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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

May 2025

Charlotte/South Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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contents MAY 2025

6 Avoid Weight Gain When Quitting Tobacco

7 Complications of Vein Disease

8 Your Podiatrist's Role to Pain-Free Walking

9 Sculpting the Future: How EmSculpt NEO Transforms Physical Fitness

10 Florida Gulf Coast University: The Leader in Healthcare Education

11 How to Exercise with Arthritis

12 Shedding Light on Stroke Awareness Month: Unveiling the Link Between Strokes and Vision

13 Neuropathy Can't Keep a Good Man Down

14 When Inflammation Rules Your Life: A Holistic Approach to Easing Arthritis

15 Early Detection Saves Lives: What You Should Know About the Latest Life-Saving Technology

16 Trusted Contact Authorizations: A Vital Shield Against Elder Financial Exploitation

17 Nurturing Your Mind: Embracing Mental Health Month for a More Fulfilling Life

18 Balancing Act: How Hormones Influence Weight Loss & Energy Levels

19 Understanding Otolaryngologists: The Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialists

20 Shock Wave Therapy: A Promising Alternative Treatment for Arthritis

21 May: Better Hearing and Speech Month: Breaking the Sound Barrier of Communication

22 All-In-One Dental Visit with CEREC

23 Spiritual Wellness: Slowing the Pace of Your Life

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AVOID WEIGHT GAIN WHEN QUITTING TOBACCO

When tobacco users set out to quit using tobacco, they may be faced with the obstacle of weight gain. Although it is possible to gain weight when you quit, it is not inevitable. There are many things you can do to keep the weight gain in check.

When an individual quits tobacco, there may be a slight change in metabolism — how fast the body burns calories. Nicotine in tobacco products is an appetite suppressant which means individuals may feel hungrier when they quit. Food is also going to smell and taste better as the tar that coats the nasal cavity and taste buds starts to break down. Lastly, some individuals may want to eat to keep from using tobacco.

Check out these tips for managing weight gain when you quit:

Pay attention to your plate:

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat snacks like pretzels.
- Use sugar-free hard candy as an alternative to tobacco.
- Choose foods low in sodium, trans fat and added sugar. Read food labels and choose healthful options.
- Drink lots of water!

Incorporate physical activity:

- Physical activity helps to release stress.
- Physical activity can help control your appetite.
- Being active can improve your mood.
- Physical activity burns calories and can help you lose weight if you take in fewer calories than you use up.

Find other activities to stay busy or prevent boredom:

- Play with a pencil, stress ball, paper clip or marbles.
- Munch on carrots, apples, celery and sugarless gum.
- Brush your teeth often and keep a fresh taste in your mouth.
- Keep your hands busy — wash the car, garden, knit, do crossword puzzles, write letters, cook.
- Try a new sport.

So, if you are avoiding quitting smoking for good because you are afraid of weight gain, do not let it get in the way of kicking the habit to the curb once and for all! The most important thing you need to remember is that tobacco does not make you thin and quitting does not make you fat. Focus on what you will “gain” when you quit — a healthier body and outlook.



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!

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1. How can I avoid weight gain when I stop smoking? American Heart Association, http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/QuitSmoking/YourNon-SmokingLife/How-Can-I-Avoid-Weight-Gain-When-I-Stop-Smoking_UCM_307852_Article.jsp#.V2gwNNjbYU. Accessed June 20, 2016.



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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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YOUR PODIATRIST'S ROLE TO PAIN-FREE WALKING

By Ravnik Singh, DPM, AACFAS

May is Arthritis Awareness Month, a time to shine a spotlight on a condition that affects more than 53 million adults in the U.S. alone. While arthritis can strike any joint in the body, many people don't realize just how much it can impact the feet and ankles—until it becomes impossible to ignore. That's where podiatry steps in.

Understanding Arthritis in the Feet

There are more than 100 types of arthritis, but the most common types affecting the feet include:

- **Osteoarthritis:** A wear-and-tear condition that breaks down joint cartilage over time.
- **Rheumatoid arthritis (RA):** An autoimmune disease that attacks joint linings, often symmetrically (both feet).
- **Gout:** A painful type of inflammatory arthritis that often begins in the big toe.

Our feet contain 33 joints, and any one of them can be a target. As arthritis progresses, simple movements like walking, standing, or even wearing shoes can become a daily struggle.

Why Podiatrists Matter

Podiatrists are often the first line of defense when it comes to diagnosing and managing arthritis in the feet. With specialized training in the structure and mechanics of the lower limbs, they're uniquely positioned to:

- Identify early signs of joint degeneration
- Offer custom orthotics to relieve pressure on painful joints
- Recommend non-surgical treatments like physical therapy, steroid injections, or anti-inflammatory medications
- Perform surgical interventions if conservative treatments don't bring relief

Podiatrists also collaborate with rheumatologists and primary care providers to create holistic treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs.

Early Action = Long-Term Relief

The earlier arthritis is diagnosed, the better the outcome. Ignoring foot pain or stiffness can lead to joint deformity, decreased mobility, and a significant



drop in quality of life. During Arthritis Awareness Month, healthcare professionals urge people to pay attention to persistent foot and ankle issues and seek help before things get worse.

Take the First Step

If you or someone you love is struggling with chronic foot pain, swelling, or reduced mobility, don't wait. A podiatrist can help pinpoint the cause and develop a personalized plan to keep you moving—because every step matters.

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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Sculpting the Future:

How EmSculpt NEO Transforms Physical Fitness

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

In today's fitness landscape, technology continues to revolutionize how we approach body transformation. Among these innovations, EmSculpt NEO stands out as a groundbreaking solution that's changing the game for those seeking physical enhancement without the traditional sweat and tears of intense workouts.

The Science Behind EmSculpt NEO

EmSculpt NEO represents the next generation of non-invasive body contouring technology, combining two powerful approaches in one treatment. It pairs high-intensity focused electromagnetic technology (HIFEM) with radiofrequency (RF) energy to simultaneously build muscle and reduce fat. This dual-action approach makes it unique in the world of body sculpting treatments.

During a typical 30-minute session, the device delivers electromagnetic energy that forces muscles to contract at intensities impossible to achieve through voluntary workouts. These contractions—approximately 20,000 per session—work the muscles far beyond what conventional exercise can accomplish. Meanwhile, the radiofrequency component heats the treatment area, effectively targeting and eliminating fat cells while preparing muscles for optimal contractions.

Impressive Clinical Results

The effectiveness of EmSculpt NEO isn't just marketing hype—it's backed by scientific research. Clinical studies consistently demonstrate impressive results, with patients experiencing an average 30% reduction in fat and a 25% increase in muscle mass. These studies utilized various measurement techniques including MRI, ultrasound, and histology to verify these outcomes.

