dietary fat based on the strong results of their proven effects on heart disease prevention. Limit saturated fat. Reduce processed meat, full-fat milk, and other full-fat dairy. Add in foods high in unsaturated fat like olive oil and fish.

Prioritize whole grains in your diet. Avoid consuming refined, highly processed grains in favor of whole grains.

Eat more plant-based proteins. Consume a variety of protein sources, limiting red meat and processed meat. Limit refined carbohydrates and include more healthful proteins for the perfect balance. Opt for nuts over other snacks.

Aim for five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Eat a diverse range of fruits and vegetables and include a variety of colors on your plate. Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables will do the trick; however, if you buy canned goods, be mindful of sodium and sugar.

Hydrate during the day – drink a glass with each meal and between meals. Diligently manage sugar-sweetened drinks, considering their calorie implications. Coffee and tea are health-enhancing options, best enjoyed without the sugar and cream additions.

Diligently read the serving size because the rest of the nutrition label depends on this. Check where the calories are coming from. Prioritize getting carbohydrates from dietary fiber rather than added sugar.



Our nutritional guide is designed to facilitate sustainable weight loss through a lifetime of healthy eating. Our shared mission is to reach the client's desired weight loss goal through proper diet and exercise, supported by the scientifically proven effectiveness of our GLP-1 medications. Our ideal destination is a state of wellness where participants can maintain a healthy weight without prescription medications.

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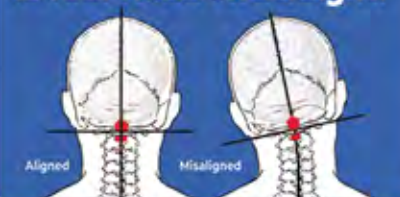


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- Whiplash

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- Dr. Drew Hall

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John Niffenegger, M.D.
Elizabeth Richter, M.D., Ph.D.
George Skopis, M.D.
Keye Wong, M.D.



Do You Need Assisted Living Or Another Level of Care?

Today's older adults have more levels of care to choose from than ever before, and while this variety helps ensure families can find a level of care that meets their needs, there is a lot to learn about each type.

In a Life Plan Community like Freedom Village of Bradenton, you'll find what is referred to as a continuum of care. It's an option that accommodates a senior's current needs while also planning for their future. Because multiple types of care are found on the same campus, residents can seamlessly transition from one type to another if their health changes.

Before you begin making calls and scheduling in-person visits to communities, it might be helpful to learn more about independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing, and short-term rehabilitation. And to compare assisted living, one of the most popular types of senior living, with other options.

WHAT IS ASSISTED LIVING?

An assisted living community is a senior living option many consider an ideal combination of support and independence. Each resident has their own private apartment or suite to call home that enables residents to maintain a sense of independence and to feel they are still in charge of their own life.

They do so, however, knowing the support of caregivers is nearby 24/7. The caregiving staff can assist with everything from taking a shower to helping with medication. Residents of an assisted living community generally require help with two or three activities of daily living (ADLs), as well as medication management support. This could include personal care tasks such as bathing, grooming, dressing, transferring, toileting, and continence care.

Other services and amenities usually found at an assisted living community are:

- Healthy, chef-inspired meals and snacks
- Transportation program for outings and appointments
- Personal laundry, linen changes, and housekeeping
- Wellness programs, daily activities, and community events
- Utilities, internet access, and cable
- On-site security and emergency call systems

For many, the most popular part of community living are life-enrichment activities. These can vary from one community to another but often include exercise



classes, book clubs, art workshops, card groups, happy hours, movie nights, shopping trips, cultural outings and participating in volunteer projects.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASSISTED LIVING AND OTHER TYPES OF SENIOR CARE?

The best way to understand how assisted living differs from other senior care options is to learn a little more about each one:

• **Independent living:** Older adults who are looking for maintenance-free living are often attracted to independent living communities. Instead of spending your days mowing the yard, making home repairs, or cleaning the gutters, you'll have time to socialize, travel, and enjoy life. It's a lifestyle that promotes choice, flexibility, and freedom. Independent living residents are generally more active and able to care for themselves than those in assisted living.

