### SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S

# Headbord Magazine May 2025 May 2025

FREE

## www.swfhealthandwellness.com

## NURTURING YOUR EYESIGHT The Significance of May

as Healthy Vision Month

ARTHRITIS... HELP!

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Taking Control of the Silent Killer

## BETTER HEARING STARTS WITH YOU

Why May Is the Perfect Time to Prioritize Your Hearing Health

# FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ON AGING

# SUMMER SKIN PROTECTION EXPERT TIPS FROM NAPLES

AESTHETIC INSTITUTE

**MELANOMA MAY** PROTECTING FLORIDA'S SUN-LOVING COMMUNITY



# Are you the type of person who values excellent dental health and wellness?

Look no further!

We are here to serve you, your family, and friends.

With over 1,700 5-star Google reviews and 15 years in business, our dedicated team provides ALL PHASES of dentistry under one roof.

We love changing lives through the arts and science of creating a confident smile.



OUR DOCTORS Dr. Hetienne Macedo, Dr. Long Huynh, Dr. Mai Huynh-Le, Dr. Ana Scopu, Dr. Bill Campbell, Dr. Tamer Eshra, and Dr. Mat Mouritsen

# Change Your Smile... Change Your Life!

- Now Accepting New Patients
- SWFL Only Accreditation by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry
- Same Day Emergency Appointments Available

# You are just a phone call away from a new life.



690 Goodlette-Frank Rd. N.

239-330-4208 myparkdental.com



# MAGNOLIA BREAST CENTER

A Division of Precision Healthcare Specialists

## YOU DESERVE THE BEST BREAST HEALTH TEAM AVAILABLE.







Steven J. Leibach, MD Board Certified Medical Oncologist



Tam T. Mai, MD, FACS, FSSO Board Certified Breast Surgical Oncologist



David T. Rock, MD, FACS Board-Certified Breast Surgeon



Elizabeth Arguelles, MD, FACS Board-Certified Breast Surgeon

## CHOOSE MAGNOLIA BREAST CENTER FOR PROVEN AND ADVANCED BREAST CANCER TREATMENT OPTIONS

Our board-certified, fellowship-trained breast surgeons have extensive experience in diagnosing, treating, and managing highly complicated cases of breast cancer. We use advanced diagnostic tests to determine the severity of your condition and devise a personalized treatment plan to achieve optimal results.

3530 Kraft Rd, Suite 202 Naples, FL 34105 24040 S Tamiami Trail, Suite 202 Bonita Springs, FL 34134 12995 S Cleveland Avenue, Suite 184 Fort Myers, FL 33907 1206 Country Club Blvd. Cape Coral, FL 33990

## 239.758.PINK (7465) magnoliabc.com

## CONTENTS MAY 2025

6 Michelle Flaherty's Journey to a Confident Smile

7 Understanding the Increased Risk of Breast Cancer in Ashkenazi Jewish Women

8 Peripheral Neuropathy: There is a Treatment!

9 Summer Skin Protection: Expert Tips from Naples Aesthetic Institute

10 Understanding the Role of Exercise in Cancer Risk Reduction

11 Orthopedic Conditions and Arthritis: The Dual Approach of Stem Cells and Exosomes

12 Understanding Carotid Disease: A Silent Threat to Brain Health

13 Melanoma May: Protecting Florida's Sun-Loving Community

14 Nurturing Your Eyesight: The Significance of May as Healthy Vision Month 15 The Power of PLEXR: Lift, Smooth and Rejuvenate - Without Surgery

16 What Your Ink Might Be Saying: What We Can Learn from the Tattoo and Cancer Study

17 Flipping the Script on Aging: Engagement & Connection Thrive at The Carlisle Naples

18 Understanding Stroke Risks: Time is Brain

19 BAHI Therapy: A Holistic Protocol for Post-Stroke Brain Recovery

20 What is Plantar Fasciitis?

21 Traditional vs. Robotic Laparoscopy

22 Better Hearing Starts with You: Why May Is the Perfect Time to Prioritize Your Hearing Health

23 High Blood Pressure Education Month: Taking Control of the Silent Killer

24 Understanding Osteoporosis and Spine Compression Fractures: Causes, Risks, and Treatments

#### CONTACT US

OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Cristan Grensing cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR Sonny Grensing sonnygrensing@yahoo.com



Publishing • Advertising • Web Design • Graphic Design

Southwest Florida's Health & Wellness Magazine can be found in over 1,000 Southwest Florida medical facilities including, hospitals', doctors', chiropractors' and dentist offices. Find a copy of your FREE Southwest Florida's Health&Wellness Magazine in most grocery and convenience stores as well.

#### To get your article published and for ad rates, call 239.588.1200 Cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

#### G WHIZ Marketing, LLC | 1630 Caxambas Court | Marco Island, Florida 34145

©Copyright SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S HEALTH & WELLNESS Magazine 2025. All rights reserved. Any reproduction of the material in this magazine in whole or in part without written prior consent is prohibited. Articles and other material in this Magazine are not necessarily the views of SWFL Health & Wellness Magazine. SWFL Health & Wellness Magazine reserves the right to publish and edit, or not publish any material that is sent. SWFL Health & Wellness Magazine will not knowingly publish any advertisement which is illegal or misleading to its readers. The information in SWFL Health & Wellness Magazine should not be construed as a substitute for medical examination, diagnosis, or treatment.

# **NEW** PREMIER DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE NOW IN **NORTH NAPLES!**

Art of Dermatology is the premier choice for comprehensive **Dermatology, Surgical, and Aesthetic** services. We are dedicated to offering exceptional care for the diagnosis, treatment, and enhancement of your overall skin health.

2350 Vanderbilt Beach Road Suite 301, Naples, FL 34109

### www.theartofderm.com

(239) 356-3503



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

26 Revitalizing Your Golden Years: The Role of IV Therapies in Healthy Aging

27 No Pain, All Gain.

28 Revocable Living vs. Irrevocable Trusts: Differences that Matter

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

30 Understanding Arthritis: Shedding Light During Arthritis Awareness Month

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

38 Arthritis... Help!

40 Understanding Dementia: A Patient's Guide

42 Beyond the Surface: Naples Cancer Advisors Spotlight Melanoma During Awareness Month

44 How Your Sex Hormones Can Support (or Hinder) Your Weight Loss Journey

46 Kidney Cancer: Are You at Risk?

47 Florida Gulf Coast University: The Leader in Healthcare Education

 $\begin{array}{c} 48 \text{ Reversing Osteoporosis Naturally:} \\ \text{A Comprehensive Path to Bone Strength} \\ \text{and Wellness} \end{array}$ 

49 Knee Pain Treatment: How Shockwave Therapy is Revolutionizing Relief

50 Ancient Wisdom Meets Modern Medicine: Acupuncture's Role in Fertility Treatment 51 Understanding Depression: Diagnosis and Expert Management

52 How Mold Affects the Elderly

53 Caring for Caregivers: Nurturing Mental Health Amidst the Demands of Dementia Care

54 Managing Spring Allergies Naturally: A Look at D-Hist and Seasonal Support

55 Any Lab Test Now! Take Control of Your Health with Any Lab Test Now

56 Heart and Brain Health: A Unified Approach Through Nutrition

57 The Matterhorn Method: Lightning Fast Pain Relief

58 Health Insurance

59 High Blood Pressure in Pets: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

60 Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

61 6 Household Cleaning Supplies New Homeowners Should Have

62 Eating Heart Healthy Meals Just Got a Whole Lot Easier

63 Spiritual Wellness: Slowing the Pace of Your Life



## NON-SURGICAL ORTHOPEDICS FOR ACUTE & CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine



#### DEREK P. WIMMER, PA-C

Private Practice Owner Orthopedics focusing in most general orthopedic conditions.

#### HOW WE HELP:

- Non-Surgical Regenerative Treatments have shown to prevent or delay the need for surgery!
- Reduced Point-of-Service Pricing.
- From Steroid Injections to Stem Cells. We also offer all Traditional and Regenerative Orthopedic Treatments.
- Preventative Care, Acute and Chronic Injuries, Chronic Illness Care, Wound Care.
- Focused Shockwave Therapy, Platelet Rich Plasma, PRP, Wharton's Jelly (contains Mesenchymal Stem Cells and umbilical cord matrix to help "patch" damaged tissues), Placental Allografts, Mesenchymal Stem Cell Exosomes and multiple other Biologic Injections performed with ultrasound or fluoroscopic guidance for greatest accuracy.
- Vitamin injections and IV Vitamin treatments.
- CareCredit Accepted.

#### SCHEDULE YOUR CONSULTATION TODAY!

### 239.829.4300 wimmerorthopedics.com

3380 Woods Edge Circle #104, Bonita Springs, Florida 34134

"Concierge treatment without the concierge price."

- www.swfHealthandWellness.com -

www.swfhealthandwellness.com

## Michelle Flaherty's Journey to a Confident Smile An Interview with Patient Michelle Flaherty and Dr. Matthew Mouritsen

hen Michelle Flaherty first walked into Park Dental, she carried more than just teeth concerns—she carried years of anxiety born from childhood dental trauma, coupled with the unpredictable course of multiple sclerosis(MS). Today, after a comprehensive full-mouth implant rehabilitation under the care of Dr. Matthew Mouritsen, Michelle beams with a confidence she thought was lost forever.

#### Patient Background and Clinical Challenge

Michelle's history illustrates two common yet complex issues in restorative dentistry: managing dental care in patients with chronic neurological conditions and overcoming profound dental anxiety. Multiple sclerosis affects approximately I million Americans, often causing fatigue, motor dysfunction, and unpredictable appointment attendance<sup>1</sup>. These factors can complicate lengthy dental treatments, such as full-arch implant placement and restoration.

"I have a long dental history," Michelle explains. "It took me almost a year to finish the process because my MS sometimes made me miss appointments." Dr. Mouritsen adjusted his schedule with flexibility and patience—essential components of care for patients whose medical conditions can fluctuate unexpectedly. "Dr. Mouritsen never rushed me," Michelle recalls. "He knew exactly what to say to calm my fears. His patience gave me the courage to start and complete my treatment."

Modern Implant Technology: Strength and Longevity "I'd had implants before, but they failed," Michelle says. "Years ago, we didn't have as many options. Today's implants are stronger, sturdier, and last much longer. The variety of shades available means my new teeth match my complexion and look completely natural."

Dr. Mouritsen adds, "Advancements in digital imaging and high-quality prosthetic materials allow us to craft a smile that not only functions well but also complements each patient's facial structure."

#### The Treatment Plan and Patient-Centered Care

By structuring appointments in shorter, staggered visits and maintaining open communication, Dr. Mouritsen and his team minimized Michelle's physical strain and dental anxiety. The result: a smile that functions like natural teeth and endures for years.



#### Overcoming Dental Anxiety: A Childhood Trauma Case

Dental phobia affects an estimated 36 percent of the U.S. population, with 12 percent experiencing extreme anxiety<sup>3</sup>. Michelle's fear began in childhood, when she and her brother attended a free clinic where a single retired dentist with unsteady hands and strong odor left them traumatized. Early extraction and a set of removable dentures in her teens became symbols of shame and self-consciousness.

"Wearing upper dentures as a young adult felt humiliating," Michelle recalls. "I had to use a whole tube of adhesive just to keep them secure during public speaking." As a professional with a public speaking career, she longed for a smile she could trust.

Dr. Mouritsen's empathetic approach—listening actively, explaining each step, and offering sedation options—helped Michelle redefine her dental experience. "I never think twice about smiling now," she says.

"The confidence of a good smile is priceless," Michelle affirms.

Advice to Younger Generations: Prevention Is Key Reflecting on her journey, Michelle urges younger patients to prioritize preventive care:

"Take care of your teeth when you're a child—those are the teeth you'll have for life. Healthy teeth and strong jawbones make all the difference later in life." Regular dental check-ups, fluoride treatments, and even simple daily habits like proper brushing and flossing can reduce the risk of decay, periodontal disease, and eventual tooth loss.

#### Choosing the Right Provider and Next Steps

The quality of restorative dental work depends not only on technology but also on the provider's expertise and patient rapport. "Dr. Mouritsen is simply the best of the best," Michelle states. "His attention to detail, gentle demeanor, and dedication to my outcome were unmatched. If I had to do it again, I wouldn't hesitate."

Dr. Mat Mouritsen considers himself a lifelong student of all things dental health-related and is constantly engaged and eager to learn. His passion for teaching and learning has been the driving force in his career. He worked as a mentor at the Spear Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. There, he helped other dentists learn and understand many advanced concepts in dentistry.

Dr. Mouritsen has studied with some of the most prominent experts in the field of airway and sleep-breathing disorders. As a member of airway prosthodontics, he continues to study and learn with doctors worldwide to find new ways to understand better and treat breathing-related health issues. He is particularly passionate about this because several close family members have been affected by sleep breathing disorders, including sleep apnea. He has unbounded enthusiasm for helping people to find individual solutions that can result in dramatic changes in nighttime rest and overall health.

If you—or someone you know—struggle with missing teeth, dental anxiety, or chronic health issues that complicate oral care, consider a comprehensive evaluation at Park Dental. Modern implant solutions can restore function, enhance esthetics, and improve overall quality of life. To schedule a consultation with Dr. Matthew Mouritsen, call (239) 330-4208 or visit www.myparkdental.com.

Change Your Smile... Change Your Life!







## Understanding the Increased Risk of Breast Cancer in Ashkenazi Jewish Women

**B**reast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, affecting millions of individuals each year. While breast cancer can occur in women of all ethnicities, research has shown that Ashkenazi Jewish women have a higher susceptibility to the disease compared to other populations. Understanding the factors contributing to this increased risk and the importance of genetic testing can empower individuals to take proactive steps in managing their health.

#### Background: Why Are Ashkenazi Jewish Women More Susceptible to Breast Cancer?

Ashkenazi Jews are individuals of Central and Eastern European Jewish descent with a distinct genetic heritage. Studies have indicated that Ashkenazi Jewish women have a higher prevalence of specific genetic mutations, particularly in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, compared to the general population. These mutations significantly increase the risk of developing breast cancer, as well as ovarian and other cancers.

#### Geographical Distribution and Lifestyle Factors:

While Ashkenazi Jews are dispersed throughout the United States and other countries, there are significant populations in areas such as New York, New Jersey, and California. However, the increased risk of breast cancer among Ashkenazi Jewish women cannot be attributed solely to geographical location. Instead, genetic factors and cultural practices may play a more significant role.

#### **Dietary Habits:**

Some researchers have suggested that dietary habits among Ashkenazi Jews may contribute to their increased risk of breast cancer. Traditional Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine, which often includes foods high in fat and calories, may influence cancer risk. However, more research is needed to fully understand the impact of diet on breast cancer risk in this population.

#### Set Apart from Other Breast Cancer Statistics:

Ashkenazi Jewish women are set apart from other breast cancer statistical demographics due to their higher prevalence of genetic mutations associated with the disease. While genetic mutations such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 are found in all ethnic groups, they are particularly common among Ashkenazi Jews, affecting approximately 1 in 40 individuals compared to 1 in 400 in the general population [1]. This significantly elevates the lifetime risk of developing breast cancer and underscores the importance of genetic testing and early detection.

#### The Role of Genetic Testing:

Genetic testing plays a crucial role in identifying individuals at increased risk of hereditary breast cancer,



including Ashkenazi Jewish women. Testing for mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes can help assess an individual's risk and inform personalized screening and prevention strategies.

#### Outcomes of Genetic Testing:

The outcomes of genetic testing for breast cancer risk can vary depending on the results. A positive result indicates the presence of a harmful mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, significantly increasing the lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers. In contrast, a negative result indicates the absence of these mutations, although it does not eliminate the possibility of developing breast cancer.

Ashkenazi Jewish women face a higher risk of breast cancer due to genetic factors, particularly mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Genetic testing offers a valuable tool for identifying individuals at increased risk and guiding personalized screening and prevention strategies. By understanding their genetic risk factors and taking proactive measures, Ashkenazi Jewish women can empower themselves to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Genetic counseling and gene testing are part of Magnolia Breast Center's comprehensive approach to breast health which encompasses all areas of this journey: prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.

Magnolia Nurse practitioner Julie Stewarr, MSN, APN, WHNP, is dedicated to evaluating women with risk factors for breast cancer and helps them develop a high risk screening program that works for them. Genetic counseling is completed in the office and if appropriate, genetic testing can be done at the same time.

#### References:

1. National Cancer Institute. (n.d.). Genetics of Breast and Gynecologic Cancers (PDQ\*)\_Health Professional Version. Retrieved from https://www.caneer.gov/types/breast/hp/breast-ovarian-genetics-pdq#\_2

#### YOUR JOURNEY TO BREAST HEALTH

Magnolia Breast Center's commitment to excellence extends from early detection through treatment and into survivorship. Their comprehensive approach addresses both the physical and emotional aspects of breast cancer care, ensuring patients receive support at every stage.

What sets Magnolia Breast Center apart is their personalized treatment plans designed to achieve optimal results for each patient. The center utilizes advanced diagnostic technologies to determine the severity of conditions and develop targeted interventions. Their multidisciplinary team approach ensures that patients benefit from collaborative expertise across specialties. For women concerned about breast cancer risk, the center offers educational resources on risk reduction strategies and early detection methods.

The center's survivorship programs are particularly noteworthy, focusing on long-term wellness and quality of life after treatment. Patients benefit from ongoing support that addresses physical recovery, emotional well-being, and lifestyle adjustments. Magnolia Breast Center's dedication to breast health education extends beyond their patients to the broader community through outreach programs designed to increase awareness and promote early detection.

Call our dedicated breast care center today at 239-758-PINK (7465) or contact us online and schedule an appointment with one of our experienced breast surgeons.



(Left ta Right) Dr. Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA, Dr. Steven J. Leibach, MD, Dr. Tam T. Mai, MD, FACS, FSSO, Dr. David T. Rack, MD, FACS, Dr. Elizabeth Arguelles, MD, FACS



#### 239.758.PINK (7465) | magnoliabc.com

3530 Kraft Rd, Suite 202 Naples, FL 34105

24040 S Tamiami Trail, Suite 202 Bonita Springs, FL 34134

12995 S Cleveland Avenue, Suite 184 Fort Myers, FL 33907

> 1206 Country Club Blvd. Cape Coral, FL 33990



## PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY: THERE IS A TREATMENT!

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

o you have numbness or tingling in your arms, hands, legs, feet, or toes? Perhaps you are dealing with inflammation, restless legs, or burning sensations. If you have any of these issues, it's essential to seek medical attention as these are frequently warning signs of peripheral neuropathy. It's not uncommon; 20 million Americans have peripheral neuropathy.

Peripheral nerves run from the spinal cord to the arms, hands, legs, and feet. If the nerves are damaged due to injury or disease, it can cause some of the following symptoms:

#### **Peripheral Neuropathy Symptoms**

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Burning sensations
- · Painful aching
- Balance issues
- Skin discoloration & texture changes
- Muscle cramps
- · Feelings of stiffness or pressure
- · Non-healing foot & ankle ulcers
- · Cold feet
- Walking on marshmallows (sensations)

Many times, peripheral neuropathy is related to cancer treatment, medications, spinal injuries, or diabetes. In the case of diabetes, there is an extremely high storage of glucose; Glucose damages many organs in the body but also has a severely adverse effect on nerves. This nerve damage happens because the small blood vessels, which supply blood and nutrients to the nerves, becomes impaired. When the nerves are no longer fed nutrients, they either die, or their signals to the brain are ineffective. Symptoms of numbness, tingling, stumbling, and foot injuries are common. The lack of brain signaling from the nerve endings makes it difficult for a person to feel pain in their foot, so often, injuries and these disorders are overlooked.

There are viable ways to treat your condition's root cause and not just mask symptoms with pain medications, which is unfortunately what many providers will recommend.



#### You Don't Need Addictive Drugs—You Need to Treat the Cause of The Neuropathy

The most common treatment for nerve pain and numbness is to mask it with narcotic prescription pain medications. Narcotics like Opioids are highly addictive, and our state is currently leading the country in abusing the drug and overdose episodes.

#### **Your Options**

Physical medicine provides alternative therapeutic and rehabilitating procedures can significantly improve the condition, offer pain relief and limit drug dependency.

#### Feel Amazing Institute's Alternative Care

- Red LED and Low Level Infrared Light Therapy help to heal and regenerate the small nerve endings that are damaged in peripheral neuropathy
- Gentle electrical stimulation therapy improves nerve function, reduces pain, and improves movement.
- Stem Cell Allografts
- Platelet Rich Plasma
- Spinal Decompression Therapy
- Ozone Therapy
- Peptide Therapy
- Acoustic Wave Therapy
- Natural supplementation to regenerate myelin sheath

#### Neuropathy Treatment at Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute

Clinical studies show that 90% of the people who undergo the treatment experience excellent results with one or more of the following: Reduced pain and cramps, reduced tingling and numbness, ability to experience normal touch without pain, reduced cold or burning sensations, improved balance and coordination, lowered dependency on medications, improved sleep, reduced sensation of restlessness in the legs. People also experience reduced local swelling and inflammation, increased range of motion, increased blood flow to the extremities, decreased tension, and decreased muscle spasm. An important side benefit to the treatment is that it reduces the risk of falls significantly by improving balance and position awareness of the feet.

#### Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute

We proudly serve the Naples area with comprehensive Chiropractic Neurology, Physical Medicine, and Regenerative Medicine services since 1998. Our office strives for excellence, and we are consistently furthering our education and techniques to improve the care you receive in our office. Whether you suffer from chronic pain, are recovering from an injury, or are seeking overall improved health and performance, we have the skills and experience to help you work toward your goals.

If you are looking for a chiropractic Neurologist to treat bulging discs and/or herniations, neck or back pain, knee, shoulder or hip pain, sciatica, or neuropathy (numbness and/or burning and pain in feet and hands), you have found the right place for your health care needs.

When you work with us, you can be sure that we are equipped to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions that include:

- Severe neck & back pain
- Shoulder, elbow, or wrist pain
- · Hip, knee pain treatment, ankle, or foot pain
- Arm or leg pain, or numbness
- · Peripheral Neuropathy pain or numbness
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- · Headaches, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- Disc bulge or herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

If you are in need of a highly experienced Chiropractic Neuorologist in Naples, FL, look no further than Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, call us today!



#### 3031 AIRPORT PULLING RD. N., NAPLES, FL 34105 FEELAMAZING.COM

Dr. Richard Hiler DABCN, is a board-certified Chiropractic Neurologist with more than 27 years of clinical experience. Dr. Hiler and his team offer a complementary telephone consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment contact the office at 239.330.1000.

# **SUMMER SKIN PROTECTION:** Expert Tips from Naples Aesthetic Institute

By Brittany Napior and Renata Almeida

Iorida summers invite us outdoors, but they also bring increased exposure to harmful UV rays. At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we emphasize that prevention is the cornerstone of effective skincare. This means incorporating antioxidant-rich serums and, most crucially, proper sun protection into your daily routine.

#### The Art of Layering

Proper layering of skincare products is essential for maximizing effectiveness. Your morning skincare routine should follow this sequence:

- 1. Cleansing
- 2. Vitamin C serum
- 3. Moisturizer
- 4. Eye cream
- 5. Sun protection

## Understanding Sun Protection: Not All Are Created Equal

A common misconception is that all sun protection products work the same way. Let's clarify the important differences between chemical and mineral sun protection:

#### Sunscreen (Chemical Filters)

Chemical sunscreens protect against skin cancer and help prevent brown spots and pigmentation. They work by converting the sun's rays into heat. However, this heat conversion can be problematic for certain skin conditions:

- For those predisposed to hyperpigmentation, heat can stimulate melanocytes, potentially worsening dark spots
- Individuals with rosacea or inflammatory skin conditions may experience flare-ups, as heat can be a significant disruptor

Chemical sunscreens are not "bad," but they're best suited for days spent primarily indoors.

#### Sunblock (Mineral Filters)

Mineral sunblocks create a physical barrier that completely blocks the sun's rays, acting like a mirror that repels sunlight away from the skin. This makes them ideal for extended outdoor activities, especially in South Florida's intense sunshine.



Modern mineral sunblocks have come a long way from the thick, pasty formulations of the past. Today's micronized zinc oxide formulas apply sheerly or come with a tint, allowing you to enjoy outdoor activities while effectively preventing sun damage and unwanted pigmentation.



#### Professional-Grade Products at Naples Aesthetic Institute At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we offer premium skincare lines including Skinbetter Science, SkinCeuticals, and Dr. Gill's exclusive brand. Our

knowledgeable aestheticians can help select the antioxidant serums and sun protection products best suited to your individual skin needs.

"Skincare has always been a passion of mine, and I believe good skincare should effect change," says Dr. Gill. "After having children and moving to Florida, I saw changes in my skin, like hyperpigmentation, dullness and sun spots. To address these issues and meet the needs and cosmetic goals of my patients, I created these innovative skincare products in partnership with leading scientists in the field." - Dr. Kiran Gill

#### Summer Favorite: The Diamond Glow Facial

Our most popular summer treatment is the Diamond Glow facial with antioxidant-rich serum infusion. This comprehensive three-in-one approach provides:

• Gentle exfoliation using a diamond-tipped wand to remove dead skin cells and surface impurities

- Effective extraction of debris from deep within the pores through controlled suction
- Deep infusion of customized medical-grade serum, selected specifically for your skin concerns

This innovative treatment delivers immediate and long-lasting results, leaving your skin refreshed, protected, and radiant throughout the summer months.

#### What Sets Us Apart

Naples Aesthetic Institute distinguishes itself through the seamless collaboration between our physicians and service providers. This synergy enables us to create meticulously customized treatment plans for each patient, ensuring your unique needs and goals are addressed with precision.

As a boutique practice, we take pride in offering truly personalized experiences where every aspect of your care is tailored specifically to you. This dedication to individualized attention results in exceptional outcomes and unparalleled satisfaction.

Visit Naples Aesthetic Institute today to discover how our expertise can help you maintain healthy, protected skin throughout the summer and beyond.



