

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

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

April 2025

Charlotte/South Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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 **FREE**



**PARKINSON'S DISEASE
TREATMENT CENTER OF
SWFL IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH CHARLOTTE COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS:**



2025 SWFL PARKINSON'S DISEASE SPRING SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025

8:30 AM TO 3:30 PM

THE ISLES YACHT CLUB, PUNTA GORDA

Ramon A. Gil, M.D.
Diplomate American Board
of Psychiatry and Neurology

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

A Holistic Approach to Treatment



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CONTACT US

OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Cristan Gensing
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
sonnygensing@yahoo.com



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Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL in partnership with Charlotte County Medical Society proudly presents...

2025 SWFL Parkinson's Disease Spring Symposium

"A Holistic Approach to Treatment"

Friday, April 25th, 2025
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
The Isles Yacht Club
1780 W. Marion Ave, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

Special Guest Speakers:

Dr. Richard B. Dewey III, M.D.

Kelly Papesh, ARNP, FNP-C, CMRD

Dr. Ramon Gil, M.D.

Mary Spremulli, MA, CCC-SLP

Debra Tarakofsky, MS, CCC-SLP

PD. Vibha Kumar

Agenda

8:30 am - 9:30 am	On Site Registration, Light Breakfast and Exhibitors
9:30 am - 9:45 am	Opening Remarks..... R. Gil, M.D.
9:45 am - 10:30 am	"Being Loud"M. Spremulli, SLP and D. Tarakofsky, SLP
10:30 am - 11:15 am	"Mindfulness and Yoga for Balance" V. Kumar
11:15 am - 11:45 am	Break & Refreshments
11:45 pm - 12:30 pm	"Lifestyle in Parkinson's Disease"... K. Papesh, ARNP
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm - 2:15 pm	"Is there a Better Medical Treatment?" ... R. Gil, M.D.
2:15 pm - 3:00 pm	"Advanced Therapies for Parkinson's Disease" R. Dewey III, M.D.
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Q's and A's..... Faculty
3:30 pm	Recognition, Raffle and Adjourn

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PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH TREATING PARKINSON'S DISEASE WITH A HOLISTIC APPROACH

By Ramon A. Gil, M.D., Medical Director, Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL

The progress witnessed over the past 30 years in understanding, diagnosing, and treating Parkinson's Disease (PD) is simply phenomenal. Many of you may be wondering, "When is the cure coming?" Even that seems closer today than ever before. But remember that "cure" is a very strong word, and in the case of PD it will probably be arresting the progression of the illness, as it is impossible to completely reverse the damage caused by PD to the brain by the time the diagnosis is made.

It is hard to believe that as recently as in the late 1990s we were still looking at or questioning the value of physical exercise as part of the treatment for PD. Today, we are fully aware that exercise is the only way to increase the levels of GDNF (neurotrophic factor), which is the chemical compound capable of repairing the brain. As a matter of fact, we are currently participating in a gene therapy trial to enhance the production of GDNF. This is indeed a promising approach to finding the cure for PD.

New and better medications continue to become available to treat PD. In just the last 5 years, six new drugs have been approved for the treatment of PD including two subcutaneous infusions. Technological advances in Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) seem to be a never-ending story. Each of the three companies involved in this field are competing (all to your benefit as patients) in creating additional features in their systems which make programming easier, more effective, and with less side effects. They are also focused on energy efficiency, as newly designed leads allow us to use more efficient settings with the batteries lasting longer. New rechargeable batteries have also been improved.

At the PD Treatment Center of SWFL, we continue to bring you the latest information regarding all aspects of this disease. We hold firm to the conviction that empowering you with education will make you better patients with more confidence in your journey with PD, resulting in a better quality of life.

This year our Spring Symposium will center around "A Holistic Approach to Treatment." As we treat you, we look forward to helping you emotionally, spiritually, and physically. First, Mary Spremulli, CCC-SPL and Debra Tarakofsky, CCC-SPL will open the program with a "loud" talk emphasizing ways to improve and preserve speech and swallowing functions, often affected in PD. They will address significant problems around this topic in the moderate to advanced stages of the disease.

Vibha Kumar studied and received her certification in yoga and meditation from the highly reputed Bihar School of Yoga in India. We are honored to have her reviewing "Mindfulness and Yoga for Balance." There is no real benefit in improving motor symptoms of PD if you ignore anxiety, depression, anger, and frustration in your daily life. These feelings are often the cause of significant deterioration in the home environment and are capable at times of breaking a family apart.

Next, we will have a special guest from Las Vegas, NV. Ms. Kelly Papesh, DNP, ARNP is a most experienced and dynamic nurse, who for years practiced side by side with very well-known neurologists in the Movement Disorders community. She will review "Lifestyle in Parkinson's." No matter how many times we have previously discussed the importance of dietary intervention and physical exercise, for some of you in the audience this material will be new. Furthermore, I know that a refresher course is not a bad idea for those who are still not totally sold on the idea of joining a gym and eating better.

In the afternoon session, I will give a presentation titled: "Is there a Better Medical Treatment?" I hope to convey information that will help you understand why your current treatment may not be the best, and the advantages of newer drugs versus older versions. It may have taken me a while, but I eventually switched from manual cameras to digital ones.



Finally, Dr. Richard Dewey, III M.D., will talk to us about "Advanced Therapies in PD." This will be an amazing presentation by a young, well-trained Movement Disorders Specialist, bringing us the latest advances in DBS technology, and the exciting new infusion therapies, some of them approved just a few weeks ago.