• **Skilled nursing:** While residents in an assisted living community typically require help with ADLs, seniors in a life plan community's skilled nursing center tend to have more complex medical needs. Licensed nurses are on-site around-the-clock to assist residents. Many also have nurse practitioners and physicians who oversee care. These residents still enjoy the same amenities as assisted living communities, such as nutritious meals, life enrichment programming, and support with personal care.

• **Memory care:** When a senior loved one has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another type of dementia, family caregivers face unique challenges with safety being a leading concern. Because judgment can become impaired, an older adult with dementia might not be safe alone. They may also experience episodes of wandering from home, agitation, and increased

anxiety. Even figuring out what meals to cook can be tough. In a memory care program, you'll find a secure environment designed to be peaceful and comforting. Activities are developed to work around disease-related losses, enabling the resident to feel successful and productive. Every aspect of these specialty programs is focused on protecting dignity.

• **Rehabilitation:** This type of care is short term and typically follows a hospital stay. If an older adult has had a serious illness or injury or a planned surgery, they may transition from the hospital to a rehabilitation center to continue their recovery. In addition to nursing staff, you will usually find physical, occupational, and speech therapists. The goal is to help the senior recuperate and return to whatever setting they call home, whether it is a private residence or an apartment in an independent or assisted living community.

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POST-CONCUSSION SYNDROME

How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

By Dr. Drew Hall

Post Concussion Syndrome (PCS) is a complex and debilitating condition that can occur after a head injury. It is estimated that up to 30% of people who experience a concussion will go on to develop PCS, which can cause a range of symptoms that can last for weeks, months, or even years. As a chiropractor who practices Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique, I have seen firsthand how this approach can help alleviate the symptoms of PCS and improve patients' quality of life.

Symptoms of Post Concussion Syndrome

The symptoms of PCS can vary widely depending on the individual and the severity of the head injury. Some common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Memory or concentration problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability or mood swings
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Ringing in the ears

These symptoms can be frustrating and disruptive, making it difficult to perform everyday tasks or engage in activities that were once enjoyable. While some people may recover from a concussion within a few days or weeks, others may experience symptoms for much longer, leading to a diagnosis of PCS.

How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

Upper cervical chiropractic is a specialized form of chiropractic care that focuses on the relationship between the upper cervical spine (the top two vertebrae of the neck) and the nervous system. When these vertebrae become misaligned, it can disrupt the flow of nerve impulses between the brain and the body, leading to a wide range of health problems, including PCS.

Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique is a specific type of upper cervical chiropractic that uses a gentle, precise approach to identify and correct misalignments in the upper cervical spine.



By using advanced imaging techniques, such as digital x-rays, to precisely measure the misalignment, we can develop a customized treatment plan that is tailored to each patient's individual needs.

One of the ways that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by restoring proper alignment to the upper cervical spine. When the vertebrae are misaligned, it can put pressure on the surrounding nerves and blood vessels, leading to inflammation and irritation that can exacerbate the symptoms of PCS. By correcting the misalignment, we can relieve this pressure and improve the flow of nerve impulses, allowing the body to function more effectively.

Another way that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by reducing inflammation in the body. Inflammation is a natural response to injury, but when it becomes chronic, it can cause a wide range of health problems, including PCS symptoms. By using a combination of chiropractic adjustments, dietary changes, and other natural therapies, we can help reduce inflammation in the body, allowing it to heal more effectively.

Finally, upper cervical chiropractic can help improve blood flow to the brain, which is essential for optimal brain function. When the upper cervical spine is misaligned, it can disrupt the flow

of blood to the brain, leading to a range of neurological symptoms, including those associated with PCS. By correcting the misalignment and improving blood flow, we can help alleviate these symptoms and improve overall brain function.