Renata Almeida Brittany Napior



3025 Airport Pulling Road North Naples, FL 34105 239,596,8000 NaplesAestheticInstitute.com

#### 10 Health & Wellness May 2025 - Collier Edition



## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF EXERCISE IN CANCER RISK REDUCTION

By Greer Burcky, MS, RDN/LDN, CPT - Registered Dietician/Performance Coach

xercise is frequently touted as a vital component of a healthy lifestyle, and its benefits extend beyond physical fitness. Research suggests that regular physical activity can reduce the risk of certain types of cancer. However, it's essential to examine the evidence critically and understand the nuances of this relationship.

#### **Types of Cancer Affected by Exercise**

Numerous studies have explored the connection between exercise and cancer risk, with varying degrees of certainty across different types of cancer. For instance, Dr. Jennifer Ligibel, senior physician in the Breast Oncology Center at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, notes there is strong evidence to suggest that regular exercise may lower the risk of breast and colon cancers. Other cancers, such as bladder, endometrial, esophageal, kidney, and gastric cancers, also show promising associations with physical activity, albeit with moderate strength evidence.

#### **Uncertainties and Complexity**

Despite the encouraging findings, it's important to acknowledge the complexity of the relationship between exercise and cancer risk. The data primarily relies on observational studies, which have limitations in establishing causality. Factors such as the type and intensity of exercise and individual characteristics may influence the outcomes.

#### **Examining the Evidence**

A recent study published in Cancer Cell sheds light on the impact of exercise on cancer incidence. The study, which analyzed data from the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Screening Trial, revealed lower risks for certain cancers among individuals who engaged in vigorous exercise. However, the findings also highlighted discrepancies, with some cancers showing no significant connection to exercise.

#### **Quantifying the Benefits**

While the exact magnitude of exercise's protective effect on cancer risk remains a topic of debate, research suggests that even modest levels of physical activity can confer benefits. According to a systematic review by the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, individuals with higher



physical activity levels may experience a 10%- 20% lower risk of developing certain cancers than sedentary individuals.

#### **Optimizing Exercise for Cancer Prevention**

Determining the optimal exercise "dose" for cancer risk reduction poses a challenge. Current recommendations advocate for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week, supplemented by strength training. However, the ideal type and exercise intensity for cancer prevention warrants further investigation.

#### Mechanisms of Action

The mechanisms underlying exercise's protective effect on cancer risk are multifaceted and not yet fully understood. Studies suggest exercise may influence tumor growth and immune function, thereby mitigating cancer development. The association between exercise and lower cancer risk persists even after accounting for confounding factors such as body weight.

#### Practical Considerations

Encouraging individuals to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle is paramount. While guidelines provide general recommendations, it's essential to tailor exercise prescriptions to individual preferences and capabilities. Emphasizing enjoyable and sustainable activities can facilitate adherence to exercise regimens.

Exercise holds promise as a modifiable factor in reducing the risk of certain cancers. While the evidence is not definitive, incorporating regular physical activity into daily routines can contribute to overall health and well-being. Inspire Exercise Medicine's Registered Dietician/Performance Coach, Greer Burcky notes that "as medical professionals, we advocate for an active lifestyle as part of a comprehensive approach to cancer treatment and prevention. We at IEM believe in the importance of strength training. Our small class size and individualized program also helps keep the joy in exercise as medicine."

Sources:

https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/does-exercise-reducecancer-risk-its-just-not-simple-2024a10004g0?form=fpf



239.429.0800 | www.Inspireem.com 3555 Kraft Road, Suite 130, Naples, FL 34105

## **Orthopedic Conditions and Arthritis:** The Dual Approach of Stem Cells and Exosomes

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

rthritis represents a major orthopedic challenge affecting millions worldwide. As treatment options evolve, both direct stem cell therapy and stem cell-derived exosomes are emerging as complementary approaches for addressing different orthopedic conditions, each with specific applications depending on the nature and location of the disease.

#### **Orthopedic Manifestations of Arthritis**

Different forms of arthritis present distinct orthopedic challenges:

Osteoarthritis (OA): Involves progressive cartilage breakdown in weight-bearing joints, leading to bone-on-bone contact and joint space narrowing.

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA): Causes systemic inflammation that erodes cartilage and bone, often resulting in widespread joint deformities.

Post-traumatic Arthritis: Develops following joint injuries, with focal cartilage damage and altered biomechanics.

Spinal Conditions: Including facet joint arthropathy and degenerative disc disease present unique structural challenges in the vertebral column.

These conditions share common pathologies but differ in their localization and inflammatory profiles, potentially benefiting from different regenerative approaches.

#### Stem Cells for Localized Joint Conditions

Direct stem cell therapy, particularly mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), shows promising applications for localized joint pathologies:

When injected into joints, MSCs can differentiate into chondrocytes, release anti-inflammatory factors, and recruit local progenitor cells. Their larger size allows them to remain in the joint space longer, providing sustained therapeutic effects.

#### Stem cell applications appear particularly suited for:

- Focal cartilage defects in osteoarthritis
- Post-traumatic joint injuries
- Weight-bearing joints like knees and hips where direct delivery offers concentrated effect

The physical presence of stem cells in the joint environment provides both cellular replacement potential and a sustained release of regenerative factors directly where needed most.



Stem Cell Exosomes for Systemic and Spinal Conditions

Exosomes—nano-sized vesicles released by stem cells—offer distinct advantages for certain orthope-dic conditions:

These tiny biological messengers contain proteins, miRNAs, and growth factors that modulate inflammatory responses systemically and cross tissue barriers more effectively than whole cells. Their smaller size and non-cellular nature allow them to reach areas inaccessible to whole stem cells.

#### Exosome therapy shows particular promise for:

- Systemic inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis
- Spinal applications where precision delivery is challenging
- Conditions requiring both local and systemic effects

For rheumatoid arthritis, intravenous exosome delivery can address the systemic nature of the disease, potentially modulating immune responses throughout the body rather than just in individual joints.

#### **Complementary Administration Approaches**

The administration method often determines which therapy is more appropriate:

Intra-articular injections: Direct stem cell delivery is often preferred for larger joints, providing concentrated cellular therapy.

Intravenous (IV) delivery: Exosomes are typically more suitable for systemic administration, affecting multiple joints simultaneously.

Spinal applications: Exosomes may navigate the complex anatomy of the spine more effectively due to their smaller size.

#### **Clinical Evidence and Future Directions**

Current research supports a condition-specific approach:

- Studies show stem cells may have stronger effects for focal cartilage regeneration in major joints
- Exosomes demonstrate better systemic antiinflammatory effects and ability to cross tissue barriers
- Combination approaches may offer synergistic benefits in complex cases

The field is moving toward precision regenerative medicine with condition-specific protocols that match the therapy to the orthopedic presentation and customized formulations based on the patient's specific pathology.

#### Conclusion

Both stem cells and their exosomes represent promising approaches for orthopedic conditions related to arthritis. For localized joint issues, direct stem cell therapy often provides concentrated benefits, while exosomes may offer advantages for systemic conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and complex regions like the spine.

As research advances, a personalized approach that selects the appropriate regenerative therapy based on the specific orthopedic condition will likely yield the best outcomes. While current evidence is encouraging, patients should maintain realistic expectations as these therapies continue to evolve through ongoing clinical investigation.

#### Compassionate Healthcare

Our mission is to provide you with personalized, high-quality care. Be seen at your appointment time. Spend your entire visit with Derek Wimmer, PA. Private care unlike anywhere else. We are dedicated to not only improving but also to maintaining your health through preventative care and education while treating your chronic conditions.

Call today for more information.



#### Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine

239.829.4300 wimmerorthopedics.com 3380 WOODS EDGE CIRCLE #104

3380 WOODS EDGE CIRCLE #104 BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34134

# A Silent Threat to Brain Health

By Russell Becker, DO

arotid artery disease is one of the leading causes of stroke, affecting millions of Americans each year. As we observe Stroke Awareness Month, it's crucial to understand this often silent but dangerous condition that can dramatically impact quality of life without warning.

The carotid arteries are major blood vessels that run along both sides of your neck, delivering oxygen-rich blood to your brain. When these vital pathways become narrowed or blocked due to plaque buildup—a condition known as carotid artery disease or carotid stenosis—stroke risk increases significantly.

#### What Causes Carotid Disease?

Atherosclerosis, the same process that leads to coronary artery disease, is the primary culprit behind carotid disease. This progressive condition occurs when fatty deposits, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances build up along the inner lining of arteries, forming plaque that narrows these critical blood vessels.

Several factors increase the risk of developing this condition:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Family history
- Advanced age
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity

What makes carotid disease particularly dangerous is that it often produces no symptoms until it becomes severe or until a stroke occurs. This "silent" nature means many people remain undiagnosed until a serious event happens.

## The Relationship Between Carotid Disease and Stroke

When carotid arteries become narrowed or blocked, two primary stroke mechanisms may occur:

**1.** Reduced blood flow: Severely narrowed arteries can reduce blood flow to brain tissues, potentially causing a stroke if blood supply becomes critically low.

**2. Plaque rupture:** More commonly, pieces of plaque can break off and travel to smaller brain arteries, blocking blood flow and causing an ischemic stroke.

These strokes can have devastating consequences including paralysis, speech difficulties, memory problems, and even death. Each year, more than 795,000 Americans experience a stroke, with carotid disease being responsible for approximately 20-30% of these cases.

#### Recognizing the Warning Signs

While carotid disease itself may be asymptomatic, transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) or "mini-strokes" often serve as warning signs. These temporary episodes typically last less than five minutes but should never be ignored. Signs include:

- Sudden weakness or numbness in the face or limbs, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking
- Sudden vision problems
- Sudden dizziness or loss of balance
- Sudden severe headache

During Stroke Awareness Month, medical professionals emphasize the importance of the "FAST" acronym for recognizing stroke symptoms: Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulties, Time to call emergency services.

#### **Diagnosis and Screening**

Screening for carotid disease is especially important for those with risk factors. Diagnostic tools include:

- Physical examination with stethoscope (listening for carotid bruits—abnormal sounds indicating turbulent blood flow)
- Carotid ultrasound (non-invasive imaging)
- CT angiography or MR angiography
- Carotid angiography (more invasive but highly detailed imaging)

#### **Treatment Options**

Treatment depends on the severity of the stenosis and individual risk factors:

For mild to moderate disease, doctors typically recommend:

- Lifestyle modifications (smoking cessation, healthy diet, exercise)
- Medications to control blood pressure and cholesterol
- Antiplatelet therapy (aspirin or clopidogrel)
- Regular monitoring

For severe stenosis or symptomatic disease, interventional procedures may be necessary:

- Carotid endarterectomy: Surgical removal of plaque from the artery
- Carotid artery stenting: Placement of a mesh tube to keep the artery open

#### Prevention: The Best Medicine

As with many cardiovascular conditions, prevention is far more effective than treatment. Recommended preventive measures include:

- Maintaining healthy blood pressure (below 130/80 mmHg)
- Managing diabetes effectively
- Keeping cholesterol levels in check
- Eating a heart-healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Engaging in regular physical activity
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Maintaining a healthy weight

Stroke Awareness Month serves as a vital reminder that understanding conditions like carotid disease can save lives. By recognizing risk factors, seeking appropriate screening, and making healthy lifestyle choices, we can significantly reduce the burden of this disease and its potentially devastating consequences.

For those with risk factors or concerns, consulting with healthcare providers about appropriate screening can provide peace of mind and potentially prevent a life-altering stroke. Remember, when it comes to carotid disease and stroke, awareness and prevention are truly our most powerful weapons.

It's no stretch to soy thot Russell Becker, DO, a fellow-trained vascular surgeon practicing at Vascular Center of Naples in Naples, Florida, gets into things for the long run. Dr. Becker, who runs marathons in his free time, has experience and interest in all areas of vascular and endovascular surgery, including treatment of conditions like carotid artery disease, hemodialysis occess creation and maintenance, and diseases of the veins.



1875 Veterans Park Dr. Suite 2203 Naples, FL 34109 239-431-5884 www.VascularCenterNaples.com

## MELANOMA MAY: PROTECTING FLORIDA'S SUN-LOVING COMMUNITY

s May ushers in longer days and heightened sunshine across the Sunshine State, it also marks Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month – a critical reminder for Floridians who face unique skin cancer risks. With Florida ranking second nationally for new melanoma cases, this awareness campaign takes on special significance for our sun-drenched communities.

#### Florida's Skin Cancer Challenge

The statistics paint a concerning picture for Florida residents. Living in a state with year-round sunshine and outdoor activities places Floridians at elevated risk for skin cancers of all types. When detected early, melanoma has a 99% five-year survival rate, yet many cases go undiagnosed until more advanced stages, particularly among younger adults who may not consider themselves at risk.

Approximately one in ten Floridians has been diagnosed with skin cancer, with melanoma rates approximately 20% higher than the national average. Even more concerning, studies show nine out of ten Florida high school students don't regularly use sunscreen when outdoors, setting the stage for potential problems later in life.

#### **Prevention: Your First Line of Defense**

For Floridians, skin cancer prevention requires vigilance beyond occasional beach days:

- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30+) daily as part of your morning routine, even on cloudy days
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours during outdoor activities, particularly after swimming
- Schedule outdoor activities before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. when possible
- Wear UPF-rated clothing, wide-brimmed hats, and UV-protective sunglasses
- Perform regular skin self-examinations using the ABCDE method (Asymmetry, Border irregularity, Color variations, Diameter larger than a pencil eraser, Evolution/changes)
- Schedule annual professional skin screenings, especially if you have risk factors

#### How Art of Dermatology Can Help

At Art of Dermatology, we provide comprehensive skin cancer services tailored specifically to Florida residents' needs. Our board-certified dermatologists offer:

- Thorough full-body skin examinations using advanced dermatoscopy technology
- Early detection screening programs for high-risk patients
- Specialized melanoma diagnostics and treatment planning
- Cutting-edge treatment options for all skin cancer types
- Customized prevention strategies based on your specific skin type and lifestyle
- Educational resources about sun protection specifically for Florida's climate
- Post-treatment monitoring and support

Our team understands Florida's unique challenges – from beach days to boating to year-round gardening – and works with you to develop realistic protection strategies that fit your lifestyle. We emphasize both early detection and prevention, knowing that consistent sun-safety practices can dramatically reduce your risk.

#### Act This May

Melanoma May serves as the perfect opportunity to prioritize your skin health. Schedule your annual skin check at Art of Dermatology and take advantage of our special awareness month initiatives:

- · Complimentary skin cancer risk assessments
- · Educational seminars on melanoma prevention
- Sunscreen samples and application demonstrations
- · Family sun-safety planning sessions

Don't let Florida's beautiful sunshine become your skin's enemy. A proactive approach to skin cancer prevention and early detection can save lives – perhaps even your own. Contact Art of Dermatology today to schedule your comprehensive skin examination and learn how our specialized care can help protect you and your family from skin cancer.

Living in the Sunshine State brings tremendous joy, but it also requires smart sun strategies. This May, make skin cancer awareness a priority for yourself and those you love.

#### The Art of Dermatology Difference

At Art of Dermatology, we combine medical expertise with aesthetic sensibility. Our comprehensive skin examinations include advanced technologies for detecting subtle changes invisible to the naked eye. Our dermatologists take time to understand your concerns, family history, and lifestyle factors affecting your skin health.

Rather than simply treating visible problems, we partner with you in preventative care—identifying risk factors and potential issues before they manifest. This approach not only supports graceful aging but potentially prevents serious health complications.

Don't wait for visible problems to appear. Schedule your comprehensive skin check at Art of Dermatology today and take the first step toward lifetime skin health. Remember, healthy aging isn't about fighting time—it's about supporting your skin's natural processes with expert care and attention.

Your skin's journey deserves the art of professional dermatology. Call Art of Dermatology today for more information.

Att of Dermatology is the premier choice for comprehensive Dermatology, Surgical, and Aesthetic services. We are dedicated to offering exceptional one for the diagnosis, treatment, and enhancement of Yam overall skin locality.





239-356-3503 theartofderm.com 2350 Vanderbilt Beach Rd STE 301 Naples, FL 34109

## 14 Health & Wellness May 2025 - Collier Edition NURTURING YOUR EYESIGHT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY AS HEALTHY VISION MONTH

very May, the United States observes Healthy Vision Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of maintaining good eye health. With the prevalence of eye conditions and vision problems on the rise, this annual campaign serves as a reminder for individuals to prioritize their eyesight and take proactive steps towards preserving it. From regular eye exams to lifestyle adjustments, here's why May is a crucial month for nurturing your vision.



#### The Importance of Healthy Vision

Our eyes play a fundamental role in how we experience the world around us. From appreciating breathtaking landscapes to connecting with loved ones through eye contact, vision is integral to our daily lives. However, many individuals overlook the significance of eye health until they encounter issues or discomfort.

#### **Preventative Care Through Regular Eye Exams**

One of the most effective ways to maintain healthy vision is through regular eye examinations. These comprehensive assessments not only evaluate visual acuity but also screen for potential eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration. Detecting these conditions early can significantly improve treatment outcomes and preserve vision.

#### **Understanding Vision Risks**

Certain factors can increase the risk of developing vision problems, including age, family history, and lifestyle choices. Older adults are particularly susceptible to age-related eye diseases, highlighting the importance of regular screenings as individuals grow older. Additionally, habits such as smoking, excessive screen time, and poor nutrition can contribute to vision decline over time.

#### **Promoting Eye-Friendly Lifestyles**

Healthy Vision Month encourages individuals to adopt habits that support optimal eye health. This includes maintaining a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids, which can benefit both overall health and eye function. Furthermore, practicing good eye hygiene, such as taking breaks from digital devices and protecting eyes from harmful UV rays, can help reduce strain and prevent damage.

#### **Empowering Individuals Through Education**

Education plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their eye health. Through community outreach programs, informational resources, and public campaigns, Healthy Vision Month raises awareness about common eye conditions, risk factors, and available treatments. By equipping people with knowledge, they can take proactive steps towards preserving their vision and seeking timely care when needed.

#### Advancements in Eye Care Technology

Advances in technology continue to revolutionize the field of eye care, offering innovative solutions for diagnosing and treating various eye conditions. From sophisticated imaging techniques to minimally invasive surgical procedures, these advancements enhance the accuracy, safety, and effectiveness of eye care interventions. Healthy Vision Month serves as an opportunity to celebrate these breakthroughs while encouraging individuals to leverage them for their benefit.

#### Addressing Disparities in Eye Health

Despite the progress made in eye care, disparities in access to services and treatment persist, particularly among underserved communities. Healthy Vision Month advocates for equitable access to eye care services, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to receive timely screenings, treatment, and vision correction. By addressing these disparities, we can work towards a future where eye health is a priority for all.

#### **Taking Action for Healthy Vision**

As Healthy Vision Month unfolds, individuals are encouraged to take proactive steps towards safeguarding their eyesight. Whether it's scheduling a comprehensive eye exam, adopting healthier lifestyle habits, or spreading awareness within their communities, every action contributes to the collective effort of preserving vision for generations to come.

May serves as a reminder of the importance of healthy vision and the proactive steps individuals can take to maintain it. By prioritizing regular eye care, adopting eye-friendly lifestyles, and advocating for equitable access to services, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a lifetime of clear, vibrant vision. As we celebrate Healthy Vision Month, let us commit to nurturing our eyesight and embracing a future where healthy vision is within reach for all.

#### Hunter Vittone, OD Optometric Physician

Dr. Hunter Vittone is an optometrist at Center For Sight. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from The Pennsylvania

State University in State College, PA, and his Doctor of Optometry degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry in Davie, FL.

Prior to joining Center For Sight, Dr. Vittone completed two optometric externships and earned certifications in CooperVision MiSight Orthokeratology, Paragon CRT Orthokeratology and MoonLens Orthokeratology.

At Center For Sight, Dr. Vittone provides comprehensive eye exams, ocular disease management, glaucoma treatment, dry eye care, as well as family eye care and contact lens fittings. He also provides pre- and post-operative care.

He is a member of the American Optometric Association and the Nova Optometry Practice Management Association.

In his spare time, Dr. Vittone enjoys golfing, fishing, tennis, and taking ski trips during the winter.

Dr. Vittone will be seeing patients in our Naples, FL office.



CENTER FOR SIGHT

€ A US EYE COMPANY

239-310-2020 www.centerforsightswfl.com 700 Neapolitan Way, Naples, FL 34103

# The Power of PLEXR

By Dr. Aldene McKenzie

evealing refreshed, youthful skin is a priority for many people throughout the year. If signs of aging or skin concerns are affecting your confidence, Plexr offers an innovative solution that delivers surgical-like results without the invasiveness of traditional procedures.

#### What Is Plexr?

Plexr (Plasma EXeResis) represents the cutting edge of non-surgical skin rejuvenation. This advanced treatment uses plasma created from ionized gas molecules in the air, which touch the skin causing fibers to contract through precise applications. Unlike lasers or surgery, Plexr treats various skin concerns without cutting, anesthesia, or lengthy recovery periods.

#### The Science Behind the Transformation

The handheld Plexr device emits streams of plasma energy, creating tiny areas of controlled damage that trigger healing responses. This stimulates new collagen and elastin production – the essential proteins responsible for skin's firmness and elasticity. The result isn't just temporary improvement but actual structural enhancement over time.

#### Versatile Solutions for Multiple Concerns

Plexr addresses numerous skin concerns with one technology:

- Non-surgical eyelid lifting: Reduces hooded eyelids and under-eye bags
- Wrinkle reduction: Smooths fine lines around eyes, forehead, and mouth
- Skin tightening: Firms sagging areas on face and neck
- Scar improvement: Minimizes acne scars and imperfections
- Skin tag removal: Precisely targets unwanted growths
- Texture improvement: Refines overall skin appearance

#### The Treatment Experience

During your Plexr treatment at Kenzi MedSpa, we apply a topical anesthetic for comfort. The 20-60 minute treatment delivers controlled plasma energy, which most clients find very tolerable compared to invasive alternatives.



Afterward, tiny carbon crusts form where the plasma worked, falling off within 5-7 days to reveal fresher, tighter skin. Some temporary swelling may occur, particularly around the eyes, but typically subsides quickly.

#### Why Choose Plexr This Summer?

Plexr offers significant advantages as beach season approaches:

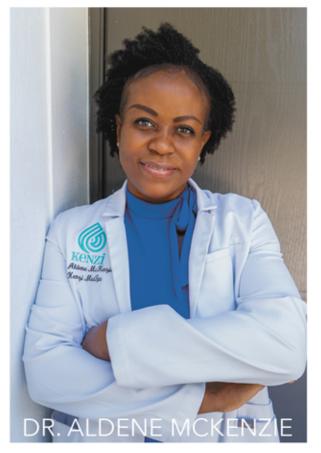
- No surgery required: Results without incisions or general anesthesia
- Minimal downtime: Return to most activities immediately
- Precision targeting: Address specific concerns without affecting surrounding tissues
- Natural-looking results: Enhance your appearance while looking like yourself

Most clients require 1-3 treatments spaced several weeks apart, making spring the perfect time to begin your transformation journey.

Dr. McKenzie, our Plexr specialist has undergone extensive training to provide the safest, most effective treatment possible. Your journey begins with a consultation to create a customized plan tailored to your specific goals, ensuring you achieve the summer-ready look you desire.

#### About Dr. Aldene McKenzie

Dr. Aldene McKenzie is a board-certified physician in Florida practicing Aesthetic and Bariatric Medicine in Naples for 9 years. She received her medical degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine and has immense knowledge and experience providing an upscale experience with a humanitarian approach.



## Providing A Healthy, Happy and Confident Lifestyle for All

Kenzi MedSpa & Wellness Center was inspired in 2017 with the goal for our clients to live a life well lived through optimizing their spiritual, physical, and psychosocial wellbeing. Holistic medicine considers the whole person-meaning body, mind, spirit, and emotions-in the quest for optimal health. That's also the philosophy of Dr. McKenzie, who is passionate about helping her clients look beautiful and feel empowered and confident thanks to an array of state-of-the-art aesthetic services. From Botox and dermal fillers to fat-loss treatments and medical-grade chemical peels, Dr. McKenzie will make sure that each treatment is tailored to meet her clients' beauty needs. With her caring and attentive approach towards patients, even injections turn into a pleasurable experience.

Reach out to book your complimentary consultation.



1-877-KENZISPA (1-877-536-9477) KENZISPA.COM 900 6th Ave S, Ste 303, Naples, FL 34102

## WHAT YOUR INK MIGHT BE SAYING: What We Can Learn from the Tattoo and Cancer Study

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

attoos have long been a form of self-expression, storytelling, and artistry. From intricate sleeves to tiny symbols, body art has become a cultural norm—especially among younger generations. But as tattoos grow in popularity, researchers are beginning to ask important questions about their long-term effects. A new study out of Denmark suggests there might be more to consider when it comes to tattoo ink—particularly its possible connection to certain types of cancer.

The Danish Twin Tattoo Cohort study, recently published in BMC Public Health, explored whether exposure to tattoo ink is linked to higher risks of skin cancers and lymphoma. Using an innovative design that included both a general cohort and twin-pair comparisons (where one twin had cancer and the other didn't), the researchers found concerning results. For individuals with large tattoos—especially those covering more skin than the size of a palm—the risk of skin cancer and lymphoma increased significantly.

Why is this study such a big deal? For starters, it's one of the first of its kind to combine robust epidemiological data with a unique twin-study design, which helps control for shared genetics and lifestyle factors. The researchers found:

- Tattooed individuals had a 1.6 to nearly 4 times higher risk of skin cancer and basal cell carcinoma.
- Large tattoos—especially those bigger than a palm—were linked to higher cancer risks than smaller ones.
- The risk was especially notable in individuals who had received their tattoos years before their diagnosis, indicating a potential long-term effect of ink exposure.

While the study doesn't claim tattoos cause cancer, it raises serious questions about chronic inflammation, ink composition, and the body's long-term response to foreign substances.

#### What's in Tattoo Ink?

Tattoo ink is more than colored liquid. Black ink, the most common, often contains carbon black, a substance classified as "possibly carcinogenic" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.



Colored inks may include heavy metals and azo compounds, some of which can break down into carcinogenic amines when exposed to sunlight or laser removal.