Get ready, this is going to be a *great* program. We are *winning* the battle.

Welcome to our 2025 PD Spring Symposium.

Friday, April 25th, 2025

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

The Isles Yacht Club

1780 W. Marion Ave, Punta Forda, FL 33950



**For more info or to register
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PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF QUITTING

Quitting tobacco is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health.⁴ As soon as an individual quits, the body begins to heal³ however, the benefits of quitting are not limited to improvements in physical health – there are numerous psychological benefits as well.

According to the British Medical Journal, smoking cessation is associated with reduced depression, anxiety, and stress and improved positive mood and quality of life compared with continuing to smoke.¹ There may be some initial feelings of stress and anxiety as an individual adjusts to a tobacco free life, however, research supports that those feelings are a temporary result of changing habits and adjusting to new behaviors.

Tobacco cessation services provided during addictions treatment enhances rather than compromises long-term sobriety. In fact, participation in smoking cessation efforts while engaged in other substance abuse treatment has been associated with a 25% greater likelihood of long-term abstinence from alcohol and other drugs.²

Smoking is associated with suicide risk, and the heaviest smokers have the highest risk. Quitting smoking improves overall quality of life which positively impacts mental health, including suicide risk.⁵

In addition to improvements in mental health, there are numerous benefits to physical health that accompany quitting tobacco. Quit tobacco today and join many other ex-tobacco users as they savor these benefits for years to come!

Help quitting tobacco is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Group Quit option of Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program—offers free group quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. **Free** nicotine replacement therapy in the form



of patches, gum, or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) is provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist. Contact us today at **866-534-7909** or visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar to schedule a class or learn more about the program!

References:

- 1 Change in mental health after smoking cessation: systematic review and meta-analysis. Taylor et al. <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g1151>
- 2 Catherine Theresa Baca, M.D., Carolina E. Yahne, Ph.D. Smoking cessation during substance abuse treatment: What you need to know. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 36 (2009) 205–219
- 3 <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/benefits-of-quitting-smoking-over-time.html#>
- 4 <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/features/surgeon-generals-report/quit-smoking-for-better-health/index.html>
- 5 Tools to Quit: Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Cessation Program Participant Toolkit. Area Health Education Centers. 2018.



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STRESS AWARENESS MONTH AND PODIATRY:

The Connection Between Stress and Foot Health

By Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

April is recognized as Stress Awareness Month, an opportunity to shed light on the impact stress has on our physical and mental health. While stress is often associated with common symptoms like anxiety, headaches, or muscle tension, its effects can extend far beyond what we might expect, especially to our feet. Podiatry, the medical specialty focused on diagnosing and treating conditions related to the feet, ankles, and lower extremities, plays an important role in understanding how stress can manifest physically. This article explores the connection between stress and foot health, highlighting why it's important to pay attention to how stress affects your feet and how podiatric care can help.

The Impact of Stress on the Body

Stress is a natural response to challenges or demands, but when it becomes chronic, it can have detrimental effects on the body. It can cause a range of physical symptoms, from digestive issues to chronic pain. The human body is equipped with mechanisms like fight-or-flight response to help cope with stress. However, prolonged activation of these mechanisms can lead to inflammation, muscle tension, and other issues that affect overall health, including foot health.

Stress and Its Effect on the Feet

Feet are our primary mode of mobility and are subjected to significant strain daily. When stress enters the picture, several foot-related issues can arise, ranging from temporary discomfort to chronic conditions. Here are some of the ways stress can affect your feet:

1. Tightening of Muscles and Tendons

Stress often leads to muscle tension, and the muscles in the feet and calves are no exception. This can cause stiffness in the arch, heel, or toes, leading to pain or discomfort. When these muscles tighten, they can affect your posture and gait, potentially leading to further strain on your feet, knees, and back.

2. Foot Pain from Anxiety

For individuals who experience high levels of anxiety, foot pain can be a result of psychological stress. Anxiety often leads to behaviors like clenching or tensing the muscles, which can put undue pressure on the feet. This can lead to conditions like plantar fasciitis (inflammation of the tissue along the bottom of the foot), heel spurs, or even stress fractures in extreme cases.

3. Changes in Walking or Gait

People under stress may unconsciously change their walking patterns. This could involve favoring one foot over the other, altering stride length, or walking with

more tension. These adjustments can affect the biomechanics of the feet, leading to conditions like bunions, hammertoes, or other deformities that might require podiatric attention.

4. Exacerbation of Pre-existing Foot Conditions

Chronic stress can worsen existing foot conditions. For example, those who suffer from conditions like flat feet or arthritis may notice more intense pain or swelling during stressful times. Stress can increase inflammation in the body, which can exacerbate these conditions and make it harder to manage symptoms.

5. Nail and Skin Problems

Stress can also manifest in the skin and nails. People under stress may neglect proper foot hygiene or may even develop conditions like athlete's foot or fungal infections. Additionally, habits like biting nails or excessive sweating from anxiety can further contribute to foot-related health problems.

How Podiatry Can Help

Podiatry takes a comprehensive approach to managing foot-related symptoms caused by stress. If you are experiencing foot pain or discomfort linked to stress, consulting a podiatrist is essential for developing a personalized treatment plan. A podiatrist will assess your feet to diagnose any stress-induced conditions and recommend appropriate treatments, such as orthotics, physical therapy, or targeted exercises. For conditions like plantar fasciitis or tendonitis, custom orthotics may be prescribed to provide support and reduce strain.