Post Concussion Syndrome is a complex and challenging condition that can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life. While traditional medical treatments such as rest, medications, and physical therapy can be helpful, they may not always address the underlying causes of PCS. Upper cervical chiropractic, particularly Blair's technique, offers a safe, effective, and natural approach to addressing the underlying causes of PCS and improving patients' overall health and wellbeing.



Dr. Drew Hall

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FGCU's 'Disaster Day' Prepares Tomorrow's Healthcare Heroes

Marieb College simulation ensures graduates are ready for any emergency

Emergencies are unpredictable, and preparing future healthcare professionals to handle them is a top priority at Florida Gulf Coast University. To ensure students gain invaluable real-world experience, FGCU hosted its inaugural "Disaster Day" event in November, bringing together over 600 participants for an adrenaline-charged emergency training exercise. More than 300 students from FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services joined faculty, staff, volunteers and local first responders in an all-day simulation designed to test their ability to assess, diagnose and treat patients under pressure.

The multidisciplinary exercise highlighted FGCU's commitment to ensuring healthcare students are prepared to enter the workforce equipped to handle real-world emergencies.

It takes a village to stage a 'disaster'

Over 600 participants were involved, including hundreds taking part in a mass CPR training in partnership with the American Red Cross.

Some 100 student actors portrayed victims on the worst day of their lives, creating realistic scenarios by simulating injuries and distress. Emergency vehicles — including ambulances, fire trucks, police cars and a medical helicopter — added to the life-like atmosphere.

The event brought together local first responders, the Florida State Guard, the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, the Salvation Army, Lee County Sheriff's Office, San Carlos Fire Department, Lee Flight, NCH and Lee Health, as well as several simulation companies that donated their time and equipment. Eleven FGCU academic programs were involved, including eight from Marieb College.

As the day unfolded, healthcare students rotated through various zones of the staging areas, each presenting unique challenges. Students practiced skills learned in the classroom, like how to help triage, evaluate, assess and treat. They faced a variety of issues affecting their patients' mental health, physical ability and psychomotor, cognitive and functional skills.

The experience dramatically underscored the importance of healthcare professionals working together. For many of the healthcare students involved, participating in a hands-on emergency simulation added urgency to lessons learned from textbooks and classroom lectures.

The simulated disaster was more than just a test of individual skills — it was a masterclass in teamwork. Students from different healthcare disciplines worked side by side, combining their expertise to deliver optimal care. This interprofessional collaboration reflected real-world healthcare settings, where success often depends on effective communication and coordination among diverse teams.

For many participants, the exercise offered a profound sense of realism. Tasks like managing airways, monitoring vital signs and delegating responsibilities became second nature as the adrenaline kicked in. By the end of the day, students reported feeling more confident and prepared to face actual emergencies.

Preparing for real life

To enhance the realism of playing victims, student actors from FGCU's theatre department arrived several hours before the simulation to apply moulage, a theatrical disaster makeup, to create the appearance of injuries involving blood and gore. The volunteer "casualties" took their positions on Recreation Field 1 under the watchful eye of four groups of first responders and Marieb College faculty, there to observe the progress of the healthcare students.

Their realistic performances added urgency and complexity to the scenarios. Healthcare participants were able to practice skills learned, such as controlling a patient's airway, making sure patients are intubated if they are unconscious and delegating tasks to other team members.

Before the event, Joe Buhain, Marieb College's director of interprofessional simulation and emerging technology, said his primary goal was to

engage students in interprofessional education with the hope that they would learn, not just from the event, but from each other.

FGCU's Disaster Day is a testament to the university's dedication to hands-on learning. Through carefully crafted scenarios, participants not only practiced their technical skills but also learned how to adapt to the unpredictable nature of crisis situations. Each scenario was designed to challenge students' clinical knowledge, decision-making abilities and emotional resilience.

The event also highlighted Marieb College's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning. Healthcare students interacted with peers from programs like social work, counseling and nursing anesthesia — fields they might not typically encounter in classroom settings. This exposure broadened their understanding of the holistic approach required in emergency care.

