

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


# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

May 2025

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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# BREAKTHROUGH NEUROPATHY TREATMENT !!

## HOW TO GET LASTING RELIEF FROM: PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY



- ✓ Pins and Needles
- ✓ Loss of Balance
- ✓ Burning Sensation
- ✓ Numbness/Tingling
- ✓ Pain in Feet/Hands
- ✓ Can't Feel The Ground

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Presented by:  
**Dr. Kenneth Carle**  
Chiropractic Physician



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# AVOID WEIGHT GAIN WHEN QUITTING TOBACCO

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

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

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

#### Pay attention to your plate:

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

#### Incorporate physical activity:

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

#### Find other activities to stay busy or prevent boredom:

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

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



Help quitting tobacco is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Group Quit option of Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program—offers free group quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. **Free** nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (if medically appropriate and while supplies last) is provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist. Contact us today at **866-534-7909** or visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar) to schedule a class or learn more about the program!

#### References:

1. How can I avoid weight gain when I stop smoking? American Heart Association, [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/QuitSmoking/YourNon-SmokingLife/How-Can-I-Avoid-Weight-Gain-When-I-Stop-Smoking\\_UCM\\_307852\\_Article.jsp#.V2gwNNjbYU](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/QuitSmoking/YourNon-SmokingLife/How-Can-I-Avoid-Weight-Gain-When-I-Stop-Smoking_UCM_307852_Article.jsp#.V2gwNNjbYU). Accessed June 20, 2016.



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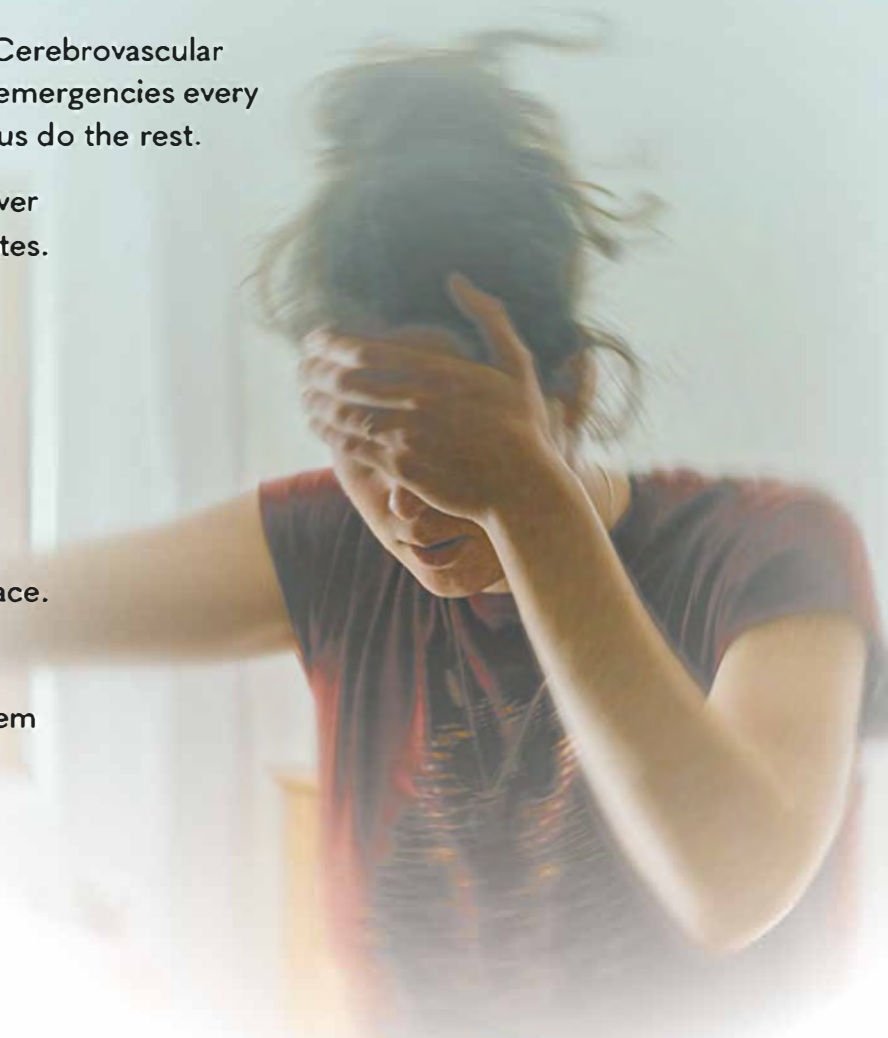
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# Make a Life-Changing Difference, Recognize the Signs of Stroke

The rapid-response Stroke Alert Team at the Stroke and Cerebrovascular Center at Manatee Memorial Hospital encounters stroke emergencies every day. Do your part by learning to identify the signs and let us do the rest.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report over 795,000 people have a stroke each year in the United States. Know the signs of a possible stroke: **BE FAST**.

- B** **Balance:** Sudden loss of balance, dizziness or difficulty walking.
- E** **Eyes:** Vision problems in one or both eyes, including blurriness or double vision.
- F** **Face:** Drooping or numbness on one side of the face. Ask the person to smile – is their smile uneven?
- A** **Arms:** Weakness or numbness in one arm. Ask them to raise both arms – does one drift downward?
- S** **Speech:** Slurred or garbled speech. Ask them to repeat a simple sentence – do they struggle?
- T** **Time:** Time is crucial, call 911 immediately.



For more information, visit [manateememorial.com/stroke](https://manateememorial.com/stroke) or call our Comprehensive Stroke Program Coordinator at **941-812-9566**.