Beyond treatment, podiatrists offer valuable advice on improving foot health through proper footwear choices, stretching routines, and posture correction. They can also suggest relaxation techniques to help prevent foot tension from accumulating. For individuals with pre-existing foot conditions that stress may worsen, podiatrists provide targeted treatments to manage symptoms and reduce inflammation. This may include corticosteroid injections, physical therapy, or, in severe cases, surgical intervention to relieve pain and restore mobility.

Preventing foot problems related to stress is just as important as treating them. A podiatrist can identify early warning signs of stress-related foot issues and recommend lifestyle changes that promote long-term foot health, such as regular exercise, proper hydration, and stress management techniques. By addressing both the symptoms and underlying causes of stress-induced foot discomfort, podiatry plays a crucial role in maintaining overall well-being.

Tips for Managing Stress and Protecting Your Feet: Managing stress is vital not just for overall well-being but also for maintaining good foot health. Here are some tips for reducing stress and protecting your feet:

Practice Stress-Relief Techniques: Regularly engage in activities that help reduce stress, such as meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, or even walking outside. These activities help release tension in the feet and the rest of the body.

Wear Supportive Footwear: Choose shoes that provide adequate support to your feet and arches. Avoid high heels or poorly fitting shoes that may contribute to foot pain or deformities.

Stretch and Strengthen: Incorporate foot exercises into your daily routine to strengthen and stretch the muscles and tendons in your feet, reducing tension and preventing injuries.

Maintain Good Posture: Be mindful of your posture when standing or sitting to avoid unnecessary strain on your feet and legs. This can help you maintain a natural gait and prevent foot fatigue.

Take Breaks: If you're sitting or standing for long periods, take regular breaks to walk around, stretch, and relieve pressure from your feet.

Stress Awareness Month is an opportunity to highlight the importance of managing stress and understanding its impact on overall health. Podiatry plays a critical role in addressing the physical effects of stress, particularly as it pertains to the feet. By recognizing the link between stress and foot health, individuals can take proactive steps to reduce their stress levels and seek professional care when necessary. Whether you're experiencing foot pain due to stress or want to prevent potential issues, a podiatrist can provide the guidance and treatment needed to keep your feet healthy and comfortable.

If you're dealing with foot pain, stress-related or not, don't hesitate to consult a podiatrist who can help you take the right steps toward recovery and better foot health.

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

Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Port Charlotte, FL. He 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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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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April: Stress Awareness Month

NAVIGATING HEALTH WITH CONFIDENCE

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

Stress is an inevitable part of life, but when it comes to your health, the pressures can feel overwhelming. From finding a doctor you trust to deciphering complex medical advice, health-care-related stress affects millions. At Harper Health, we believe that reducing this stress is essential to overall well-being. Our mission is to support each patient on their health journey—body, mind, and spirit—so they can live their best life.

The Stress of Having a Doctor You Trust

One of the most fundamental aspects of healthcare is having a doctor you can rely on. Yet, for many, this can be a major source of stress. Changing physicians, feeling unheard, or worrying about whether your doctor truly understands your needs can create unnecessary anxiety. At Harper Health, we eliminate this stress by fostering long-term relationships built on trust. Our concierge model ensures that you have direct, ongoing access to a physician who knows your history, listens to your concerns, and prioritizes your well-being.

The Stress of Getting Appointments

Anyone who has tried to schedule a doctor's appointment—only to be met with long wait times or rushed visits—knows the frustration this can bring. The stress of delayed care can exacerbate health issues, leaving patients feeling helpless. With our concierge care model, we remove these barriers. Our members enjoy same-day or next-day appointments, extended visit times, and direct communication with their physician. We make healthcare seamless so you can focus on your well-being.

The Stress of Navigating What's Right for You

The internet is overflowing with health advice, but how do you know what's credible? From trendy diets to conflicting medical opinions, sifting through information can be overwhelming. Understanding what's best for your body, how to get healthy, and how to stay that way shouldn't be a guessing game. Our team at Harper Health helps you cut through the noise, providing clear, personalized guidance tailored to your unique health needs. With expert advice and a doctor who truly knows you, you can make informed decisions with confidence.



The Stress of Staying Healthy

Being proactive about your health is vital, but it can also be stressful. Managing chronic conditions, keeping up with screenings, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle all require time, knowledge, and effort. At Harper Health, we act as your health partner, ensuring that you stay on track with preventive care and wellness strategies. Whether it's personalized fitness recommendations, nutrition counseling, or mental health support, we provide the tools you need to maintain long-term well-being without added stress.

We Actively Help You Navigate Your Stress

Stress is not just a byproduct of life—it has real health consequences, from high blood pressure to weakened immunity. That's why we take a proactive approach to stress management, helping you access the right resources when needed. Whether it's guiding you to a mental health professional, offering stress-reducing wellness strategies, or simply providing the reassurance of knowing your health is in good hands, we are here to support you.

Our Mission: Supporting Your Health Journey

At Harper Health, we recognize that stress is a significant factor in overall health. Our mission is to support each patient on their journey—body, mind, and spirit—so they can live their best life. By eliminating the common stressors of traditional healthcare, we empower our patients with the time, attention, and expertise they deserve. This Stress Awareness Month, we invite you to take a step toward a less stressful, healthier life. Let us help you navigate your health with confidence.



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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Varicose Veins vs. Spider Veins

By Dr. TC Lackey II

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

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

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

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

How Varicose and Spider Veins Develop

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



However, when veins don't function properly, it can cause blood to collect inside your veins. When this happens, the blood pushes up against the walls within your vein, creating pressure weakening the vessel wall. Ultimately, this pressure is what causes veins to twist and bulge.