When applied to the abdominal region, EmSculpt NEO can also reactivate core muscles that may have weakened over time or after pregnancy. It has even shown effectiveness in treating mild diastasis recti, a condition where abdominal muscles separate.

Beyond Aesthetics: Functional Benefits

While many seek EmSculpt NEO for its aesthetic benefits, the treatment offers functional improvements that extend beyond appearance. The technology serves as an adjunctive therapy for various

medical conditions, helping increase range of motion, improve local blood circulation, re-educate muscles, relax muscle spasms, and prevent disuse atrophy.

Unlike procedures that only address fat reduction, EmSculpt NEO strengthens the muscles being treated. This means patients who target their abdomen are genuinely strengthening their core, while those treating buttocks area gain stronger glutes that improve performance in activities like squats and deadlifts.

Convenience and Comfort

One of EmSculpt NEO's most appealing aspects is its convenience. The treatment requires no downtime, allowing patients to resume normal activities immediately after a session. While some experience muscle fatigue similar to post-workout soreness, this typically resolves within 24-48 hours.

A standard treatment protocol usually involves four 30-minute sessions spaced about a week apart. Results can appear after just one session, though optimal outcomes typically emerge after completing the full series of treatments.

Who Can Benefit?

EmSculpt NEO serves a wide range of individuals, from fitness enthusiasts looking to enhance their results to those struggling with stubborn fat despite diet and exercise. The treatment has been FDA-cleared as safe and effective when performed by qualified practitioners.

It's approved for individuals with BMIs up to 35, making it accessible to more body types than previous technologies. The treatment can target multiple areas including the abdomen, buttocks, thighs, arms, and calves.

Long-Term Value

Unlike temporary solutions, EmSculpt NEO offers lasting benefits when combined with healthy lifestyle choices. While muscle enhancement results typically last 6-12 months or longer with regular exercise and proper nutrition, the fat reduction component can be permanent since eliminated fat cells don't return.

The Future of Fitness Enhancement

EmSculpt NEO represents a paradigm shift in how we approach physical fitness enhancement. By combining muscle building with fat reduction in a single, non-invasive treatment, it bridges the gap between conventional exercise and more invasive cosmetic procedures.

For those looking to supplement their fitness regimen or overcome plateaus in their physical transformation journey, EmSculpt NEO offers a scientifically-validated option that delivers measurable results without surgery or extensive recovery time. As we continue to embrace innovative approaches to health and wellness, technologies like EmSculpt NEO demonstrate how science can help us achieve physical goals more efficiently than ever before.

Start Your Health Journey with Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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

Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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



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Florida Gulf Coast University: The Leader in Healthcare Education

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

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

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

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

Marieb College Continues to Grow

When FGCU welcomed its first students in 1997, what was then the College of Health Professions enrolled 178 students in a nursing bachelor's degree program and bachelor's and master's degrees in health science. Today, Marieb College of Health & Human Services educates approximately 2,500 students a year in 15 degree programs in its School of Nursing and Departments of Social Work, Rehabilitation Sciences, Health Science and Counseling. The college also houses FGCU's Counseling and Psychological Services for students as well as the Community Counseling & Education Center.

And Marieb College continues to grow. A new health sciences building is under construction that will complement Marieb Hall, the college's home, where students learn in state-of-the-art classrooms and practice laboratory facilities. The new building will support further expansion of the college and further cement its ability to train the needed healthcare workforce.

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

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

We Create Well-Rounded Practitioners

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

Our graduates consistently score higher than peers from other institutions on national licensure exams, achieving 100% first-time pass rates in several different program areas. It's no wonder the majority of Marieb graduates are employed within six months of completing their education.

For the second consecutive year, 100% of Marieb's bachelor of science in nursing students passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses on their first attempt. It was the only program in the Florida State University System to achieve this feat.

But Marieb College's licensure success do not end there. For the 11th year, our master of science occupational therapy program maintained a 100% overall pass rate. Moreover, the doctor of physical therapy program secured a 100% first-time pass rate on the Florida Board of Physical Therapy licensing examination, with four students posting perfect scores. Our master of physician assistant studies program also secured a 100% overall pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination, marking five consecutive years with this success.

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

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

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

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

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



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How to Exercise with Arthritis

by ArchWell Health

Exercise can become more difficult with age. Aches and pains from arthritis can make activities you once enjoyed feel like a chore. It can also feel overwhelming to decide what exercises will help reduce the joint stiffness and muscle pain associated with arthritis. But there is good news! Just a few minutes of movement a day can help ease the impacts arthritis has on your life. So, if regular exercise and movement is a part of your plan, you'll be able to maintain a whole and healthy life with arthritis.

It is important to always talk with your ArchWell Health provider about your individual care plan and how exercise can fit into your wellness goals. These suggestions could be a great place to start a conversation.

Focus on Low-Impact Activities

Low impact activities and daily movement can lessen the symptoms of arthritis. Plus, these activities can help protect your knees and other joints as you age. Walking, dancing, cycling, water activities and even gardening are all examples of low-impact exercises. Using a resistance band can also be a fun, low-impact way to build strength and fight off arthritis pain. Resistance bands can be found at your gym, or are affordable to purchase online or at a local retailer.

Remember to Stretch

Many people forget about this crucial step. Stretching in the morning can help you warm up your muscles and joints for the day. Plus, stretching your arms, shoulders, hips and knees can help increase or maintain your range of motion. This means you will be able to move throughout the day with less pain! Talk with your ArchWell Health provider about safe stretches for your body and current pain levels.

Prioritize Nutrition

Drinking water is always important but is especially crucial after exercise. Make sure you take time to sit down with a glass of water after completing a low-impact activity or stretching. Eating certain foods can



also help reduce inflammation that contributes to arthritis discomfort. Try fueling up with fruits and vegetables, fish, olive oil, unrefined grains, nuts, seeds and beans after an activity.

Check Out ArchWell Health's Zumba and Chair Yoga Classes

Not only are Zumba and chair yoga classes low-impact activities that can protect your joints from stress, but they are also fun ways to improve your balance and get active. ArchWell Health Centers host a range of activities every week for members. Talk to your local center today to sign up!

Take Steps to Manage Arthritis Today

Remember you are not alone in dealing with the pain and discomfort caused by arthritis. Your ArchWell Health care team is ready to help you create a plan so that you live your life to the fullest.

For more information on how ArchWell Health can help you manage your arthritis, visit www.archwellhealth.com or call (941) 297-2126.

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Shedding Light on Stroke Awareness Month: Unveiling the Link Between Strokes and Vision

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

May marks Stroke Awareness Month, a crucial time to highlight the importance of understanding strokes and their potential impact on various aspects of health, including vision. While strokes primarily affect the brain, their repercussions can extend to the eyes, often serving as early indicators or resulting in lasting visual impairments. As we delve into the connection between strokes and vision, it becomes evident that raising awareness about this correlation is essential for early detection, prevention, and holistic stroke management.