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# BREAKTHROUGH TREATMENTS IN WOUND CARE

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

**A**dvanced therapies in the treatment of complicated diabetic and non-diabetic foot wounds are helping save limbs and improve the quality of life for individual plagued by wounds that just won't heal. Specifically, for the diabetic population, impaired healing of wounds often leads to frequent hospitalizations, increased health care costs and limb loss. Advanced wound healing therapies are now offered at Family Foot and Leg center.

Foot ulcers develop in about 15 % of the 25 million American's living with diabetes. These foot ulcers can lead to serious complications including infection, osteomyelitis (bone infection), decreased quality of life and limb loss. Today's advanced treatment options help stimulate wound healing in people who would likely not be able to heal these wounds on their own. These advanced treatments are critical in the diabetic population who frequently have poor circulation, nerve damage and impaired immune response which all negatively affect the body ability to heal wounds.

One ground breaking therapy is the use of stem cells. Stem cells are undifferentiated cells found in blood, bone marrow and other human tissue. Stem cells have the ability to develop into many different types of cells. When applied directly to a wound, stem cells can help the body grow new tissue in order to heal the wound. The use of stem cells in diabetic related foot wounds has shown favorable results when looking at time to wound closure, number of treatments needed, and number of adverse events related to the wound. Other advanced wound healing therapy is the use of negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT). This consists of a wound dressing with an air tight seal and a drainage tube connected to a suction device. The suction enables healthy new tissue to grow. This device can also be combine with stem cells and other types of grafts.

If you or someone you know has a wound that has been present for a long time or is showing slow progress make sure to schedule an appointment



with Family Foot and Leg center immediately. The longer you wait for treatment, there is a greater risk of limb loss. Your physician will evaluate you and determine why your wound is not healing. They can then develop a treatment plan with advanced wound healing therapies if indicated. To learn more, contact Family Foot and Leg Center in Sarasota.

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

**Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, FACFAS, DABPM**

Isin Mustafa, DPM, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Sarasota, FL. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons.

Call 239-430-3668 or visit

[www.NaplesPodiatrist.com](http://www.NaplesPodiatrist.com) to make an appointment. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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# NEUROPATHY CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

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

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

## The Role of Advanced Neuropathy Treatments

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

At home, Darren uses three FDA-approved devices:

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

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

## In-Office Treatments: Acoustic Wave Therapy

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

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

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

## Understanding Neuropathy and Its Progression

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

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

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

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

## The Limitations of Traditional Neuropathy Treatments

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



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

## A Path to Recovery

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

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

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



**Dr. Kenneth Carle**  
Chiropractic Physician



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# Complications of Vein Disease

By Dr. TC Lackey II

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

## Skin Changes

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

## Phlebitis

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

## Stages of Vein Disease



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

## Bleeding

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

## Swelling

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

## Skin Ulcers

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

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

## Blood Clots

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

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



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# How to Exercise with Arthritis

by ArchWell Health

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

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

## Focus on Low-Impact Activities

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

## Remember to Stretch

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

## Prioritize Nutrition

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



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

## Check Out ArchWell Health's Zumba and Chair Yoga Classes

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

## Take Steps to Manage Arthritis Today

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

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

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# WHY SINGLE SENIORS FLOURISH IN SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES

**R**esearch has shown what most of us already intuitively know: After your 20s, it gets difficult to make friends, let alone find someone to date and/or marry. This issue usually gets tougher as we age. Although perceptions are slowly but surely changing, most of our culture and social activities are still built around couples. However, surrounding yourself with people of a similar life stage who share your interests increases your chances of forming new relationships.

That's why many single seniors are considering senior living communities like Freedom Village of Bradenton. This article will look at our retirement lifestyle and show you how communities like ours make building relationships easier.

## WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

Senior independent living is a term used to describe a maintenance-free community designed exclusively for older adults. They also typically feature a variety of activities and amenities and services like:

- Fully-equipped fitness center with fitness classes and wellness programs
- Heated indoor pool
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- On-campus shows and concerts
- Arts and crafts studio
- Woodworking shop

## BENEFITS OF SENIOR LIVING FOR SINGLE SENIORS

Senior living communities provide a range of advantages you might not be able to get staying in your current home. Senior living can make it easier and more convenient to live the life you want. Some benefits include:

**More social opportunities:** For isolated seniors, senior living communities have calendars filled with social activities, classes, interest groups and clubs, outings, lifelong learning discussions and more. They also have a welcoming committee to help new residents meet people. So, you're sure to find others who share your goals and interests.

**Maintenance-free lifestyle:** Independent living communities have a variety of helpful services and thoughtful amenities to give you the freedom to do more of what you want and less of what you don't. So let our talented staff handle the housekeeping, indoor and outdoor maintenance and even the cooking.

**Community of support:** Many senior living communities offer support groups and spiritual services. These circles of support often develop organically through continual social interactions.

**Right-sized residences:** Most senior living communities offer studio and one-bedroom senior apartments that are the perfect size for a single person. Once you compare the cost of living in your current residence with everything you get at a retirement community, you'll also find it's more affordable than you think.



## DISCOVER THE SINGULAR FREEDOM OF FREEDOM VILLAGE

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**V**oted "2024 Top Doctor," Dr. Cole has helped tens of thousands of patients to be happier, healthier, and healing. These patients all rave about the "Expert Diagnostic Skills and Exceptional Treatment Outcomes." Dr. Cole believes that "You Can't Fix What You Don't Know," so taking the time to actually "Listen to the Patient" is baked into his DNA and upbringing. Dr. Cole attributes this pragmatic and effective approach to patient care to his grandmother, a 25-year Children's Hospital Administrator, who always said to him, "You have two ears and one mouth... for a reason," which he takes to heart with all his patients.