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

Treatment Options for Vein Disease

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

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

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

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

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

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



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FGCU Addressing Shortage of Mental Health Professionals

Expanded enrollment, enhanced training and community outreach aim to stem crisis

Nearly 1 in 4 American adults lives with a mental illness, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Demand for mental health services is outpacing the supply of providers, while more than half the U.S. population lives in an area with a shortage of mental health professionals.

As a result of these healthcare deserts with scant resources, many individuals seeking help are not getting assistance or at best face long delays due to long waits. In fact, the percentage of need for mental health professionals that is being met in Florida is only 21%, according to Kaiser Family Foundation research.

Marieb College of Health & Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University is helping address this crisis through several initiatives. These efforts include: expanding enrollment and faculty to train more students to become licensed clinical mental health counselors, licensed clinical social workers and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners; providing more supervised experience earlier in students' education through FGCU's Community Counseling & Education Center; and taking students to underserved communities in Southwest Florida that lack sufficient access to mental health services.

Southwest Florida is a "mental health desert," according to Sherdene Brown-Simpson, Ph.D., LMHC, director of Marieb College's clinical mental health counseling program. The community has a critical need due to a high percentage of people struggling with mental health issues, she says.

"When you look at the number of people versus the services, there is a need to increase providers in this area," says Brown-Simpson. "That is something we are really working to address in our program. How can we increase the number of licensed mental health counselors? This is an opportune time to really look at how can we impact the community."

Comprehensive training

Marieb College's accredited, standards-based graduate programs prepare students to take on society's big issues and improve quality of life for individuals and communities. With strong demand for clinical mental health counselors, clinical social workers and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners in every community, FGCU students have the opportunity to make a widespread impact.

Their coursework includes human development, legal and ethical issues, career development, appraisal methods, counseling theories, group and individual counseling, practicum and research, counseling special populations and clinical practice.

Marieb College prepares graduate students with a high degree of counseling competence, technological skills and hundreds of hours of supervised field experience addressing issues like college and career readiness, social-emotional learning, academic achievement, depression, cyberbullying and substance abuse. Practical learning and internships take place in local schools and agencies throughout Southwest Florida and in FGCU's on-campus Community Counseling & Education Center. This intense preparation creates a bridge between classroom learning and real world application.

Because FGCU students are so comprehensively prepared, 100% are employed within three months of earning their counseling degree.

Soaring demand for services

These committed, compassionate professionals join a workforce straining under heavy caseloads. Demand for licensed mental health professionals has skyrocketed in recent years, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. More people are reporting feelings of anxiety and depression and experiencing substance use problems. Opioid-related deaths sharply accelerated during the pandemic and with increases in illicit fentanyl. In Florida, the number of drug overdose deaths per 100,000 people more than doubled from 2011 to 2021, with 76% of those deaths due to opioids.

"There's an increased need for students to understand how to provide counseling for substance use disorder, which is increasing across the country," Brown-Simpson says. "We're also seeing that there is a need to address issues of trauma and trauma-informed care. If you have mental health disorders that go untreated, that could be very difficult for people to truly embrace a positive quality of life."

Such emergent mental health issues underscore the importance of Marieb College's holistic approach to teaching counseling and providing internship opportunities that ensure graduates become well-rounded practitioners in, social services, government agencies, hospitals, community organizations and private practice.

Some of FGCU's mental health counseling interns are currently bringing their counseling skills to children in several underserved Southwest Florida communities where Marieb College is partnering with local organizations to fill gaps in mental health services. Meanwhile, on campus, the Community Counseling & Education Center also provides students with experience while helping improve the lives of individuals, couples and families affected by depression, anxiety, trauma, relationship and family functioning, and parenting challenges. The center offers low-cost mental and behavioral health services for all ages regardless of socioeconomic status. Call 239-745-4777 for more information.

In these ways and more, FGCU's Marieb College is a growing oasis for solutions amid a mental health desert.

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



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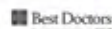
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WHY SENIORS ARE CHOOSING LIFE PLAN COMMUNITIES OVER AGING IN PLACE

Where do you see yourself in retirement? Will you be busy at home or branching out as part of a larger community? How will you spend your free time? If you're considering the options of aging in place at home or moving to a Life Plan Community – also known as a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) – it pays to look closely at the costs and benefits of each option. Keep in mind that perspectives may evolve and priorities may shift as you make plans for your future.

THE REALITIES OF AGING IN PLACE

The idea of aging in place in your home may sound appealing, but modifying your home with age-friendly features and/or potentially hiring in-home care can be expensive, labor-intensive, and stressful. Most private homes have to be modified to accommodate the needs of seniors, such as wider hallways, wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, and entryway ramps. People often assume the option of staying in their home will be less costly than moving to a Life Plan Community. However, you may be surprised to see how the costs add up in the long run.

Instead of living with the burden of home maintenance and the uncertainty of how to handle future health care needs, you can live in luxury and comfort when you choose a Life Plan Community. Plus, you'll enjoy the peace of mind that comes with having a solid plan for the future.

WHAT IS A LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY?