Strokes, often referred to as "brain attacks," occur when blood flow to the brain is interrupted or reduced, leading to the deprivation of oxygen and essential nutrients. This interruption can result from a blockage in the blood vessels (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels (hemorrhagic stroke). While strokes can manifest in various ways, including sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, difficulty speaking, and severe headaches, their impact on vision is less commonly understood.

The eyes serve as windows to the brain, and changes in vision can often indicate underlying neurological issues, including strokes. One of the most common visual symptoms associated with strokes is sudden vision loss or changes, which can range from partial blindness to double vision. These changes may occur abruptly and affect one or both eyes, depending on the location and severity of the stroke. Additionally, individuals may experience visual disturbances such as blurred vision, tunnel vision, or difficulty focusing, all of which warrant immediate medical attention.

The connection between strokes and vision lies in the intricate network of blood vessels that supply oxygen and nutrients to the eyes and the brain. When a stroke occurs, these blood vessels may become compromised, leading to decreased blood flow and potential damage to the optic nerve or retina. The optic nerve, responsible for transmitting visual information from the eyes to the brain, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of strokes, often resulting in vision loss or impairment.

Furthermore, strokes can indirectly impact vision through their effects on cognitive function and mobility. Cognitive impairments resulting from strokes, such as memory loss or difficulty processing information, can hinder a person's ability to interpret visual stimuli effectively. Similarly, mobility issues stemming from stroke-related paralysis or weakness can limit a person's field of vision and spatial awareness, increasing the risk of falls or accidents.

Early detection and intervention are crucial in mitigating the visual consequences of strokes. Regular eye exams, including assessments of visual acuity, peripheral vision, and eye movement, can help detect subtle changes indicative of underlying neurological issues. Additionally, imaging tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) scans can provide valuable insights into the extent and location of brain damage caused by strokes.

Preventive measures play a pivotal role in reducing the risk of strokes and preserving vision. Lifestyle modifications, including maintaining a healthy diet, engaging in regular exercise, managing stress, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, can significantly lower the risk of stroke occurrence. Moreover, managing underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol through medication and regular monitoring can further decrease the likelihood of stroke-related complications.

In conclusion, Stroke Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the multifaceted nature of strokes and their potential impact on vision. By understanding the connection between strokes and the eyes, individuals can take proactive steps to safeguard their visual health and reduce the risk of stroke-related visual impairments. Through increased awareness, early detection, and comprehensive stroke management, we can strive towards a future where strokes no longer cast a shadow on vision and overall well-being.



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

Retina Group of Florida

If you are experiencing any changes in your eye health, whether it is blurry vision, pain, impaired vision, or any other visual irregularities, you should see an 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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NEUROPATHY CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

Neuropathy, a chronic and often debilitating condition affecting the nerves, can drastically change a patient's quality of life. This is the case for Darren Hall, a patient under the care of Dr. Kenneth Carle. Darren's story reflects the profound impact that neuropathy can have on an individual's physical abilities and mental health, but it also showcases the potential for recovery with advanced treatments.

Darren's journey with neuropathy began in 2011, when the condition forced him to stop working as an HVAC contractor and stop driving. The loss of independence, combined with the constant pain, led to deep depression, culminating in two suicide attempts. For years, Darren relied on a walker and became progressively dependent on others. However, thanks to the comprehensive treatment plan offered by Dr. Carle, Darren's life is beginning to change.

The Role of Advanced Neuropathy Treatments

At Renewed Life Wellness Center, Darren has undergone a multi-faceted treatment plan designed to repair damaged nerves, improve circulation, and halt the progression of neuropathy. A combination of home devices and in-office therapies has been pivotal in his recovery.

At home, Darren uses three FDA-approved devices:

- 1. Electrical Nerve Stimulation Device** – This helps regenerate and repair damaged nerves.
- 2. Low-Level Light Therapy** – This device enhances circulation, allowing blood to flow more freely to the extremities.
- 3. Vibration Plate** – By increasing circulation, this device stimulates nerve function and promotes healing.

In addition to these home therapies, Darren applies specific creams and takes supplements daily, targeting inflammation and nerve health. While these tools have been critical in his day-to-day improvement, in-office treatments have accelerated his recovery significantly.

In-Office Treatments: Acoustic Wave Therapy

The cornerstone of in-office treatment at Renewed Life Wellness Center is **Acoustic Wave Therapy**. This therapy addresses one of the primary causes of nerve damage in neuropathy: scar tissue. Over time,

scar tissue builds up around damaged nerves, constricting them and worsening symptoms. Acoustic Wave Therapy works to break up this scar tissue, allowing healthy tissue to replace it. This process not only helps to stop the progression of neuropathy but can also reverse some of the symptoms such as numbness, tingling, burning, and pain.

For Darren, who had been unable to feel his feet for years, the ability to break up this scar tissue has been life changing. After just a few months of treatment, Darren took a major step forward in his recovery: he drove a car for the first time in 13 years. While it was a short, cautious drive around his neighborhood, it represented a significant milestone.

Understanding Neuropathy and Its Progression

Neuropathy is a progressive, degenerative disease that worsens over time without intervention. It can be caused by a variety of factors, including:

- **Diabetes** 50% of diabetics develop neuropathy
- **Injury or trauma** to the nerves, especially the lower back
- **Medications** like statins cause neuropathy
- **Heredity**
- **Toxins or chemotherapy**

The progression of neuropathy is divided into four stages, with stage four being the most severe. At this stage, the damage is often too advanced to be reversed. As Dr. Carle explains, stage four neuropathy is like "a house on fire that can't be extinguished." However, patients in earlier stages still have the potential for significant recovery.

At Renewed Life Wellness Center, a comprehensive 24-test evaluation is conducted to determine the stage of neuropathy each patient is in. These tests measure sensitivity to hot and cold, sharp and dull, vibration, and touch. In addition, thermography—a heat map of the body—is used to visualize circulation and identify areas of impairment.

The Limitations of Traditional Neuropathy Treatments

In conventional medicine, neuropathy is often managed with medications like gabapentin, Lyrica, or Neurontin. While these medications can help mask the pain, they do not address the underlying cause of the nerve damage. Moreover, these medications can come with side effects, one of the most common



being memory loss. This makes it difficult for many patients to adhere to a long-term medication regimen, especially when the drugs do little to stop the progression of the disease.

A Path to Recovery

For patients like Darren Hall, who are committed to following through with the treatment protocol, there is hope. Dr. Carle's approach not only aims to stop the progression of neuropathy but also focuses on reversing its symptoms.