Another issue that plagues the current medical system is the corporate incentives to make as much money as possible by seeing as many patients as humanly possible on a daily basis, instead of actually performing treatments and procedures with the goal of "Find-It, Fix-It," so that patients will experience "Less Pain and Better Function," with increased "Quality of Life!" as this is what matters most to the patients.

As an NYU Trained Interventional Specialist, Dr. Cole provides expert diagnostic and treatment protocols for those "Complicated and Difficult Disorders," in addition to "Guided Precision-Based Therapeutic and Regenerative Treatments" that yield remarkable "Life-Changing Results," as per the hundreds of testimonials by our thousands of current and former satisfied patients as seen on our "kNOWPAIN.com" and "RegenaMed.US" websites.

Patients who want to avoid the "unnecessary drugs or surgeries" are actually in the majority, as they see their friends, loved ones, or even themselves in the vicious loop of "drugs and surgery lead to... More drugs and surgery!" And as per Medicare statistics for 2024, "over 60% of surgeries fail, are repeated, get infected, or have complications," which will not help the patient achieve the "Quality of Life" that they desire... and deserve!



Hence, the "Most Advanced Regenerative Program, Procedure, Protocols, and Products on the Face of the Earth" are utilized by Dr. Cole, who is one of the Founding Fathers of Stem Cell Regenerative Medicine. Muscle, tendon, ligament, and joint arthritis are the mainstay of his extensive arsenal to combat pain and dysfunction. This even includes "Failed Joint Replacement," which is more common than you think.

However, backs and brains are his specialty, as very few doctors these days take the time to figure out "What is the problem...?" let alone how to resolve the problems, reduce the pain, and increase the function. "Backs are Easy!" is the most common motto by Dr. Cole, as he will find the "Who, What, Where, When, and Why" of your back pain to help you get "Back to Your Life" ASAP!

Millions of patients are suffering from Brain Disorders that range from autoimmune or genetic driven Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, and Alzheimer's, to residual headaches/fog/confusion/memory loss/and insomnia from Long-Covid, in addition to acute or chronic brain trauma sustained by injuries, car accidents, sports, and even deterioration of the brain with age. There are new Advanced Regenerative Treatments to assist with rebuilding the brain, safely, without invasive surgeries, with extraordinary results, as per the patients who have been fortunate enough to receive this new technological breakthrough. As Dr. Cole always says: "THIS is The Future of Medicine!" as the body was engineered to be rebuilt...

The "Blueprint of the Body" is the patient's DNA, and by facilitating the removal and replacement of dead or dying cells, activating the reserve cells, and

building stronger network connections, the brain has the capacity to rebuild exponentially. This is accomplished through proprietary protocols that allow the patient's brain to absorb the trillions of growth and healing factors through the blood-brain barrier in a sustained, safe, and sterile fashion to "Maximize Brain Function." Dr. Cole insists, "THIS is The Future of Medicine!" as there is no drug or surgery that can heal the body better than the body... Nothing!"

The expert traditional treatments are explained on the "kNOWPAIN.com" website for the OrthoMed Group, and the World-Class Advanced Regenerative Treatments and Testimonials are revealed on the "RegenaMed.US" website, so please look for your disorder and see what Dr. Cole can do for you too, and if it's not there, Dr. Cole will help you figure out the underlying causes of pain and dysfunction to treat.

"So how can patients and veterans get the proper diagnosis and treatment for all muscle, joint, tendon, nerve, spine, and brain disorders...?"

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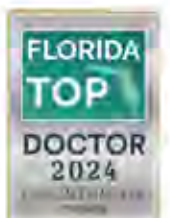
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# THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS ON MENTAL HEALTH

58% of Americans surveyed agreed with the statement, "How much I weigh directly impacts my mental health."

In today's health-conscious society, discussions around weight loss often focus on aesthetics and physical fitness. However, emerging research highlights a vital aspect of weight management that often goes unrecognized: its significant positive effects on mental health. Healthy weight loss, defined as a gradual and sustainable reduction in body weight through balanced nutrition and regular exercise, can lead to meaningful improvements in psychological well-being.

## Enhanced Mood and Reduced Symptoms of Depression

One of the most immediate benefits of achieving a healthy weight is the improvement it can bring to one's mood. Engaging in regular physical activity, which often accompanies weight loss efforts, releases endorphins—commonly known as "feel-good" hormones. These natural chemicals can enhance feelings of happiness and reduce perceptions of pain. Research has indicated that exercise is effective in alleviating symptoms of depression and anxiety. A successful weight loss journey often leads individuals to adopt a more active lifestyle, decreasing feelings of lethargy and enhancing overall mood.

Additionally, weight loss can help mitigate the chronic conditions associated with obesity that frequently contribute to depressive symptoms. For many, losing weight can lead to a decrease in feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem associated with being overweight, fostering a more positive self-image.

## Increase in Self-Esteem and Confidence

Achieving weight loss goals, especially when they are healthy and sustainable, can significantly boost self-esteem and body image. As individuals see positive changes in their physique and overall health, they often experience increased confidence in social situations. This newfound confidence can



lead to more fulfilling relationships, enhanced social interactions, and an overall boost in quality of life.

It is important to note that the path to weight loss requires perseverance and dedication. Overcoming challenges and reaching goals can foster a sense of achievement and empowerment. Individuals often report feeling a greater sense of control over their lives, which can enhance mental resilience and cope more effectively with life's stresses.

## Improved Cognitive Function and Focus

Healthy weight loss also positively influences cognitive function. Obesity is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases. By achieving and maintaining a healthier weight, individuals may experience improved brain health and cognitive function, leading to better concentration, memory, and decision-making. Regular exercise, a key component of healthy weight loss, promotes blood flow to the brain and encourages the growth of new brain cells, supporting mental clarity.