The path forward

As FGCU looks ahead, the success of Disaster Day has set the stage for future simulations. Organizers plan to make this an annual event, continually refining the scenarios to mirror evolving healthcare challenges. By providing students with immersive, real-life experiences, Marieb College is preparing them to succeed — and shaping the future of healthcare.

For prospective students, current professionals and community partners, Disaster Day exemplifies the university's innovative approach to education. It's a place where learning goes beyond the classroom, where collaboration takes center stage and where the future of healthcare is being shaped.

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



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Revolutionary Face and Body Transformation: The Power of EMFACE® and EXION™ Combination Therapy

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

In the ever-evolving world of aesthetic medicine, breakthrough technologies continue to reshape how we approach facial rejuvenation and body contouring. Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness is proud to introduce a groundbreaking combination therapy featuring EMFACE® and EXION™, two cutting-edge treatments that work synergistically to deliver unprecedented results in non-invasive aesthetic enhancement.

The Science Behind the Synergy

EMFACE® technology represents a paradigm shift in facial rejuvenation by simultaneously targeting both muscle and skin tissue. Using a unique combination of synchronized RF (radio frequency) and HIFES (High-Intensity Facial Electrical Stimulation) energies, EMFACE® works to lift and tighten facial features while rebuilding natural collagen and elastin. This revolutionary approach addresses multiple signs of aging in a single treatment, offering a comprehensive solution for facial rejuvenation.

Complementing EMFACE®'s facial focus, EXION™ technology brings advanced body contouring capabilities to the treatment protocol. EXION™ utilizes precise thermal energy delivery systems to target stubborn fat deposits and stimulate muscle conditioning, resulting in improved body composition and enhanced muscle definition. The technology's sophisticated temperature control ensures optimal results while maintaining patient comfort throughout the treatment.

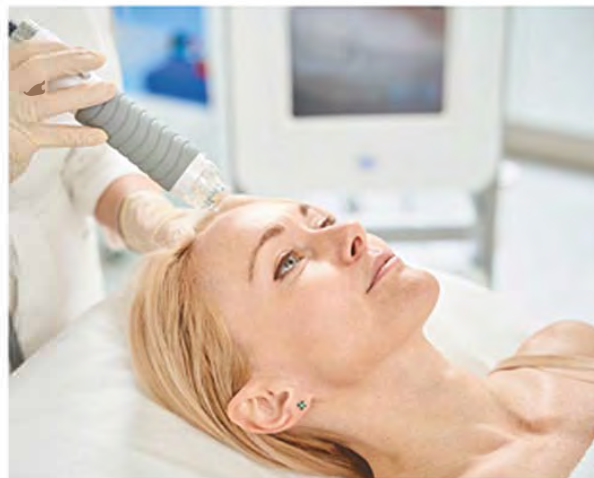
When combined, these innovative technologies create a comprehensive approach to aesthetic enhancement that addresses both facial aging and body sculpting concerns.

Comprehensive Benefits of the Combination Therapy

The EMFACE® and EXION™ combination therapy offers multiple advantages that set it apart from traditional aesthetic treatments:

1. Enhanced Results Through Synchronized Treatment

The simultaneous application of different energy modalities creates a multiplier effect, enhancing overall results beyond what each treatment could achieve independently. This synergistic approach optimizes treatment outcomes while potentially reducing the total number of sessions needed.



2. Non-Invasive Excellence

Both treatments are completely non-invasive, requiring no needles, surgery, or downtime. This makes the combination therapy an ideal choice for busy professionals seeking significant improvements without disrupting their daily routines.

3. Natural-Looking Outcomes

Unlike more aggressive treatments, EMFACE® and EXION™ work with your body's natural processes to enhance and rejuvenate. The results appear gradually and naturally, avoiding the artificial or "overdone" look that can sometimes occur with other aesthetic procedures.

4. Comprehensive Treatment Approach

While EMFACE® focuses on facial rejuvenation, addressing multiple aging concerns simultaneously, EXION™ complements these results by improving body contours and muscle tone. This head-to-toe approach ensures harmonious results across the entire treatment area.