A Life Plan Community, also called a continuing care retirement community (CCRC), provides an exceptional value for older adults who want financial protection from the rising costs of senior care and guaranteed care for life. The entrance fee, which is paid upfront to secure your place in the community, ensures you'll have priority access to health care services offered by the community, such as assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care ... and that you can receive these services at prices well below market rates. If you're on the fence about moving to a Life Plan Community, here are some compelling reasons to choose a community like Freedom Village of Bradenton for your next home:



MAINTENANCE-FREE LIVING

Owning and maintaining a home is a lot of work, and there may come a time in life when you'd rather be relaxing or spending time with loved ones instead of doing chores around the house. When you move to a Life Plan Community, you can let the professionals take care of lawn mowing, housekeeping, meal preparation, home repairs and more. You'll have more time to enjoy what you've earned, and more freedom to travel without worrying about who will take care of your home while you're away.

FINANCIAL SECURITY

Choosing a Life Plan Community with a Life Care contract can save you money by protecting you from the rising costs of senior care. Life Care gives you guaranteed access to higher levels of care at predictable monthly rates with little to no increase above the cost you pay for independent living.

RESORT-LIKE LIFESTYLE

With distinctive homes and floor plans to fit every lifestyle, you can customize your senior living residence to match your preferences. Plus, you'll enjoy a host of amenities and services that make each day fun and fulfilling. You can choose to be as active as you'd like, with an array of wellness activities, educational lectures, social events and more. Experience the benefits of a Gulf Coast retirement lifestyle at Freedom Village of Bradenton.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Maintaining social connections as you age is one of the best ways to protect your health and well-being.

It's easy to expand your social circle when you choose to be part of a community filled with friendly and like-minded peers. Seniors who age in place at home are often at risk for social isolation, especially if they aren't driving places to visit friends and socialize. Learn more about how senior living combats social isolation.

PEACE OF MIND FOR YOUR LOVED ONES

You can't predict the future, but you can take control of your options now so your loved ones don't have to worry. Moving to a Life Plan Community means they won't have to rush to find health care if the unexpected happens and you suddenly need help with activities of daily living or round-the-clock care. Your family will have peace of mind knowing you'll have access to advanced levels of care, if needed, along with the safety of having staff available 24/7 should an emergency occur.

DISCOVER TRUE FREEDOM

It's normal to feel hesitant about giving up the space you have at home to move into a senior living community. However, once you experience the expansive lifestyle waiting for you at Freedom Village of Bradenton, you'll see how your living space opens up to a whole world of opportunities that you don't want to miss.

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The Connection Between Anxiety and Eye Health: Understanding the Impact on Vision

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

In the fast-paced world we live in, stress and anxiety have become almost commonplace. From work deadlines to personal responsibilities, it's easy to become overwhelmed by the demands of daily life. While the effects of stress and anxiety on mental health are well-documented, their impact on physical health, particularly eye health, is often overlooked.

Anxiety, a feeling of worry or nervousness, can manifest in various physical symptoms, including changes in blood flow to the eyes. This alteration in blood flow can lead to a range of eye-related issues, such as blurred vision, eye strain, and dry eyes. For individuals already prone to eye problems, such as glaucoma or dry eye syndrome, prolonged stress and anxiety can exacerbate these conditions, worsening their symptoms and potentially leading to further complications.

One of the most common symptoms of stress and anxiety-related eye issues is blurred vision. This occurs when the muscles in the eyes become tense due to heightened stress levels, affecting their ability to focus properly. As a result, objects may appear blurry or out of focus, making tasks such as reading or driving challenging and uncomfortable.

Eye strain is another prevalent issue associated with stress and anxiety. When we feel anxious or stressed, we tend to tense our muscles, including those in the eyes, leading to fatigue and strain. Staring at screens for extended periods, a common occurrence in today's digital age, can exacerbate this strain, causing discomfort, headaches, and difficulty concentrating.

Dry eyes are also a common complaint among individuals experiencing heightened levels of stress and anxiety. Stress can disrupt the natural balance of tear production and drainage in the eyes, resulting in inadequate lubrication and discomfort. Without sufficient moisture, the eyes may feel gritty, irritated, or excessively watery, impacting both comfort and vision quality.

Moreover, for individuals already dealing with underlying eye conditions such as glaucoma or dry eye syndrome, stress and anxiety can pose additional challenges. Glaucoma, a group of eye diseases characterized by damage to the optic nerve, can be exacerbated by elevated intraocular pressure, which may occur during periods of stress. Similarly, stress-related changes in tear production can worsen the symptoms of dry eye syndrome, leading to increased discomfort and potential damage to the cornea.

Given the significant impact of stress and anxiety on eye health, it is essential to prioritize self-care and stress management strategies. Incorporating relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga into your daily routine can help alleviate stress and promote overall well-being. Additionally, taking regular breaks from screen time, practicing good eye hygiene, and staying hydrated can support optimal eye health and minimize the impact of stress-related symptoms.

Furthermore, seeking professional help and support is crucial for managing anxiety and its associated effects on both mental and physical health. Whether through therapy, medication, or holistic approaches, there are various resources available to help individuals cope with stress and anxiety effectively.

In conclusion, the relationship between stress, anxiety, and eye health is undeniable. From blurred vision and eye strain to dry eyes and exacerbation of existing conditions, prolonged stress can take a toll on our eyesight and overall well-being. By prioritizing stress management techniques and seeking appropriate support, we can protect our vision and cultivate a healthier, more balanced lifestyle. Let's raise awareness about the importance of mental health in preserving our precious sense of sight.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Cleerly Analysis - Using the Power of AI:

Revolutionizing Heart Disease Diagnosis to Lower the Risk of Heart Attack

Hear 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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THE LINK BETWEEN PARKINSON'S DISEASE & HEARING LOSS

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that primarily affects movement, causing symptoms such as tremors, stiffness, and impaired balance. However, recent research suggests that Parkinson's may also be associated with other health conditions, including hearing loss. While the connection between these two conditions is still being investigated, understanding their relationship could lead to better management and treatment for individuals living with Parkinson's.