Furthermore, when individuals engage in weight loss efforts, they often start to make healthier dietary choices. Nutrition plays a significant role in brain health; foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins can positively impact cognitive function and mental clarity.

## Stress Reduction and Better Coping Mechanisms

Stress is a common contributor to weight gain and poor mental health. An effective weight loss program that integrates physical activity and mindfulness practices, such as yoga or meditation, can help individuals develop better coping mechanisms for stress management. These practices promote relaxation and a greater sense of balance, reducing

feelings of anxiety and tension. As weight loss fosters a healthier lifestyle, it can create a positive feedback loop that enhances mental well-being.

For nearly 20 years, Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness has empowered clients across Southwest Florida to achieve sustainable weight loss through personalized care and cutting-edge programs. Our locations in Manatee County and surrounding areas offer convenient, flexible hours to meet clients' needs with weekly, appointment-free visits for established patients.

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While the scale may reflect numbers, the results of healthy weight loss resonate deeply within individuals' minds and spirits. At Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness, our holistic approach to weight loss prioritizes mental well-being alongside physical health and can lead to lasting positive change, creating a healthier, happier community as a whole.

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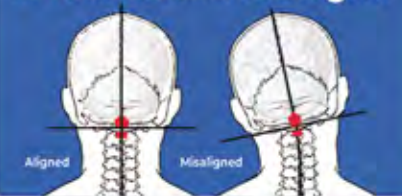


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# Shedding Light on Stroke Awareness Month: Unveiling the Link Between Strokes and Vision

George Skopis, M.D.

**M**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.



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George Skopis, M.D., is a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship trained vitreoretinal surgeon. Dr. Skopis specializes in surgical and medical diseases of the retina and vitreous. He strives to utilize the most advanced imaging, medical and surgical techniques to diagnose and treat patients. Dr. Skopis has expertise in age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular occlusions, macular holes, macular pucker/epiretinal membranes, retinal detachments, proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and scleral fixated intra-ocular lenses.

Dr. Skopis grew up in Tarpon Springs, FL and graduated from Tarpon Springs High School. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The University of Florida where he graduated cum laude.

Dr. Skopis earned his medical degree from the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami, FL where he was elected to the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha medical honors society for his academic achievement. While in medical school, Dr. Skopis received multiple teaching awards. He completed his internship in internal medicine at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, FL where he was voted "intern of the year" by both his co-residents and hospital medical faculty. Dr. Skopis completed his ophthalmology residency at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC where he served as chief resident. During residency, Dr. Skopis volunteered with the Prevention of Blindness Society of DC to perform glaucoma screening examinations and back-to-school eye exams for children in underserved communities. Following residency, he completed a 2 year fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery and medical retina at the combined Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary of University of Illinois Chicago/University Retina program.

Dr. Skopis is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and is an active member in the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Society of Retina Specialists, and Vit-Buckle Society. He has published manuscripts in peer-reviewed medical journals and authored multiple book chapters. During his time in fellowship he participated in clinical trials for the treatment of diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema, retinal vascular occlusions, and age-related macular degeneration.

As a Florida native, Dr. Skopis is thrilled to return to southwest Florida and serve the community. He enjoys watching and playing soccer, cheering on the Florida Gators and grilling anything he can get his hands on. He is fluent in English and Greek.





# Strong Women, Strong Bones:

A NOTE FROM DR. MIGDALIA MERIDA FOR OSTEOPOROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

**M**ay is Osteoporosis Awareness Month—a time to shed light on a condition that affects millions of women, often silently, until a fracture occurs. As a primary care physician deeply committed to women’s health, I believe it’s essential to talk openly about bone health, prevention, and the tools we have to stay ahead of osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is often called the “silent disease” because it progresses without symptoms until a fracture happens. It can lead to serious injury, prolonged recovery, and a loss of independence. But the good news? With early detection and preventive strategies, osteoporosis is manageable—and often preventable.

At Harper Health, we take a proactive approach to bone health. During this month especially, I encourage all women—particularly those over 50 or with risk factors—to consider a comprehensive bone health evaluation. We offer women’s health screenings and bone density scans (DEXA) that provide a clear picture of your bone strength and fracture risk. These screenings are quick, painless, and one of the most important steps you can take for your future self.

## Why Women Are at Higher Risk

Osteoporosis disproportionately affects women. After menopause, women experience a rapid decline in estrogen, a hormone that helps maintain bone density. In fact, up to 20% of bone loss can occur in the first five to seven years after menopause. Family history, certain medications, a history of fractures, and lifestyle habits can also increase risk.

That’s why awareness—and action—are so important.

## Bone Density Scans: Know Your Numbers

The DEXA scan (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry) is the gold standard for measuring bone mineral density. It helps us detect bone loss early—often before symptoms begin—and track changes over time. Based on your scan results, we may recommend changes in diet, supplements, exercise, or, in some cases, medications to help strengthen your bones.



At Harper Health, we’ve made it a priority to ensure our members have access to this vital screening as part of their personalized preventive care plan. Everyday Tips for Healthy Bones

Whether you’re already managing osteoporosis or looking to prevent it, here are five key tips to support strong bones at every stage of life:

### 1. Get Enough Calcium and Vitamin D

Aim for at least 1,200 mg of calcium per day, especially if you’re postmenopausal. Good sources include dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, and many women benefit from a supplement—especially if they have limited sun exposure.

### 2. Stay Active

Weight-bearing exercises like walking, dancing, and strength training help stimulate bone growth and slow bone loss. Just 30 minutes a day can make a big difference. Balance exercises like yoga and tai chi are also helpful to reduce fall risk.