Darren's story is a testament to the power of combining cutting-edge therapies and patient dedication. With the support of Dr. Carle and his team, Darren has gone from relying on a walker to using just a cane, and now he's driving again—something that seemed impossible for more than a decade.

If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms of numbness, tingling, burning, or pain in their extremities, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider. Dr. Kenneth Carle and the team at Renewed Life Wellness Center is ready to help.



Dr. Kenneth Carle
Chiropractic Physician



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When Inflammation Rules Your Life: A Holistic Approach to Easing Arthritis

You wake up and your fingers are stiff. Every movement feels slow, almost like your joints are stuck in molasses. The act of pouring coffee becomes a chore, gripping a toothbrush takes effort, and climbing stairs feels like you're hoisting weights. You once enjoyed morning walks, gardening, or playing with your grandchildren—but now, even those simple joys come with consequences: flares of pain, swelling, and fatigue. This is the day-to-day reality for many people living with arthritis, where pain and limitation take center stage and life starts to feel smaller.

The Hidden Driver Behind Arthritis: Inflammation

At the root of most arthritis-related pain is **inflammation**. Arthritis isn't just "wear and tear"—it's a complex condition where the body's immune response goes awry, attacking its own tissues or overreacting to stress and injury. This immune overactivation leads to joint swelling, warmth, stiffness, and pain.

Whether you're dealing with **osteoarthritis** (caused by the breakdown of cartilage) or **autoimmune forms like rheumatoid arthritis or psoriatic arthritis**, inflammation is a constant thread. And it's not just joint inflammation that matters—**systemic** inflammation throughout the body can make symptoms worse and contribute to fatigue, brain fog, and even cardiovascular risks.

Where Is the Inflammation Coming From?

Understanding the **sources of inflammation** is essential for healing. Here are some of the most common—and often overlapping—triggers:

- **Injury and repetitive strain:** One of the most overlooked sources of inflammation is **injury**—past or present. Whether it's from a fall, overuse, repetitive motions at work, sports trauma, or even micro-injuries that build up over time, the body responds with inflammation to begin the healing process. However, if healing is incomplete, inflammation can linger, turning into a **chronic low-grade fire** in the tissue. For those with autoimmune arthritis, even minor injuries can trigger exaggerated immune responses and **prolonged flares**. These injured areas often become "weak links" in the system—places where pain and stiffness recur due to unresolved inflammation and poor circulation.
- **Dietary triggers:** Processed foods, refined sugars, trans fats, gluten, dairy, and nightshades (like tomatoes and peppers) can provoke inflammatory responses in sensitive individuals.
- **Gut health issues:** Leaky gut and imbalanced gut microbiota (dysbiosis) can lead to immune dysregulation and systemic inflammation.
- **Chronic stress:** Stress hormones like cortisol, when dysregulated, contribute to inflammation and pain sensitivity.

- **Environmental toxins:** Mold, heavy metals, pesticides, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals in common products can burden the immune system.

- **Infections and stealth pathogens:** Low-grade viral or bacterial infections (like Epstein-Barr or Lyme co-infections) may trigger or exacerbate autoimmune responses.

- **Sedentary lifestyle:** Lack of movement reduces circulation and lymphatic drainage, impairing the body's ability to clear out inflammatory byproducts.

A Holistic Roadmap to Healing

Holistic care for arthritis focuses on **addressing the root causes** of inflammation and supporting the body's innate healing wisdom. It moves beyond medications that simply dull the pain to uncover why your body is inflamed in the first place.

Here are some powerful strategies that can make a difference:

- **Anti-inflammatory diet:** Emphasizing whole foods, leafy greens, omega-3-rich seeds, low-sugar fruits, and herbs like turmeric and ginger helps reduce inflammatory load.
- **Targeted supplementation:** Omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, magnesium, curcumin, and proteolytic enzymes can support joint health and immune regulation.
- **Detoxification support:** Liver and lymphatic support through herbal teas, dry brushing, sauna therapy, and binders can assist the body in clearing out environmental triggers.
- **Stress and nervous system regulation:** Mind-body therapies like breathwork, meditation, EFT tapping, and gentle yoga calm the inflammation-driving stress response.
- **Functional medicine testing:** Identifying food sensitivities, infections, toxic load, and gut health imbalances provides a roadmap for personalized healing.
- **Movement therapy:** Joint-friendly exercise like swimming, tai chi, and rebounding can keep joints lubricated and blood moving without overstraining inflamed tissues.
- **Injury repair and circulation reactivation:** Using therapies that improve circulation, oxygenation, and waste clearance—like ozone, carbonic acid therapy, and full-spectrum infrared—can help the body heal from long-standing inflammatory responses rooted in injury.

How HOCATT Enhances Arthritis Relief

HOCATT (Hyperthermic Ozone and Carbonic Acid Transdermal Technology) is one of the most effective tools we offer for people living with arthritis and inflammation-related disorders. In a single 30-minute session, HOCATT combines multiple powerful healing modalities that target the root of chronic pain.

Here's how HOCATT helps:

- **Reduces inflammation and pain:** Ozone therapy is known for its immune-modulating, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial effects. It calms excessive immune activation and supports tissue repair.
- **Improves circulation and oxygen delivery:** Carbonic acid (CO₂ dissolved in water vapor) dilates blood vessels, allowing more oxygen-rich blood to reach inflamed or injured tissues. This vasodilation is crucial for supporting healing in areas with poor circulation—like old injury sites and stiff joints.
- **Detoxifies the body:** HOCATT enhances detoxification through the skin and lymphatic system, helping to eliminate heavy metals, environmental toxins, and inflammatory waste that burden the joints and immune system.
- **Relaxes the nervous system:** The calming heat and steam therapy help reduce stress-driven inflammation by shifting the body into a parasympathetic, rest-and-repair mode.
- **Accelerates healing from injuries:** By increasing oxygen and circulation while reducing inflammation and supporting lymphatic drainage, HOCATT is especially effective for those whose arthritis pain is tied to unresolved injuries or scar tissue.

An Invitation to Try a New Approach

If arthritis has been dictating your life—limiting your movement, robbing you of joy, and making everyday tasks harder—**there is hope beyond just masking the symptoms.**

At **Soaring Spirit**, we use an integrative and root-cause approach to help you move freely, feel better, and live with vitality. Our HOCATT sessions are just one part of a holistic plan tailored to your unique needs.

We invite you to come in for a no-charge consultation to explore how functional wellness and advanced therapies like HOCATT can help you regain control of your body—and your life.

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EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST LIFE-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

The best way to conquer, fight and overcome any disease state is to have early diagnostic testing at the onset of symptoms, or as a preventative measure. Individuals with high-risk factors for coronary artery disease, or certain cancers are highly encouraged to have annual screenings for their specific disease states potentials.