The Treatment Experience at Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

At Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness, each combination therapy session is tailored to meet individual patient needs and goals. The treatment process begins with a comprehensive consultation to assess your unique concerns and develop a customized treatment plan.

During the treatment, patients can relax comfortably while the advanced technologies work simultaneously. The procedure is virtually painless, with

many patients describing it as feeling similar to a warm massage with mild muscle contractions. Most sessions last between 45-60 minutes, making it convenient to fit into even the busiest schedules.

Long-Lasting Results and Maintenance

One of the most compelling advantages of the EMFACE® and EXION™ combination therapy is the longevity of results. While individual experiences may vary, many patients report seeing initial improvements within weeks of their first treatment, with results continuing to develop over the following months as collagen production increases and muscle tone improves.

To maintain optimal results, our specialists at Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness will work with you to develop a personalized maintenance schedule. This typically involves periodic touch-up treatments to ensure your results remain fresh and natural-looking over time.

The Future of Aesthetic Medicine

The introduction of the EMFACE® and EXION™ combination therapy at Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness represents a significant advancement in non-invasive aesthetic treatment options. This innovative approach offers patients the opportunity to address multiple concerns simultaneously, with natural-looking results and no downtime.

For those seeking a comprehensive solution to facial aging and body contouring, this combination therapy provides an exciting new option that leverages the latest technological advances in aesthetic medicine. Contact Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness today to schedule a consultation and discover how this revolutionary treatment combination can help you achieve your aesthetic goals.



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Defeat Gum Disease

There is a silent oral disease affecting more than 80% of adults. Chances are you either have had or are currently battling periodontal (gum) disease. Unfortunately, in many cases, the disease goes undetected until painful symptoms begin occurring. At which time the disease and any adverse conditions have already set in. Because there are no early signs of periodontal disease, it often goes untreated until the physical symptoms surface and by then the concern is treatment not prevention. It is extremely important for everyone to have regular dental check ups at the recommended six month interval. Without these check ups and proper oral care, periodontal disease can silently cause not only oral health problems but can also contribute to other major health concerns.

Periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, is the chronic infection of the soft tissue around the teeth caused by plaque producing bacteria. The gums hold the teeth in place. As the gums become infected, they loosen their hold on the teeth and pockets are formed. These pockets collect debris and cause more infection and bone loss to the tooth. Gum disease is infectious and contagious. It can spread from tooth to tooth in the mouth and from one person's mouth to another through saliva.

As with other diseases, prevention is key to good oral health. It is important for everyone to practice diligent, thorough, and proper oral care by scheduling check ups every six months. At which time, your dentist will be able to detect and treat any signs of periodontal disease before symptoms begin to show and the damage is done. As mentioned earlier, most people do not know they have periodontal disease until they begin suffering from any combination of the following signs:

- Chronic bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums especially after tooth brushing
- Tender or sore gums
- Loose or shifting teeth
- Receding gums
- Sensitive teeth



If you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, there are various treatment plans your dentist may recommend depending on the severity of your case. The most important action is meticulous at home daily oral care. Teeth must be brushed twice or more times each day for at least two minutes and flossed at least once per day. Other treatments include oral rinses, periodontal cleanings, and sometimes surgery.

Traditional periodontal surgery involves cutting and suturing of the gums and recovery time can be long and painful. With the advancement of modern laser technology, there is an alternative. Joseph H. Farag, DMD offers a better alternative for patients battling periodontal disease. Dr. Farag offers patients laser-assisted new attachment procedure (LANAP™) which is a no-cut, no-sew procedure to treat mild to advanced periodontal disease. The advancements in laser surgery techniques, have made treating periodontal faster and less painful. LANAP™ is much less invasive than traditional surgery, allowing patients to return to work the next day if desired.

Even with the benefits of LANAP™ it is obviously best to practice good oral care. The most important preventative measure to avoid the insidious gum disease is to take excellent care of your teeth. Proper cleaning at least twice a day is imperative. The goal is to keep the bacteria that cause the plaque at very low levels.