### 3. Limit Alcohol and Avoid Tobacco

Smoking and excessive alcohol intake both contribute to weaker bones. Moderation and lifestyle changes can have a significant impact on long-term bone health.

### 4. Check Your Medications

Some medications can accelerate bone loss. If you’re taking steroids, thyroid medications, or anti-seizure drugs, let your doctor know. We can evaluate whether a bone protection strategy is needed.

### 5. Don’t Wait for a Fracture to Take Action

Prevention is always easier than treatment. Regular screenings, open conversations, and tailored plans are the cornerstone of staying ahead of this disease.

### We’re Here to Help

As your partner in health, I want every woman to feel empowered—not fearful—when it comes to aging and wellness. Bone health is one of those areas where a little knowledge and proactive care go a long way.

If you’re unsure whether you should be screened or if you’re concerned about your bone health, please reach out. This month, we’re offering enhanced women’s health screenings with a special focus on osteoporosis prevention and detection. These include bone density testing, hormone evaluations, and personalized risk assessments.

Our goal at Harper Health is to make sure you have the tools and support you need to stay strong—in body, mind, and spirit—for many healthy years to come.

Let’s make May a turning point for strong bones and even stronger women.



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# Understanding Occipital and Trigeminal Neuralgia: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment Options

By Dr. Drew Hall

**N**euralgia, a condition characterized by intense, stabbing pain along the nerves, can disrupt daily life and cause significant discomfort. Among the various types of neuralgia, two common forms are occipital neuralgia and trigeminal neuralgia. These conditions affect different nerves in the head and face, leading to distinctive symptoms and treatment approaches. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and treatment options for occipital and trigeminal neuralgia is crucial for individuals experiencing these conditions.

## Occipital Neuralgia

Occipital neuralgia is a neurological condition that causes intense, sharp, or shooting pain in the back of the head, neck, and behind the eyes. This pain stems from irritation or injury to the occipital nerves, which run from the top of the spinal cord to the base of the skull. The exact cause of occipital neuralgia can vary, but common triggers include:

- 1. Compression or Irritation:** Compression of the occipital nerves due to tight muscles, injury, or inflammation can lead to neuralgia.
- 2. Trauma:** Head trauma, such as whiplash injuries from car accidents or falls, can damage the occipital nerves and trigger neuralgia.
- 3. Medical Conditions:** Conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, or infections may contribute to the development of occipital neuralgia.

## Symptoms of Occipital Neuralgia

Individuals with occipital neuralgia often experience the following symptoms:

- Intense, shooting pain that radiates from the base of the skull to the back of the head or behind the eyes.
- Sensitivity to light or sound.
- Tenderness in the scalp or neck.
- Pain triggered by neck movements or pressure on the back of the head.

## Treatment Options for Occipital Neuralgia

Treatment for occipital neuralgia aims to relieve pain and manage symptoms effectively. Common treatment options include:

- 1. Medications:** Over-the-counter pain relievers, muscle relaxants, or prescription medications such as anticonvulsants or tricyclic antidepressants can help alleviate pain.
- 2. Nerve Blocks:** Injection of a local anesthetic or steroid medication around the occipital nerves can provide temporary pain relief.
- 3. Physical Therapy:** Techniques such as massage, stretching exercises, and postural correction can help reduce muscle tension and improve neck mobility.
- 4. Nerve Stimulation:** In cases of severe or refractory occipital neuralgia, nerve stimulation therapies such as occipital nerve stimulation may be considered to modulate pain signals.

## Trigeminal Neuralgia

Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic pain condition that affects the trigeminal nerve, which is responsible for sensation in the face. The hallmark symptom of trigeminal neuralgia is sudden, severe, electric shock-like pain that radiates along one or more branches of the trigeminal nerve. The exact cause of trigeminal neuralgia is often unknown, but potential factors include:

- 1. Compression:** Compression of the trigeminal nerve by blood vessels, tumors, or abnormal brain structures can lead to neuralgia.
- 2. Degeneration:** Age-related changes or damage to the myelin sheath, a protective covering of nerve fibers, may contribute to the development of trigeminal neuralgia.

## Symptoms of Trigeminal Neuralgia

Trigeminal neuralgia is characterized by the following symptoms:

- Sudden, intense facial pain, typically on one side of the face.
- Pain triggered by activities such as chewing, talking, or touching the face.
- Episodes of pain lasting from a few seconds to several minutes.
- Periods of remission followed by recurrent pain attacks.

## Treatment Options for Trigeminal Neuralgia

Managing trigeminal neuralgia involves a combination of medications, procedures, and lifestyle modifications to alleviate pain and improve quality of life. Common treatment approaches include:

- 1. Medications:** Anticonvulsant medications such as carbamazepine or gabapentin are often prescribed to reduce nerve sensitivity and pain intensity.
- 2. Surgical Interventions:** Procedures such as microvascular decompression, gamma knife radiosurgery, or nerve rhizotomy may be recommended to relieve pressure on the trigeminal nerve and disrupt pain signals.
- 3. Alternative Therapies:** Techniques such as acupuncture, biofeedback, or relaxation exercises may help manage pain and reduce stress levels.

In conclusion, occipital and trigeminal neuralgia are neurological conditions characterized by intense, debilitating pain in the head and face. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and treatment options for these conditions is essential for effective management and improved quality of life for individuals experiencing neuralgia. With proper diagnosis and a multidisciplinary treatment approach, individuals with occipital and trigeminal neuralgia can find relief from pain and regain control over their daily activities.

**Schedule a no obligation FREE consultation in our office today!**



Dr. Drew Hall



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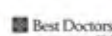
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FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services prepares well-rounded practitioners

**T**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 2,500 students a year in 15 degree programs in its School of Nursing and Departments of Social Work, Rehabilitation Sciences, Health Science and Counseling. The college also houses FGCU's Counseling and Psychological Services for students as well as the Community Counseling & Education Center.