The body doesn't just leave the ink in place. Studies have shown that ink particles can travel through the lymphatic system and even reach internal organs like the liver. The Danish study builds on that evidence, suggesting these migrating particles may play a role in cancer development by triggering chronic immune responses.

#### What Can We Learn—and Do?

Let's be clear: This study isn't here to shame anyone with tattoos or spark panic. Instead, it's a reminder that even the most culturally accepted practices can come with hidden risks. Here's how we can take this research and apply it in practical, thoughtful ways:

#### 1. Ask Before You Ink

Before getting a tattoo, ask your artist about the inks they use. Do they meet current safety standards? Are they free of known carcinogens or heavy metals? Reputable tattoo studios should have this information readily available. It's your body—don't hesitate to ask questions.

#### 2. Size (and Location) Matters

The study found that larger tattoos, and possibly those located on sun-exposed areas, were more strongly associated with cancer risk. If you're planning body art, consider keeping designs smaller and avoiding frequent exposure to direct sunlight—or make sunscreen a permanent part of your tattoo care routine.

#### 3. Rethink Removal

Ironically, removing tattoos may present its own risks. Laser removal breaks ink into smaller particles that can migrate more easily through the body. If you're considering tattoo removal, consult with a dermatologist about safer approaches, and weigh the risks and benefits carefully.

#### 4. Monitor Your Skin

If you already have tattoos, the takeaway isn't to panic but to be proactive. Regularly check tattooed areas for any changes, like unusual bumps, discoloration, or new growths. Tattoos can mask early warning signs, so it's important to be extra vigilant. If anything seems off, get it checked by a healthcare provider.

#### 5. Push for Better Regulation

Tattoo inks are surprisingly under-regulated in many countries. Public health experts are calling for stricter oversight, clearer ingredient labeling, and long-term safety testing. Supporting these efforts—by raising awareness or contacting your local health authorities—can lead to safer practices for everyone.

#### The Bigger Picture

This study also reminds us of a broader truth: our choices, however small, can have long-term impacts on our health. Tattoos may be art, but they're also a chemical commitment. Understanding what goes into our bodies—and how our bodies respond over time—is part of being informed and empowered consumers.

As the researchers concluded, more studies are needed to fully understand how tattoo ink interacts with our biology. But their findings are enough to spark caution—and hopefully, more conversation about how we can enjoy tattoos safely.

Whether you're inked from head to toe or just considering your first piece, knowledge is power. Ask questions, be informed, and keep your skin—and your whole self—safe.

#### Svetlana Kogan, M.D.



The author of 'Diet Slave No More!', Svetlana Kagan, MD is a Board-Certified Internal Medicine, Holistic & Functional Medical Doctor with 25 years of experience. She has appeared as a health expert on prime-time TV and rodia stations

and has authored hundreds of holistic health articles for internet and print. She moved her Concierge Practice from Manhattan NYC to Naples in 2019. Her Functional Medicine Primary Care Practice is focused on prevention and holistic approach to illness, and longevity.

720 Fifth Ave S, Unit 209, Naples , FL 34102 Phone: (239) 676-6883 www.customlongevity.com

# FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ON AGING: Engagement & Connection Thrive at The Carlisle Naples

By Greg Pascucci

May is Older Americans Month, an opportunity to recognize the powerful contributions of older adults and challenge outdated stereotypes about aging. This year's theme, "Flip the Script on Aging," invites us to reframe how we talk about growing older, moving beyond limitations and into a new narrative centered on empowerment, engagement and purpose.

At The Carlisle Naples, an active retirement community, this theme isn't just a campaign, it's a way of life. Residents here aren't slowing down; they're reimagining what aging looks like and leading by example.

For example, Bonnie Jean Cousineau is a former English teacher with a lifelong love of learning and service. She didn't retire from purpose; she simply redirected it. After relocating to Naples, she discovered Palm Cottage, the city's oldest surviving house and a local treasure maintained by the Naples Historical Society. Bonnie found a new calling there as a volunteer docent, weaving stories of Naples' rich history for visitors from around the world.

Though she no longer drives, Bonnie's commitment hasn't wavered. The Carlisle Naples ensures she has transportation to continue her volunteer work. For Bonnie, aging hasn't meant stepping back, it's meant stepping forward into a role that fuels her passion and connects her with the community.

Retirement communities like The Carlisle Naples are uniquely positioned to help older adults flip the script on aging. Far from being places of quiet retreat, these communities offer the resources, programs and support needed to continue living with energy and intention.

Residents can enjoy lifelong learning classes, wellness programs, outings and opportunities to volunteer, all within a supportive environment designed to make staying engaged as easy as it is rewarding.



Here are a few tips for how to flip the switch on aging:

#### Pursue a Passion Project

Whether it's volunteering, gardening, mentoring or creative writing, finding something that excites you is one of the best ways to stay motivated and connected.

#### Stay Socially Connected

Social isolation is a risk as we age, but it doesn't have to be the norm. Join clubs, attend lectures or simply share meals with neighbors. In communities like The Carlisle Naples, opportunities to connect are part of daily life.

#### Focus on What You Can Do

Aging may bring physical changes, but that doesn't mean giving up independence or joy. At communities like The Carlisle Naples, services like transportation and on-site wellness support empower residents to keep doing what they love.

#### Challenge Ageist Narratives

Speak up when you hear stereotypes about older adults. Lead by example by showing that growth and contribution don't stop at a certain age.

#### Celebrate Your Story

Everyone has a legacy to share. Whether through storytelling, mentoring younger generations or documenting family history, your experiences are valuable and worthy of celebration.

By flipping the script, older adults reclaim the narrative to one that honors resilience, curiosity and contribution. This May, let's celebrate all that it means to grow older and honor the vibrant, evolving stories still being written every day.

Located at 6945 Carlisle Court in Naples, The Carlisle offers independent and assisted living lifestyles featuring spacious one-and two-bedroom residences, housekeeping, maintenance, transportation, all utilities except telephone, Zest wellness programming and elevated dining with daily, chef-prepared specials. The community is ECC licensed with an integrated health care clinic and rehabilitative therapies located onsite. The Carlisle Naples is accredited by the National Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an important distinction that provides residents with the assurance that the highest standards of quality care, services and safeguards are maintained. For more information about the community, please call 239-221-0017 or visit www.TheCarlisleNaples.com.



Luxury Rental Retirement Living 6945 Carlisle Court, Naples, FL 34109

239-221-0017 • www.TheCarlisleNaples.com



Distinctive Retirement Living since 1988

# Understanding Stroke Risks: TIME IS BRAIN

By Cory Lamar, MD - Board-Certified in Clinical Neurophysiology and Epilepsy

ach year, nearly 800,000 Americans experience a stroke, making it a leading cause of long-term disability and the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. With May designated as National Stroke Awareness Month, Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC in Naples, Florida, led by Dr. Cory Lamar, is committed to educating the community about stroke prevention, recognition, and treatment.

#### Recognizing the Signs of Stroke

"When it comes to stroke, every minute counts," explains Dr. Cory Lamar, neurologist at Advanced Neurology Specialists. "The faster a stroke is recognized and treated, the better the chances for recovery."



Remember the acronym FAST to identify stroke symptoms:

Face drooping: Does one side of the face droop when the person smiles?

Arm weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? When both arms are raised, does one drift downward?

**Speech difficulty:** Is speech slurred or strange? Can the person repeat a simple sentence?

Time to call 911: If any of these signs are present, call emergency services immediately.

Additional warning signs include sudden numbness (especially on one side of the body), confusion, trouble seeing, difficulty walking, and severe headache without a known cause.

#### Understanding Stroke Types and Risk Factors

There are two main types of stroke: ischemic (caused by blood clots) and hemorrhagic (caused by bleeding in the brain). Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs), often called "mini-strokes," serve as warning signs that a more severe stroke may occur. While some risk factors like age, family history, and gender cannot be changed, many others can be controlled:

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Atrial fibrillation

"Controlling these modifiable risk factors can significantly reduce your stroke risk," says Dr. Lamar. "Regular check-ups and appropriate medical management are essential components of prevention."

#### **Advanced Treatment Options**

At Advanced Neurology Specialists, Dr. Lamar employs state-of-the-art diagnostic tools and treatment protocols for stroke patients. For ischemic strokes, treatments like tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) can dissolve clots and restore blood flow when administered within the critical time window.

For patients who have experienced a stroke, comprehensive rehabilitation services help maximize recovery and independence. This may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and psychological support.

#### Prevention is Key

The best treatment for stroke is prevention. Dr. Lamar recommends:

- Following a heart-healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins
- Engaging in regular physical activity (at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise weekly)
- Maintaining healthy blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels
- Taking medications as prescribed
- Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol consumption

"We partner with our patients to develop personalized prevention strategies based on their specific risk factors," notes Dr. Lamar. "Through education and preventive care, many strokes can be avoided entirely."

#### **Expert Neurological Care in Naples**

Advanced Neurology Specialists provides comprehensive care for stroke prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. Dr. Cory Lamar brings extensive expertise in neurology to the Naples community, offering personalized treatment plans for patients with neurological conditions.

Conditions we often help people with at Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, include Alzheimer's disease (and other conditions that cause dementia), multiple sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease (and other disorders that cause tremor), epilepsy, and stroke. We also treat children from age 14 who are affected by headaches and seizure disorders.

Dr. Lamar is committed to delivering compassionate care backed by evidence-based medicine for the best possible outcomes. In addition to his extensive experience, he completed a fellowship at a Veterans Association (VA) medical center treating traumatic brain injuries and concussions.

Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, offers convenient outpatient electroencephalographs (EEGs) and ambulatory EEGs that patients perform at home. We aim to minimize anxiety while maximizing patient comfort and confidence at our welcoming office.

Call 239-667-5878 for more information about our services or to schedule a consultation with Dr. Lamar. Online booking is also available.

Remember: When it comes to stroke, time is brain. Know the warning signs and act quickly.



239-667-5878 advancedneurofl.com 730 Goodlette-Frank Rd. N, Suite 205 Naples, FL 34102

## BAHI THERAPY: A HOLISTIC PROTOCOL FOR POST-STROKE BRAIN RECOVERY

ecovering from a stroke is a complex and deeply personal journey—one that often demands more than conventional rehabilitation. That's where BAHI Therapy steps in. This emerging integrative health protocol combines cutting-edge science with holistic healing philosophies to support whole-brain recovery and functional restoration.

#### **BAHI stands for:**

- Biomodulation (Photobiomodulation or PBM)
- Air (Hydrogen Inhalation Therapy or HIT)
- Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)
- Integration of Vibration Therapy

Together, these four non-invasive, research-supported therapies work synergistically to address some of the most critical challenges in post-stroke recovery, such as:

- Oxidative stress
- Neuroinflammation
- · Hypoxia (low oxygen in brain tissues)
- Impaired circulation
- Neuromuscular dysfunction

Let's break down how each component supports recovery in a way that both patients and healthcare professionals can appreciate.

#### 1. Hydrogen Inhalation Therapy (HIT)

After a stroke, the brain undergoes a cascade of cellular damage triggered by oxidative stress—an overproduction of unstable molecules called free radicals. Hydrogen gas  $(H_2)$  is a selective antioxidant, meaning it only targets the most harmful radicals like hydroxyl and peroxynitrite, without interfering with the body's normal healing signals.

#### How it helps:

- In animal models, hydrogen inhalation reduced the size of brain infarcts (areas of dead tissue) and preserved neurological function.
- In human trials, particularly for cardiac arrest patients with similar oxidative brain stress, HIT improved neurological recovery and survival outcomes.

#### Why it matters:

Hydrogen therapy is safe, fast-acting, and supports neuroprotection during the brain's critical window of healing—potentially preserving brain function before irreversible damage sets in.

#### 2. Photobiomodulation (PBM)

PBM, also known as low-level laser therapy, uses specific wavelengths of red or near-infrared light to stimulate cellular repair.

#### What it does:

- Energizes the mitochondria (the "powerhouses" of cells) to increase ATP production, which is crucial for brain cell survival and repair.
- Triggers neurogenesis (formation of new brain cells).
- Reduces neuroinflammation by regulating overactive immune cells in the brain (microglia).
- Enhances blood flow and oxygen delivery.

#### What the research says:

Clinical and pre-clinical studies support PBM's ability to restore neurological function, especially in brain injury and stroke models. It has even shown potential in conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, where mitochondrial dysfunction and neuroinflammation play key roles.

#### 3. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)

In HBOT, patients breathe inside a pressurized chamber. This therapy dramatically increases oxygen levels in the bloodstream by pushing the hydrogen molecules inhaled during BAHI Therapy deeper into the brain and muscle tissues. This delivers oxygen to brain areas that are often starved of it after a stroke.

#### Why this matters:

- Oxygen is vital for cellular repair, but stroke often disrupts normal blood flow.
- HBOT promotes angiogenesis (growth of new blood vessels) and enhances brain metabolism.
- It can reactivate dormant neurons in the brain's penumbra—the area surrounding stroke-damaged tissue that is still salvageable.

#### Proven benefits:

- Clinical studies have shown HBOT can improve cognition, language, memory, motor skills, and overall quality of life—even months or years after the initial stroke.
- A protocol of 40–60 sessions has been linked to statistically significant improvements in long-term stroke outcomes.

#### 4. Vibration Therapy

Vibration therapy uses mechanical oscillations to stimulate the nervous system and muscles. While often used in sports recovery and physical rehab, it's increasingly being recognized for its role in neurological conditions.

#### Benefits for stroke patients:

- Enhances circulation and nutrient delivery to tissues.
- Stimulates proprioception (body awareness) and sensory feedback pathways.
- Supports neuromuscular reeducation, helping retrain the body to move with greater coordination and strength.



When used alongside PBM, HBOT, and HIT, vibration therapy may help "wake up" dormant pathways, reinforce motor learning, and accelerate physical recovery.

#### Why BAHI Therapy Works: A Synergistic Healing Model

While each of these therapies provides its own benefits, their combined application amplifies healing potential. BAHI Therapy addresses multiple aspects of stroke pathology—something that few single treatments can achieve.

Target	Mechanism	BAHI Component
Daldative Stress	Neutralizes damaging free radicals	Hydrogen Inhalation, PBM
Neuroinflammation	Modulates immune response	PBM, Hydrogen
Hýpexia	Recoygenates ischemic tissue	HBOT
Cellular Energy Deficit	Boosts ATP & mitochondria	EBM
Circulatory Issues	Enhances blood flow	HBOT Vibration
Motor Dysfunction	Promotes neuromuscular recovery	Vibration, PBM

#### A New Era in Stroke Recovery

BAHI Therapy offers a non-invasive, drug-free, and personalized approach to stroke rehabilitation—grounded in both clinical research and the body's natural regenerative capacity.

For patients, this means more control over your healing journey—and hope for recovery, even if traditional methods haven't worked.

For clinicians, BAHI Therapy represents a next-generation neurorehabilitation strategy, one that leverages technology, metabolic science, and functional healing principles in a coordinated, evidence-based manner.

At Brain Rejuvenation Clinic of Naples, we are here to help you and your loved ones dealing with the physical repercussions of stroke. We are located at 1729 Heritage Trail, Unit # 901. Call us at (239) 877- 2900 to schedule a consultation or to learn how our holistic approach can benefit you. We look forward to hearing from you!



239-877-2900 BrainRejuvenationClinic.com 1729 Heritage Trail, # 901 Naples, FL 34112



# What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Michael J. Petrocelli, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P. Board Certified Ankle and Foot Surgeon and Board Certified Wound Care Specialist

f you suffer from heel pain, you are well accompanied by over a million others that see their doctor for heel pain each year. The most common foot and heel discomfort is caused by a painful disorder known as plantar fasciitis.

The foot is comprised of many different bones, joints, tendons, and ligaments; these include the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a band of ligament tissue. It stretches from the heel of your foot to the middle, and it is responsible for reinforcing and supporting your arch. When this area becomes inflamed due to extreme tension on the ligament, pain erupts every time you take a step, and if left untreated, many people will even experience discomfort while at rest.

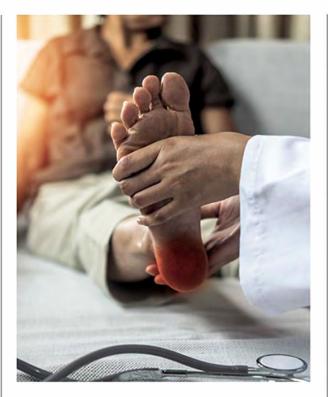
Because plantar fasciitis is one of the most common foot issues; one in ten people will experience it at some time in their life. Usually, the pain is concentrated in the heel area, and it is generally caused by small injuries that occur over an extended period of time. It's quite common for heel spurs, which are bony protrusions under the heel bone to coincide with plantar fasciitis.

There are many treatment options that you can do at home with the guidance of your podiatrist to try and alleviate the painful symptoms of plantar fasciitis. But, because of weight bearing, this area of the foot, in particular, is challenging to heal on its own, The key to getting your foot health back to normal, and you free from pain is to have medically based procedures provided by your podiatrist.

#### TREATMENT OPTIONS

#### Rest

Rest is one of the most important aspects of healing plantar fasciitis. It can take between 6 and 18 months for the issue to resolve completely. Taking it easy on the arches whiel you are healing is important.



#### **Arch Supports & Orthotics**

Arch taping or using orthotics can help to alleviate pressure and some of the pain associated with plantar fasciitis.

#### **Stretching Exercises**

Dynamic stretches can be very helpful to relax and create more flexibility within the tendon. Your podiatrist will give you a detailed list of exercises that you can safely do at home.

#### **Anti-Inflammatory Medications**

Ice and NSAIDs such as ibuprofen can help to reduce inflammation. These work best in conjunction with other treatments.

#### **Ultrasound- Guided Corticosteroid Injections**

This is an innovative treatment available from Collier Podiatry It allows the podiatrist to view the precise placement of the cortisone injectable via an advanced ultrasound machine to make certain that all of the pain and tension relieving material is placed accurately.

#### **Laser Treatment**

Laser therapy is one of the top methods to reduce your pain and inflammation. Deep tissue laser therapy uses a process called photobiomodulation, which penetrates deep into the muscles tissues using photon energy. This therapy increases cellular metabolism while decreasing inflammation and pain.

Collier Podiatry sees great results in their patient's foot health with this treatment option. The best part is that there are no side effects, no harmful medications and more importantly, long lasting results.

#### **Collier Podiatry**

Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 20 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. If you are experiencing any foot pain or foot conditions, please contact Collier Podiatry. Their kind and well-trained staff are ready to answer your questions and concerns and get you back on your feet again.

The caring supportive staff at Collier Podiatry is available to answer your questions and make your appointment. Please visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com, or call them direct at (239) 775-0019.



COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A. Michael J. Petrocelli D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P.

239-775-0019 www.collierpodiatry.com

NCH Countryside Commons 1715 Heritage Trail, Suite 204 Naples, FL 34112 Phone: (239) 775-0019 Fax: (239) 775-0219

## **TRADITIONAL VS. ROBOTIC LAPAROSCOPY**

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

inimally invasive surgical techniques have revolutionized urology and pelvic medicine. At the Florida Bladder Institute, Dr. Joseph Gauta has been performing laparoscopic surgery for over 30 years. While experienced in both traditional and robotic techniques, Dr. Gauta primarily utilizes traditional laparoscopy for compelling reasons that directly benefit his patients. This article explores why traditional laparoscopy often provides superior benefits compared to robotic alternatives.

#### TRADITIONAL LAPAROSCOPY

#### The Preferred Approach

Traditional laparoscopy (also known as "straightstick" laparoscopy) has been a cornerstone of minimally invasive surgery for decades. Dr. Gauta has refined his technique over three decades of practice.

#### **Significantly Fewer Incisions**

One of the most significant advantages of traditional laparoscopy as performed by Dr. Gauta is the dramatically reduced number of incisions required. While robotic surgery (using the da Vinci system) typically requires 5-6 puncture sites in the abdomen, Dr. Gauta's traditional laparoscopic approach needs only 1-3 holes. Fewer incisions mean less trauma to the body, potentially faster healing times, and reduced scarring.

#### **Proven Track Record**

Traditional laparoscopy has decades of clinical data supporting its safety and efficacy. Dr. Gauta has performed thousands of successful procedures using conventional laparoscopic approaches, refining his techniques to maximize patient outcomes.

#### Superior Setting: Outpatient Surgery Centers

Traditional laparoscopic procedures can be performed in outpatient surgery centers, where infection rates are nearly zero. In contrast, robotic procedures must be performed in hospital settings, which typically have higher infection rates. For patients, this difference can significantly impact recovery and overall surgical experience.

#### **Cost-Effectiveness for Patients**

Traditional laparoscopy is substantially more cost-effective than robotic alternatives. Not only is the equipment less expensive, but avoiding hospital facilities in favor of outpatient surgery centers dramatically reduces costs for patients. The hospital setting required for robotic surgery adds considerable expense without necessarily improving outcomes.

#### **Tactile Feedback**

Surgeons performing traditional laparoscopy maintain direct control of the instruments, allowing them to feel tissue resistance and tension. This tactile feedback is invaluable during delicate procedures and cannot be replicated by robotic systems, regardless of technological advances.

#### Improved Ergonomics for the Surgeon

While robotic systems are often promoted for their ergonomic benefits, Dr. Gauta has found that traditional laparoscopy provides superior comfort for his surgical style. The standing position and ability to use his body more naturally during traditional laparoscopic procedures has proven less taxing, particularly on his neck, compared to the seated, more static position required for robotic surgery. This translates to better surgeon performance during procedures.

#### Shorter Setup and Procedure Time

Traditional laparoscopic procedures typically require less preparation time compared to robotic systems. This efficiency translates to shorter overall procedure times and reduced anesthesia exposure for patients.

#### WHEN ROBOTIC SURGERY MAY BE CONSIDERED

While Dr. Gauta prefers traditional laparoscopy for most procedures, he acknowledges that robotic-assisted surgery does have specific applications in certain cases:

#### **Enhanced Visualization in Complex Cases**

The robotic platform provides three-dimensional visualization, which can be beneficial for certain highly complex procedures. However, for the majority of urological and gynecological procedures that Dr. Gauta performs, traditional laparoscopic visualization provides excellent views without the added costs and complications.

#### **Potential Benefits in Limited Circumstances**

For certain specific procedures, robotic assistance may offer advantages. However, patients should carefully weigh these potential benefits against the increased costs, additional incisions, hospital setting requirements, and associated infection risks.

#### Collier Edition - May 2025 Health & Wellness 21

Dr. Gauta's Approach at Florida Bladder Institute At the Florida Bladder Institute, Dr. Joseph Gauta's extensive experience with both traditional and robotic laparoscopy has led him to strongly favor the traditional approach for most procedures. His expertise allows him to perform procedures with precision that rivals or exceeds robotic alternatives, while offering patients fewer incisions, lower costs, and the safety of an outpatient surgical environment.

As with any surgery, patients should do their homework and understand all available options. When evaluating laparoscopic versus robotic approaches, consider these important factors:

- Number of incisions required (1-3 for traditional vs. 5-6 for robotic)
- · Setting where surgery will be performed (outpatient center vs. hospital)
- Risk of infection (nearly zero in outpatient) centers vs. higher in hospitals)
- Overall cost of the procedure
- Surgeon's experience and preference
- Recovery time expectations

For most patients requiring procedures that Dr. Gauta specializes in, traditional laparoscopy provides excellent outcomes with distinct advantages over robotic alternatives. His extensive experience ensures that patients receive the benefits of minimally invasive surgery without unnecessary complications or expenses.





Nicole Houser, PA-C



NAPLES: 1890 SW HEALTH PKWY., SUITE 205 info@floridabladderinstitute.com



## **Better Hearing Starts with You:** Why May Is the Perfect Time to Prioritize Your Hearing Health

By Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

ach May, we celebrate Better Hearing Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about hearing loss and encouraging people to take a proactive approach to their hearing health. As an audiologist, I couldn't be more excited about this annual reminder—because hearing is one of our most powerful connections to the world around us, and yet it's often overlooked until it starts to slip away.

#### Hearing is Health

When I talk to patients at Decibels Audiology, many are surprised to learn that hearing loss doesn't just affect how we perceive sound—it also plays a major role in our cognitive function, mental well-being, balance, and even heart health.

The ears may be small, but they are part of a much bigger system. When hearing begins to decline, the brain has to work harder to process sound. This increased mental strain has been linked to memory issues, faster cognitive decline, and even early signs of dementia. Additionally, untreated hearing loss has been associated with higher risks of depression, social isolation, and falls in older adults.

That's why hearing health is not just about communication—it's a key part of your overall wellness.

#### The Signs Are Easy to Miss

One of the biggest challenges with hearing loss is how gradually it tends to happen. You may find yourself turning up the TV volume more often, asking people to repeat themselves, or avoiding noisy restaurants because conversations feel too difficult to follow. You may even think others are mumbling more than they used to.

These are all signs that your hearing may be changing—but many people chalk it up to "getting older" or don't realize how much they're missing until they're tested.

Better Hearing Month is the perfect reminder to schedule a baseline hearing screening, especially if you're over 55. Just like an annual eye exam or a check-up with your primary care provider, hearing evaluations should be a regular part of your preventive health care.

#### Hearing Loss Is Treatable

The good news? Hearing loss Is manageable, and the solutions today are better than ever. At Decibels Audiology, we prescribe medical-grade hearing devices from all major manufacturers. That means we don't take a one-size-fits-all approach—we take time to understand your hearing needs, your lifestyle, and your budget.

Whether you spend your time golfing, traveling, volunteering, or simply enjoying family time, we can help you find a solution that keeps you hearing your best in the moments that matter most.

One of my favorite parts of this job is watching someone light up when they realize what they've been missing. A patient recently told me, "I didn't realize how quiet my world had become until I could hear the birds again." That's what hearing care is all about—restoring your connection to life.

#### Don't Wait—Your Brain Won't

Some people hesitate to take the first step because they think their hearing loss "isn't that bad yet." But studies show that the longer hearing loss goes untreated, the harder it can be for your brain to adapt to sound again. Early intervention not only helps you hear better now—it protects your cognitive health and keeps those vital neural pathways strong.