RAVE RADIOLOGY

At RAVE Radiology, they put your health at the forefront of their mission, by investing in the latest most up to date technology available. RAVE, Radiology Associates of Venice & Englewood understand the importance of providing the best methods and the most advanced diagnostic tools for their patients.

RAVE is a radiology practice, which has been active for over 30 years. They currently consist of 10 board-certified radiologists, many of which have postgraduate fellowships with subspecialty training, all of whom have years of full-time experience. There are over 90 healthcare professions working with RAVE to provide the best possible radiologic services in Sarasota County. In addition to their personnel, they have some of the best radiologic imaging devices available. Superior visualization makes your diagnoses accurate and timely, preventing potentially dangerous delays in initiation of your therapy. At RAVE, you can have confidence you're getting top-notch professional assistance in your diagnosis and care.

CRITICAL CARDIAC TESTING

Cardiac Scoring is a Non-Invasive CT Scan of the heart, which calculates the risk of developing Coronary Artery Disease by measuring the amount of calcified plaque in the coronary arteries.

LEADING LUNG DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS

CT Lung Screening: If you have been a heavy smoker, then you are at significantly increased risk of developing lung cancer. CT can find small lung nodules that might be cancer before any other test can detect them. If you are between the ages of 55 and 75, then national experts recommend you undergo low dose CT screening for lung cancer. These recommendations come from many groups of medical experts including the National Lung Screening Trial Research Team, the American College of Chest Physicians, and American Society of Clinical Oncology.

RAVE is committed to you and your family's health. If you wish to undergo a lung cancer screening, you should ask your doctor to order it, or you can contact RAVE directly to schedule an appointment.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MRI AND CT SCANS

MRI uses a strong magnetic field, radio waves and a computer. This enables MRI to make very detailed pictures of bone, organs, soft tissues and any other body structures. Differences between normal and abnormal tissue is often clearer on an MRI image than a CT.

CT uses a very thin unique X-ray beam to produce detailed, cross-sectional views of the area being studied. CT is often the preferred method of diagnosing causes of pain and many different forms of cancer.

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

CARDIAC

- Smoking
- Atherosclerosis
- Family History
- Shortness of Breath
- Lethargy
- Chest pain
- Leg pain

LUNG

- Smoking
- Pollutants
- Asthma
- COPD
- Frequent Coughing
- Shortness of Breath and more...

ADDITIONAL RAVE DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

- Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- 3T Wide Bore MRI (Open)
- Multi-Slice CT
- Cancer & Heart Calcium Screening
- MRA
- CTA
- P.E.T. (Positron Emission Tomography)
- Digital Mammography
- Nuclear Medicine
- Ultrasound
- Osteoporosis (Bone Density/DEXA) Evaluation
- Diagnostic Radiology/X-ray
- Non-invasive Vascular Testing



To find out if you're a candidate for CT Lung Cancer Screening, you can use the Lung Cancer Risk Calculator at <http://www.shouldiscreen.com>.

For more information on early diagnostic testing and screenings, please visit their website at www.RaveRad.com



www.raverad.com

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941-342-RAVE (7283)
Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm



Trusted Contact Authorizations: A Vital Shield Against Elder Financial Exploitation

By Carl Zacharia

In an era where financial scams targeting seniors have reached epidemic proportions, trusted contact authorizations stand as a critical line of defense. These simple yet powerful arrangements allow financial institutions to reach out to a designated person when they suspect something might be amiss with an older account holder's transactions or decision-making. As elder financial exploitation continues to claim billions annually from vulnerable seniors, understanding how to implement these protections has never been more important.

The Growing Threat of Elder Financial Exploitation

Financial scams targeting older Americans have become increasingly sophisticated. Romance scammers build false relationships over months before requesting financial assistance. Investment fraudsters offer "guaranteed" returns that evaporate once money is transferred. Even family members sometimes exploit access to accounts.

The statistics are sobering: according to recent estimates, elder financial abuse costs seniors approximately \$36.5 billion annually. More distressing still is that many cases go unreported, with victims often experiencing shame or fear of losing independence.

What makes seniors particularly vulnerable? Many live alone after losing a spouse, face cognitive changes that affect financial decision-making, or come from generations that typically place high value on politeness and trust. When financial institutions lack proper authorization to discuss concerns with family members, exploitation can continue undetected for months or years.

How Trusted Contact Authorizations Work

A trusted contact authorization is essentially permission granted to your financial institution to contact a designated person if they notice suspicious activity or have concerns about your well-being. Unlike a power of attorney, this designation doesn't allow the trusted contact to make transactions or changes to the account. Instead, it creates a communication channel when something seems amiss.

Financial institutions can reach out to trusted contacts when:

- They cannot reach the account holder after repeated attempts
- They observe unusual transaction patterns that suggest potential exploitation
- They have concerns about the account holder's mental capacity
- They suspect undue influence or coercion

This limited but crucial role allows financial institutions to sound an alarm without violating privacy regulations that might otherwise prevent them from reaching out.

Setting Up Trusted Contact Authorizations

Establishing trusted contact authorizations is straightforward but requires thoughtful consideration:

1. **Select appropriate contacts:** Choose individuals who are financially responsible, trustworthy, and reasonably accessible. Consider geographic proximity, as local contacts may be better positioned to check on you physically if needed. Many experts recommend naming at least two trusted contacts.
2. **Contact your financial institutions:** Most major banks and investment firms now offer trusted contact forms. Contact each institution where you hold accounts, as you'll need to complete this process separately for each one. Many allow you to complete this process online through your account portal.
3. **Complete the authorization forms:** Provide contact information including name, relationship, phone numbers, email, and mailing address for each trusted contact. Be thorough so institutions can reach them through multiple channels if necessary.
4. **Review and update regularly:** Set calendar reminders to review your trusted contacts annually, especially after major life changes like relocations, health issues, or changes in family dynamics.
5. **Inform your trusted contacts:** Have an open conversation with those you've designated, explaining the responsibility and circumstances under which they might be contacted. Ensure they're comfortable with the role and know what to expect.

Beyond Trusted Contacts: Creating a Comprehensive Protection Plan

While trusted contact authorizations are valuable, they work best as part of a broader financial protection strategy:

- **Financial powers of attorney:** These legal documents allow a designated agent to manage finances if you become incapacitated. Unlike trusted contacts, these agents have transaction authority.
- **Account monitoring services:** Many institutions offer services that alert designated individuals to large withdrawals or unusual activity patterns.
- **Regular family financial discussions:** Open conversations about financial management reduce stigma and create natural oversight.
- **Professional oversight:** Consider involving financial advisors, accountants, or elder law attorneys in regular reviews of financial activity.