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

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

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

## We Create Well-Rounded Practitioners

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Learn more about FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services at [fgcu.edu/marieb](https://fgcu.edu/marieb).*



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# WORK-LIFE BALANCE STARTS WITH YOU: Finding harmony in your career and life

By Misty Brueckner

**D**id you know the average person will spend 90,000 hours at work over their lifetime. Whether or not you work a typical 9-5, the hours add up. It's crucial for your overall well-being to achieve work-life balance and minimize your risk of burnout.



Burnout happens when we feel overwhelmed and stressed over a prolonged period of time. This can often be connected to your career but can also happen due to other demanding areas of life.

Life can be overwhelming at times. We have numerous daily responsibilities – work, taking care of family, managing a household, raising children – and sometimes, we get too busy to take a step back and attain balance. That's when burnout creeps in.

The emotions that come with burnout often leave you feeling hopeless, unmotivated and overall unhappy. This can ultimately hurt your work productivity and connections, your familial relationships and your social life. Burnout can also cause physical implications too, such as chronic fatigue, headaches, muscle pain, digestive issues and a weakened immune system.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a crucial time to spotlight the importance of mental well-being and breaking the stigma around mental health. This month serves as a reminder to prioritize self-care and promote healthy coping mechanisms, including establishing a work-life balance and setting boundaries.

A healthy work-life balance can help you feel motivated at work, reduce stress, improve your mental and physical health and enhance your overall wellbeing. This is imperative to minimizing burnout.

There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. Everyone has different personal and professional goals. It's important to find an effective way to manage the demands of work and personal life while feeling fulfilled in both areas. This includes balancing work obligations, family commitments, personal interests, self-care and other areas of importance. It's not about strictly splitting your time evenly but rather finding a harmony that works for you and your priorities.

Burnout tends to happen over time so there are ways to get ahead of it. Symptoms may be subtle at first, but the longer they go unaddressed, the worse they can become.

According to the National Institutes of Health, signs of burnout can include:

- **Exhaustion:** You may feel drained, emotionally exhausted and unable to properly deal with the problems around you, both personally and professionally. These symptoms can present as physical pain or even stomach or bowel problems.
- **Isolation:** People who are experiencing burnout find their jobs increasingly stressful and can target frustration toward work or colleagues. You may find yourself distancing and feeling disinterested in your work and environment or avoiding social activities.
- **Reduced performance:** This can occur in your personal or professional areas because you have little or no energy left for everyday tasks. Burnout can make it hard to concentrate or handle your responsibilities and not feel negative toward them.
- **Feeling down:** You may feel self-doubt, helplessness, defeat and failure. This can result in feeling alone and isolated, losing your sense of purpose and feeling increasingly dissatisfied or incapable.
- **Physical fatigue:** You may feel greatly fatigued and without energy. Burnout can lead to getting sick often, suffering from colds, having body aches and recurring headaches, losing your appetite or experiencing insomnia.

If you find yourself experiencing these symptoms, it's important to recognize your feelings and work

toward finding solutions that work for you. If you're comfortable doing so, talk to your employer about how you're feeling. Communication is essential, and they may be able to help you with your time management, delegating, setting boundaries and other skills. This also applies at home. When feeling burnout, communication with your significant other, family members, roommates or friends is key, as they may be able to help lighten your burden during especially stressful times.

Prioritizing your health and well-being are key to preventing or treating burnout. After all, you cannot effectively help others if you can't help yourself. Make sure you're getting enough quality sleep at night, practice mindfulness and set aside personal time for things that help you relax or bring you joy, like reading, spending time with loved ones or other hobbies. Talking to a therapist to share your feelings and learn new coping skills can help. In some cases, psychiatric care or medication may be beneficial in reducing symptoms of burnout.

Remember, life can get busy and it's easy to get caught up in the chaos. Slow down, take a step back and reflect on what's most important to you, discover your definition of work-life balance and keep both your body and mind healthy. Addressing the issue in the beginning is key to avoiding more serious implications down the road. We all want to live fulfilling, healthy lives, but achieving that often requires intentional effort. Dedicate the time to prioritizing your well-being and take the necessary steps to create the life you deserve.

## About the Author

Misty Brueckner is a licensed clinical social worker for Elite DNA Behavioral Health's Fort Myers office. Elite DNA seeks to provide accessible, affordable mental health care to everyone and has become one of the largest mental health providers in the state, providing in-person and virtual behavioral health services to children, adolescents and adults at more than 30 locations across Florida. For more information, visit [EliteDNA.com](http://EliteDNA.com).



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# EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST LIFE-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

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

### RAVE RADIOLOGY

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

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

### CRITICAL CARDIAC TESTING

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

### LEADING LUNG DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS

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

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

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MRI AND CT SCANS

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

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

### KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

#### CARDIAC

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

#### LUNG

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

### ADDITIONAL RAVE DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

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



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

*For more information on early diagnostic testing and screenings, please visit their website at [www.RaveRad.com](http://www.RaveRad.com)*



[www.raverad.com](http://www.raverad.com)

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# May: Better Hearing and Speech Month

## Breaking the Sound Barrier of Communication

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ADVANCED HEARING SOLUTIONS

Using the latest and most sophisticated technology, we determine if you have hearing loss—and, if you do, we determine the degree and type of hearing loss. If your hearing loss requires medical or surgical intervention, we can refer you to a physician (otologist or neurologist) for appropriate treatment. If your type of hearing loss can best be treated with the use of hearing aids and/or other assistive listening devices (which is true in the great majority of cases), we can select any of a wide range of hearing devices and custom fit them to your ear, programmed to augment your hearing at those frequency levels where your hearing loss is greatest.