The sooner you start, the better your outcomes. And no—hearing aids are not bulky or embarrassing anymore! Today's technology is discreet, smart, and designed to fit seamlessly Into your life.

#### Start with a Conversation

If you're not sure where to begin, start by talking with your loved ones or your primary care provider. Or better yet, call us directly! A simple hearing screening takes less than an hour and gives us a clear picture of your hearing health. From there, we'll guide you through your options—real answers and real care.

At Decibels Audiology, we're here to build a lifelong partnership with you. That means helping you every step of the way—from your first test to follow-up adjustments and annual check-ins.



#### Let This May Be Your Moment

If you've been putting off your hearing test, now is the time. Make Better Hearing Month the moment you finally prioritize your hearing just like you would your heart, eyes, or joints. Because hearing isn't just about sound—it's about connection, confidence, and living life fully.

We invite you to schedule a free hearing screening at one of our two convenient locations in Naples. Let's work together to protect one of your most precious senses and keep you hearing—and thriving—for years to come.

#### Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D

Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D. is a Florida native with a passion for helping patients reconnect with the world through better hearing. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Central Florida in 2020 and completed her Doctorate in Audiology at the University of South Alabama in 2024.

Dedicated to improving her patients' ability to communicate, Dr. Rhodes takes pride in providing compassionate, personalized care. Outside of work, she enjoys soaking up the Florida sunshine at the beach with her goldendoodle, Fez.



Audiology & Hearing Center Call today and schedule your complimentary

hearing test and consultation. Helping Southwest Florida hear better for over 15 years!

> 239-325-0596 napleshearingaids.com

# R

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH: TAKING CONTROL OF THE SILENT KILLER

By Kathy V. Verdes, APRN, A-GNP-C

ach May, healthcare providers, advocacy groups, and communities across the nation unite for High Blood Pressure Education Month. This annual observance serves as a critical reminder about the dangers of hypertension—often called the "silent killer" because it typically presents no symptoms while quietly damaging vital organs.

#### Understanding the Scope of the Problem

Nearly half of American adults—an estimated 116 million people—have high blood pressure, with only about 24% having their condition under control. This widespread health issue is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke, the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States, respectively.

High blood pressure doesn't discriminate. It affects people of all ages, races, and backgrounds, though certain groups face heightened risks. Black Americans develop high blood pressure more frequently and at earlier ages than white Americans, while Hispanic and Asian populations show varying rates depending on specific heritage.

#### The Science Behind the Numbers

Blood pressure readings consist of two measurements: systolic pressure (the force when the heart beats) and diastolic pressure (the force when the heart rests between beats). Normal blood pressure falls below 120/80 mm Hg. Readings between 120-129 systolic with diastolic under 80 are considered elevated, while 130/80 or higher indicates hypertension.

Our understanding of blood pressure management has evolved significantly. Current guidelines emphasize earlier intervention and lifestyle modifications, recognizing that even modest elevations increase long-term health risks.

Prevention and Management Strategies High Blood Pressure Education Month highlights practical steps everyone can take to prevent or manage hypertension:



**Dietary Approaches:** The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins while limiting sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars. Research consistently shows this approach can lower blood pressure by 8-14 points—comparable to some medications.

Physical Activity: Regular exercise strengthens the heart, allowing it to pump more efficiently and reducing strain on arteries. Even modest activity—30 minutes of brisk walking five days weekly—can reduce blood pressure by 5-8 mm Hg.

Limiting Sodium: The average American consumes about 3,400 mg of sodium daily, far exceeding recommendations. Reducing intake to 2,300 mg or less can significantly lower blood pressure in salt-sensitive individuals.

Medication Adherence: For those prescribed antihypertensive medications, taking them as directed is crucial. Yet nearly half of patients stop taking their medication within a year of starting—a concerning statistic that education campaigns aim to address.

#### The Role of Regular Monitoring

Self-monitoring has emerged as a powerful tool in blood pressure management. Home monitoring devices provide valuable data between medical visits and can help detect white coat hypertension (elevated readings only in clinical settings) or masked hypertension (normal readings in clinical settings but elevated elsewhere).

Most importantly, regular monitoring increases patient engagement. When people actively track their numbers, they become more invested in the lifestyle choices affecting those readings.

#### **Community Impact and Policy Solutions**

Effective high blood pressure management requires more than individual action. Community-based programs offering free screenings, education, and resources have successfully identified undiagnosed cases and improved control rates in underserved populations.

Policy initiatives addressing food deserts, promoting physical activity through urban planning, and ensuring affordable access to medications also play vital roles in population-level blood pressure control.

#### The Path Forward

As we recognize High Blood Pressure Education Month this May, the message is clear: hypertension is both preventable and manageable. Through increased awareness, regular screening, lifestyle modifications, and when necessary, proper medication use, we can reduce the burden of this common but dangerous condition.

By making blood pressure control a national priority, we take significant steps toward healthier communities and reduced rates of heart disease, stroke, and other hypertension-related complications.

#### Are you ready for a consultation?

Your treatment will be performed by a Certified Nurse Practitioner. Schedule your appointment now!

#### KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP- C

Kathy earned her Master's in Nursing Degree from Kaplan University in 2017. Kathy is certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) as an Adult- Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (A-GNP-C). Prior to her Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Degree (APRN), Kathy managed a weight loss clinic for over 6 years right here in Naples. Kathy has since then managed acute and chronic care illnesses in different settings, and she genuinely enjoys spending time with her patients.





## Understanding Osteoporosis and Spine Compression Fractures: CAUSES, RISKS, AND TREATMENTS

By Amanda N. Sacino, MD-PhD • Neurosurgeon and Managing Partner

ay is Osteoporosis and Awareness Month. Osteoporosis, often called the "silent disease," is a condition in which bones become weak and brittle due to the loss of bone density and mass. This weakening can progress without symptoms until a bone breaks—often from a fall or, in severe cases, from something as minor as a sneeze. One of the most common and serious consequences of osteoporosis is spine compression fractures, which can lead to chronic pain, loss of height, and reduced quality of life.

#### What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a skeletal disorder characterized by low bone mineral density and deterioration of bone tissue. It primarily affects older adults, especially postmenopausal women, but can also affect men and younger individuals under certain conditions. Bone is living tissue that constantly breaks down and regenerates. When bone loss outpaces the formation of new bone, the skeleton becomes porous and fragile.

Risk factors include aging, hormonal changes (particularly the drop in estrogen in women after menopause), family history, poor nutrition (especially low calcium and vitamin D), sedentary lifestyle, smoking, and excessive alcohol use. Certain medications and medical conditions—like corticosteroids, rheumatoid arthritis, or thyroid disorders—can also increase the risk.

#### What Are Spine Compression Fractures?

Spine compression fractures occur when one or more vertebrae (the bones in the spine) collapse or are compressed. These fractures can happen suddenly or develop over time and are most often caused by osteoporosis. In people with weakened bones, even minimal stress—like lifting a light object, coughing, or twisting—can cause a vertebra to crack or collapse.

These fractures are most common in the thoracic spine (the middle portion of the back), but they can occur anywhere along the spine. Often, patients are unaware they have suffered a fracture, attributing the pain to general back issues or aging.

#### Symptoms and Diagnosis

The most telling symptom of a spine compression fracture is sudden back pain, particularly in the middle or lower back. The pain can be sharp and debilitating or present as a persistent, dull ache. Other signs include:

- Loss of height over time
- Stooped posture or kyphosis (a curved, hunched back)
- Limited spinal mobility
- Pain that worsens with standing or walking and improves with rest

In severe cases, multiple fractures can compress nerves, leading to numbness, tingling, or weakness in the limbs.

Diagnosis typically involves a physical exam followed by imaging tests. An X-ray can often reveal the collapsed vertebrae, while a DEXA (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry) scan is used to measure bone density and confirm osteoporosis. In some cases, an MRI or CT scan may be used to evaluate the severity of the fracture and rule out other causes of back pain, such as cancer or infection.

#### **Treatment Options**

The treatment for spine compression fractures depends on the severity of the fracture and the degree of osteoporosis. It usually includes a combination of pain management, activity modification, and bone-strengthening interventions.

#### 1. Conservative Treatment

Most compression fractures can be managed conservatively:

- Pain Relief: Over-the-counter pain medications like acetaminophen or NSAIDs can help. In some cases, stronger prescription pain relievers may be necessary.
- Bracing: A spinal brace or orthotic may be used to limit motion and provide support during healing.
- Activity Modification: Bed rest may be recommended initially, followed by gradual reintroduction of movement and physical therapy to restore mobility and strength.

#### 2. Medical Treatment for Osteoporosis

Treating the underlying osteoporosis is critical to prevent future fractures. This may involve:

- Calcium and Vitamin D Supplements: Essential for bone health.
- Bisphosphonates: Medications that slow bone loss and help rebuild bone density.
- Other Medications: Such as denosumab, teriparatide, or romosozumab, depending on the patient's profile and response to initial therapies.
- Lifestyle Changes: Incorporating weight-bearing exercises, quitting smoking, reducing alcohol intake, and improving diet.

#### 3. Surgical Treatment

In cases where conservative treatment is ineffective or the pain is severe and persistent, minimally invasive surgical procedures may be considered:

• Kyphoplasty: A procedure which involves inserting a balloon to create space which can help restore vertebral height before bone cement is injected into the fractured vertebra to stabilize it.

#### Prevention

Preventing osteoporosis and spine compression fractures starts early. Building strong bones through adequate calcium and vitamin D intake, regular physical activity (especially weight-bearing and resistance exercises), and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol can go a long way. For those at risk, regular bone density screenings and early medical intervention are key.

#### Living with Osteoporosis

Though osteoporosis and spine compression fractures can be life-altering, many people live well with proper management. A multidisciplinary approach involving primary care physicians, endocrinologists, orthopedists, and physical therapists can help optimize outcomes. Education and support—through patient groups or community resources—also play a vital role in maintaining both physical and emotional well-being.



239-422-APEX (2739) 3530 Kraft Road, Suite 203 • Naples, FL 34105 www.apexbrainandspine.com

## **NURTURING YOUR MIND:** Embracing Mental Health Month for a More Fulfilling Life By Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC

ental 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 fore-

front 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.



239.259.1659 www.phoenixbehavioralgrp.com

4949 Tamiami Trail North, Suite 202 Naples, FL 34103

n the quest for graceful aging, innovative approaches like intravenous (IV) therapies are gaining popularity among those seeking to preserve vitality and address age-related concerns. These targeted treatments deliver nutrients, antioxidants, and therapeutic compounds directly into the bloodstream, potentially offering more immediate and effective results than oral supplements. Let's explore several promising IV therapies that are helping redefine healthy aging.

#### NAD+ Therapy: Energizing Cellular Function

Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD+) is a coenzyme present in every cell that plays a crucial role in energy production and cellular health. As we age, NAD+ levels naturally decline, potentially contributing to decreased energy, cognitive function, and cellular repair capacity.

NAD+ IV therapy aims to replenish these diminishing levels by delivering this vital compound directly into the bloodstream. Proponents report improved energy levels, enhanced mental clarity, and better sleep quality. Some research suggests NAD+ supplementation may help support DNA repair mechanisms, potentially addressing one of the fundamental aspects of aging at the cellular level.

Many recipients describe feeling a renewed sense of vitality after treatment courses, with effects typically building over multiple sessions. While more clinical studies are needed, preliminary research shows promise for NAD+ as part of a comprehensive approach to healthy aging.

#### Ozone Therapy: Oxygenating and Detoxifying

Ozone therapy utilizes medical-grade ozone  $(O_3)$ , a form of oxygen with three atoms instead of the usual two. When administered intravenously in carefully controlled amounts, ozone can stimulate oxygen metabolism, activate the immune system, and promote detoxification pathways.

For aging individuals, this therapy may offer several benefits. The increased oxygenation could improve circulation and cellular metabolism, while the mild oxidative stress it creates paradoxically stimulates antioxidant defense systems. This hormetic effect might help the body better handle the oxidative stress associated with aging.



Some practitioners report that patients experience improvements in energy, reduction in chronic inflammation, and enhanced overall well-being. As with many integrative approaches, personal responses vary, and ozone therapy is typically most effective when incorporated into a holistic health plan.

Specialized IV Formulations for Age Management Beyond single-compound therapies like NAD+, several combination IV formulations have been developed specifically to address the multifaceted nature of aging:

IV Firm cocktails typically blend collagen-supporting compounds, antioxidants, and minerals that promote skin elasticity and structural integrity. These formulations aim to address visible signs of aging from the inside out, potentially complementing topical skincare routines for more comprehensive results.

Metabolize infusions focus on supporting metabolic efficiency, which naturally declines with age. These specialized IV formulations often include a careful balance of B vitamins, amino acids, and compounds that support mitochondrial function and fat metabolism. Recipients may experience improved energy and more efficient metabolic processes.

Time Machine: cocktails represent comprehensive approaches combining multiple anti-aging compounds. These robust formulations typically include antioxidants, NAD+ or its precursors, glutathione, and various vitamins and minerals. They aim to address multiple aging pathways simultaneously, from oxidative stress to inflammation and cellular energy production.

#### -www.swfHealthandWellness.com -

#### **Embracing IV Therapies Wisely**

While IV therapies offer exciting possibilities for those pursuing healthy aging, they work best as part of an integrated approach. Quality nutrition, regular physical activity, stress management, and adequate sleep remain the foundation of any effective anti-aging strategy.

Before pursuing IV therapies, consult with healthcare providers knowledgeable in both conventional and integrative medicine. Individual health conditions, medication interactions, and personal health goals should guide treatment decisions.

As research evolves, these therapies will likely become more refined and targeted. For now, they represent promising tools that, when used appropriately, may help us redefine what healthy aging looks like in the modern era—maintaining vitality, cognitive function, and quality of life throughout our extended lifespans.

To experience these transformative IV therapies for yourself, call TheDRIPBaR today at 239-422-6044 and take the first step toward revitalizing your aging journey.

#### Naples, FL IV Therapy Unleash the Power of Wellness



239-422-6044 www.TheDRIPBaR.com/Naples

> 11216 Tamiami Trail N. Naples, FL 34110



# NO PAIN. ALL GAIN.

By Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A.

S pinal injuries can profoundly affect daily life, leading to chronic pain, reduced mobility, and diminished quality of life. At the clinic of Dr. Michael Shaffer we utilize advanced, non-invasive therapies to address these challenges, notably the M7 MLS® Therapy Laser and Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression. These treatments aim to alleviate pain and promote healing.

#### **Common Spinal Injuries**

Spinal injuries can result from various causes, including:

- Whiplash: Often due to rear-end vehicle collisions, leading to neck pain and stiffness.
- Sprains and Strains: Caused by overstretching or tearing of ligaments and muscles.
- Herniated Discs: Occurs when disc material protrudes, pressing on spinal nerves.
- Degenerative Disc Disease: Age-related wear and tear causing disc deterioration.
- Sciatica: Compression of the sciatic nerve, resulting in leg pain.
- Spinal Stenosis: Narrowing of the spinal canal, leading to nerve compression.
- Repetitive Stress Injuries: From prolonged poor posture or repetitive motions.
- Improper Lifting Injuries: Due to incorrect lifting techniques, causing back strain.
- Sleep Posture Injuries: Resulting from inadequate sleeping positions affecting spinal alignment.



#### M7 MLS® Therapy Laser

The M7 MLS® Therapy Laser is an FDA-cleared, Class IV laser system designed to reduce pain and inflammation while promoting tissue repair. It utilizes synchronized dual wavelengths to penetrate deep into tissues, stimulating cellular activity and enhancing the healing process.



#### Benefits:

- Pain Reduction: Alleviates acute and chronic pain conditions.
- Inflammation Control: Decreases swelling and promotes circulation.
- Accelerated Healing: Enhances tissue regeneration and recovery.
- Non-Invasive: Provides a painless treatment option without side effects.

Studies indicate that approximately 85–90% of patients experience significant relief from musculoskeletal pain as well as other types of chronic pain following MLS laser therapy.

#### Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression

Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression is a therapy aimed at relieving pressure on spinal discs and nerves. By gently stretching the spine, it creates negative pressure within the discs, encouraging retraction of herniated material and promoting nutrient-rich fluid influx for healing.

#### Procedure:

- Setup: The patient is secured on a specialized table with harnesses.
- Decompression: Controlled mechanical stretching is applied to the spine.
- Duration: Sessions typically last 30 minutes, with a recommended course of 20-24 sessions over several weeks.

#### **Conditions Treated:**

- Herniated or bulging discs
- Degenerative disc disease
- Sciatica
- Spinal stenosis



Clinical studies have demonstrated that combining spinal decompression with laser therapy can achieve success rates up to 86%.

#### **Combined Therapeutic Approach**

Integrating the M7 MLS® Therapy Laser with Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression offers a comprehensive treatment strategy. While decompression addresses structural issues by relieving disc and nerve pressure, the laser therapy promotes cellular repair and reduces inflammation.

#### Advantages:

- Enhanced Pain Relief: Targeting both mechanical and inflammatory sources of pain.
- Improved Functionality: Restoring mobility and reducing discomfort.
- Accelerated Recovery: Facilitating faster healing through synergistic effects. This combined approach is particularly effective for conditions like sciatica, where nerve compression and inflammation coexist.

#### **Personalized** Care

Dr. Michael Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981, specializing in spinal care, musculoskeletal conditions, and rehabilitation. Each patient receives a tailored treatment plan based on a comprehensive assessment, ensuring optimal outcomes.

> Call today to schedule. Appointments are filling quickly.

CD

Rely on Clinical Expertise and Experience

Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A.

(239) 793-3200 www.drmichaelshaffer.com

> 671 Goodlette Rd., Unit 160 Naples, FL 34102

## **REVOCABLE LIVING VS. IRREVOCABLE TRUSTS: DIFFERENCES THAT MATTER**

By Dominico R. Palma, Florida Estate Planning Attorney

rusts are flexible estate planning tools that can serve a variety of purposes. When combined with a Will and other appropriate estate planning tools, trusts can help people at all stages of life confidently achieve their estate planning goals.

Several different types of trusts are used in estate planning. Broadly speaking, these trusts fall into two categories: (i) revocable living trusts and (ii) irrevocable trusts.

#### Incorporating a Revocable Living Trust Into Your Estate Plan

Revocable living trusts allow you to plan for the future while still maintaining complete control over your assets during your lifetime. When you establish a revocable living trust as part of your estate plan, this trust will serve several purposes that your Last Will and Testament would otherwise serve. Most importantly, it will allow your loved ones to avoid the probate process.

Under Florida law, when a person passes away with or without a Will, all personal assets become inaccessible. Accessing these assets requires court involvement, the process of which is called "Probate." This process involves additional time, expense, and possible complications in finalizing the decedent's personal affairs.

When you place assets into a revocable living trust, they are not part of your probate estate. As a result, the assets are distributed privately, and there is no need to involve the courts. A carefully drafted Florida revocable living trust combined with other estate planning tools will often keep a person's entire estate out of probate.

As the term "revocable living trust" suggests, these trusts are revocable. This means that if you decide to modify the terms of your trust or get rid of it entirely, you can do so at any time for any reason. This flexibility, combined with the ability to avoid probate, makes the revocable living trust a valuable estate planning tool for many people.



#### Using Irrevocable Trusts to Achieve Specific Estate Planning Goals

If revocable living trusts are so flexible and effective, why would you create an irrevocable trust instead? While revocable living trusts are useful as general estate planning tools in Florida, irrevocable trusts can help you achieve a variety of more specific estate planning goals.

There are several types of irrevocable trusts—all of which are useful in different circumstances. For example, some of the most commonly used irrevocable trusts include:

- Spousal Lifetime Access Trusts
- Charitable Trusts
- Qualified Personal Residence Trust
- Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts
- Qualified Income Trusts
- Special Needs Trusts

Although the permanent nature of these trusts may seem daunting and comes with certain disadvantages, such as giving up ownership and control of assets, the irrevocability comes with certain benefits. For example, using irrevocable trusts may allow for tax advantages or help qualify an individual for Medicaid.

-www.swfHealthandWellness.com -

The use of trusts in estate planning is highly specific to each individual's or family's wants and needs. Thus, meeting with an Estate Planning lawyer in Florida is imperative to inform you of all your options and determine what will work best for you.

#### Discuss Your Options with a Florida Estate Planning Lawyer

Do you have questions about incorporating a revocable living trust or an irrevocable trust into your estate plan? If so, we invite you to get in touch. To discuss your options with an experienced Florida estate planning lawyer at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A., please call **239-394-5161** or visit **www.wpl-legal.com** for more information.

#### About the Author



Dominico "Nico" R. Palma is an associate attorney with Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. in the Marco Island location. His law practice focuses on Florida estate planning, probate and

trust administration, business planning and real estate transactions. Originally from Roseto, Pennsylvania, Nico moved to Naples in 2019 to attend Ave María School of Law.

Nico's passion for helping clients and the community led him to serve as a First Lieutenant in the Florida Army National Guard as well as in multiple roles for organizations such as the National Italian American Bar Association, the Florida Italian-American Bar Association, and the Estate Planning and Probate Committee of the Elder Law Section of The Florida Bar. Additionally, Nico is an active member of the Naples Italian-American Society and Young Professionals of Naples.

Outside the office, Nico enjoys golfing, beachgoing, and spending time with his English bulldog, Apollo.



NAPLES OFFICE: 3200 TAMIAMI TRAIL N, STE 200 NAPLES, FL 34103 239-649-6555

MARCO ISLAND OFFICE 606 BALD EAGLE DR, STE 500 MARCO ISLAND, FL 34145 239-394-5161

WWW.WPL-LEGAL.COM

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

Dr. Katia Taba, Board-Certified Ophthalmologist and Retinal Specialist

ay 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.



Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes,

and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times.

Dr. Taba is a board-certified ophthalmologist in both her home country of Brazil and in the United States. She earned her medical degree at a leading medical school in Brazil and continued specialized vitreoretinal surgery training in Florida, New York, California, Louisiana, and many other locations in the U.S. Dr. Taba trained under the leading experts in the field of ocular disease.

Dr. Taba's extensive training and experience include many years as both a clinician and academician. She entered solo practice as a way to deliver consistently great care in a world where the environment and health care policies are always changing.

Dr. Taba wants to make sure that patients always get the most accurate diagnosis and most effective treatment, so she uses only the latest, state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. Dr. Taba is the first retina specialist on the southwest coast of Florida to have wide-angle viewing imaging. Dr. Taba also makes sure that injections and treatments are pain-free so patients can always expect a comfortable experience.

#### **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.

Please call (239) 325-3970 today to schedule your eye exam. When necessary same day appointments can often be accommodated.



Katia E. Taba, M.D., Ph.D. 3467 Pine Ridge Rd #103 Naples, Florida 34109

239-325-3970 www.retinagroupflorida.com

# **UNDERSTANDING ARTHRITIS** Shedding Light During Arthritis Awareness Month

rthritis, a term encompassing over 100 different types of joint diseases and conditions, affects millions worldwide, causing pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility. As the world marks Arthritis Awareness Month this May, it's imperative to shed light on this often misunderstood condition and its impact on individuals and communities.

Arthritis is not a condition confined to the elderly; it can affect people of all ages, including children. Despite its prevalence, misconceptions persist, hindering both awareness and support for those living with arthritis. Therefore, this awareness month serves as an opportunity to educate, advocate, and support those affected.

Raising awareness about arthritis involves dispelling myths and misconceptions. While commonly associated with aging, arthritis can develop due to various factors, including genetics, autoimmune disorders, injuries, and infections. By understanding these diverse causes, society can move beyond stereotypes and offer better support to individuals navigating the complexities of arthritis.

Moreover, highlighting the importance of early diagnosis and intervention is crucial. Early detection allows for better management of symptoms and can slow the progression of the disease. Through public education campaigns and initiatives during Arthritis Awareness Month, individuals are encouraged to prioritize their joint health and seek medical attention if they experience persistent symptoms such as joint pain, swelling, or stiffness.

Arthritis not only impacts physical health but also takes a toll on mental and emotional well-being. Living with chronic pain and limited mobility can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety. Thus, raising awareness about the psychological aspect of arthritis is essential. By fostering understanding and empathy, communities can offer valuable support networks to those struggling with the emotional burden of the condition.

In addition to raising awareness, Arthritis Awareness Month serves as a platform for advocacy and policy change. By amplifying the voices of individuals living



with arthritis, advocates can push for improved access to healthcare, research funding, and workplace accommodations. Through collective action, strides can be made towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for those affected by arthritis.

Furthermore, promoting lifestyle modifications and self-management strategies is key to empowering individuals with arthritis. From maintaining a healthy weight to engaging in regular exercise and adopting joint-friendly habits, there are various steps individuals can take to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life. Arthritis Awareness Month provides an opportunity to disseminate these valuable resources and encourage proactive self-care.

It's also important to recognize the impact of arthritis on caregivers and family members. The burden of supporting a loved one with arthritis can be immense, both emotionally and physically. By acknowledging the vital role of caregivers and providing resources and support, communities can ensure that no one faces the challenges of arthritis alone.

Education plays a pivotal role in dispelling stigma and fostering empathy towards those living with arthritis. By incorporating arthritis awareness into school curriculums and public health initiatives, we can cultivate a more informed and compassionate society. Additionally, promoting research and innovation in arthritis treatment and management is essential for improving outcomes and enhancing the lives of those affected by the condition.

In conclusion, Arthritis Awareness Month serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of understanding, supporting, and advocating for individuals living with arthritis. By dispelling myths, promoting early detection and intervention, addressing the psychological impact, advocating for policy change, empowering individuals through self-management strategies, and supporting caregivers, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. Let us unite in raising awareness, promoting empathy, and striving for a world where arthritis no longer limits lives.

#### Dr. Ricardo Martinez



Dr. Ricardo Martinez is an internist in Naples, FL and is affiliated with NCH Baker Hospital. He received his medical degree from Superior Institute of Medical Sciences of

Santiago de Cuba and has been in practice 20 years. He also speaks multiple languages, including Spanish. He specializes in hospital medicine, ambulatory care and is experienced in hospice and palliative medicine, bariatric medicine, diabetes mellitus, food allergy, and infectious disease. As of March 16th, 2020, Dr. Martinez has founded Well-Being Medical center in Naples Florida. He is looking forward to providing Medical care within primary care settings and urgent care service throughout the Naples Florida area.