If your gums are painful, red, or swollen don't ignore the signs; make an appointment today that may save your teeth and gums. Treating periodontal disease sooner is always better than later.

Benefits of LANAP™

EASY - LANAP™ is about as EASY as erasing a blackboard - unlike older techniques, there is no cutting and no suturing of the gums.

MINIMAL DISCOMFORT - Both during and post procedure, the patient experiences very minimal discomfort with LANAP™ than with prior standard surgery techniques.

SHORTER PROCEDURE TIME - It takes less time to complete LANAP™ than traditional surgery. Typically it takes is two 2-hour visits to the office and two follow up visits. Traditional surgery requires four sessions of about one hour each, with subsequent visits for suture removal and additional check-ups.

LESS GUM LOSS - LANAP™ minimizes the loss of gum tissue, traditional surgery often involves removing a significant amount of gum tissue. This tissue loss can lead to sensitive teeth since your roots are exposed. Also, if the treatment needs to be performed again in the future, you have not removed the bone and gums during the first LANAP™ treatment. Typically with LANAP™, any gum tissue shrinkage is actually due to reduced swelling of the area that was previously diseased and inflamed.

SHORT RECOVERY - Many patients fully recover from LANAP™ within 24 hours. In most cases, patients feel just fine post surgery and daily activities are not interrupted. On the other hand, recovery after traditional surgery can take up to 4 weeks during which patients can experience considerable pain and swelling.

SAFE - LANAP™ with the PerioLase is SAFE for patients with health concerns such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or those taking medications such as Coumadin or Cyclosporine.

Dr. Joseph Farag - Port Charlotte Dentalcare
941.764.9555

3441 Conway Blvd, Port Charlotte
www.Drfarag.com

Cleerly Analysis - Using the Power of AI:

Revolutionizing Heart Disease Diagnosis to Lower the Risk of Heart Attack

Heat disease remains the leading cause of death globally, with millions of lives lost each year due to heart attacks and related complications. Despite advancements in medical technology, accurately diagnosing heart disease and assessing the risk of heart attacks remains a complex challenge. However, a promising solution has emerged in the form of Cleerly, a groundbreaking approach to heart disease diagnosis that aims to lower the risk of heart attacks through early detection and personalized risk assessment.

Cleerly represents a paradigm shift in cardiovascular imaging and risk assessment. Developed by a team of leading cardiologists, data scientists, and engineers, Cleerly harnesses the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced imaging techniques to provide comprehensive insights into the heart's health. Unlike traditional methods that often rely on subjective interpretation and limited information, Cleerly utilizes state-of-the-art algorithms to analyze cardiac imaging data with unmatched precision and efficiency.

At the core of Cleerly's innovation is its ability to generate highly detailed 3D reconstructions of the heart and its blood vessels from standard cardiac imaging scans such as CT angiography. By employing advanced machine learning algorithms, Cleerly can accurately identify and quantify various aspects of heart disease, including plaque buildup, arterial blockages, and coronary artery disease. This comprehensive assessment allows healthcare providers to detect potential issues at an early stage, enabling timely interventions to prevent heart attacks and other cardiovascular events.

One of the key advantages of Cleerly is its ability to provide personalized risk assessment for each patient. Traditional risk scoring systems often rely on generalized population-based metrics, which may not accurately reflect an individual's unique risk profile. In contrast, Cleerly leverages AI to analyze multiple factors, including plaque composition, vessel geometry, and hemodynamic parameters, to generate personalized risk scores tailored to each patient's specific characteristics and medical history. This individualized approach enables healthcare providers to prioritize interventions and optimize treatment strategies based on each patient's unique risk profile, ultimately leading to better outcomes and reduced incidence of heart attacks.

TRACK YOUR HEART HEALTH.

Now, with Cleerly's compare feature, you and your doctor can see how the plaque in your heart has changed over multiple scans, empowering you to make decisions that truly transform your health.