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**Noël Crosby**  
 Doctor of Audiology



**Karen Draper**  
 Doctor of Audiology

# Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

**V**AX-D, short for Vertebral Axial Decompression, is a patented non-surgical therapy proven to successfully treat chronic low back pain, caused by prolapsed, bulging, herniated or degenerative discs, facet syndrome, stenosis and sciatica. Even post-surgical patients and those suffering from central canal or foraminal stenosis have reported significant pain relief with VAX-D therapy. Over a series of relaxing treatment sessions, patients experience powerful pain reduction and healing. Some patients even notice relief after just one visit.

VAX-D's proven and patented technology is currently being utilized by leading physicians in orthopedic medicine, pain medicine, neurology and other specialties in hundreds of clinics around the world. Many doctors choose VAX-D over other devices because it employs the original, patented technology from which decompression therapy was born. VAX-D effectiveness is backed by clinical research. Back pain has grown to be a \$54 billion industry and has literally become a national epidemic. Due to the astounding array of varied treatment options, finding a back pain solution can be a daunting task. Knowing that a product backs its claims with clinical research makes all the difference, and that is what VAX-D offers. A recently completed 2 1/2 year study has demonstrated that VAX-D achieved a remarkable 88% success rate in the 283 chronic back pain patients studied! The patients selected for the study had been unsuccessful at finding relief with at least two previous non-surgical treatments.

VAX-D is not to be confused with traction. VAX-D lengthens and decompresses the spine, reversing high intradiscal pressure through the application of negative pressure via a patented "slow ramp-up" process. This reversal of pressure creates a vacuum inside the discs that not only takes pressure off of pinched nerves, but helps to reposition bulging discs and pull extruded disc material back into place. Simultaneously, nutrients, oxygen and fluids are drawn into the disc to create a revitalized environment conducive to healing. VAX-D stimulates the body's repair mechanism, providing the building blocks needed to actually mend injured and degenerated discs. VAX-D's process is the only patented treatment clinically proven to decrease disc pressures to the negative levels needed to facilitate healing!

### How does VAX-D work?

High intradiscal pressures cause discs to bulge out and press painfully on nerve roots. They also make for a compressed, anaerobic environment unsuitable for healing. Decompression produces and sustains negative pressures within the disc, creating a vacuum effect which draws in nutrients and fluids to promote the repair of injured discs and surrounding tissues. This vacuum has also been shown to aid in the retraction of escaped cushioning gel from herniated discs. Much like gauging the air pressure in a car tire, scientists have been able to use pressure sensors to



measure the various pressures put on spinal discs while lifting, standing, sitting, lying down, undergoing traction, and during VAX-D Therapy. Like other pressures found in the body such as blood pressure, intradiscal pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). While traction, physical therapy and manipulation may reduce disc pressures to as low as 40mmHg, only VAX-D has been shown to achieve negative pressures within the spine. Clinical studies have shown that, with VAX-D Therapy, negative pressures as low as -160 mmHg\* are created within the injured disc during the treatment session!

The key to the "distraction" of VAX-D is achieved through an intricately timed series of pulls, holds, and releases over the course of a treatment session. VAX-D's biofeedback system adjusts this curve of tension specifically to each patient's needs, making every session a truly individualized treatment.

VAX-D Therapy involves three phases that repeat fifteen times throughout a treatment session: the Decompression Phase, the Retraction Phase, and finally, the Rest Phase. During the Decompression Phase, tension slowly mounts, lengthening the spine; up to 99 pounds of tension may be exerted directly on the injured discs. This is where spinal pressures drop and decompression actually occurs. During the Retraction Phase, tension is slowly decreased and the spine is retracted slowly. This is followed by a short Rest Phase.

### Is VAX-D Right for Me?

You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:

- You have chronic and/or severe back and/or neck pain caused by bulging or herniated discs. Degenerative disc disease, sciatica, and/or facet syndrome.
- You have been diagnosed with a clinically unstable low back.
- You have failed back surgery syndrome.
- You have been told to consider surgery.

Many patients have experienced more than a 50% reduction in pain after their first treatment! For those suffering from herniated and degenerated discs, the escaped nucleus pulposus may be partially or completely retracted back into the disc after just the first session (though usually it takes longer), relieving a great deal of pain. However, pain reduction does not indicate full recovery, and a full

recovery is essential to preventing re-injury. Each treatment session lasts approximately 45 minutes. A typical VAX-D treatment regimen consists of about 20 sessions. Some conditions require fewer visits; some require more. Many patients report relief from their pain and other symptoms during the first few treatment sessions, and most experience dramatic pain relief after completion of their prescribed VAX-D Therapy program.

VAX-D therapy is a non-surgical procedure to reduce pain by decompressing your spine and reducing the stress and pressure on your discs and spinal nerves. Contact Dr. Craig Aderholdt, at 941-756-5528 for a **free consultation** to see if you are a candidate for this revolutionary procedure. We hope you enjoy the information within and share it with others.

Contact Dr. Aderholdt today to find out if you can finally relieve your pain and suffering with this proven safe and effective nonsurgical breakthrough for neck and back pain.

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### Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



At Back Pain Institute of West Florida, located in Bradenton, FL, our number one concern is to help our patients with a natural approach to pain treatment. Dr. Craig Aderholdt, BSc, DC, received his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State

University State College, and his Doctor of Chiropractic from life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA. He then later graduated Cum Laude.

Dr. Aderholdt also holds certification in chiropractic adjunctive physiotherapy from New York Chiropractic College and completed extensive postgraduate training in therapeutic modalities at National-Lincoln School. He is a member of the Florida Chiropractic Association and American Chiropractic Association and is a certified VAX-D consultant. He was also voted a Bradenton Herald People's Choice Awards Winner for 2008, 2022 and is the Manatee Herald-Tribune Awards winner for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2021 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune finalist for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023 and winner in 2019 and 2024.