Hearing loss is not typically considered a primary symptom of Parkinson's disease. However, studies have shown a higher prevalence of hearing impairment among individuals with Parkinson's compared to the general population. One study published in the journal JAMA Neurology found that people with Parkinson's were more likely to experience hearing loss, particularly in higher frequencies, even after controlling for age-related factors.

The exact mechanism linking Parkinson's disease and hearing loss remains unclear, but several theories have been proposed. One possibility is that both conditions share underlying pathological processes, such as inflammation and oxidative stress, which can damage both the auditory and motor systems. Another theory suggests that certain neurotransmitter imbalances associated with Parkinson's may also affect auditory function.

Furthermore, some researchers believe that certain medications used to treat Parkinson's could contribute to hearing loss. For example, dopamine agonists, agonists, which are commonly prescribed to alleviate

motor symptoms, have been associated with auditory side effects in some cases. However, more research is needed to determine the extent of this potential association.

The impact of hearing loss on individuals with Parkinson's disease can be significant. Communication difficulties can exacerbate social isolation and decrease quality of life for those already coping with the challenges of a progressive neurological disorder. Additionally, hearing impairment may complicate the management of Parkinson's symptoms, as it can affect a person's ability to follow instructions from healthcare providers and participate in rehabilitation programs effectively.

Recognizing the potential link between Parkinson's disease and hearing loss underscores the importance of comprehensive healthcare for individuals with Parkinson's. Routine hearing screenings should be integrated into the standard care protocol for Parkinson's patients to detect any auditory issues early on. Moreover, healthcare providers should be vigilant in addressing hearing-related concerns and providing appropriate interventions, such as hearing aids or auditory rehabilitation, when necessary.

In addition to clinical implications, understanding the relationship between Parkinson's disease and hearing loss may also have broader implications for research and treatment development. Investigating common underlying mechanisms could lead to the

identification of novel therapeutic targets that address both motor and auditory symptoms simultaneously. Furthermore, insights gained from studying the intersection of these conditions could inform our understanding of neurodegenerative processes more broadly, potentially paving the way for innovative approaches to managing Parkinson's and related disorders.

In conclusion, while the connection between Parkinson's disease and hearing loss requires further investigation, emerging evidence suggests that there may be a meaningful association between these two conditions. By exploring this relationship, healthcare providers can better support individuals living with Parkinson's by addressing their auditory needs alongside their motor symptoms. Moreover, continued research in this area holds promise for advancing our understanding of both Parkinson's disease and hearing loss, ultimately improving outcomes for affected individuals.

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BALANCE FROM WITHIN: Hormonal Harmony for Sustainable Weight Loss

In a world of quick-fix solutions and one-size-fits-all diet plans, the key to effective weight management often lies in addressing what's happening beneath the surface—your hormonal health. The intricate dance of hormones influences everything from your metabolism and hunger signals to fat storage and energy levels, making hormonal balance essential for sustainable weight loss.

When hormones like insulin, cortisol, thyroid hormones, and sex hormones fall out of sync, your body can stubbornly resist weight loss efforts despite dedicated diet and exercise. Understanding this connection empowers individuals to take a more personalized, effective approach to their weight management journey.

Insulin regulation forms the foundation of hormonal weight management. This powerful hormone determines whether your body stores or burns fat. When insulin levels remain consistently elevated through frequent sugar consumption and processed carbohydrates, your body becomes locked in fat-storage mode. Strategic meal timing, prioritizing protein and fiber, and reducing refined carbohydrates can help restore insulin sensitivity, allowing your body to access stored fat for energy.

Chronic stress triggers another hormonal disruptor—cortisol. This "stress hormone" signals your body to hold onto fat reserves, particularly around the midsection. Implementing stress-reduction techniques like mindfulness meditation, adequate sleep, and regular movement breaks throughout the day can help normalize cortisol patterns and remove this hormonal barrier to weight loss.

Thyroid health deserves special attention as this small gland produces hormones that regulate your metabolic rate. Even slightly underactive thyroid function can significantly impact weight management efforts. Regular testing, addressing nutritional deficiencies (particularly selenium, zinc, and iodine), and eliminating environmental toxins can support optimal thyroid function.

For women, fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone throughout the menstrual cycle and during perimenopause/menopause create additional considerations. These hormonal shifts influence hunger



hunger levels, cravings, water retention, and fat distribution. Tracking symptoms throughout your cycle and adjusting nutrition and exercise accordingly can transform these natural rhythms from obstacles into strategic advantages.

Sleep quality serves as a powerful regulator of multiple weight-related hormones, including ghrelin and leptin, which control hunger and satiety. Prioritizing sleep hygiene—consistent bedtimes, screen-free wind-downs, and optimized sleep environments—can enhance hormonal balance and weight management success.

Implementing nutrition strategies that support hormonal health extends beyond calorie counting. Focus on nutrient density, incorporating anti-inflammatory foods like fatty fish, colorful vegetables, and healing spices. Experiment with intermittent fasting approaches after consulting healthcare providers, as time-restricted eating patterns can reset insulin sensitivity and improve metabolic flexibility.