Moreover, Cleerly's user-friendly interface and intuitive visualization tools empower healthcare providers to easily interpret complex cardiac imaging data and communicate findings effectively with patients. By enhancing communication and patient engagement, Cleerly fosters a collaborative approach to heart disease management, where patients are actively involved in their care and empowered to make informed decisions about their health.

The impact of Cleerly extends beyond diagnosis and risk assessment, as it also plays a crucial role in guiding treatment decisions and monitoring disease progression. By providing detailed insights into the underlying mechanisms of heart disease, Cleerly enables healthcare providers to tailor treatment plans to address specific pathophysiological processes and optimize therapeutic outcomes. Additionally, Cleerly's ability to track changes in cardiac morphology and function over time allows for early detection of disease progression and adjustment of treatment strategies as needed, further reducing the risk of adverse cardiovascular events.

In conclusion, Cleerly represents a transformative approach to heart disease diagnosis that has the potential to revolutionize cardiovascular care and lower the risk of heart attacks. By harnessing the power of AI and advanced imaging techniques, Cleerly provides comprehensive insights into the heart's health, enables personalized risk assessment, and facilitates informed decision-making for patients and healthcare providers alike. With its promise of early detection, personalized intervention, and improved patient outcomes, Cleerly offers new hope in the fight against heart disease and underscores the immense potential of technology to transform healthcare.

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Serving our patients is our highest priority. We ensure that all patients feel comfortable and safe as we explain all procedures step by step. Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood holds the highest quality of care for our patients to be a core tenant - which we proudly see in the over 4,000 Google reviews that have collectively scored a 4.9 out of 5 stars.

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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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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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GainsWave Therapy:

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

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Dr. David Zamikoff and Natural Healing Arts Medical Center - a professional Bradenton Chiropractic and Medical office. In practice as well as online, Bradenton Florida 34209, chiropractor Dr. Zamikoff strives for excellence through superior patient treatment, education and satisfaction.

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Maintaining Healthy Friendships

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

The first step is to realize that you really do NEED friends.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived said, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Prov. 27:17

That means that we make each other better. It seems pretty important to God that we have good friendships. The Bible is full of examples of this.

Think about the amazing friendship of Jonathan and David. Jonathan warned David that his life was in danger at the hands of Jonathan's own father, King Saul.

This warning allowed David to take action and avoid harm, and ultimately this act of true friendship allowed David to take the throne.

Friends look out for each other. They should have each other's back. Your friends are the ones who will be there for you when everything in your life is falling apart.

The second step is to be friendly and willing to meet new people. The Bible says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly..." Prov. 18:24

Put a smile on your face, stick out your hand and meet new people. Opportunities abound for making new friends if you are willing to actively pursue new relationships. Get involved in a local church, join a social organization, volunteer at the local schools or another non-profit organization. These are all great ways to meet new people and do good in the community at the same time.

The third step to building relationships is to make yourself vulnerable even at the risk being rejected. The reality is that not everyone is going to like you. And, you are not going to like everyone.

Look for people with similar interests or a common background. If you don't connect with someone, just move on. You will certainly find several good friends if you keep working towards making friends.

You will find the fourth step most helpful if you make it a natural part of your life: put other's needs ahead of your own. The Bible says it like this:

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Phil. 2:3-4

Have you ever met people who want you to listen to all of the details about their life but then they never bother to ask about yours? Be interested in other people. In humility, don't try to "one up" their stories. Just listen, smile, and ask genuine questions. Get to know them.

If you want to make friends, get interested in other people. Discover their story. Dale Carnegie writes, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

You might find it helpful to evaluate how you talk with other people. Are you genuinely interested in others or does every conversation revolve around you? Do you make yourself the hero of every story? Do find it necessary to talk about your successes and achievements? Are you trying to impress people or relate to people?

If you really want to make friends, get interested in other people. Learn about them. Listen to their stories and ask questions. If you listen and genuinely care about others, you'll have more friends than you can handle in a short time.

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