239-315-7801 www.well-beingmedicalcenter.org

> 851 5th Ave. N. Suite 102, Naples, FL 34102



# Your prescription for life

Exercise is the one medical treatment that works to prevent and manage all chronic conditions, including cancer.

Visit us today to learn how we're redefining healthcare together.

## © 239.429.0800 3555 Kraft Rd, Ste 130, Naples, Florida, 34105

inspireem.com

## EMBRACE LIFE'S NEXT ADVENTURE.



**IMAGINE A LIFE FILLED WITH POSSIBILITIES**. Every day, a vibrant mingling of community connections and inspiring experiences. Every moment, an opportunity to revitalize your mind, body and soul.

Book a personal tour or RSVP to join us for our Lunch & Learn events. Thursday, May 15th Ray 22nd • 11:30am

THE CARLISLE

It's a great way to get to know us!

An SRG Senior Living Community

RETIREMENT LIVING, REDEFINED

6945 Carlisle Court, Naples | TheCarlisleNaples.com | 239-323-0024

🚖 🗑 🖉 ECC Licensed · Assisted Living Facility 9408

# What is Your VASCULAR PROFILE?

Call to schedule your free screening for ...

Carotid disease---Stroke prevention

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm---Risk of rupture

Atherosclerosis (PAD)---Pain in legs with walking

We offer complete vascular lab studies performed by an RVT/RPhS (Registered phlebotomist sonographer)



Vascular Center of Naples 1875 Veterans Park Drive, Suite 2203, Naples, FL 34109

239-431-5884 www.vascularcenternaples.com





**Russell Becker, DO** 

**Duke Pfitzinger, DO** 

## **Regenerative, Physical, & Preventative Medicine**

"Comprehensive programs for spine, joints, neuropathy, and wellness."



Neuropathy Webinar - Via Email or Text 239-330-1000 Stem Cell Allografts
Platelet Rich Plasma
Chiropractic

Massage

Ultimate Neuropathy Program
Ultimate Spinal Decompression
Ultimate Knee Program

Peptides
Nutritional IVs



# 239.330.1000

3031 AIRPORT PULLING RD. N. NAPLES, FL 34105 NaplesNeuroDoc.com



www.well-beingmedicalcenter.org 851 5th Ave. N. Suite 102 Naples, FL 34102

SW Florida's Premier Board Certified Urogynecology Practice

## FEMALE PELVIC MEDICINE & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

#### Specializing in the treatment of:

- Urinary & Fecal Incontinence
- Overactive Bladder
- Complex Pelvic Disorders
- Cosmetic Gynecology
- Pelvic Organ Prolapse
- Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections
- Heavy Bleeding
- Emsella

#### (239) 449-7979

www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com 1890 SW HEALTH PKWY., SUITE 205 NAPLES FL





**Associates In Nephrology** 

#### PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE KIDNEY CARE AND TRANSPLANT SERVICES IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA FOR OVER 40 YEARS



Our multidisciplinary team provides treatment for kidney disease with follow up care, as well as kidney transplant services. We work collaboratively with a patient's primary care physician and specialists to slow the progression of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and prevent or manage complications.

Neetu Malhotra, MD

#### Now Accepting New Patients (ages 18 and older)

CAPE CORAL 1320 SE 8th St Cape Coral, FL 33990

FORT MYERS LEHIGH ACRES 7981 Gladiolus Dr 3400 Lee Blvd, #112 Fort Myers, FL 33908 Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

**BONITA SPRINGS** 9550 Bonita Beach Rd, 108 Bonita Springs, FL 34134

239.939.0999

associatesnephrology.com

Most major insurances accepted.

Providing comprehensive kidney care & transplant services since 1984.

## **Does PAIN prevent you from** getting back into the game of Life?

Let Dr. Swift help you return to a pain free, active life.





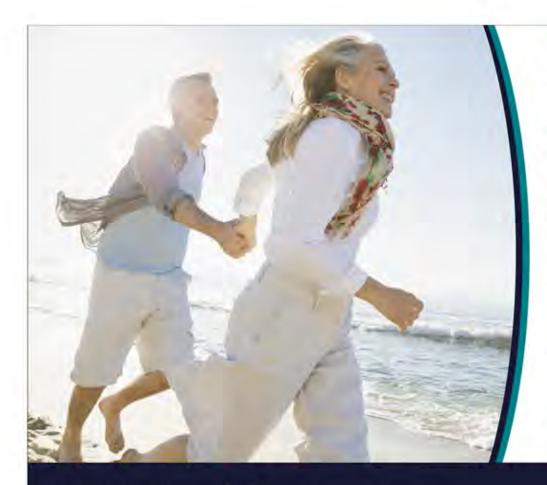
Dr. Robert Swift, D.O.

Dr. Swift's goal is to provide thorough, high-quality orthopedic care to our community.

When you decide to put your health into our hands, it immediately becomes our number one priority. We value the relationships we form with each patient, and believe that goes a long way in improving their health care outcomes.

Give us a call to find out how we can help you today.

(239) 877-4662 | www.blueskyorthopedics.com 730 Goodlette-Frank Fd N., Suite 205, Naples, FL 34102



## **Bringing Clear Vision to Life**

At Center For Sight, we know that restoring vision is not just about improving your sight – it's about enhancing your quality of life. We are proud to offer our patients convenient access to nationally renowned surgeons, compassionate staff members and cutting-edge technology.

Schedule your appointment today!

#### Services Include:

- Cataract Surgery
- LASIK Surgery
- Glaucoma Management and Treatment
- · Comprehensive Care
- Reconstructive and Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery

CENTER FOR SIGHT | SA US EYE COMPANY

CenterForSightSWFL.com | 239.310.2020 700 Neapolitan Way, Naples, FL 34103

### **NEUROLOGY & EPILEPSY SPECIALIST**

#### At Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, in Naples, Florida, we offer exceptional, comprehensive care to patients with brain and nervous system conditions.

Our neurologist, **Cory Lamar, MD**, is board-certified in clinical neurophysiology and epilepsy, as well as neurology, ensuring patients receive expert diagnosis and treatment.

#### **CONDITIONS WE TREAT**

- SEIZURES
- DEMENTIA
- TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
- MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
- PARKINSON'S DISEASE
- STROKE
- TREMOR

#### CORY LAMAR, MD - NEUROLOGIST/EPILEPTOLOGIST



Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC

239-667-5878 | advancedneurofl.com 730 GOODLETTE-FRANK RD N, SUITE 205 NAPLES, FL 34102



## ACHIEVE THE LOOK YOU DESIRE!

Love yourself and your body with treatments from Kenzi MedSpa.

Injectables | Skin & Body Treatments | Wellness Services





#### Dr. Aldene McKenzie

LOCATION: 900 6th Ave S, Ste 303, Naples, FL 34102

**KENZISPA.COM** 

Are you ready to embrace your best self by feeling and looking your best? We can't wait to help boost your confidence and be part of your journey to loving the skin you are in.

Give Kenzi MedSpa a call today at 1-877-KENZISPA (1-877-536-9477)



700 Neapolitan Way, Naples, FL 3410

## **Understanding Otolaryngologists:** The Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialists

hen 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 spe-

cialty 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.

Do you suffer with a chronic cough? Throat irritation? Hearing loss? Nasal congestion? Ear fullness? Allergy sufferers, ask us about our alternative solution to allergy shots.

We are always accepting new patients. Don't trust something as important as your hearing to just anyone. Call us and make an appointment today!

#### **PA/NP POSITION AVAILABLE**

Join Dr. Sonkarley's ENT team! Seeking experienced PA/NP. Excellent benefits and supportive work environment. Call 239-495-6200 to apply.

Serving all of Southwest Florida 9240 Bonita Beach Rd. SE #1106, Bonita Springs, FL 34135 Sunshine Professional Center (across from Spanish Wells) 239.495.6200 Mon-Thurs 8am until 6pm - drmarkmontgomery.com

For the Protection and Health of Our Patients and Employees, We Strictly Follow all CDC Safety Guidelines.



Business Law – Community Association – Estate Planning – Family Law Land Use & Zoning – Litigation – Local Government Law Personal Injury Law – Probate & Trust Administration – Real Estate Law





MARCO (239) 394-5161

### GOT PAIN? GET BETTER FASTER WITH MLS THERAPY LASER



**CALL TODAY!** 

(239) 793-3200

www.drmichaelshaffer.com

**NEW LOCATION!!!** 

671 Goodlette Road, Unit 160, Naples, FL 34102

Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A. Specializing in Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression and MLS Therapy Laser



Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation.

> Rely on Clinical Expertise and Experience



#### EMBARK ON YOUR JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

## JO ORTIZ, PMHNP-BC

Phoenix Behavioral Group, your premier destination for exceptional psychiatric services in the vibrant state of Florida. Founded and led by, Jo Ortiz, PMHNP-BC, our practice is dedicated to fostering mental health and well-being within our community.

#### WHAT WE TREAT:

Depressive Disorders • Anxiety Disorders including Panic Attacks & Social Anxiety
 Postpartum Depression and/or Anxiety • Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Fear and Stress-Related Disorder
  - Bipolar Disorders Substance Abuse/Addiciton/Alcohol Use Disorder
  - Personality Disorders Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
     Alzheimer's Disease Eating Disorders



**NAPLES CLINIC** 

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE

- · Urgent Care
- · Primary Care
- · X-Ray
- Hormone Therapy
- Weight Loss
- Aesthetic
- · Botox & Fillers



WE BELIEVE THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE IS SERVICE.



### 38 Health & Wellness May 2025 - Collier Edition



# ARTHRITIS... HELP!

Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

rthritis is a group of disorders that cause inflammation and pain in the joints. It affects millions of people worldwide, and it is one of the leading causes of disability. There are over 100 types of arthritis, and each one has unique symptoms, causes, and treatments. While there are many types of healthcare professionals that can help manage arthritis, an orthopedic surgeon is an essential part of the treatment plan for certain types of arthritis.

Orthopedic surgeons specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disorders of the musculoskeletal system. This includes bones, joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. Arthritis affects the joints, which makes an orthopedic surgeon a crucial part of the treatment team for certain types of arthritis.

One of the most common types of arthritis is osteoarthritis. This type of arthritis is caused by the wear and tear of the joints over time. Osteoarthritis can affect any joint in the body, but it most commonly affects the hands, hips, knees, and spine. While there is no cure for osteoarthritis, there are many treatment options available to help manage the symptoms. An orthopedic surgeon can provide surgical options such as joint replacement, which can greatly improve the quality of life for people with osteoarthritis.

Another type of arthritis that may require the expertise of an orthopedic surgeon is rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that causes the immune system to attack the joints, resulting in inflammation, pain, and damage to the joints. The most commonly affected joints in rheumatoid arthritis are the hands, wrists, and feet. While there are many medications available to help manage the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, some people may require surgery to help improve joint function. An orthopedic surgeon can perform procedures such as joint fusion or joint replacement to help alleviate the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

Psoriatic arthritis is another type of arthritis that may require the expertise of an orthopedic surgeon. This type of arthritis is characterized by joint pain,



stiffness, and swelling, and it often occurs in people with psoriasis. The most commonly affected joints in psoriatic arthritis are the fingers, toes, and spine.

While medications can help manage the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis, some people may require surgery to help improve joint function. An orthopedic surgeon can perform procedures such as synovectomy or joint replacement to help alleviate the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis.

In addition to the types of arthritis mentioned above, there are many other types of arthritis that may require the expertise of an orthopedic surgeon. These include gout, ankylosing spondylitis, and reactive arthritis, among others. An orthopedic surgeon can provide a comprehensive evaluation of the joints and recommend the best course of treatment based on the individual's specific needs.

Arthritis is a complex and varied group of disorders that affect millions of people worldwide. While there are many types of healthcare professionals that can help manage arthritis, an orthopedic surgeon is an essential part of the treatment plan for certain types of arthritis. With their specialized training and expertise in the musculoskeletal system, orthopedic surgeons can provide surgical options that can greatly improve the quality of life for people with arthritis. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with arthritis, it is important to work with a healthcare team that includes an orthopedic surgeon to ensure that you receive the best possible care.

www.swfHealthandWellness.com -

Everyone has a busy life and being hurt or injured can get in the way of the enjoyment of life." Dr. Swift believes that movement gets us back to enjoying our lives. Our goal is to restore pain free motion to the injured spine, shoulder, knee, elbow, hip and ankle using the most modern, innovative and safety proven techniques available in orthopedic surgery today. My practice uses state of the art procedures that treat injured joints. It doesn't matter if you are an accomplished athlete, a weekend warrior, a busy professional, an active parent, or grandparent, our goal is to keep you active and get you moving. I believe it is important to spend time together and understand how we can accomplish your goals.

Robert D. Swift, DO is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and a Fellow of the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. He has subspecialty and advanced training in minimally invasive surgery of the shoulder, knee, hip, ankle, and elbow. He has additional orthopedic trauma training to better manage fractures and Training in Robotic Knee and hip replacement. He has been an adjunct professor of Orthopedics at Vanderbilt University and at Upstate University Medical Center. Dr. Swift attended medical school at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed a general surgery internship with the US Army at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center and was then stationed in Europe. As a physician he supported missions and troops throughout Europe. He was asked to be the military physician for medical support to the White House Mission to Chernobyl. Dr. Swift completed his orthopedic residency training at UMDNJ-SOM/Copper Medical Center. He rejoined the military after residency and was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY. He deployed to Afghanistan as the Chief of Orthopedics at Bagram. His service was decorated by the Bronze Star Medal, and the Meritorious Service Medal. Dr. Swift is accomplished in his field; he has been the Team Physician for Division I Athletic programs, been a course instructor, presenter, and author on fracture care and on minimally invasive shoulder and knee surgery. While in Michigan he was selected as a Top Doctor for 2019-2021.

Call Blue Sky Orthopedics today!



730 Goodlette-Frank Fd N., Suite 205, Naples, FL 34102 (239) 877-4662 I www.blueskyorthopedics.com

## OUR EAGLES ARE SOARING

100% licensing pass rates for two consecutive years - the highest-achieving pass rates for a B.S.N. program in the Florida State University System\*

Ranking based on recent national licensing exam success.



For more information visit: fgcu.edu/nursing



School of Nursing

## Awaken Your Brain, **Elevate Your Life**



Schedule your FREE consultation today to learn how our holistic approach can benefit you.



Brain

ejuvenation

239-877-2900 BrainRejuvenationClinic.com linic of Naples 1729 Heritage Trail, Unit # 901, Naples, FL 34112



Neuropsychiatric Research Center

# Memories Matter

Unlock a brighter future with a FREE Memory Screen! Visit nprc-swfl.com, scan the QR Code, or call us at 239.939.7777



## UNDERSTANDING DEMENTIA: A PATIENT'S GUIDE

ementia is a complex and multifaceted condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide, leading to significant challenges in memory, cognition, and daily functioning. Even though it is prevalent, it is often poorly understood. Read on to learn about causes, diagnosis, and treatment for dementia as well as working with loved ones struggling with dementia, and strategies for coping with dementia.

Dementia is a collective term for cognitive decline that affects daily life and is not reversible. Before diagnosing dementia, it is important your doctor rule out curable conditions that can mimic dementia such as infections, normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH), and encephalitis. Common symptoms of dementia include memory loss, confusion, difficulty with language, and changes in mood and behavior. Changes in mood and behavior are often overlooked early symptoms and should prompt further investigation. The lifetime risk of an individual developing dementia is up to 40%, with dementia-related healthcare costs in the U.S. exceeding \$305 billion annually and projected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2050. Personal costs of dementia are significant such as emotional distress, loss of dignity, deterioration of social relationships, and isolation.

The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer's, Vascular, Lewy Body, and Frontotemporal. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 45% of dementia cases, followed by vascular dementia at 15%, Lewy Body Disease at 5.4%, and frontotemporal dementia at 1%. Alzheimer's disease primarily affects memory, thinking, and behavior, with symptoms worsening over time. Risk factors include age, genetics, and lifestyle. It is caused by the buildup of Tau and Amyloid protein in the brain, with environmental factors and genetics playing a role. The APOE £4 gene significantly increases the risk of Alzheimer's, while the APOE £2 gene offers protective effects.

Vascular dementia is caused by reduced blood flow to the brain, with symptoms including memory loss, confusion, and difficulty with decision-making. Lewy Body Disease is characterized by abnormal protein deposits in the brain and may present with visual hallucinations and fluctuating cognition. Frontotemporal dementia involves more predominant personality changes and behavioral issues than the other types. Alzheimer's and Vascular dementia typically start in the mid to late 60s and older, while Lewy Body disease and Frontotemporal dementia often start younger, in the 50s and 60s.

Historically, cognitive assessments, such as the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) were the primary tools for diagnosing and categorizing dementia. Fortunately, new tools have been developed in recent years to help. Brain imaging, particularly PET scans, are essential for diagnosing dementia accurately and differentiating between types of dementia. Innovative blood tests, such as P-Tau 181 and Amyloid 42/40 markers, can detect dementia earlier and track disease progression and treatment response.

Dementia does not just happen, there are things you can do to help prevent it. Engaging in physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, participating in mental activity, fostering connections, and managing chronic health conditions significantly decrease your odds of developing dementia. Current medicines alleviate symptoms, with cholinesterase inhibitors and Memantine helping moderate to severe Alzheimer's symptoms. Emerging monoclonal antibody treatments, such as Lecanemab (Leqembi) and Donanemab (Kisunla), show promise in slowing cognitive decline and improving patient outcomes. Experimental treatments, including Reminetug, Buntanetap, and Semaglutide, are on the horizon.

Working with your loved ones to improve their quality of life is an important part of treatment. Establishing daily routines, using memory aids, staying socially engaged, and participating in enjoyable activities can significantly reduce the disease's impact. Communication strategies are important for creating a stress free, loving environment. Using a calm, reassuring tone, avoiding contradicting the patient, keeping instructions simple, and discussing events and people the patient can recall can create a peaceful mental state conducive to good health and mood. Proactive planning when dementia is a concern is crucial, and addressing difficult decisions early can significantly decrease stress for the patient and their loved oned. Genetic testing, medical and social support, and financial plans should all be addressed as soon as possible. Genetic testing can help individuals make informed decisions based on their personal risk profile. Periodic dementia screenings help involve families early, and ensures legal, medical and financial plans are in place.

Considering preferences for support early ensures a patient receives the care they wish in their preferred environment. Home with help versus assisted living needs to be considered, as well as what resources are available. Support for caregivers should not be overlooked, as they need breaks and often rely on family support. Financial planning involves addressing key questions such as where the patient will live, who will pay the bills, and whether a progressive care community or in-home care is needed.

Understanding dementia is vital for effective management and compassionate care. Recognizing early symptoms, exploring various treatment options, and implementing coping strategies can help patients and their families navigate the challenges of dementia together.

#### DR. JONATHAN MARSH

Specialty Information: Internal Medicine with a focus on health span and longevity Board Certification: ABIM – American Board of Internal Medicine

Dr. Jonathan Marsh provides personalized care so you can live your healthiest life for years. He will address your immediate medical needs and work with you to achieve your health and lifestyle goals. Throughout his career, Dr. Marsh has held a variety of leadership positions at both NCH and Physician's Regional Healthcare Systems, where he is the current Chief of Medicine. With a unique understanding of the local medical landscape, Dr. Marsh can guide his patients seamlessly through their care plans.

#### Call Naples Concierge Health Today!

Explore personalized care with our expert team. Enjoy tailored health plans, next-day appointments, and dedicated support for a seamless start to your wellness journey.

C Naples Concierge Health

239-690-6286 www.NaplesConciergeHealth.com 700 2nd Ave N. #305, Naples, FL 34102

## Ear, Nose & Throat

Price Sonkarley, MD Head & Neck Surgical Specialist Specializing in Ear, Nose and Throat Disease, Allergy, Hearing Care and Hearing Aids



PA/NP Position Available Join Dr. Sonkarley's ENT team! Seeking experienced PA/NP. Excellent benefits and supportive work environment. Call 239-495-6200 to apply.

Dr. Price Sonkarley

Kathleen Rocuant

AU.D FAAA

#### Do you suffer with a chronic cough? Throat irritation? Hearing loss? Nasal congestion? Ear fullness? Allergy sufferers, ask us about our alternative solution to allergy shots.

#### • HEARING LOSS • EAR CARE • NASAL HEALTH

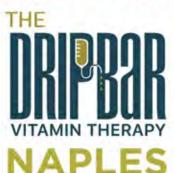
THROAT PROBLEMS · HEAD & NECK MASSES · PEDIATRIC ENT

#### Don't trust something as important as your hearing to just anyone. Serving all of Southwest Florida

We are always accepting new patients. Call us and make an appointment today!

9240 Bonita Beach Rd. SE #1106, Bonita Springs, FL 34135 • 239-495-6200 Sunshine Professional Center (across from Spanish Wells) Mon-Thurs 8am until 6pm - drmarkmontgomery.com

### ELEVATE YOUR HEALTH WITH VITAMIN THERAPY AT THE DRIPBAR



11216 Tamiami Trail N Naples, FL, 34110 (239) 422-6044 thedripbar.com/naples NaplesFL240@TheDRIPBaR.com

Feed your Cells. Fuel your Life.



NOW OFFERING: **OZONE THERAP** Faster Healing and Recovery

Without Medication

- HIGH-DOSE VITAMIN C FOR PRE/ POST CANCER TREATMENTS
- ANTI AGING
- SEMAGLUTIDE/TIRZEPATIDE TREATMENTS
- IV LIFESTYLE DRIPS
- IM SHOTS

Contact us online or call (239) 422-6044 today to learn more about our IV therapy, wellness programs, and other services!

TheDRIPBaR.com/Naples

### NCA advocates that

great care begins with a great plan and in doing so, the organization hopes to take those feelings of chaos out of a cancer diagnosis through its mission-driven approach to making these no cost services more accessible.

**Naples Cancer Advisors** Serving Southwest Florida

Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) provides NO COST second opinion, consultative oncology, and genetic counseling services powered by generous donors.





#### 239-846-2273 (CARE) | NaplesCancerAdvisors.org

### A DEDICATED **TEAM YOU CAN TRUST!**

**Hearing devices** to fit any lifestyle and budget. We work with and service all

brands of hearing devices. **Complimentary hearing** 

test and evaluation.

### Schedule Your **Free Hearing Test**

#### 239-325-0596 napleshearingaids.com

Proudly serving Southwest

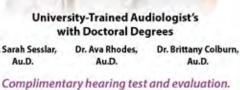
It's a promise. rs are smart. We owe them h

Competitive Pricin perior Customer Se No coupons or promotions need

Hearing Devices starting at \$999 each

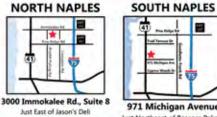
ng that is easy to unde

Dr. Sarah Sesslar, Au.D. Florida for over 15 years!



Voted Southwest Florida's Best Hearing Center

Audiology & Hearing Center





### **Beyond the Surface:** Naples Cancer Advisors Spotlight Melanoma During Awareness Month

By Jillian Hunt, CNP – Executive Director of Clinical Operations at Naples Cancer Advisors

ay is Melanoma Awareness Month, and in sun-drenched Collier and Lee Counties, it's more than a calendar observance. It's a call to action. The sunny environment increases exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays, which are a significant risk factor for skin cancer, including melanoma. Understanding the risks and adopting preventive measures can help residents enjoy the sun safely while minimizing their skin cancer risk.

At NCA, we specialize in delivering second opinions and expert oncology guidance at no cost to patients. Our team, including nationally recognized oncologist Dr. Philip Leming, believes that no one should face a cancer diagnosis alone. This month, we want to shine a light on reshaping melanoma prevention, detection, and awareness—so you can stay protected and proactive.

#### Prevention: A Daily Practice, Not Just a Summer Checklist

Most people know the basics: use sunscreen, avoid tanning beds, cover up when outside. But melanoma doesn't just show up where the sun shines. It can develop under your fingernails, between your toes, even on your scalp or eyes. We educate patients to look everywhere, not just the obvious spots.

One powerful (and often overlooked) fact: a single blistering sunburn in childhood doubles your lifetime risk of melanoma. That's why prevention is a family affair. We urge parents to build sun safety habits early and keep them consistent all year.

#### Detection: A Watchful Eye is The Best Tool

The front line of defense against skin cancer is early detection. Identifying skin changes especially changes in moles is the easiest way to catch skin cancer earlier.

#### What is a mole?

A mole is a benign (non-cancerous) growth on the skin that develops when melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing pigment, cluster together instead of being evenly distributed. Moles can be present from birth or develop later in life.



#### ABCDE's of Moles and Melanoma Detection

- Asymmetry: One half of the mole doesn't match the other.
- Border irregularity: The edges of the mole are uneven, ragged, or notched.
- Color variation: The mole has multiple shades of brown, black, or other colors like red, white, or blue.
- Diameter: The mole is larger than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser).
- Evolving: The mole has changed in size, shape, or color, or has new symptoms like itching, bleeding, or crusting.

The ABCDEs are a helpful tool for self-examination and can prompt individuals to seek professional medical advice if any of these signs are present.

Dermatologists remain the front line in detection and diagnosis. However, emerging technologies are offering exciting backup. Artificial intelligence skin scanners and total body imaging are improving the speed and accuracy of diagnosis.

Whether it's through advanced tools or a trained eye, one truth remains: catching melanoma early saves lives.

### The NCA Difference: Compassionate, Cost-Free Cancer Guidance

Naples Cancer Advisors was founded to be a bridge for patients who feel lost, overwhelmed, or unsure where to turn after a cancer diagnosis. We offer a second set of expert eyes, help explain treatment options, connect people to top-tier providers, and support them throughout their journey.

Melanoma may be aggressive, but it's also highly preventable and treatable when caught early. This May, we urge everyone in our community to schedule a skin check, learn your ABCDEs (Asymmetry, Border, Color, Diameter, Evolving), and take sun safety seriously. And if you ever need clarity or support after a diagnosis, Naples Cancer Advisors is here—free, local, and fully focused on you.