Movement patterns significantly impact hormonal balance. While excessive high-intensity exercise can actually increase cortisol in already-stressed individuals, strategic strength training stimulates growth hormone production and builds metabolically active tissue. Combining strength work with low-intensity activities like walking creates an optimal exercise environment for hormonal weight management.

Environmental factors also influence hormonal health. Reducing exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in plastics, conventional cleaning products, and personal care items removes obstacles to natural hormonal balance.

The path to sustainable weight management through hormonal balance requires patience and personalization. Working with healthcare providers to test and address specific imbalances provides a targeted approach. By shifting focus from quick fixes to addressing root causes, individuals gain not only control over their weight but improvements in energy, mood, sleep quality, and overall vitality.

Hormonal harmony offers a profound shift—from fighting against your body to working with its natural intelligence for lasting health transformation.

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THE BREAKTHROUGH POWER OF SHOCK WAVE THERAPY: Revolutionizing Pain Treatment

By Jordan Sanderson D.C.

In the evolving landscape of non-invasive medical treatments, Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) stands out as a revolutionary approach to musculoskeletal healing. This cutting-edge technology, now available along Florida's Gulf Coast through Dr. Sanderson and the Amplified Chiropractic and Wellness team, is transforming how we address chronic pain and injuries.

What Is Shock Wave Therapy?

ESWT utilizes acoustic pressure waves that are delivered through the skin to targeted tissue areas experiencing pain or injury. These high-energy sound waves travel through the body's tissues, creating microtrauma that triggers the body's natural healing response. Unlike surgical interventions, ESWT stimulates cellular repair mechanisms without incisions, significantly reducing recovery time and complications.

Proven Effectiveness for Multiple Conditions

Originally developed to break down kidney stones, shock wave therapy has expanded its therapeutic applications dramatically. Clinical research now supports its effectiveness for treating:

- Plantar fasciitis and heel pain
- Tennis and golfer's elbow
- Rotator cuff injuries and shoulder pain
- Achilles tendinopathy
- Hip and knee pain
- Chronic muscle tension
- Sports injuries and repetitive strain disorders

Patients experiencing these conditions who haven't responded to traditional treatments often find remarkable relief through ESWT when other approaches have failed.

The Treatment Experience

During an ESWT session, patients experience a series of controlled pressure pulses directed at the injury site. While some patients report mild discomfort during treatment, sessions typically last only 10-15 minutes. Most treatment protocols involve 3-5 sessions spaced about a week apart, with many patients reporting improvement after just 1-2 treatments.

What separates ESWT from other therapies is its dual-action approach: immediate pain reduction coupled with accelerated tissue regeneration. This combination not only addresses symptoms but targets the root cause of musculoskeletal problems.

Why Gulf Coast Residents Should Consider ESWT For residents along Florida's Gulf Coast dealing with persistent pain, ESWT offers several distinct advantages:

1. Non-invasive alternative to surgery
2. No medication or injections required
3. Minimal recovery time with no activity restrictions
4. Stimulates natural healing processes
5. High success rates for conditions that typically require lengthy rehabilitation

Dr. Sanderson's introduction of this technology to the Gulf Coast represents a significant advancement in regional healthcare options. Patients no longer need to travel to major metropolitan areas to access this state-of-the-art treatment.

The Future of Pain Treatment

As medical science continues to advance, ESWT exemplifies the shift toward treatments that work with the body's natural processes rather than overriding them. The therapy's growing adoption among sports medicine professionals and orthopedic specialists signals its emergence as a standard treatment for musculoskeletal conditions.

For those suffering from chronic pain or injuries that haven't responded to conventional approaches, shock wave therapy offers not just relief, but genuine healing and restored function.

Holistic Health Philosophy

At the core of Dr. Sanderson's practice are four fundamental pillars of functional health: **Body, Gut, Mind, Oxygen**

After years of searching for a healthcare center that embodies a truly comprehensive approach, Dr. Sanderson is now bringing his integrated healing philosophy to the Gulf Coast of Florida.

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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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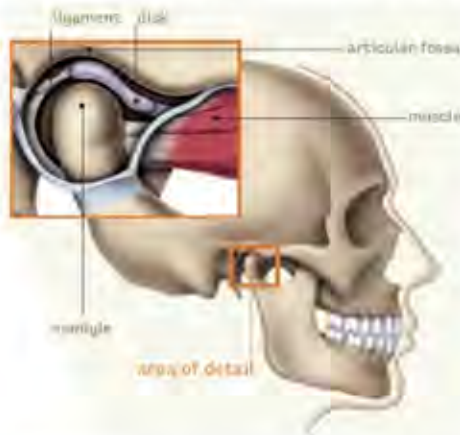


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The Daily “Grind”

By Dr. Joseph Farag

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



Treatment Options

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

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

Patients who present with TMD should also have an occlusal analysis

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

Relaxation Techniques May Help Alleviate TMJ Symptoms

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

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



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Stress is Sabotaging Your Health— Here's How to Take Back Control

In the modern whirlwind of life, stress has become an unavoidable companion. The relentless pace of work, family obligations, and societal pressures often leaves little room for relaxation and rejuvenation. This neglect of self-care plays a crucial role in the elevation of cortisol, our primary stress hormone, compelling our bodies into a constant state of "fight or flight." Research indicates that chronic stress is a significant contributor to a myriad of health issues, including obesity, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, and digestive dysfunction (McEwen, 2006). The implications extend beyond physical health; they also include mental well-being, cognitive function, and emotional stability. While it is tempting to zone out with television programming, doom scroll on social media, or eat yet another box of cookies to manage stress, these activities fail to address the damaging physical effects of stress and may even perpetuate a negative cycle into more stress, in some cases.