Taking Action Now

The most effective time to implement trusted contact authorizations is before any signs of exploitation appear. For adult children of aging parents, approaching this topic requires sensitivity. Frame the conversation around preserving independence rather than removing it—these arrangements actually help seniors maintain control of their finances by adding a layer of protection.

Financial institutions have increasingly embraced these protections, recognizing their role in preventing elder abuse. Many now proactively ask clients to designate trusted contacts during account openings or reviews.

In a landscape where scammers continuously refine their tactics, trusted contact authorizations represent a simple yet powerful tool that costs nothing to implement but potentially saves seniors from devastating financial losses and the accompanying emotional trauma. By taking this straightforward step today, we create an important safety net for our loved ones and ourselves in the years ahead.

Schedule a consultation today by calling 239.345.4545 or by visiting ZacBrownLaw.com to learn how we can help you to protect what matters most.

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NURTURING YOUR MIND:

Embracing Mental Health Month for a More Fulfilling Life

By Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC

Mental Health Month serves as a powerful reminder that our psychological well-being deserves the same care and attention we give to our physical health. This annual observance in May encourages us to reflect on our mental state, dismantle stigmas, and implement practices that foster emotional resilience. By prioritizing mental wellness, we open the door to a more meaningful, balanced, and ultimately fulfilling life.

Understanding the connection between mental health and life satisfaction begins with recognizing that our minds influence every aspect of our existence. Our thoughts shape our perceptions, guide our decisions, and color our experiences. When we neglect our mental health, we limit our capacity to engage fully with life's richness. Conversely, when we nurture our psychological well-being, we enhance our ability to find joy, purpose, and connection in everyday moments.

The journey toward better mental health starts with self-awareness. Take time to check in with yourself regularly, noting patterns in your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This mindfulness practice helps identify areas that may need attention before small concerns develop into larger problems. Remember that acknowledging struggles isn't weakness—it's an essential first step toward growth and healing.

Building strong connections forms another cornerstone of mental wellness. Humans are inherently social creatures, and meaningful relationships provide emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and contribute significantly to our sense of belonging. Make an effort to nurture relationships with family, friends, and community members. Even brief interactions can boost mood and provide perspective when challenges arise. Consider joining groups centered around shared interests to expand your social circle organically.

Physical well-being and mental health exist in a symbiotic relationship. Regular exercise releases endorphins that naturally elevate mood, while adequate sleep allows the brain to process emotions and consolidate memories. Nutritious eating provides the



building blocks your brain needs to function optimally. These physical practices create a foundation that supports psychological resilience and emotional stability throughout life's ups and downs.

Finding purpose represents another vital element of a fulfilling life. Engaging in meaningful activities—whether through work, volunteering, creative expression, or personal projects—provides a sense of accomplishment and contribution. Purpose gives context to our daily efforts and connects us to something larger than ourselves. During Mental Health Month, consider exploring new activities that align with your values and strengths to discover fresh sources of meaning.

Learning to manage stress effectively protects mental health during inevitable difficult periods. Techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation activate the body's relaxation response. Establishing boundaries around work and digital consumption prevents burnout and creates space for restorative activities. The goal isn't to eliminate stress entirely but to develop skills that help you navigate challenging circumstances while maintaining equilibrium.

Perhaps most importantly, cultivating gratitude shifts attention from what's lacking to what's present. Research consistently shows that grateful people experience more positive emotions, greater life satisfaction, and even better physical health. A simple practice of noting three things you appreciate daily can gradually transform your perspective and enhance your capacity for joy, even during difficult seasons.

Professional support plays a crucial role for many on their mental health journey. Therapy provides a safe space to explore concerns, develop coping strategies, and gain insights. If you're struggling, reaching out to a mental health professional demonstrates

courage and self-care, not failure. Mental Health Month often brings awareness campaigns and resources that can help connect individuals with appropriate support services.

Embracing imperfection also contributes to mental well-being. Perfectionism often leads to self-criticism and unrealistic standards that undermine happiness. Learning to accept yourself—strengths, weaknesses, and all—creates psychological freedom and opens doors to authentic connection with others. Practice self-compassion by treating yourself with the same kindness you would offer a good friend.

As Mental Health Month reminds us, tending to our psychological well-being isn't a luxury or indulgence—it's essential maintenance for a life well-lived. By incorporating awareness, connection, physical care, purpose, stress management, gratitude, and appropriate support into our routines, we create the conditions for true fulfillment to flourish.

The path isn't always straightforward, and progress often comes through small, consistent actions rather than dramatic changes. Be patient with yourself, celebrate improvements, and remember that caring for your mental health is a lifelong practice worth prioritizing—not just during Mental Health Month, but every day of the year.



Meet Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC

Bilingual in Spanish and English, Jo is one of the visionary leaders at Phoenix Behavioral Group. As a board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Jo brings a wealth of expertise and a compassionate touch to the forefront of patient care. With unwavering dedication, she strives to empower individuals to reclaim their mental health and lead more fulfilling lives.

Jo is currently accepting the majority of insurances, give us a call to schedule an appointment.



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BALANCING ACT:

How Hormones Influence Weight Loss and Energy Levels

When it comes to weight management and energy levels, many people focus solely on calories and exercise while overlooking a crucial factor: hormonal balance. These powerful chemical messengers orchestrate numerous bodily functions and play a fundamental role in determining how effectively we burn fat, build muscle, and maintain energy throughout the day.

The Hormone-Weight Connection

Your body's intricate hormonal network acts as an internal communication system, transmitting signals that regulate everything from hunger to metabolism. Insulin, cortisol, thyroid hormones, estrogen, testosterone, and leptin are just a few key players in this complex system that directly impact weight management.

Insulin resistance, often triggered by consistently high sugar intake and processed foods, forces your body to produce more insulin, promoting fat storage especially around the abdomen. Meanwhile, chronic stress elevates cortisol levels, which can increase appetite, particularly for high-calorie comfort foods, while simultaneously signaling your body to store fat rather than burn it.

Thyroid imbalances significantly affect your metabolic rate – the speed at which your body converts food into energy. Even mild hypothyroidism can slow metabolism by 30%, making weight loss increasingly difficult despite diet and exercise efforts.

Hormones and Energy Regulation

Beyond weight management, hormones directly influence your daily energy levels. Imbalances often manifest as persistent fatigue, afternoon energy crashes, or disrupted sleep patterns that leave you exhausted regardless of how much rest you get.

Adrenal fatigue from prolonged stress can deplete your body's energy reserves, while insulin spikes and crashes create the all-too-familiar energy rollercoaster many experience throughout the day. Sex hormone imbalances in both men and women frequently present as unexplained fatigue and reduced vitality.