#### Jillian Hunt, CNP Bio

Jillian has been caring for cancer patients since 2004. In that time, she has set the benchmark for her patient-centric approach in Cincinnati, Southwest Florida, and beyond.

Her professional journey began at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1999 on the hematology/oncology/bone marrow transplant unit and later the emergency department.

After spending five years caring for children, Jillian found her passion in caring for the adult oncology patient. Starting as a chemotherapy infusion nurse in private practice with Dr. Philip Leming at Cincinnati Hematology Oncology, she then pursued an advanced degree to offer a higher level of care to her cancer patients.

Jillian has been an oncology nurse practitioner since 2011 and is passionate about patient care, education and staying current on research opportunities available for the patients she cares for.

Jillian is a national speaker traveling to educate clinicians on the use and management of toxicities of medications that are used in cancer treatments. She has spoken at national nursing conferences and sits on several advisory boards. Jillian feels strongly about staying on the front lines to improve patient care and expert advice on cancer.

Jillian was born and raised in Cincinnati and graduated from Lakota High School. She and her husband have five children. Outside of her love and passion for oncology, Jillian and her husband are licensed foster parents and have participated in global mission trips to serve orphaned children around the world.





239-846-2273 (CARE) 3201 Tamiami Trail N, Suite 112, Naples, FL 34103 naplescanceradvisors.org

#### SUPERIOR TREATMENT, PERSONALIZED CARE



Retinal diseases are often silent. There is usually no pain, no redness and no tearing associated with most retinal diseases. The paucity of symptoms can delay diagnosis and threaten your vision. Early detection is the key to preserve vision.

Macular Degeneration · Retina Detachment, Holes & Tears . Flashes and Floaters Diabetic Retinopathy · Macular Holes and Puckers



retinagroupflorida.com 2023

Best Doctors

Dr. Katia E. Taba, M.D., Ph.D.

3467 Pine Ridge Rd #103

Naples, Florida 34109

CALL TODAY!

239-325-3970

### **BEAUTY, WELLNESS & SEXUAL HEALTH**

Dr. Mel Irvine, DNP and Clinical Sexologist specializes in sexual medicine and beauty in Naples, Estero and Fort Myers Florida Areas.

#### FOR HIM

RVINE

Self-discovery and improvement for him covering a wide range of topics tailored to men's sexual health and enhancement.

#### FOR HER

Self-discovery and improvement for her covering a wide range of topics tailored to women's sexual health and enlightenment.

239-351-5663

info@sextys.com | drmelirvine.com www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR5BgNltKmc

9250 Corkscrew Rd. STE 15, Estero, FL 33928 🗗 G 🕒

Get Answers to Your Neurological **Issue from Specialized** Neurosurgeons



Gregory Cannarsa, MD

Fellowship-Trained Neurosurgeons from Johns Hopkins Hospital, University of Maryland/Shock Trauma Center now in Naples, Florida

- · Offering appointments on an expedited basis, accepting most major health insurances
- Treating patients at both Physician's Regional Medical Center and NCH System
- Comprehensive appointments with relevant imaging viewed together with patient and explained in detail





3530 Kraft Road • Suite 203 • Naples, FL 34105 www.apexbrainandspine.com

3

24/7 Availability for the Patient ey were family 239-775-0019 www.collierpodiatry.com NCH Countryside Commons 1715 Heritage Trail, Suite 204 Naples, FL 34112

Care for Your Feet, Relieve Discomfort

and Enjoy Walking Again

#### COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A. Michael J. Petrocelli D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P.

BOARD CERTIFIED ANKLE AND FOOT SURGEON AND BOARD CERTIFIED WOUND CARE SPECIALIST

#### **Foot and Ankle** Services

- Deep Tissue Laser Therapy
- Heel & Achilles Pain
- Bunion Surgery
- Diabetes Foot & Limb Care
- Wound Care
- Onychomycosis (Nail Fungus)

### 44 Health & Wellness May 2025 - Collier Edition

## How Your Sex Hormones Can Support (or Hinder) Your Weight Loss Journey

By Dr. Melissa (Mel) Irvine, DNP - Clinical Sexologist - Specializes in Sexual Medicine and Beauty

re you aware of the role your sex hormones play in regulating glucose and promoting weight loss? While thyroid hormone plays a role in regulating the metabolism and how the body burns calories, sex hormones play a role in distribution of fat stores and water retention.

Have you ever put in all the effort to lose weight—modifying your diet, adding in exercise—only to have the numbers on the scale stay the same? It can be aggravating to feel as though all your efforts are going to waste, but it may not be because you're not doing enough; it could be because your hormones are unbalanced, causing your body to hold onto glucose.

With high blood sugar leaving your body in a perpetual state of fat-storing instead of fat-burning, it's no wonder why weight loss becomes exceptionally challenging.

Let's further explore the role some crucial hormones have in blood sugar management and weight loss and what the key is to finally seeing those numbers on the scale go down.

#### Estrogen: A Glucose Reducer

Estrogen, the female hormone known for regulating the menstrual cycle and promoting the development of female characteristics, also plays a crucial role in directing glucose to the right areas of your body. Namely, estrogen encourages muscle cells to take in glucose.

Estrogen accomplishes this by stimulating the cells lining your blood vessels to deliver insulin to muscles, with insulin then encouraging the muscle to take in glucose and use it. The result? Thanks to estrogen, your blood sugar level lowers.

Researchers have long known the protection offered by estrogen against Type 2 diabetes, a disease where insulin becomes less effective in the body organs responsible for controlling blood sugar, resulting in high blood sugar. They've seen that women undergoing menopause have a significantly higher risk of Type 2 diabetes, meaning Type 2 diabetes risk increases when estrogen levels



decrease. Additionally, it's been shown that this risk of diabetes becomes less drastic when menopausal women are given hormone replacement therapy to restore their estrogen levels.

While women have more estrogen circulating through their bodies, men still require this hormone, and its declining numbers can also increase their risk of insulin resistance.

In short, it's clear that estrogen is crucial for regulating glucose levels in the body.

However, these benefits of estrogen can reverse if the amounts are too high. Some research has found that high concentrations of estradiol, a form of estrogen, can cause insulin resistance, which can cause blood sugar levels to rise.

#### Progesterone: An Insulin Inhibitor

While estrogen is crucial for helping your body deliver insulin where needed and increase glucose uptake—lowering blood sugar levels—progesterone does the opposite.

Progesterone, a hormone that supports menstruation and, if a woman is pregnant, supports the pregnancy, can also affect insulin signaling in a type of fat cell, 3T3-L1 adipocytes. This can lead to higher blood sugar levels because progesterone keeps these cells from up taking glucose, which then allows the glucose to continue circulating in the blood.

Progesterone increases significantly during pregnancy, and given its influence over insulin, this increase in progesterone may be what contributes to gestational diabetes in pregnant women.

Everything is about balance in the body and progesterone is the counterbalance to the negative side effects of estrogen. When estrogen is in excess it may also lead to insulin resistance and in turn weight gain. Progesterone is also a natural diuretic and keeps both estrogen and testosterone in check when maintained within the right levels.

#### Testosterone: The Baby Bear of Hormones

Do you know how, in the fairy tale, Baby Bear has everything that is "just right?" This is how testosterone levels need to be, with studies showing that both high and low testosterone are associated with insulin resistance. This data shows the importance of finding the ideal target range for each person and keeping hormones within these personalized bounds to ensure the other parts of the body work as needed.

Collier Edition - May 2025 Health & Wellness 45

Additionally, testosterone regulation and its influence can vary based on gender. Studies have shown that increased testosterone levels in males (if they are low) can cause a more favorable metabolism of glucose, lowering glucose levels and improving insulin sensitivity. However, increased testosterone was not shown to influence glucose metabolism in women.

Hormone replacement therapy has traditionally taken a very cookie cutter approach, and everyone is treated as if they are the same. This evidence showcases the importance of a customized approach to hormonal management, as not everybody will respond in the same way or need the same alterations.

#### Blood Sugar And Weight Loss: How Are They Connected?

We've spent a lot of time discussing how various hormones affect our body's ability to manage blood sugar levels, but how does blood sugar influence our weight loss journey? It's simple: your blood sugar levels can either make it easier or harder to lose weight, and it's all because of how your body signals within itself.

If your insulin levels are high, your body never receives a signal to run through glycogen (a form of glucose and a primary energy source) and then burn fat stores for energy. Instead, your body will remain in fat-storing instead of fat-burning mode. As you can expect, this makes weight loss challenging-not impossible, but much harder than it could otherwise be.

Insulin is what unlocks the insulin receptors on your cells. They're like a gate; once it's open, your cells can let in glucose and convert it into energy. If the gate remains shut, though, which can occur if your blood sugar is too high, the cells don't open, and glucose stays in the bloodstream, making your blood sugar rise even more. This phenomenon is referred to as insulin resistance.

When insulin resistance occurs, your body produces more insulin to try and unlock the cells, but it only makes matters worse. So, the key to making fat-burning possible is to ensure your body has stable sugar levels and that insulin never goes into overdrive; otherwise, those gates will stay shut.

#### Hormone Optimization: A Necessary Element of Weight Loss

Society places diet and exercise as the two key components of losing weight, but there's a hidden factor

that many people don't consider despite it making all the difference for your weight loss journey: your hormonal balance.

The most current and hottest weight loss trend are peptide injections of Semaglutide (Ozempic"/Wegovy\*/Rybelsus\*) and Tirzepatide (Mounjaro\*/Zepbound™). While these therapies are effective and individuals will lose weight, once the weight loss goals are met and the medication is discontinued the weight lost will return if the hormones are not optimized.

Blood sugar levels that are too high, or insulin that is not receptive enough, can cause your body to stay in fat-storing mode, and the culprit of these high blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity may be your hormones.

So, even if you revamp your diet or add in an exercise routine, if your hormones are imbalanced and affecting your blood sugar, your body will fight to hold on to its fat stores. This means that the numbers on the scale might not change or will change very slowly, no matter how many healthy habits you adopt.

Ultimately, the key to weight loss is ensuring your hormones are properly balanced. This not only means that your hormone levels, individually, should be within your body's ideal range-which can be different from the standard recommendations-but your hormones need to be balanced with each other. For instance, blood sugar levels are best managed when your estrogen is higher than your progesterone, so you need to check the levels of each hormone, how they compare to each other, and which ratio produces the best results.

This is a challenging balance to find, which is why working with a hormone specialist is so crucial-they can find the balance that helps you regain control of your hormones and encourages your body to finally release its hold on glucose and fat.

#### Can Weight Loss Medications Replace the Need for Hormone Optimization?

Even if you take medication for weight loss, you still need hormonal balance if you want to maintain your weight loss.

To better understand why, we need to look at how blood sugar levels become fat.

Your body requires energy from food to complete all its processes, but if you eat more than your body needs, glucose will be left floating around in your bloodstream. When your body has excess glucose, it stores it as fat, leading to weight gain.

Weight loss medication often suppresses your appetite, which lowers blood glucose levels and encourages your body to instead break down fat for energy. However, once you come off the medication, your blood sugar can once again rise if your hormones are imbalanced, causing the excess glucose to once again become fat.

When your hormones are optimized, though, your body will use glucose more efficiently, which can keep your blood sugar levels normal. This puts you in the right place to maintain your weight loss even when you stop taking medication.

If you're looking to lose weight, diet and exercise are crucial components of any healthy lifestyle, but to truly see success, you need to take a closer lookat your hormones and ensure that they're setting your body up for success.

#### References

Sacharidou, A., Chambliss, K., Peng, J., Barrera, J., Keili Tanigaki, Luby-Phelps, K., Ipek Özdemir, Khan, S., Sira, S. R., Sung Hoon Kim, Katzenellenbogen, B. S., Katzenellenbogen, I. A., Kanchwala, M., Sathe, A. A., Lemoff, A., Xing, C., Hoyt, K., Mineo, C., & Shaul, P. W. (2023). Endothelial EB0 promotes glucose tolerance by enhancing endothelial insulintransport to skeletal muscle. Nature Communications, 14(1). https://doi.org/10 1038/s41467-023-40562-w

Suba Z. (2012). Interplay between insulin resistance and estrogen deficiency as co-activators in carcinogenesis. Pathology oncology research : POR, 18(2), 123-133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12253-011-9465-8

Nagira, K., Sasaoka, T., Wada, T., Fukul, K., Ikubo, M., Hori, S., Tsuneki, H., Salto, S., & Kobavashi, M. (2006). Altered subcellular distribution of estrogen receptor alpha is implicated in estradiol-induced dual regula tion of insulin signaling in 3T3-L1 adipocytes. Endocrinology, 147(2), 1020-1028. https://doi.org/10.1210/en.2005-0825

Quintanilla Rodriguez B5, Mahdy H. Gestational Diabetes. [Updated 2023 Aug 8) In: StatPearls (Internet). Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls. Publishing; 2024 Jan -. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK545196/

Leutner, M., Malzhold, C., Bellach, L., Wohlschläger-Krenn, E., Winker, R., Nistler, S., Endler, G., Thurner, S., Klimek, P., & Kautzky-Willer, A. (2022). Increase in testosterone levels is related to a lower risk of conversion of prediabetes to manifest diabetes in prediabetic males. Wiener klinische Wochenschrift, 134(1-2), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00508-021-01903-1

Xing, Z., Kirby, R. S., & Alman, A. C. (2022). Association of age at menopause with type 2 diabetes mellitus in postmenopausal women in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2011-2018, Przeglad menopauzalny = Menopause review, 21(4), 229-235. https://doi.org/10.5114/pm.2022.123514

Mauvais-Jarvis, F., Manson, J. E., Stevenson, J. C., & Fonseca, V. A. (2017). Menopausal Hormone Therapy and Type 2 Diabetes Prevention: Evidence, Mechanisms, and Clinical Implications: Endocrine reviews, 38(3), 173-188. https://doi.org/10.1210/er.2016-1146



9250 Corkscrew Rd. STE 15, Estero, FL 33982 239-351-5663 info@sextys.com | drmelirvine.com

#### 46 Health & Wellness May 2025 - Collier Edition

## **KIDNEY CANCER:** Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

The kidneys are a major part of our detoxifying system. These two small bean-shaped organs clean the blood and filter waste products and toxins from the body through the urine. Kidney cancer is one of the ten most prevalent cancers. The lifetime risk for developing kidney cancer is about 1 in 46 in men and 1 in 82 in women.<sup>1</sup>

The symptoms of kidney cancer often go unnoticed or don't begin to show until the tumor(s) has grown. However, some of the key indicators are as follows:

- Blood in the urine
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever or infection.
- Swollen abdomen
- Lump on the side of the abdomen (with or without pain)
- Anemia
- Swollen legs and ankles
- Chronic inflammation
- High blood pressure
- Shortness of breath

If you have symptoms or your physician finds a lump during a physical examination, they will order diagnostic testing such as a renal arteriogram, MRI, CT Scan, blood and urine analysis, and a needle biopsy may be necessary.

There are some increased risk factors, which make some individuals more susceptible to renal cancer. The risks factors included:

- Being over the age of 40
- Being male
- · Being black
- Smoking
- Obese
- Overuse of NSAIDs and other prescription medications
- Family History
- Chemical Exposures
- Kidney disease

Most kidney cancer appears first in the tubules of the kidneys. When the malignant cells form a tumor(s) the growth rate is typically slow, so the likelihood of an early diagnosis is increased, and the treatment can usually be performed before the tumor has metastasized into any other organs.

#### Treatment

Depending on the stage and size of the tumor(s), your physician will develop a specific treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Typically, performing a nephrectomy treats kidney cancer. There are three main types of this surgical option. The first is a Partial nephrectomy, which removes the tumor and some of the surrounding tissue. The second is a Simple nephrectomy, which removes the entire kidney, and the third treatment method is a Radical nephrectomy, which removes the kidney, adrenal glands, lymph nodes, and any questionable surrounding tissue margins. These procedures can usually be done laparoscopically. Some patients may also require radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

#### Associates in Nephrology

Associates in Nephrology has been providing comprehensive kidney care and transplant services in Southwest Florida since 1984. Our team of nephrologists, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants are engaged in all aspects of providing the most advanced services for kidney disease and kidney transplants.

#### **Chronic Kidney Disease Program**

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) means that the kidneys have become damaged. The common causes of CKD are diabetes mellitus, hypertension, inherited diseases, and nephritis.

The purpose of the CKD program is to slow the progression of damage to the kidneys and treat associated complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. If we are unable to arrest the disease process and the kidney damage progresses to end stage renal disease (ESRD), our plan is to manage these complications while preparing patients for renal (kidney) replacement therapy. This therapy can consist of peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis, home hemodialysis, or kidney transplantation.

#### Source

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid= CjwKCAIAyc2BBhAaEkwA44-wW9qTM7gXblKsBU1ldxNNrM7OKwmG3l43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsK0RoCE5QQAvD\_BwE Managing these complications and preparing patients for renal replacement therapy is a complex process of visits, treatment, and teaching sessions. Our medical team consists of nephrologists (kidney doctors), nurse practitioners, registered dieticians, nurses, and medical assistants.

#### Services Provided

Associates in Nephrology provides treatment for many kidney related conditions, as well as kidney transplant services.

- All forms of Dialysis Hemodialysis and Peritoneal
- Diabetic Kidney Disorder
- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
- Disorders of Blood Chemistry
- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
- Glomerulonephritis
- Hypertension
- Injections of Aranesp for Anemia related to Kidney Disease
- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

We work collaboratively with a patient's primary care physician and specialists to slow the progression of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and prevent or manage complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. Additionally, our multidisciplinary team of professionals can assist you in arranging a wide array of supportive services and educations programs for patients in all stages of CKD. For patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), our nephrologists can prepare them for all renal replacement therapies: in-center or home hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and kidney transplant.

### Associates In Nephrology

#### 239-939-0999

www.associatesnephrology.com Most major insurances accepted.

#### FORT MYERS BONITA SPRINGS 7981 Gladiolus Dr 9550 Bonita Beach Rd,

Fort Myers, FL 33908

CAPE CORAL

1320 SE 8th St

Cape Coral, FL 33990

9550 Bonita Beach Rd, 108 Bonita Springs, FL 34134

LEHIGH ACRES 3400 Lee Blvd, #112 Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

# Florida Gulf Coast University: The Leader in Healthcare Education

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

he 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 2,500students 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.



10501 FGCU Boulevard South Fort Myers, FL 33965 (239) 590-1000 | fgcu.edu



## **Reversing Osteoporosis Naturally:** A Comprehensive Path to Bone Strength and Wellness

By Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

steoporosis is no longer a condition to be passively managed—it's a challenge that can be actively confronted and overcome through innovative, holistic approaches. At Strength Lab Plus, we've developed a groundbreaking strategy that empowers individuals to reclaim their bone health naturally, without relying solely on pharmaceutical interventions.

## Understanding Bone Health Beyond Traditional Methods

Conventional approaches to osteoporosis have often been reactive, focusing on medications and minimal interventions. Our methodology represents a paradigm shift—a proactive, comprehensive strategy that addresses bone health from multiple angles. We believe that the human body has an extraordinary capacity for healing and regeneration when provided with the right tools, environment, and support.

#### Precision Diagnosis: The REMS Revolution

At the core of our approach is the cutting-edge REMS (Radiation-free Electromagnetic Scanning) technology. Unlike traditional bone density scans that expose patients to radiation, REMS provides precise, detailed assessments of bone health without any harmful side effects. This state-of-the-art diagnostic tool allows us to:

- Create highly personalized baseline measurements
- Track subtle changes in bone density with unprecedented accuracy
- Develop targeted interventions based on individual physiological characteristics
- Monitor progress with minimal patient discomfort

## The bioDensity Protocol: Natural Muscle and Bone Strengthening

Central to our treatment philosophy is the bioDensity protocol, a revolutionary approach to bone and muscle strengthening that harnesses the body's natural adaptive mechanisms. This scientifically designed program focuses on:

- Targeted, progressive resistance exercises
- Stimulating bone formation through controlled, strategic loading
- Enhancing muscle strength as a critical support system for bone health
- Improving overall functional mobility and balance

The bioDensity method differs dramatically from traditional exercise regimens by creating precise, controlled stress points that trigger the body's natural bone-building responses. Clients experience gradual, sustainable improvements in bone density and muscular strength without the risks associated with high-impact activities.

### Functional Medicine: A Comprehensive Support System

Beyond physical interventions, our functional medicine approach considers the complex interplay of factors influencing bone health:

- Comprehensive hormone panel testing
- Nutritional analysis and targeted supplementation
- Assessment of lifestyle factors like sleep, stress, and diet
- Identifying and addressing underlying inflammatory processes
- Personalized nutrition plans rich in bonesupporting nutrients

Each client receives a meticulously crafted care plan that takes into account their unique genetic makeup, lifestyle, and health history. This individualized approach ensures that interventions are not just effective but optimally tailored to each person's specific needs.

#### **Continuous Monitoring and Refinement**

Progress isn't a one-time achievement but an ongoing journey. Our commitment to our clients extends beyond initial assessments through:

- Regular REMS technology evaluations
- Adaptive treatment protocols
- Continuous performance tracking
- Collaborative client education and empowerment

#### The Strength Lab Plus Promise

We stand at the forefront of a healthcare revolution that sees patients not as passive recipients of treatment, but as active participants in their healing journey. Our holistic approach to reversing osteoporosis naturally represents more than a treatment protocol—it's a comprehensive wellness strategy that restores strength, confidence, and quality of life. By integrating advanced technology, personalized functional medicine, and innovative exercise protocols, we offer hope and tangible results for individuals seeking to overcome osteoporosis naturally.

#### Functional and Integrative Medicine with Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

Are you concerned about osteoporosis and looking for a natural, medication-free approach to restoring your bone health?

Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk specializes in reversing bone loss and strengthening your bones using personalized, science-backed solutions. Her expertise ensures each client receives a custom plan tailored to their unique needs, helping you regain confidence in your health.

#### Services include:

- ✓ REMS Bone Health Diagnostics
- ✓ Personalized Functional Medicine Consultations
- ✓ BioDensity Sessions to naturally stimulate bone growth
- ✓ Holistic Anti-Aging Strategies for long-term resilience

#### Why Choose Us?

- ✓ Advanced Bone Diagnostics: The REMS Bone Health Scan provides the most accurate, radiation-free assessment of your bone density and quality.
- ✓ Individualized Care: Every client gets a fully customized plan to rebuild bone health naturally and sustainably.
- Medication-Free Approach: With cutting-edge osteogenesis techniques, bioDensity sessions, and functional medicine, we focus on natural healing and strength-building.

## Strength Lab<sup>+</sup>

Transform Your Bones, Transform Your Life

## screenmybones Call us: 239.544.4114

www.screenmybones.us

3341 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, Florida, 34103

## **KNEE PAIN TREATMENT:**

How Shockwave Therapy is Revolutionizing Relief

or millions of people worldwide, chronic knee pain represents more than just discomfort—it's a daily obstacle that limits mobility, reduces quality of life, and often leads to dependency on pain medications. Traditional treatments have typically involved a combination of physical therapy, anti-inflammatory drugs, corticosteroid injections, and in severe cases, surgical intervention. However, a revolutionary approach called shockwave therapy is changing the landscape of knee pain management.

#### What is Shockwave Therapy?

Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT) uses acoustic pressure waves to stimulate healing in damaged tissues. Originally developed to break down kidney stones, this non-invasive technology has evolved into an effective treatment for musculoskeletal conditions, particularly those affecting tendons, ligaments, and joints.

#### How It Works for Knee Pain

Shockwave therapy delivers high-energy acoustic waves directly to painful areas around the knee. These waves create microtrauma that triggers the body's natural healing response. The process stimulates:

- Increased blood circulation to damaged tissues
- Acceleration of metabolic activity
- Release of pain-reducing substances
- Breakdown of calcium deposits
- Regeneration of new blood vessels



Unlike traditional treatments that often mask symptoms, shockwave therapy addresses the root causes of knee pain by promoting actual tissue repair and regeneration.

#### **Clinical Evidence of Success**

Recent clinical studies show promising results for conditions like patellar tendinopathy, osteoarthritis, and runner's knee. A 2023 systematic review found that 75% of patients with chronic knee pain experienced significant improvement after shockwave therapy, with effects lasting 12+ months. Most remarkably, many patients reported reduced pain within just 3-4 sessions.

#### **Benefits Over Traditional Approaches**

The advantages of shockwave therapy include:

- Non-invasive treatment requiring no anesthesia
- No medication, reducing risk of side effects
- Quick sessions (typically 15-20 minutes)
- No downtime or recovery period
- Cost-effectiveness compared to surgery
- Potential to delay or eliminate need for knee replacement

#### The Patient Experience

Most patients receive a series of 3-5 treatments spaced a week apart. While some mild discomfort may occur during the procedure, it's generally well-tolerated. Many report immediate improvement following treatment, with optimal results typically manifesting within 2-3 months as tissue healing progresses.

As healthcare continues evolving toward minimally invasive solutions, shockwave therapy represents a cutting-edge option for those suffering from debilitating knee pain. By harnessing the body's innate healing capacities rather than merely masking symptoms, this innovative approach is transforming how we think about knee pain management and offering new hope to chronic sufferers.

#### Take the First Step Toward Pain-Free Living

If you're struggling with chronic knee pain and looking for an effective, non-invasive solution, Orchidia Medical Group offers state-of-the-art shockwave therapy treatments. Their team of experienced specialists can create a personalized treatment plan to address your specific knee condition. Don't let knee pain limit your life any longer. Call Orchidia Medical Group today at 239-333-8809 to schedule a consultation and discover how shockwave therapy can revolutionize your path to recovery.



CALL TODAY! 239-333-8809

2590 Golden Gate Parkway, Suite 104 Naples FL 34105

Board Certified Physicians Dr. Cuberos & Dr. Young

### Ancient Wisdom Meets Modern Medicine: ACUPUNCTURE'S ROLE IN FERTILITY TREATMENT By Quiet Waters Wellness Center

n an era where one in six couples struggles with fertility challenges, many are turning to complementary approaches alongside conventional medical treatments. Acupuncture, an ancient Chinese medical practice dating back thousands of years, has emerged as a popular adjunctive therapy for those undergoing fertility treatments like In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and Intrauterine Insemination (IUI).