Ignoring the importance of relaxation and engaging in parasympathetic-dominant activities can accelerate the aging process, leading to premature aging and a heightened risk of early mortality (Seeman et al., 2001). Chronic stress profoundly impacts various bodily systems, leading to a cascade of negative effects.

The Gut-Brain Connection: How Stress Disrupts Digestion and Overall Health

The digestive system is particularly vulnerable to stress. When the body is in a prolonged "fight or flight" state, digestion slows, nutrient absorption decreases, and the gut microbiome becomes imbalanced. Stress can lead to conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), acid reflux, bloating, and food sensitivities. It also weakens the gut lining, increasing inflammation and contributing to "leaky gut," which may trigger autoimmune responses and chronic fatigue.

The gut and brain are deeply connected via the vagus nerve, which regulates digestion and relaxation. Chronic stress reduces vagal tone, impairing gut motility and the body's ability to regulate inflammation. As a result, the digestive system struggles to function optimally, further exacerbating stress-related symptoms like brain fog, anxiety, and fatigue.



The Role of the Parasympathetic Nervous System in Stress Recovery

The **parasympathetic nervous system (PNS)** is responsible for counteracting stress by promoting relaxation, digestion, and healing. When activated, the PNS lowers cortisol, reduces heart rate, and supports hormonal balance, allowing the body to shift from a state of survival to one of restoration.

Activities that engage the PNS include:

- **Meditation & Breathwork** – Lowers cortisol and improves vagal tone.
- **Mindful Eating** – Enhances digestion and absorption of nutrients.
- **Nature Exposure** – Reduces stress hormones and increases serotonin.
- **Aromatherapy** – Stimulates relaxation through the olfactory system.
- **Yoga & Gentle Movement** – Reduces muscle tension and enhances nervous system regulation.

Creating Your Personalized Self-Care Stress Management Plan

The first step in addressing chronic stress is prioritizing **scheduled self-care**—just like you would an important meeting or doctor's appointment. A structured plan ensures you make space for relaxation and healing, preventing stress from compounding over time.

One of the most effective ways to commit to self-care is by incorporating **HOCATT sessions** into your wellness routine. The **Hyperthermic Ozone and Carbonic Acid Transdermal Technology (HOCATT)** system offers a multi-layered approach to relaxation and stress reduction, working in synergy with the body's natural healing mechanisms.

How HOCATT Helps You Take Back Control of Your Health:

- **Vagus Nerve Stimulation** – Encourages deep relaxation and activates the parasympathetic nervous system.
- **Oxygenation & Circulation** – Enhances blood flow, ensuring that oxygen and nutrients reach the brain, organs, and tissues more effectively. Proper oxygenation supports the nervous system, reducing stress-related fatigue and brain fog while improving energy levels and emotional resilience.
- **Reduction of Oxidative Stress** – Chronic stress fuels inflammation, and inflammation, in turn, amplifies stress—creating a vicious cycle that wreaks havoc on the body. HOCATT helps break this cycle by delivering antioxidants that neutralize free radicals, reducing systemic inflammation and promoting cellular repair. This not only helps restore balance but also mitigates the long-term health risks associated with chronic stress.
- **Scheduled Self-Care** – Ensures you consistently engage in relaxation without excuses, giving your body the time and space to recover from daily stressors.

Health coaching, stress management techniques, meditation, and yoga are also available to support your journey toward a calmer, healthier life. But the key to transformation starts with **taking action**.

Start Your Personalized Program to Annihilate Stress Today!

Prioritize your well-being by **scheduling your first HOCATT session**. Give your body the gift of relaxation, renewal, and resilience—because you deserve to **thrive, not just survive**.

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When You Are At Your Wits End

Have you ever been at your wits' end? Have you ever been so confused that you didn't really know which way was up? Have you ever had the feeling, "I know I need to do something...but I don't know what 'something' to do."

The Bible tells the story of a group of sailors who went out to sea and encountered a huge storm that almost killed them:

²³Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. ²⁴They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. ²⁵For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. ²⁶They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. ²⁷They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. ²⁸Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. ²⁹He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. ³¹Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Psalm 107:23-31

Can you relate to this group of sailors? Maybe the circumstances in your life have caused your courage to melt away. Perhaps you are going through a storm of your own. You may find yourself at your wits' end without any clear direction as to what to do next. If so, follow the example of the sailors in the Bible.

The first thing they did was cry out to the LORD in their trouble. Don't underestimate the power of prayer. An old gospel song says, "when God is all you have, you'll find He's all you need." God responded to the sailor's prayer by bringing them out of their distress. In fact, it says he stilled the storm to a whisper and the waves of the sea were hushed. God can do that in your life and in your situation as well. Call out to him. His timing is not always as quick as we may like but He knows what is best for each of us.

When the storm was over, the text says that God guided the sailors to their desired haven. They found their place of rest and peace. Storms don't last forever... and neither will yours. Keep your faith in God. Cry out to Him in your pain. Trust that He knows what's best and keep praying and seeking your desired haven... it may be just around the corner.

And then, don't forget to thank God when He does bring you through the storm. The story concludes by saying, "Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

Storms, crises, pain and problems are an unfortunate reality of life. We grow through the pain and learn valuable lessons during these times. Don't give up, give in, or quit. When you find yourself at your wits' end...hang on, cry out to God, and look for His deliverance.



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



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