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CONTENTS JUNE 2025

6 A Smile Worth Sharing: Jason's Journey to Confidence with Porcelain Crowns at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

7 Beyond Traditional Breast Cancer Screening

8 Peripheral Neuropathy: A Widespread But Treatable Condition

9 Men's Health Month: Modern Cosmetic Solutions for the Contemporary Man

10 Healthy Aging for Your Brain Begins with Your Diet

11 Mesenchymal Stem Cell Exosomes: A Promising Frontier in Alzheimer's Treatment

12 Prostate Artery Embolization: A Minimally Invasive Breakthrough in the Treatment of BPH (Enlarged Prostate)

13 Sun Safety and Melanoma: Protecting Florida's Sun-Loving Community

14 Strong, Silent-and at Risk: A New For Men's Health

15 How a Senior Living Community Can Add Years-And Life-to Your Retirement

16 When Blood Pressure is Elevated: A Functional Medical Doctor's Perspective

17 Timeless Results, Thoughtfully Done: Regenerative Treatments and Innovative Technology to Deliver Lasting and Natural Results

18 Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness: How Advanced Technology is Making a Difference

19 Laser + Decompression: The Dynamic Duo for Disc Healing

20 Understanding Bunions: Causes, Treatment, and the Path to Relief

21 EMSELLA: A Revolutionary Approach to Sexual Dysfunction Treatment

22 Shedding Light on Cataracts: Understanding and Addressing the Impact

23 Naples Brain Rejuvenation Clinic: Comprehensive Integrative Approaches to Alzheimer's Care

24 Niagen Plus and IV Therapy Offer New Hope During Brain Health Month

25 This Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month, Don't Overlook Your Hearing

26 Back Braces and Physical Therapy: A Powerful Duo for Back Pain Recovery

27 Celebrate Men's Health Month by Optimizing Testosterone Levels

28 Cryptocurrency in Florida Divorce: Navigating the Hidden Challenges

32 **Beat the Heat:** Protecting Yourself from Heat Illness During Florida's Scorching Summer

34 What is Rhinitis? An In-Depth Look at This Common Nasal Condition

36 Innovative Teaching is Integral to FGCU's Mission

38 Hip Fractures After a Fall: What I Learned From My Hip Fracture

42 The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

44 New Advances in the Treatment of Coronary Artery Disease

45 Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

46 Home Health Safety

47 Revolutionizing Bone Health: The Cutting-Edge REMS Echolight Assessment

48 From Hospital Healthcare Limbo to Home

49 Understanding the Annual Check-up Panel

50 Acupuncture for Men's Health: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Wellness

51 The Matterhorn Method: A Seamless Integration Between Pain Relief and Performance

52 Breaking the Silence: Addressing Men's Mental Health

53 Shockwave Therapy: A Revolutionary Treatment for Tennis and Golfer's Elbow

54 Health Insurance

55 Keep Your Pet Safe from the Cane Toad

56 Memory Matters

57 Unlocking Men's Vitality: Understanding Testosterone Replacement Therapy and Enclomiphene

58 June Spotlight: Men's Health Awareness Month

59 The Potential of CBD and THC for Treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

60 What is the Mind Diet?

61 5 Tips for Minimizing Toy Chaos in Your Home

62 Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

63 Spiritual Wellness: When You Are At Your Wits End

CONTACT US

OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Cristan Gensing
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
sonnygensing@yahoo.com



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Cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

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

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A Smile Worth Sharing: Jason's Journey to Confidence with Porcelain Crowns at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

When Jason Elliott stepped into Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry (PFCD), he was looking for more than a brighter smile—he was looking for confidence. As a software designer turned digital nomad, Jason had spent years battling tooth decay and feeling self-conscious about the appearance of his teeth. But thanks to Dr. William Campbell and the caring team at PFCD, Jason finally found the solution he needed: porcelain crowns that transformed both his smile and his outlook.



Jason's lifestyle is anything but ordinary. Though based in Florida, he and his fiancée are currently traveling the world, taking on freelance design projects from wherever inspiration strikes. "We just spent 14 days in Italy," he says. "I

loved Tortola, the culture, and especially meeting new people. It's so much easier to connect when you're confident in your smile."

The Problem: Cavities and Confidence

Like many patients, Jason came to PFCD with a history of cavities and dissatisfaction with the appearance of his teeth. "I wanted something that looked more professional," he says. "Something whiter, straighter—and I wanted it done right."

Cavities, or dental caries, are among the most common chronic diseases worldwide. Caused by a combination of bacteria, sugars, and poor oral hygiene, cavities can damage the structure of the teeth and lead to sensitivity, infection, or even tooth loss if not treated promptly. When restorative work such as fillings is no longer sufficient, dental crowns may be recommended.

The Solution: Porcelain Crowns

Dr. Campbell recommended porcelain crowns for Jason's top teeth. Dental crowns are custom-made restorations that cover the entire visible portion of a tooth. They are often used to:

- Strengthen weakened or damaged teeth
- Restore teeth with extensive decay or large fillings
- Improve the appearance of discolored or misshapen teeth
- Support dental bridges or top dental implants

Porcelain crowns are a popular choice for front teeth because they closely mimic the translucency and shine of natural enamel. They are also highly durable and stain-resistant.