#### Understanding the Eastern Perspective

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) views fertility through a different lens than Western medicine. Rather than focusing solely on reproductive organs, TCM considers overall balance within the body. Acupuncture practitioners believe that fertility issues often stem from energy blockages or imbalances in the body's vital force, known as "qi" (pronounced "chee").

During treatment, hair-thin needles are inserted at specific points along energy meridians to remove blockages, enhance blood flow to reproductive organs, and restore hormonal balance. These treatments are typically painless and many patients report feeling deeply relaxed during and after sessions.

#### The Scientific Evidence

While research results vary, several studies show promising connections between acupuncture and improved fertility outcomes. Acupuncture appears to help by reducing stress hormones that can interfere with conception, improving blood flow to the uterus and ovaries, regulating ovulation in some women with hormonal imbalances, and potentially enhancing embryo implantation rates.

For IVF patients specifically, acupuncture sessions performed before and after embryo transfer have shown modest improvements in pregnancy rates in some studies. The therapy may help by reducing uterine contractions, creating a more receptive endometrial lining, and decreasing stress during a critical time in the treatment process.

#### Practical Considerations

Most fertility acupuncturists recommend beginning treatment three to four months before starting IVF or IUI to optimize reproductive health. A typical treatment plan might include weekly sessions, with more frequent visits during key phases of medical fertility treatments. It's worth noting that acupuncture should be viewed as a complementary approach rather than a replacement for conventional medical treatments. The most successful outcomes typically occur when patients work with both reproductive endocrinologists and qualified acupuncturists who specialize in fertility.

#### Finding the Right Practitioner

When seeking acupuncture for fertility support, it's essential to find a licensed practitioner with specific training and experience in reproductive health. Many fertility clinics now offer on-site acupuncture services or can refer patients to trusted practitioners who understand the nuances of coordinating with medical fertility treatments.

#### Expert Care at Quiet Waters Wellness Center

At Quiet Waters Wellness Center, both Dr. Tasha and Dr. Leila Motta specialize in treating infertility and hormonal imbalances using a comprehensive approach. Their treatments combine traditional acupuncture with other complementary modalities to create personalized care plans for patients struggling with fertility challenges.

With extensive training in reproductive health, Drs. Tasha and Motta work collaboratively with their patients' reproductive endocrinologists and OB/GYNs to optimize fertility treatment outcomes. Their integrative approach addresses both the physical and emotional aspects of fertility, supporting patients through every stage of their journey whether they're trying to conceive naturally or undergoing IVF or IUI treatments.

#### Final Thoughts

While acupuncture isn't a guaranteed solution for fertility challenges, its minimal risk profile, stress-reduction benefits, and potential to improve reproductive function make it a worthwhile consideration for many couples. As with any healthcare decision, patients should discuss acupuncture with their medical providers to ensure it integrates appropriately with their overall fertility treatment plan.

For those navigating the emotional and physical demands of fertility treatments, acupuncture offers not just potential physiological benefits, but also a holistic approach that addresses the mind-body connection during a challenging life journey.



#### LeeTasha Perez, AP, DOM

Tasha is a nationally board-certified and licensed acupuncturist (NCCAOM) and the Chief Practitioner at Quiet Waters Wellness Center. She earned her Master's Degree in Acupuncture and Ori-

ental Medicine and a Bachelor's in Professional Health Sciences from East West College of Natural Medicine.

Specializing in pain management, Tasha uses a comprehensive approach rooted in Chinese medicine to address a wide range of conditions, including women's health concerns, stress-related disorders, and chronic illness. Her practice integrates traditional Eastern therapies—such as Acupuncture Facials, Auricular Therapy, Fire Cupping, and herbal medicine—with a deep understanding of holistic wellness.

Tasha is passionate about treating the body as a whole and believes that healing begins with a balanced mind. She is committed to providing compassionate, individualized care that empowers her clients on their path to wellness.



Leila Motta, D.O.M, AP, Dipl. O.M., ADS.

Dr. Motta is a Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine a board certified licensed acupuncture physician. Dr. Motta graduated from Maryland University of

Integrative Health (MUIH) in Laurel, Maryland with the degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. She has obtained her Masters degree in Acupuncture first and subsequently studied her Doctoral degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Dr. Motta holds a Diplomate Certification in Oriental Medicine from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) a Florida state license and is a Nationally Board - Certified Acupuncturist. She is also a certified Acupuncture Detoxification Specialist (ADS) and holds certification in injection therapy as well. Dr. Motta specializes in Neuro Acupuncture and studied at Neuro Acupuncture Institute (NAI) New Mexico. She also holds a certificate of completion for Cosmetic Acupuncture Facial Rejuvenation. Dr. Motta has started working in health care settings for more than 15 years ago including medical aesthetics and massage therapy.

Call us today for more information.

QUIET WATERS WELLNESS CENTER 239-246-6622 QuietWatersWellnessCenter.com 28410 Bonita Crossings Blvd, Ste 215, Bonita Springs, FL 34135

## **Understanding Depression:** Diagnosis and Expert Management

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

epression is a pervasive mental health condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It is a complex and often debilitating illness that requires comprehensive diagnosis and expert management to improve the quality of life for those affected. In this article, we will explore the diagnosis and management of depression from the perspective of a psychiatrist, shedding light on the importance of professional intervention.

#### Diagnosing Depression

The first step in managing depression is an accurate diagnosis. Psychiatrists, as medical doctors with specialized training in mental health, are uniquely qualified for this task. They employ a combination of methods, including clinical interviews, psychological assessments, and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) criteria to evaluate a patient's symptoms. This thorough assessment helps determine the severity and type of depression, ensuring that treatment is tailored to the individual.

#### Differentiating Depression Types

Psychiatrists play a crucial role in distinguishing between various types of depression, such as major depressive disorder, persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder. Each type may necessitate distinct management strategies, underscoring the importance of precise diagnosis.

#### Medication Management

Once diagnosed, psychiatrists can recommend medication as part of the treatment plan. Antidepressant medications, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), are commonly prescribed. Psychiatrists carefully select the appropriate medication and dosage based on the patient's symptoms, medical history, and potential side effects.

#### Therapeutic Interventions

In addition to medications, psychotherapy plays a vital role in managing depression. Psychiatrists often provide therapy themselves or collaborate with clinical psychologists and therapists to offer evidence-based approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy (IPT), and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). These therapies help patients understand and cope with their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, ultimately promoting recovery.

#### Monitoring and Adjustments

Regular follow-up appointments with a psychiatrist are crucial during depression management. They monitor medication efficacy, side effects, and overall progress, making necessary adjustments to the treatment plan. This ongoing relationship helps ensure that patients receive the most suitable care throughout their recovery journey.

#### Addressing Co-occurring Conditions

Psychiatrists are trained to identify and address co-occurring conditions that may exacerbate depression, such as anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, or medical conditions. Treating these comorbidities is essential for comprehensive depression management.

#### Preventing Relapse

Depression can be a recurring illness, and psychiatrists help patients develop relapse prevention strategies. This may involve continuing therapy, adjusting medications, and incorporating lifestyle changes to reduce stress and support mental well-being.

#### Supporting the Family

Depression affects not only the individual but also their loved ones. Psychiatrists often work with families to educate them about depression, improve communication, and provide guidance on how to support their loved one's recovery.

Depression is a challenging mental health condition, but with the expertise of a psychiatrist, it can be diagnosed accurately and managed effectively. Through a combination of medication management, psychotherapy, ongoing monitoring, and a holistic approach to mental health, individuals living with depression can find hope and healing on their journey to recovery. Consulting a qualified psychiatrist is a vital step in this process, as they possess the knowledge and experience to provide the comprehensive care needed for those battling depression.

Dr. Richard J. Capiola is the Chief of Psychiatry for Physicians Regional Medical Center. He received his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years. Call Dr. Capiola today at 239-649-7494.





239.649.7494 720 Goodlette Frank Road, Suite 203 Naples, Florida 34102

#### **PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION SERVICES**

Dr. Capiola focuses on the treatment of: • Depression and Anxiety • Mood Disorders • Alcohol use disorders • Substance abuse • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder • ADHD

Treatment of Adolescents and Adults, Alcohol and Substance abuse, medication assisted therapy with suboxone, and patients needing psychiatric assessments related to the court system.

Dr Capiola's mission is to focus on the strengths inherent in all of us to help overcome any problems and life stresses that make us feel stuck and limited. He combines psychotherapy and medication management into all patient visits.

# By Scott Briggs - American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC

old can have significant effects on the health of elderly individuals, particularly those with pre-existing conditions or compromised immune systems.

Mold, a type of fungus that thrives in damp and humid environments, can pose serious health risks to people of all ages. However, the elderly are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of mold exposure due to age-related changes in their immune systems and respiratory functions. Understanding how mold affects the elderly can help in taking preventive measures and addressing any mold promptly.

One of the most common ways mold affects the elderly is through **respiratory problems**. Mold spores can become airborne and enter the respiratory system when inhaled. For older adults with respiratory conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or allergies, exposure to mold can exacerbate their symptoms and lead to respiratory distress. Mold exposure has been linked to increased coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness in elderly individuals with pre-existing respiratory issues.

Moreover, mold can trigger allergic reactions in seniors, causing symptoms such as sneezing, runny or stuffy nose, itchy or watery eyes, and skin irritation. These **allergic reactions** can be particularly bothersome for older adults who may already have weakened immune systems or multiple health concerns to manage. In addition to respiratory and allergic reactions, mold exposure has been associated with other health problems in the elderly, including infections. Certain types of mold produce mycotoxins, which are toxic substances that can cause infections when they enter the body. Elderly individuals with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to these infections and neurological affects, which can manifest as skin infections, sinus infections, or even neurological symptoms which can affect multiple organs or even cause cancer.

Furthermore, mold exposure has been linked to cognitive issues in older adults. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found a correlation between mold exposure and cognitive decline in seniors. The presence of mold in living spaces was associated with poorer cognitive function, including problems with memory, attention, and decision-making abilities. This highlights the importance of maintaining a mold-free environment for the cognitive well-being of elderly individuals.

Another concern related to mold and the elderly is the potential for mold-related illnesses to be misdiagnosed or overlooked. Symptoms of mold exposure, such as respiratory problems or allergies, can be similar to those of other health conditions common in seniors. This can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment, prolonging the discomfort and health risks associated with mold exposure.



Preventing mold growth and addressing mold issues promptly are crucial steps in protecting the health of elderly individuals. Here are some strategies to prevent mold-related problems in the elderly:

1. Maintain proper ventilation: Ensure that living spaces are well-ventilated to reduce humidity levels and prevent moisture buildup, which promotes mold growth.

 Address water leaks promptly: Repair any leaks in plumbing, roofs, or windows to prevent water intrusion and mold formation.

3. Use dehumidifiers: In areas prone to high humidity, such as bathrooms and basements, use dehumidifiers to keep moisture levels in check.

4. Clean and inspect regularly: Regularly clean and inspect areas where mold is likely to grow, such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements. Use mold-inhibiting cleaners and promptly address any signs of mold growth.

5. Seek professional help if needed: If mold growth is extensive or persistent, consult a professional mold remediation specialist to safely and effectively remove the mold from the environment.

By taking proactive measures to prevent mold growth and promptly addressing any mold issues, elderly individuals can reduce their risk of experiencing the adverse health effects associated with mold exposure. Regular monitoring of indoor air quality and maintaining a clean and dry living environment are essential for promoting the health and well-being of older adults.

CALL TO SCHEDULE A FREE QUOTE: 239-572-2216 or visit www.AMEswfl.com



Scott Briggs American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC Licensed & Insured Serving Southwest Florida (Other States for Mold Toxic Patients/Clients Upon Arrangement) Mold Inspections, Mold & Mycotoxin Testing FL License MRSA 3097

## **CARING FOR CAREGIVERS:**

#### Nurturing Mental Health Amidst the Demands of Dementia Care

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

ay is Mental Health Month, shining a spotlight on a critical aspect of caregiving often overlooked: the mental health of dementia caregivers. Understanding this topic is crucial, given the high stakes for both caregivers and those with dementia. Experts estimated in 2020 that there were around 7 million people over 65 with Alzheimer's, just one form of dementia. By 2040, this number is expected to rise to 12 million or more.

Most people with dementia do not reside in nursing homes but live with spouses, adult children, or close family friends who provide care. Unpaid family caregivers, predominantly daughters, dedicate substantial time to caring for loved ones with dementia. According to statistics, daughters provide 39% of unpaid care hours, followed by spouses (25%), sons (17%), and other family members and friends (20%).\*

The care provided at home by these individuals is typically unpaid. According to the CDC, 16 million Americans provided over 17 billion hours of unpaid care for family and friends with dementia-related diseases. This immense responsibility leads to significant stress, making it easy for caregivers to neglect their mental health.

Caregiver burnout is a genuine risk, creeping up unexpectedly due to the constant stress, worry, and emotional strain of caregiving. Prioritizing



self-care is not just a luxury but a necessity for both the caregiver's well-being and their ability to provide quality care.

Self-care varies for each caregiver but involves finding activities that nourish the soul and provide grounding. Whether it's meditation, baking, running, or talking to a friend, any activity that rejuvenates you is beneficial. Setting boundaries is crucial; it's okay to say no to overwhelming responsibilities. Taking time to recharge is vital, benefiting both the caregiver and the person with dementia.

Seeking support is another essential aspect of self-care. Caregivers should not attempt to navigate this journey alone. Friends, family, support groups, or therapists can offer the emotional support and guidance needed. Sharing struggles with others who understand can be empowering and reassuring. There is strength in vulnerability. If you do not have supportive friends or family, there are valuable community groups which meet online, and you can join them any time day or night.

Guilt is a common feeling among caregivers, but it's important to remember that self-care is not selfish but selfless. By caring for their own mental health, caregivers are better equipped to care for their loved ones. Research consistently shows that caregivers of people with dementia have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and physical health issues. This can look like becoming easily agitated and frustrated, feeling hopeless, poor sleep, loss of energy, difficulty thinking and concentrating, and more. Physically, caregivers have higher rates of high blood pressure, diabetes, and cognitive impairment. Caregivers also experience more physical pain and discomfort. Prioritizing self-care is not just beneficial; it's essential for maintaining good health and providing quality care.

Self-care is important because caregivers deserve it. Caregiving is one of the hardest jobs there is, and it should be done with love, compassion, and grace. Caregivers must treat themselves with the same kindness and compassion that they show to others.

In conclusion, self-care is not a luxury but a necessity for dementia caregivers. By prioritizing their mental health, caregivers can prevent burnout, improve their well-being, and provide the best possible care for their loved ones.

Sources: \*https://www.prb.org/resources/fact-sheet-u-s-dementio-trends/

> SENIOR CARE AUTHORITY Senior Living and Care Solutions 239-330-2133 | www.scanyfl.com

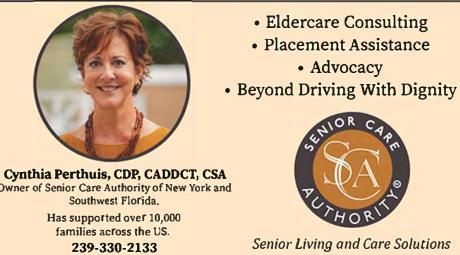
## Is Your Home Making You Sick?

- Mold is microscopic. By the time you see it, a 1 inch square has over a million spores!
- Mold produces a by-product called MYCOTOXINS, a light-weight vapor molecule that easily travels through your HVAC, is easily inhaled and absorbed through your skin.
- It is well know that mold and MYCOTOXINS cause health issues.
- A water issue even years earlier could still be haunting your home.

The most common mold that affect our health can often appear as dust!



residential and commercial licensed mold remediation, inspection, testing. treatment & green removal.



cynthia@seniorcareauthority.com



• Eldercare Consulting • Placement Assistance

Advocacy

Senior Living and Care Solutions www.scanyfl.com



## **MANAGING SPRING ALLERGIES NATURALLY:**

A Look at D-Hist and Seasonal Support from Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy

By Jerry and Lisa Meloche, Pharm.D., Owners, Compounding Pharmacists

S pring in Southwest Florida brings longer days, warm breezes, and lush landscapes—but for many, it also signals the start of allergy season. Each year, millions of Americans suffer from seasonal allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 25% of U.S. adults and nearly 19% of children experience seasonal allergies, with symptoms often peaking during spring months.

In Naples and throughout Collier County, spring allergies are particularly triggered by high pollen counts from native flora, including oak, pine, and cypress trees, as well as various grasses and flowering plants that thrive in Florida's subtropical climate. These allergens are carried by coastal breezes and compounded by the region's long growing season, creating a near year-round challenge for allergy sufferers.

At Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy, we understand the impact that seasonal allergies can have on your quality of life. That's why we're proud to offer D-Hist, a clinically supported, drug-free supplement that addresses allergy symptoms using natural ingredients. For patients seeking an alternative to traditional antihistamines—especially those with sensitivities or who prefer to avoid drowsiness and side effects—D-Hist may provide meaningful relief.

## Understanding Seasonal Allergies in Southwest Florida

Allergic rhinitis is an immune system response to airborne allergens. When exposed to substances such as pollen or mold spores, the body overreacts by releasing histamine, a chemical that causes inflammation, swelling, mucus production, sneezing, and itching.

Common spring allergens in Naples and the surrounding area include:

- Tree Pollen: Oak, pine, cypress, and cedar are prevalent in early spring and are among the most potent tree allergens in Southwest Florida.
- Grass Pollen: Bermuda and Bahia grass, both commonly found in Florida lawns, release pollen later in spring and early summer.
- Mold Spores: Humidity and rain encourage mold growth outdoors, particularly in mulch, compost, and leaf piles.
- Indoor Allergens: Though not seasonal, dust mites and pet dander can exacerbate spring allergy symptoms, especially when combined with outdoor exposures.

Local pollen counts in Collier County frequently exceed 500 grains per cubic meter during peak season—a level that is considered "high" by the National Allergy Bureau and sufficient to cause moderate to severe symptoms in sensitive individuals.

#### **D-Hist: A Natural Solution for Allergy Support**

D-Hist, available at Creative Scripts, is a nutritional supplement formulated to provide comprehensive seasonal allergy support without the use of traditional medications. Manufactured by Ortho Molecular Products, D-Hist combines powerful natural agents that work synergistically to modulate the body's immune response and promote respiratory health.

#### Key Ingredients in D-Hist:

**1.** Quercetin: A plant-based flavonoid with natural antihistamine properties, quercetin stabilizes mast cells, helping to reduce histamine release and allergic inflammation.

2. Stinging Nettle Leaf: A traditional herb used for centuries, stinging nettle has been shown to ease nasal congestion and reduce sneezing in allergy sufferers.

**3.** N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC): NAC supports healthy mucus viscosity and drainage, particularly beneficial for individuals with sinus pressure and congestion.

**4.** Bromelain: An enzyme derived from pineapple, bromelain reduces nasal swelling and improves absorption of the other active ingredients.

5. Vitamin C: Known for its antioxidant and immune-supportive functions, vitamin C also enhances the action of quercetin and promotes overall sinus health.

Together, these ingredients help address the underlying mechanisms of allergic responses—particularly inflammation and histamine activity—while also supporting the body's natural detoxification pathways.

#### **Clinical Support for D-Hist**

• A 2016 study in the journal Allergy, Asthmo & Clinical Immunology found that quercetin significantly decreased nasal congestion and histamine levels in allergic rhinitis patients.

• Research published in *Phytotherapy Research* demonstrated that stinging nettle extract provided significant symptom relief compared to placebo in seasonal allergy sufferers.

• NAC, widely used in respiratory care, has been shown to improve mucociliary clearance in the upper airways, supporting better sinus drainage and fewer complications from excess mucus buildup. While D-Hist is not a cure for allergies, it offers a drug-free alternative or complement to standard therapies such as antihistamines, decongestants, or corticosteroid nasal sprays. Many patients report fewer side effects, better symptom control, and an improved sense of well-being when using D-Hist consistently during allergy season.

#### Compounding and Personalized Allergy Care

As a compounding pharmacy, Creative Scripts offers more than just retail supplements. We can work with your healthcare provider to create custom allergy solutions, including:

- Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) for desensitization
- Customized nasal sprays with natural antiinflammatory agents
- Compounded antihistamines or corticosteroids in non-standard doses or delivery formats

We understand that no two allergy sufferers are alike. Whether you're dealing with persistent sinus pressure, itchy eyes, or seasonal asthma exacerbations, our pharmacists can help identify the right combination of overthe-counter, prescription, and nutritional therapies to meet your unique needs.

Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy custom builds medication, one patient at a time. We use the highest quality pharmaceutical-grade ingredients, state-of-the-art bases, equipment, and technology. Continual training on the newest techniques, advances in therapy, and regulations allows our pharmacists and technicians to provide the safest, most effective medications for you AND your pets. In addition to compounded medications, we offer pharmaceutical-grade nutritional supplements, health advice, and hormone consults. Creative Scripts specializes in veterinary compounding, dermatology, bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), pain management, and more. Pharmacists Jerry and Lisa Meloche have served Naples and surrounding communities since 2005.

Come in to see us or call AND MENTION THIS AD for a one-time \$15 off a new or transferred prescription!



## **ANY LAB TEST NOW!** Take Control of Your Health with Any Lab Test Now

esidents of Naples, Florida now have a convenient new option for getting affordable lab tests right in their neighborhood. *Any Lab Test Now* has opened a new location on Immokalee Road, bringing their extensive selection of professional lab tests to the Naples area.

Any Lab Test Now allows individuals to order their own lab tests without requiring a doctor's order. This puts patients in control of their own health monitoring and screening. The retail lab testing model provides an easy and affordable way to get lab work done for wellness, prevention, treatment, and management of existing conditions.

"We're excited to open our doors in Naples and provide this level of access to lab testing services," said the local owner. "Our goal is to empower people to be proactive about their health by making it simple and affordable to get the lab tests they need."

At Any Lab Test Now, patients can get tested for a wide range of health concerns from routine wellness panels to highly specialized biomarker tests. Some of the most popular tests offered include:

• Annual Check-Up Panel: A comprehensive array of tests that screen for a variety of potential health issues like diabetes, liver and kidney problems, anemia and more.

- Paternity Informational (Non-Legal): For those needing to determine biological relationships through DNA testing for personal knowledge.
- STD Panel, Comprehensive: Screens for all major sexually transmitted infections like HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B & C, herpes, chlamydia and more.
- Cholesterol (Lipid) Panel: Checks HDL, LDL, triglycerides and total cholesterol levels to assess heart disease risk.
- 5 Panel Rapid Drug Screen (Urine): Detects recent use of marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and PCP.
- Weight Management Hormone Test Panel: Looks at levels of hormones like cortisol, thyroid, testosterone and more that can affect weight.
- Hemoglobin A1C: Used to monitor average blood sugar levels over 2-3 months for diabetes management.
- Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA): Screens for prostate cancer and other prostate disorders in men.
- **Basic Thyroid Panel:** Checks TSH, T4 and T3 levels to identify thyroid disorders.
- Testosterone, Free & Total: Measures free and total testosterone levels in men and women.



The new Any Lab Test Now Naples is staffed by certified technicians who can properly collect samples for blood tests, urine tests, saliva tests, hair tests and more. They are knowledgeable about all the tests offered and can help customers select the right screening for their needs. Test results are typically available within 24-48 hours.

With the opening of the Naples location, residents of Collier County now have convenient access to professional lab testing services. Stop by Any Lab Test Now on Immokalee Road and take control of your health today.

#### ANY LAB TEST NOW NAPLES 239-899-8378 2415 Tarpn Bay Blvd., Suite 7, Naples, FL 34119 www.anylabtestnow.com/naples\_fl

### Svetlana Kogan, M.D., IFMCP Functional Concierge Primary Care



Dr. Svetlana Kogan is a Cornell-educated, board-certified physician with over 25 years of experience blending traditional, functional, and holistic medicine. Trained and certified by the Institute for Functional Medicine, she brings deep expertise & compassion to every patient encounter.

Dr. Kogan has authored hundreds of articles, & has appeared as a medical expert on FOX, CBS, ABC, and NBC. She is also the author of the holistic book 'Diet Slave No More!'

Dr. Kogan offers a customized Functional approach to your entire health, including:

Chronic Disease Management
 Nutrition & Digestive Health
 Weight Optimization
 Hormonal Health
 Brain Function
 Sleep & Stress Disorders
 Immune Function
 Inflammation
 Environmental Issues
 Detoxification
 Anti-Aging
 Longevity Coaching
 Mind-Body Techniques

• Exercise & Movement

At **ANY LAB TEST NOW**<sup>®</sup> of Naples, we're in the business of helping you get on the path to wellness.





## Heart and Brain Health: A Unified Approach Through Nutrition

By James V. Talano, MD, MBA, FACC

s a cardiologist, I emphasize that both heart disease and neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease are influenced by lifestyle choices, particularly diet. Research consistently highlights that dietary patterns promoting cardiovascular wellness also support brain function.

#### HEART-HEALTHY DIETS

#### Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet is widely regarded as one of the most beneficial for heart health. Based on traditional diets from Mediterranean countries, it emphasizes:

- Fruits and vegetables as the foundation of every meal
- Whole grains, nuts, and legumes as primary carbohydrate and protein sources
- Healthy fats from olive oil, avocados, and nuts
- Fish and poultry as primary sources of animal protein, with limited red meat

A landmark study published in the *New England Journal* of *Medicine* found that individuals following a Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil or nuts had a significantly lower risk of cardiovascular events. This diet reduces inflammation and improves cholesterol levels through its rich content of monounsaturated fats and antioxidants.

#### DASH Diet

Designed specifically to combat high blood pressure, the DASH diet also reduces heart disease risk by emphasizing:

- High intake of fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains and lean proteins such as poultry, fish, and legumes
- Low-fat dairy products
- Limited sodium intake
- Reduction in saturated fats and added sugars

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the DASH diet significantly lowers blood pressure through its high potassium, calcium, and magnesium content.