Signs Your Hormones May Be Affecting Weight and Energy

Common indicators of hormone-related weight and energy issues include:

- Weight gain resistant to diet and exercise changes
- Difficulty building muscle despite strength training
- Persistent fatigue regardless of sleep quality
- Strong cravings for sugar or carbohydrates
- Abdominal fat accumulation
- Energy crashes during specific times of day
- Mood fluctuations correlated with energy levels

Comprehensive Approach to Hormone Balance

Achieving hormonal equilibrium requires a multifaceted approach. Nutrition plays a pivotal role – emphasizing whole foods, adequate protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates helps stabilize blood sugar and support hormone production. Strategic exercise that includes both strength training and recovery periods can optimize hormone response rather than triggering additional stress.

Quality sleep remains perhaps the most undervalued component of hormonal health, as crucial restoration and regulation occur during deep sleep phases. Stress management techniques like meditation, breathwork, or mindfulness practices help modulate cortisol levels, supporting both weight management and steady energy.

Tracking Progress Beyond the Scale

Traditional weight measurements provide limited insight into hormonal health improvements. The innovative Fit3D Scanner offers comprehensive body composition analysis that reveals meaningful changes in your wellness journey:

- Precise body measurements across multiple points
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- Posture and balance assessments reflecting overall functional health
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This technology provides compelling visual evidence of progress and helps identify areas requiring special attention, making it an invaluable tool for monitoring hormone-related body composition changes.

Moving Forward

Understanding the powerful influence hormones exert over weight management and energy levels empowers you to address the root causes rather than just symptoms. By focusing on hormonal balance through nutrition, targeted exercise, stress reduction, quality sleep, and comprehensive progress tracking with tools like the Fit3D Scanner, you can achieve sustainable results that improve not just your weight but your overall quality of life.

When conventional approaches fail to produce results, consider consulting with healthcare providers specializing in hormonal health who can provide personalized guidance and appropriate testing to identify specific imbalances affecting your unique situation.

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Understanding Otolaryngologists: The Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialists

When health issues arise involving your ears, nose, or throat, you may be referred to a medical specialist known as an otolaryngologist. Often simply called an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) doctor, these physicians possess specialized training to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions affecting some of our most vital sensory organs and communication pathways.

What is an Otolaryngologist?

An otolaryngologist is a physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The term "otolaryngology" combines three Greek words: "oto" (ear), "laryngo" (larynx or throat), and "logy" (study). These specialists complete four years of medical school followed by at least five years of specialized residency training, making them highly qualified to handle complex conditions affecting these interconnected areas of the body. Many further specialize in areas like pediatric ENT, neurotology, or facial plastic surgery.

Areas of Expertise

Otolaryngologists provide comprehensive care for various body systems that affect our ability to communicate, breathe, taste, and hear. Their expertise spans several key areas:

Ear Conditions: ENT doctors diagnose and treat hearing loss, ear infections, balance disorders, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), ear pain, and congenital disorders. They perform surgical procedures such as cochlear implants for severe hearing loss, tympanoplasty to repair damaged eardrums, and procedures to address chronic ear infections or Ménière's disease.

Nasal and Sinus Conditions: They manage allergies, sinusitis, nasal obstruction, smell disorders, polyps, and deviated septums. Procedures like endoscopic sinus surgery, septoplasty, and turbinate reduction help patients breathe more freely and reduce chronic inflammation. They also address issues related to the sense of smell and taste that originate in the nasal cavity.

Throat Disorders: Otolaryngologists treat voice and swallowing problems, throat cancer, tonsillitis, and sleep-related breathing disorders like sleep apnea.



They might perform tonsillectomies, vocal cord surgeries, or other procedures to restore proper function. Voice rehabilitation is another important aspect of their practice.

Head and Neck Issues: They handle thyroid disorders, facial trauma reconstruction, cancers of the head and neck, and facial plastic surgery needs. This may include removing tumors, performing reconstructive surgery, addressing cosmetic concerns, or managing salivary gland diseases.

When to See an Otolaryngologist

Patients are typically referred to an ENT specialist when primary care physicians identify concerns requiring specialized attention. Common reasons for referral include persistent sinusitis, chronic ear infections, hearing difficulties, voice changes lasting more than two weeks, difficulty swallowing, unexplained lumps in the neck, or recurrent dizziness and balance problems.

The Collaborative Approach

Many otolaryngologists work collaboratively with other specialists like audiologists, speech pathologists, allergists, neurologists, and oncologists to provide comprehensive care. This multidisciplinary approach ensures patients receive treatment addressing all aspects of their condition, from diagnosis through rehabilitation. For complex cases, ENT specialists often participate in tumor boards where various experts discuss treatment options.

Otolaryngologists blend medical knowledge with surgical expertise to address conditions affecting some of our most essential functions—hearing, breathing, speaking, and swallowing. Their specialized training makes them invaluable healthcare providers for conditions affecting quality of life and vital sensory experiences throughout all stages of life, from newborns to elderly patients.

Expert Care You Can Trust

If you're experiencing symptoms related to your ears, nose, throat, or head and neck region, seeking specialized care is essential for proper diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Price Sonkarley and his dedicated team provide comprehensive otolaryngology services with a patient-centered approach. Their expertise spans the full spectrum of ENT conditions, ensuring you receive the highest standard of care for your specific needs. Don't let persistent symptoms affect your quality of life—schedule a consultation with Dr. Sonkarley's office today by calling 239-495-6200.



Dr. Price Sonkarley is a Board Certified Otolaryngologist Head and Neck Surgeon and will be continuing Dr. Montgomery's practice providing excellent care to all patients. He will be performing both medical and surgical aspects of the specialty and is accepting new patients.

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



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

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SHOCK WAVE THERAPY: A Promising Alternative Treatment for Arthritis

By Jordan Sanderson D.C.

Arthritis affects millions of people worldwide, causing joint pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility. While traditional treatments like medications and physical therapy remain standard care, shock wave therapy has emerged as a promising alternative treatment option for those suffering from various forms of arthritis.

Shock wave therapy, also known as extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT), delivers acoustic pressure waves to targeted areas of the body. Originally developed to break up kidney stones, this non-invasive procedure has found applications in treating musculoskeletal conditions, including arthritis.

The therapy works by generating high-energy sound waves that pass through the skin to the affected area. These waves create microtrauma that stimulates the body's natural healing responses. The process encourages increased blood flow, reduces inflammation, and promotes tissue regeneration in the affected joints.

For osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, shock wave therapy has shown promising results in reducing pain and improving function. Research indicates that patients often experience significant pain relief after just a few sessions, with benefits lasting for months. The therapy appears particularly effective for knee and hip osteoarthritis, where it may help delay the need for more invasive procedures like joint replacement surgery.

Rheumatoid arthritis patients have also reported benefits from shock wave therapy. While not a cure for this autoimmune condition, the treatment can help manage symptoms by reducing inflammation and pain in affected joints, complementing pharmaceutical approaches.