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# GAINSWave is Making Headlines Due to its Ability to Prevent & Treat ED

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

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

## How Can GAINSWave Prevent & Treat ED?

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

GAINSWave utilizes high frequency, low-intensity soundwaves to improve blood flow to the penis, remove micro-plaque, and stimulates the growth of



- ✓ Achieve Harder & Stronger Erections
- ✓ Improve Sexual Performance
- ✓ Increase Sensation
- ✓ Treat ED & Peyronie's Disease



new blood vessels. GAINSWave uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety, and results. Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by reduced blood flow. GAINSWave has developed a protocol to treat ED and Peyronies disease (scar tissue) as well as enhance sexual performance.

## Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

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

## Men are Preventing ED with GAINSWave

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

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

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

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# Sculpting the Future:

## How EmSculpt NEO Transforms Physical Fitness

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

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

### The Science Behind EmSculpt NEO

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

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

### Impressive Clinical Results

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

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

### Beyond Aesthetics: Functional Benefits

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

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

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

### Convenience and Comfort

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

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

### Who Can Benefit?

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

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

### Long-Term Value

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

### The Future of Fitness Enhancement

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

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

### Start Your Health Journey with Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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

### Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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



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# Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**R**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:

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

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

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

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

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of 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. *1I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 2I 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. 3I 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: *4But godliness with contentment is great gain. 5For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

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

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

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



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

If you find yourself making statements like this:

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

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

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

# Specialized Stroke Care That Goes Above and Beyond

A stroke is a medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to the brain is disrupted. Unfortunately, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, stroke is a leading cause of long-term disability and death. This makes early recognition and treatment key for improving stroke recovery outcomes and helping to prevent further complications.

## Types of Stroke

**Ischemic stroke** is the most common of the three, occurring when a blood clot blocks an artery that leads to the brain. This type accounts for around 87% of all strokes.

**Hemorrhagic stroke** is caused by a ruptured blood vessel, leading to bleeding in or around the brain. This type is often associated with high blood pressure or aneurysms.

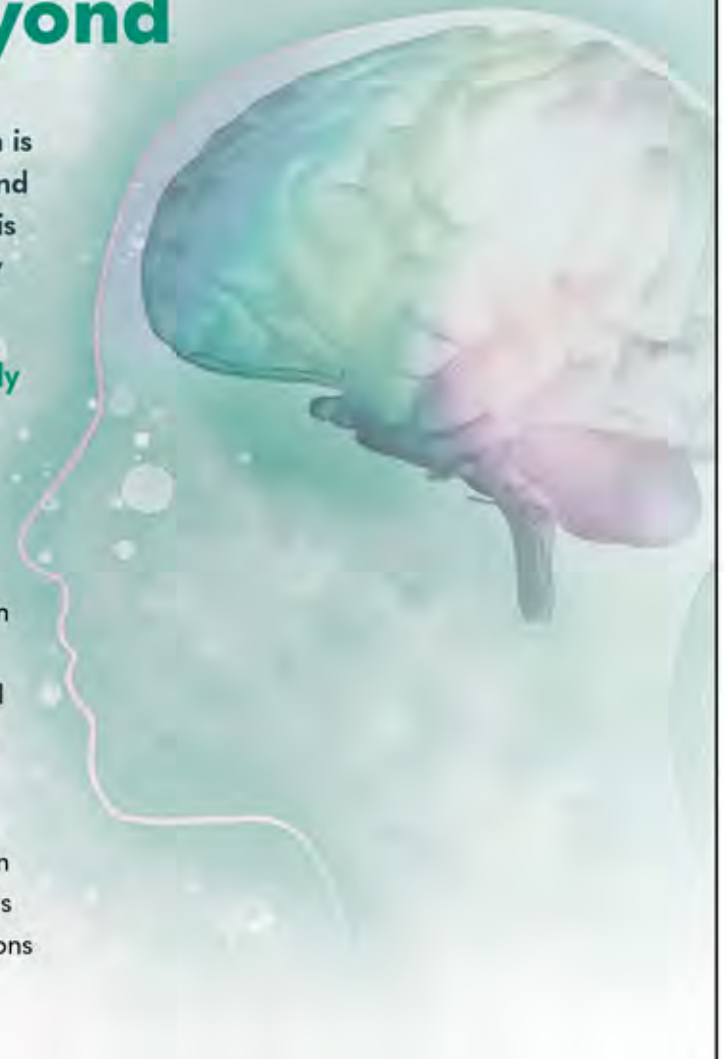
**Transient ischemic attack (TIA)** refers to a temporary blockage of blood flow to the brain that resolves within 24 hours. Though the symptoms disappear, a TIA is a serious warning sign of potential future stroke.

## We Take Stroke Care Seriously

The sooner a stroke is treated, the greater the chance of minimizing potential brain damage and maximizing the chance of recovery.

The rapid-response Stroke Alert Team at the Stroke and Cerebrovascular Center at Manatee Memorial Hospital offers prompt emergency treatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Our team-based strategy allows for collaborative, streamlined intervention thanks to skilled emergency physicians and nurses, neurologists, neurosurgeons and medical technicians.



For more information, visit [manateememorial.com/stroke](https://manateememorial.com/stroke) or call our Comprehensive Stroke Program Coordinator at **941-812-9566**.



206 2nd Street East, Bradenton, FL 34208 | 941-746-5111 | [manateehealth.com](https://manateehealth.com)



Physicians are on the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Manatee Memorial Hospital. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website. 253043835-3057746 4/25