#### Plant-Based and Flexitarian Diets

Plant-based diets primarily consist of plant-derived foods, with variations including vegetarian and vegan approaches. The American College of Cardiology highlights their benefits in reducing heart disease risk, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes due to their high dietary fiber, antioxidants, and heart-healthy fats.

The Flexitarian diet offers a more flexible approach, allowing occasional inclusion of animal products while maintaining a plant-based focus. Studies suggest this approach can lower heart disease risk by improving cholesterol levels and reducing inflammation.

#### The MIND Diet and Alzheimer's Prevention

Alzheimer's disease presents a growing public health concern. While age and genetics are non-modifiable risk factors, diet plays a significant role in prevention and progression.

#### Mediterranean Diet and Cognitive Health

In addition to heart health, the Mediterranean diet has been linked to reduced cognitive decline. A study in BMC Medicine demonstrated that individuals adhering to this diet experienced a significant reduction in dementia risk, independent of genetic predisposition. Its neuroprotective effects stem from rich antioxidants and unsaturated fatty acids, which mitigate oxidative stress and inflammation—processes involved in both cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases.

#### The MIND Diet: A Targeted Approach

Building upon the Mediterranean and DASH diets, the MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) diet specifically promotes brain health by emphasizing:

- High consumption of leafy greens, berries, nuts, and whole grains
- Olive oil as the primary fat source
- Fish, beans, and poultry as protein sources
- Limited red meat, butter, cheese, and processed foods

Research indicates that adherence to the MIND diet correlates with slower cognitive decline and lower Alzheimer's risk. Even partial adoption has shown significant neuroprotective benefits.

#### **KEY NUTRIENTS FOR BRAIN HEALTH**

Several dietary components have been individually associated with cognitive benefits:

- **Polyphenols:** Found in fruits, vegetables, and olive oil, these antioxidants protect brain function.
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids: These anti-inflammatory fats found in fish are essential for neuronal membrane function.
- Antioxidants: Vitamins E and C combat oxidative stress, a contributor to neuronal damage.
- B Vitamins: These play crucial roles in homocysteine metabolism, with elevated homocysteine levels associated with cognitive decline.

### The Overlap **Between Ca**rdiovascular and Cognitive Health

The similarities between dietary recommendations for heart and brain health are striking. These diets not only support neuroprotection but also improve lipid profiles, lower blood pressure, and enhance vascular function. Cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension and diabetes have been linked to Alzheimer's development, making dietary interventions a dual-benefit strategy.

#### Practical Recommendations

Key dietary modifications that support both heart and brain health include:

- Increase plant-based foods: vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains
- Incorporate healthy fats: olive oil, nuts, and fatty fish
- Moderate animal product consumption: limit red and processed meats
- Reduce processed foods high in saturated fats, sugars, and sodium
- Practice mindful eating with regular meal patterns and portion control

#### Conclusion

By prioritizing heart-healthy nutrition, individuals can also take proactive steps in reducing Alzheimer's risk. The Mediterranean, DASH, plant-based, and Flexitarian diets all provide cardiovascular benefits, while the MIND diet specifically targets cognitive health. Ultimately, adopting a sustainable, balanced approach to diet can promote long-term well-being for both the heart and brain.

For those unsure where to start, consulting a healthcare provider or dietitian can help tailor a dietary plan suited to individual health needs. Small, gradual changes—such as adding more vegetables to meals or swapping refined grains for whole grains—can have lasting health benefits. By making informed nutritional choices, we can safeguard our hearts and minds for years to come.

#### ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS



239-261-2000 x1 | www.swicft.org

Naples - 625 9th Street North 730 Goodlette Road North Bonita Springs - 9410 Fountain Medical Ct.



## The Matterhorn Method: Lightning Fast Pain Relief

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

urrent research indicates that one in four American adults, and 81% of youth, DO NOT meet the minimum recommendations for physical activity. The body is not designed to be idle, and we know that moving regularly can add years to our lives. As we age, we want to be able to continue to do the things we love, whether that be general activities of daily living or participation in recreational sports. However, injuries can be a major part of being active. Pain is unique to all of us and can be all-encompassing as it may adversely impact functional, social, and psychological well-being.

Coordinated movement is planned in the cerebral cortex, and staged signals are sent down to the spinal cord and out to the motor neurons. When staged signals fire in the correct order and reach their intended muscles, the body moves with an efficient motor pattern. After an injury or feeling pain, the pattern of these staged signals can become distorted or changed; resulting in compensation, which can lead to weakness, pain and further injury. Pain signals from the brain can last long after the acute tissue is healed causing chronic pain.

Correcting your neurological compensation allows for signals to fire in the correct order to absorb the force of movement. Once your brain and muscles communicate as they should, your body will operate efficiently and the brain will not elicit a pain signal.

The leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naplesbased Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat over 70 professional athletes, 11 Olympians, and thousands of SW Florida residents in as little as two weeks. In their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it quickly, and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods without any results. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain. The team spent the next five years compiling various techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan's rehabilitation. The results were immediate and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.

"When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered," says Vesce. "So we started testing our new process on pro athletes, and it worked. We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method worked so well that our clients told all of their family and friends about it. That's when we knew we had something really special. Within 2 weeks, virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today. The process worked fast. The culture was inspiring, and we began to take off."

The first step in Matterhorn Fit's process is a comprehensive initial evaluation. Through their evaluation, they will be able to identify any neurological compensation in the client's system. If they do find compensations, there is a very high probability that they can improve the client's pain in two weeks.

"Through our initial evaluation we will be able to determine IF we can help you. If we do find something that we can fix, then we will start you with 6 sessions over a two week period to resolve your symptoms," says Vesce. "Over 94% of our clients have reported a major reduction of pain within two weeks. After the symptoms are resolved, we build a personalized movement plan to prevent the problem from returning."

To schedule an initial evaluation visit matterhornfit.com or call the office at 239.676.5342.

#### Matterhorn Fit

239-676-5342 www.matterhornfit.com

Matterhorn Fit Naples - 2079 Pine Ridge Rd. Naples FL 34109 Matterhorn Fit Bonita - 25330 Bernwood Dr #2

Bonita Springs, FL 34135





## It is illegal for an insurance agent to call you regarding Medicare,

Do not talk to someone you have not given permission to call. Ask them for their National Producer number and report them to Medicare for an unsolicited call.

CMS has made many changes for Medicare recipients. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone, you need to agree to be recorded, and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person, appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that authorizes us to talk to you about Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan. It does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics.

One of the biggest changes for 2025 related to Medicare Part D Prescriptions whether withing a Part C Advantage plan or a stand-alone Part D drug Plan. Your yearly Part D out-of-pocket costs will be capped at \$2,000 in 2025. You must buy medications using your plan and the medication must be in formulary to go toward the cap. You will also have a payment option to pay out-pocket costs in monthly amounts over the plan year, instead of paying when you receive the medications. This is done through the insurance company that you purchased your plan.

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare,

once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A". Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue



you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6 months on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! *Especially important:* when you *move* you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

Special Enrollment Periods – You moved out of your plans service area, New to Medicare, Retiring and coming off of your employer group plan, Going into or out of Skilled Nursing, Medicaid and other's may apply.

We offer Free Medicare Seminars in Lee & Collier County please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

**Travel Insurance** – Did you know that most health insurance does NOT cover you outside of the country and that includes a cruise, in international waters (4 miles out). Travel insurance is not just about trip cancelation but most importantly what if you got sick or had an accident on your trip. Medical Trip insurance is very important and most of the time not very costly when you out way the benefits. Life Insurance – You are never too young to have life insurance, and many types offer living benefits. As an example, I purchase life insurance for my grandchildren almost as soon as they are born. Their policy continues to build cash value that they can use during their lives, for education, wedding or even a 1st home purchase. The younger you are the lower the cost. There are many types of life insurance, and it is important to understand the differences between them. You also have payment options, such as 10-Pay, this type of policy you can pay the premium in full in 10 years, there are other terms available as well.

Long Term Care Insurance - Overall, 48.7% of older adults with ADL difficulties (or an estimated 3 million persons aged 70 and older) reported needing some sort of personal assistance with one or more ADLs, and, of those individuals with need, 20.7% (or an estimated 629,000 persons) had an unmet need. Long Term Care Insurance helps pay for in-home or facility-based needs, such as assistance with acts of daily living or help with paying for a facility. Start shopping for this insurance in your 40's, but it's never too late to try. Your overall health will pay a major roll in the cost of the plan's premium. The sooner than later for affordability. You have payment options such as a single payment, 10-Pay where the premium is paid-in-full in 10 years. You also get a discount with most companies doing a joint policy with your spouse. Remember Medicare is NOT meant for Nursing Home Care/Skilled Nursing.

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the carriers, we are happy to help you through the maze. This is what we do daily, it is second nature to us. We offer virtual seminars, one on one Webex, phone and in-person appointments.

To learn more about your options call to schedule an appointment contact: Logical Insurance Solutions for all your insurance needs, I am licensed in 36 states.



www.Logicalinsurance.com info@Logicalinsurance.com

## High Blood Pressure in Pets: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment

here are several factors that can contribute to hypertension in pets. Some of the common causes include:



**Obesity:** Just like in humans, obesity is a leading cause of high blood pressure in pets. Extra weight puts extra strain on the heart, leading to an increase in blood pressure.

Kidney Disease: Kidney disease can cause hypertension in pets by affecting the kidneys' ability to regulate blood pressure.

Hyperthyroidism: Overactive thyroid glands can cause hypertension in cats.

Cushing's Disease: This condition, which causes an overproduction of cortisol hormone, can lead to hypertension in dogs.

Aging: As pets age, their blood vessels become less elastic, and their blood pressure tends to increase.

#### Symptoms of High Blood Pressure in Pets

High blood pressure in pets can be asymptomatic, meaning there are no obvious signs of the condition. However, in some cases, pets may exhibit the following symptoms:

- Seizures
- Blindness or other vision problems
- Disorientation or confusion
- Nosebleeds
- Difficulty breathing
- Weakness or lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Increased thirst and urination

If you notice any of these symptoms in your pet, it is essential to take them to a veterinarian immediately. Early detection and treatment can prevent complications and improve your pet's quality of life.

#### Treatment of High Blood Pressure in Pets

The treatment of high blood pressure in pets depends on the underlying cause of the condition. In some cases, managing the underlying condition can resolve the hypertension. For example, weight loss can help manage hypertension in obese pets, and treating kidney disease can help regulate blood pressure in pets with kidney problems. In other cases, medication may be necessary to control hypertension. There are several medications available to treat high blood pressure in pets, including angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and calcium channel blockers. These medications work by relaxing the blood vessels, which lowers blood pressure.

In addition to medication, lifestyle changes can also help manage hypertension in pets. For example, feeding your pet a healthy diet, ensuring they get regular exercise, and reducing stress can help manage hypertension.

High blood pressure is a common condition that affects pets, and it can lead to serious complications if left untreated. As a pet owner, it is essential to be aware of the causes, symptoms, and treatment of hypertension in pets. Regular veterinary checkups can help detect hypertension early, and early treatment can prevent complications and improve your pet's quality of life. By making lifestyle changes and working with your veterinarian to manage your pet's hypertension, you can help ensure that your furry companion lives a long and healthy life.

Contact Animal Oasis Veterinary Hospital to schedule a wellness exam, vaccinations, and calming medications for your pets today!

Animal Oasis Veterinary Hospital in Naples offers the most up to date and progressive veterinary services for your pets. Ranging from laser surgery, ultrasound, dental X-rays, radiology, full pharmacy, and in house diagnostics, Animal Oasis Veterinary Hospital provides your pets with the necessary options for treatment.

#### 239-431-7980 www.aovethospital.com





## Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

f the past few months have given you more time for introspection, use it to improve your financial plan in a big-picture way. Even for the privileged among us who still have our jobs, are not on the front lines with the pandemic, and have not had anyone close to us felled by COVID-19, the current crisis has brought hardships big and small.

Parents have confronted the daily struggle of trying to do their jobs while also home-schooling. Adult children have not been able to visit their elderly parents. Graduations, weddings, and even funerals have been put on hold or "Zoomified." Yet as difficult as it has been, there have been a few silver linings too, especially for those of us lucky enough to not be touched directly by the crisis. One of the most valuable is that pressing pause on our usual routines has given many of us the opportunity to take a step back, get out of our ruts, and take stock. What do we really value? What do we really miss? What can we not wait to do when this is all over? What "necessity" of our past lives, whether the daily purchased latte or frequent meals in restaurants, are we finding that we are quite happily doing without?

Travel may be someone's greatest longing, while others miss cooking and entertaining big groups of family and friends. Talking about how the pandemic has changed our thinking on a topic, or made us want to do more of something else, can help us feel like we are using the present situation productively. The current sense of isolation will not be for naught, because it is shaping how we intend to use our lives in the future, when we once again have a full set of choices before us.

### Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

It can be argued that now is a good time to put a fresh set of eyes on your financial plan, taking a similarly expansive view of it that you might not have been able to do when you were busy and mired in your day-to-day activities. Too often, one expert opined, financial plans (and planners) move straight to the "solution" phase, without stopping to ask some basic questions about what someone is trying to achieve and what their real problems are.

"Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things." What will constitute "success" for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

Whether you are well into retirement or early in your career, it can be easy to backburner questions like these and move straight to logistics, determining your asset allocation and minimizing taxes, for example. Those are all worthy pursuits, but if you find yourself with a bit of extra time to think a bit more broadly and introspectively about your financial plan, here are some of the key questions to ask yourself.

#### What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

As most investors know, the biggest determinant of whether you achieve financial success is how much you spend versus how much you save. But as important as it is to make sure your intake exceeds your outgo, budgeting can seem like sheer drudgery. Here is a different way to think about budgeting. Simply begin to take note of how various discretionary expenditures make you feel. It can be incredibly illuminating. Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things. Many would also argue that many of life's most memorable experiences cost very little.

#### How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

Investors should strive to make smart allocations of financial capital across opportunity sets, not just saving versus spending but also debt pay down versus investing in the market, how much to allocate to retirement savings versus college, and so on. These are crucial topics worthy of significant analysis and introspection. Ultimately, the right answers are a matter of math (expected return on "investment") and personal preference.

Many of us pay much less attention to how we allocate an even more scarce resource, our time, even though that allocation will ultimately have an even greater impact on whether we feel like we have met our goals. Of course, some of our time expenditures are pre-ordained, the time we spend working or caring for children, for example. Even within those allocations it seems worthwhile to be more mindful, to help ensure that your allocation of time in a given day, week, or year aligns with your goals and vision for that period. An audit of how you are allocating your time currently is a good starting point. Technology tools can help you determine how much time you waste (uh, spend) on social media and other activities that could be detracting from your productivity and happiness.

#### What Is Your Definition of "Enough"?

Many of us are operating with an incredibly vague notion of how much we really need to save in order to achieve our financial goals and find security. Even financial planners might rely on rules of thumb when setting your retirement savings target. For example, they might assume that you will need 80% of your working income in retirement and extrapolate the rest of your plan from there.

As humans, we often have a natural tendency to reach for more more more, regardless of whether that "more" is actually bringing more happiness and security. Trying to keep up with the people around us, in terms of possessions and outward signs of success, can get exhausting and may not get us any closer to our life's goals. That is why, in this period of limited activity, spending, and social contact, it is worthwhile to think through your own definition of enough, both now and for the future.

#### What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

When taking a strictly financial and estate-planning perspective, leaving a "legacy" is one of those topics that can seem overly narrow. It is about leaving assets behind for children, grandchildren, and other loved ones, as well as charity if we so choose. It is about making sure we do not burden the people we care about. Those are crucial considerations and they are why everyone needs an estate plan that includes wills, powers of attorney, and beneficiary designations, among other key documents.

While you are at it, why not think big picture about your legacy, too? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? What life philosophy or pieces of wisdom do you hope that your loved ones will always associate with you? If you Imd yourself with a bit of extra time for introspection, write down a few ideas along these lines. And no, you are not too young to start thinking about this. You can find templates for creating a "personal legacy" online, but some good advice is not to overthink it. Balance more serious ideas with more lighthearted ones. We all have credos that we live by; make sure your loved ones know yours.

#### Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments, Wintrust Wealth Management.

© Morningstar 2020. All Rights Reserved, Used with permission. Securities, insurance products, financial planning, and investment management services offered through Wintrust Investments, LLC (Member FINRA/SIPC), founded in 1931. Trust and asset management services offered by The Chicago Trust Company, N.A. and Great Lakes Advisors, LLC, respectively. Investment products such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds are: NOT FDIC INSURED | NOT BANK GUARANTEED | MAY LOSE VALUE | NOT A DEPOSIT | NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY.



239.687.5204 nazwoir@wintrustwealth.com 3401 Tamiami Trail North Naples, Florida

### 6 Household Cleaning Supplies New Homeowners Should Have

oving into a new home is an exciting and stressful experience. There are so many moving parts, and the task of cleaning can easily fall to the side. Don't let this happen by hiring the professional cleaners at MaidPro. We can ensure your new home starts and stays clean. That way, you have more time to purchase the cleaning essentials. This new homeowner cleaning supply list of six items will help you have the basics to keep your home clean.

#### 1. Microfiber Towels

The versatility of microfiber cloths makes them essential in your new home. The gentle fibers make them suitable for a broad range of surface types. They are also effective at disinfecting your home. When one gets dirty, you can throw them in the wash and use them again.

#### 2. Vacuum

You need to be able to clean the floors of your new home. A vacuum can work on various surfaces, making it the perfect solution for your new home. Look for a vacuum with the ability to adjust for different floor types. That way, you can easily transition from carpet or rugs to tile or hardwood flooring.

#### 3. All Purpose Cleaner

An all-purpose cleaner is a versatile cleaning product that you can use on surfaces all over your home. This makes it an essential first cleaning product for your new home. Use this cleaner with a microfiber cloth in every room in your home.

#### 4. Glass Cleaner

One surface where all-purpose cleaner doesn't work is on glass or mirror. You need a specific glass cleaner that will clean while also leaving the surface streak-free. Use glass cleaner in the bathroom to clean the mirror and glass around the shower. Then wipe down the inside of the windows in the rest of the home. This cleans them and increases the amount of natural light coming in.

#### 5. Wood Cleaner

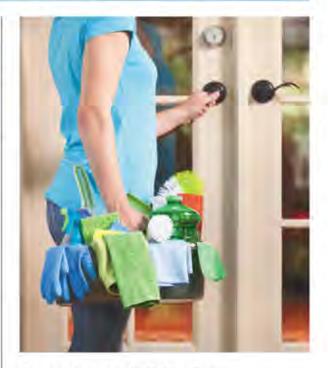
Protect your wood furniture by using a specialized cleaner. All-purpose cleaners can cause damage to your wood, so using a specialized cleaner is a must. Look for one that can clean, condition, and protect. This will ensure your wood furniture stays looking beautiful for years to come.

#### 6. Toilet Brush and Cleaner

The other items on this list are general purpose and can be used throughout the home. However, they aren't suitable for cleaning the toilet. Instead, you need a toilet brush and cleaner. This lets you clean the inside of the toilet bowl.

#### **Hire the Cleaning Pros**

You have plenty to think about when moving into your new home. Don't let cleaning fall through the cracks. Having these six essential items will make a strong start to establishing your cleaning kit. Another great option is to hire a professional cleaner. The professionals at MaidPro can take on the cleaning responsibility so that you can focus on other tasks. That way, your new home starts clean and stays clean.



maidero

#### **Cleaning Is Deeper With MaidPro**

Whether you hire us just once or we see you every week, our PROs are committed to ensuring our services go above and beyond your expectations, each and every time. Our locally owned cleaning company takes the time needed to give your home the clean it deserves, guided by our 49-Point Checklist.

When you call MaidPro, you get the satisfaction of a clean home - Your way!

> 239.596.5200 maidpro.com/naples 239.437.5520 maidpro.com/fortmyers



Investment products such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds are: NOT FDIC INSURED [NOT BANK GUARANTEED ] MAY LOSE VALUE | NOT A DEPOSIT | NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY



NOT YOUR STANDARD CLEANERS Damage and theft protection Employee backgrounds
 Knowledgeable cleaners

maidpro

f 🤳 🚠 in B

Satisfaction Guaranteed



MaidPro MUSCLE Services Immediately Dry & Green Carpet Cleaning Uphalstery + Tie & Grout Pressure Washing Window Cleaning

239.596.5200



Servicing Marco Island, Naples, Banita Springs and Fort Myers Area

www.swfHealthandWellness.com

# Eating Heart Healthy Meals Just Got a Whole Lot Easier

ating more plant-based foods doesn't mean you have to be vegan or vegetarian, although those options are good for some individuals. The Mediterranean diet, the MIND or Dash diet are all viable options for individuals that want to have healthy cardiovascular systems but still consume some animal products. Eating plant-based foods while consuming lean proteins like finfish, shellfish or poultry can nonetheless be very healthy. With a heart-healthy diet, the best advice is to load up on fresh produce, limit refined or processed foods, reduce alcohol and sugar, eliminate processed meats and excessive saturated fats. If being vegan or vegetarian is better suited for one's personal preference or needs, that is absolutely a remarkable way to stay healthy and protect the heart. But the one thing we know from various studies and research is that processed carbohydrates, sugars, and trans fats cause inflammation and can exacerbate cardiovascular disorders.



Speaking to a medical professional is essential to learn which foods are best for your condition.

Meal planning, grocery shopping and food preparation can be challenging for seniors. That's why Chefs for Seniors specializes in fresh, nutritious meals that are cooked right in the comfort of your home, AND there is no shopping or planning involved on your part.

#### What is Chefs for Seniors?

As individuals age, shopping and preparing meals can become a difficult task. With so many other issues to worry about such as being a caregiver, suffering from arthritis, or other disorders that limit mobility, cooking is one thing that many seniors wish they didn't have to do. Chefs For Seniors is a welcomed answer for many that want nutritious, flavorful foods custom-prepared right in the comfort of your home by a licensed chef that not only provides gourmet-style meals, but also compassionate companionship. They also have specialty meals for low sodium, low fat, and other dictary needs.

#### Why Chefs For Seniors?

Our Mission is to Provide Amazing Food and Proper Nutrition

- Find peace of mind knowing our personal chefs will handle the cooking
- Feel healthy and rejuvenated with meals for seniors that fit your diet
- Truly affordable and much less expensive than eating out
- All personal chefs are servsafe licensed, undergo background checks, and are fully insured

Chefs For Seniors is a welcomed answer for many that want nutritious, flavorful foods custom-prepared right in the comfort of your home by a licensed chef that not only provides gourmet-style meals, but also compassionate companionship. They also have specialty meals for low sodium, low fat, and other dietary needs.

The company's local professional chefs prepare affordable meals for the week in the home using the freshest ingredients, while offering a fun interactive experience. Chefs for Seniors is a private meal preparation service which specializes in providing companionship with the chefs preparing the meals in the home of the client. Clients select meals from a regional menu which can be customized to the client's dietary preferences and needs. The process aims to be an affordable option for seniors who may want fresh home-cooked meals, but who may be physically unable to cook the meals for themselves.

#### Professionally Prepared Meals and Clean Up!

Chefs for Seniors offers rotating menu options, which includes select Chef creations inspired by the region. Clients select their desired meal in advance, allowing the chef to shop and prepare the meals on the designated cooking day. Chefs prepare the meals between two to two and a half hours. And an added benefit is that after the meal is prepared and stored according to the client's preferences, the chefs clean before leaving the house. The price of our services are region-specific and depends on your individual needs. Our goal is to provide an affordable solution that seniors can use long-term. We offer three different service packages to meet a variety of needs: Standard, Custom, and Non-Standard. Some Long Term Health Insurance Policies may cover certain in-home services like Chefs For Seniors. During a 2-hour home visit, your personal chef will prepare 4 different entrées and 10-12 individually-packaged servings of meals. The exact number of servings depending on your appetite and the types of meals ordered and serving sizes can be adjusted with your chef.

Most clients have their personal chef visit their home every week, although some choose to schedule services every 2 weeks or 2x per week. We can work within your budget, appetite, and needs.

#### What if I Have a Special Diet or Dietary Concerns?

We can accommodate most dietary concerns and diets. Our chefs and menus are particularly well-suited for low-sodium, diabetic friendly, gluten-free, Kosher, and renal diet meals. We also take inspiration from the DASH Diet (Dietary Approach To Stopping Hypertension), when designing our weekly menu rotations. Our Custom Package is well suited for clients with less common diets or dietary concerns.

#### Do I Have to Supply the Cooking Equipment?

Your chef will bring their own "toolbox" with pots, pans, knives, and utensils into the home. You don't need to have anything on hand except an appetite and working appliances!

You don't have to be a senior to enjoy the professional chef prepared foods! Contact Chefs For Seniors today to find out more.

For any questions, please contact your local Chefs For Seniors Office:

Phone: **239-776-1758** Email: bill.springer@chefsforseniors.com



Spiritual)/ellness

# **Slowing the Pace of Your Life**

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of 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. <sup>11</sup> I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup>I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. <sup>13</sup>I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:11-13

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

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things.

Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

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

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

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

If you find yourself making statements like this:

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

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

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





### CHEF-MADE MEALS FOR SENIORS

Our chefs shop, cook meals for the week, and clean up Cost similar to meal delivery. Customized to your diet.



#### BOOK YOUR CHEF

Schedule weekly or bi-weekly visits with your chef. There are no long-term contracts to worry about.

#### WE COOK FOR YOU

Our professional chefs bring fresh ingredients and cook delicious. homemade meals in your kitchen.

#### ENJOY YOUR MEALS

You're set for the week! We leave you with customized, nutritious meals that can be eaten when you need them.

## Beauty, Reimagined

CHRISTINA ESPINETA Certified Physician Assistant Aesthetic Medicine KIRAN GILL, MD Board Certified Plastic Surgeon

NADIA KAZIM, MD Board Certified Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon

#### **BOUTIQUE SURGERY**

Facelifts Breast Augmentation Tummy Tuck Mommy Makeovers Eyelid Surgery

### Naples Aesthetic Institute

Boutique Plastic Surgery & Med Spa

3025 Airport Rd North | Naples, Florida 34105 | 239.596.8000

MED SPA

Microneedling Diamond Glow Facials Permanent Makeup & More