The treatment protocol typically involves a series of sessions spaced over several weeks. Each session lasts approximately 15-20 minutes and causes minimal discomfort. Most patients can resume normal activities immediately after treatment, making it a convenient option for those with busy schedules.

Compared to surgical interventions, shock wave therapy offers several advantages: it's non-invasive, requires no anesthesia, carries minimal risks, and involves significantly shorter recovery time. It also presents fewer side effects than long-term medication use, which can cause digestive issues or increase cardiovascular risks.

Recent technological advancements have improved the precision and effectiveness of shock wave therapy equipment. Modern devices allow clinicians to adjust intensity levels and target specific tissue depths, customizing treatment to individual patient needs. This personalization has contributed to better outcomes and expanded the range of conditions that can be effectively treated.

Clinical studies continue to explore the mechanisms behind shock wave therapy's effectiveness. Current theories suggest that beyond stimulating blood flow and tissue repair, the treatment may also influence pain signaling pathways and reduce the production of inflammation-causing substances in the body. This multi-faceted approach explains why many patients experience both immediate pain relief and long-term functional improvement.

For those considering shock wave therapy for arthritis, consultation with a rheumatologist or orthopedic specialist is essential. These health-care professionals can determine if the treatment is appropriate based on individual factors like arthritis type, severity, and overall health status.

As research continues and technology advances, shock wave therapy may become an increasingly important tool in the multimodal approach to managing arthritis, offering hope to those seeking effective pain relief and improved quality of life without relying solely on medications or invasive procedures.

Holistic Health Philosophy

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

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May: Better Hearing and Speech Month

Breaking the Sound Barrier of Communication

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

Every year, May marks Better Hearing and Speech Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about hearing health and the life-changing interventions available to those affected by hearing loss. This annual observance, established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), shines a spotlight on the often-overlooked challenges faced by millions who struggle to navigate a world filled with sounds many take for granted.

Hearing forms the foundation of human connection, yet for approximately 48 million Americans living with hearing loss—roughly 20% of the population—everyday interactions can present significant barriers. This invisible condition affects people across all age groups, from children developing language skills to seniors preserving their quality of life and independence.

The impact of hearing loss extends far beyond casual conversation. Children with untreated hearing issues often face academic challenges and developmental delays, while adults may experience career limitations, reduced earning potential, and profound social isolation. Perhaps most concerning is the strong correlation between untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline, with studies suggesting hearing impairment may increase the risk of dementia by up to five times.

Our auditory system is remarkably complex yet incredibly vulnerable. The delicate hair cells in our inner ear, responsible for converting sound waves into electrical signals the brain can interpret, cannot regenerate once damaged. This makes hearing protection not just advisable but essential in our increasingly noisy world. Prolonged exposure to sounds above 85 decibels—the equivalent of heavy traffic or a noisy restaurant—can cause permanent damage over time.

Modern hearing technology has revolutionized treatment options for those with hearing loss. Today's hearing aids bear little resemblance to the bulky devices of previous generations. Many are virtually invisible, equipped with advanced features like Bluetooth connectivity, rechargeable batteries, and sophisticated algorithms that can distinguish speech from background noise. For those with more severe hearing loss, cochlear implants can bypass damaged portions of the ear to directly stimulate the auditory nerve.

Early intervention is crucial for optimal outcomes. The average person waits seven years after noticing hearing difficulties before seeking help—a delay that can have significant consequences. Regular hearing screenings should be part of everyone's healthcare routine, particularly for those over 50 or in high-risk professions involving noise exposure.

This May, consider taking meaningful action to support Better Hearing Month. Schedule a hearing evaluation for yourself or encourage loved ones to do the same. Practice safe listening habits by limiting headphone volume and using protective gear in noisy environments. Most importantly, help reduce stigma by fostering understanding toward those with hearing challenges.

Community resources abound for those seeking assistance. Audiologists work in various settings, offering specialized expertise in diagnosing and treating hearing disorders. Many organizations also provide support groups, educational materials, and financial assistance programs for hearing devices.

As we celebrate Better Hearing and Speech Month, remember that the ability to hear connects us to our world in profound ways—from the laughter of loved ones to the warning signals that keep us safe. By prioritizing hearing health, we preserve one of our most precious senses and the rich tapestry of sound that enhances our lives.

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Noël Crosby
Doctor of Audiology



Karen Draper
Doctor of Audiology

All-In-One Dental Visit with CEREC

By Dr. Joseph Farag

New technologies are making our lives simpler and easier everyday and dentistry has certainly not been left behind. Thanks to a great new system called CEREC, you can now have a high-tech smile in a single visit.

In days gone by, you may have needed to visit the dentist two or three times to have a quality, white ceramic restoration. The dentist would need to take a special impression to make a plaster model for the dental laboratory to generate an extra replica of your tooth in order to hand-make your porcelain restoration. The craftsmanship of the laboratory technician is highly regarded, but generally requires a minimum turn-around time of two weeks, leaving you to function with a temporary, generally plastic, restoration.

Instead of multiple dentist appointments and weeks for a complete restoration, CEREC allows the dentist to achieve the same, if not better, results in a single visit.

CEREC is an acronym for Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics. Translated, it means that a dentist can economically restore damaged teeth in a single appointment using high-quality ceramic material that matches. CEREC uses the latest Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD-CAM) technology incorporating a camera, computer and milling machine in one instrument to give you perfect, white fillings, veneers or crowns, all in a fraction of the time it used to take.



Here's how it works.

Once your dentist determines that CEREC is the correct course of treatment, your visit will begin by preparing the tooth. Any decay, if present, is removed, leaving as much possible of your healthy tooth to support the CEREC restoration. Next, your dentist will use a specially designed electronic camera that makes a digital 3D model of your tooth in seconds.

You can then watch your dentist design your new restoration on a computer screen, right beside the dental chair using the 3D image created by the camera. The virtual filling is then transferred into reality, again using CEREC. A solid block of porcelain ceramic is inserted into the CEREC milling unit. Special tools then sculpt your restoration to the finest detail based on the restoration designed on the CEREC computer.

The perfect-fit restoration is completed and placed in your mouth with the whole process only taking around an hour!

CEREC fillings are natural looking, smooth, white and hard-wearing, just like the enamel surface of the rest of our teeth. The ceramic material is biocompatible and is not effected by hot or cold.

The office of Dr. Joseph Farag offers CEREC restoration. For more details and CEREC or to schedule an appointment for a check-up please call (941) 764-9555 today.



Before and after: CEREC restorations look and feel better than amalgam (above and gold (below), and can be completed in a single appointment



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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *21I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 22I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 23I can do everything through him who gives me strength.* Philippians 4:11-13

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

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

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

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



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

If you find yourself making statements like this:

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

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

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

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Restless Legs

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