The process typically involves two to three visits. During the first appointment, Dr. Campbell made impressions and carefully reshaped Jason's teeth to accommodate the crowns. Temporary crowns were placed while the permanent ones were being fabricated by the dental lab. Once ready, the final crowns were bonded in place, instantly transforming Jason's smile.

"Absolutely Worth It"

When asked if he would do it again, Jason didn't hesitate. "Absolutely," he says. "The best part is how white and natural they look. I get compliments all the time. But more than that, I have the confidence to smile and speak freely—whether I'm pitching to a client or just talking to a stranger in a café."

This boost in self-assurance has had a ripple effect on both his personal and professional life. "My new teeth have helped me win over clients for jobs. I love that people notice my smile—it's something I never experienced before."

Managing Dental Anxiety

Dental anxiety is a common barrier to care. The American Dental Association estimates that as many as 22% of adults avoid going to the dentist due to fear. For Jason, this was once a real concern. But PFCD made a lasting impression.

"I had a lot of dental anxiety in the past," he admits. "But I didn't feel it here. Everyone is so professional and kind."

Jason credits Dr. Campbell's assistant, James, as a key part of his positive experience. "James was incredible. He answered my questions before I could even ask them. He walked me through the entire process and made me feel totally comfortable."

At Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, managing dental anxiety is an essential part of patient care. The team is trained to recognize signs of discomfort and offers solutions such as clear communication, gentle techniques, and sedation options when appropriate. These efforts are especially important for patients undergoing multi-step procedures like crown placement.

An Office That Feels Like Family

Jason's praise extends beyond just his smile makeover. "I love everyone at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry," he says. "It's such a great place. I can't recommend them enough."

Dr. William Campbell and his team take pride in offering a patient-centered approach. Every smile transformation begins with a detailed consultation and personalized treatment plan, ensuring that patients understand their options and feel confident about their care.

For individuals who struggle with damaged, discolored, or decayed teeth, porcelain crowns offer both aesthetic and functional benefits. When placed by an experienced provider like Dr. Campbell, they can restore not just your smile, but your quality of life.



About Dr. William Campbell

Since earning his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree in 2009, Dr. William Campbell has been dedicated to making a meaningful impact on his patients' lives—whether by

restoring confidence through advanced cosmetic dentistry or providing immediate relief during dental emergencies. Committed to clinical excellence, Dr. Campbell has pursued extensive continuing education to ensure his care remains at the forefront of modern dentistry. He offers a comprehensive range of specialized services, including gum recession treatment, bone grafting, dental implants, and complete smile makeovers. His expertise and patient-centered approach have earned him recognition as a Top Dentist by Naples Illustrated on two occasions.

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BEYOND TRADITIONAL BREAST CANCER SCREENING:

Exploring Additional Options for Women's Health

Breast cancer remains a significant concern for women's health, with millions of individuals affected by this disease worldwide. While traditional screening methods, such as mammography, play a crucial role in early detection, recent research suggests that they may not be sufficient for specific populations. As we strive to raise awareness about breast cancer screening, it's essential to explore additional options that can provide comprehensive care and improve outcomes for all women.

Organizations like the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommend breast cancer screening to start with annual or biennial mammograms for women aged 50 to 74. Mammography is a valuable tool for detecting breast cancer in its early stages, allowing for timely intervention and improved prognosis. However, studies have shown that mammography may not be as effective in detecting cancer in specific populations, including women with dense breast tissue or those at high risk due to family history or genetic factors.

One of the limitations of mammography is its reduced sensitivity in women with dense breast tissue. Dense breast tissue appears white on mammograms, making it challenging to distinguish between normal breast tissue and potential tumors, which also appear white. As a result, cancers may be missed or detected at later stages in women with dense breasts. According to the *American Cancer Society*, women with dense breast tissue have a slightly higher risk of breast cancer compared to women with less dense breasts, and additional screening methods may be necessary to improve detection rates.

The USPSTF recommended screening guidelines may not adequately address the needs of women at high risk of breast cancer due to family history or genetic predisposition. While mammography is still recommended for these individuals, additional screening modalities, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and ultrasound, may be recommended in some instances. MRI is beneficial for detecting breast cancer in women with a known genetic mutation, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, who are at significantly higher risk of developing the disease.



Recent research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* highlights the importance of personalized breast cancer screening strategies tailored to individual risk factors and breast density. The USPSTF Evidence Report and Systematic Review on Screening for Breast Cancer emphasizes the need for healthcare providers to consider alternative screening methods for women who may not benefit fully from mammography alone. By incorporating additional screening modalities, such as MRI or ultrasound, clinicians can improve detection rates and provide more comprehensive care for women at increased risk of breast cancer.

Women must advocate for their health and discuss their risk factors with their healthcare providers. By engaging in shared decision-making and exploring additional screening options, women can take proactive steps to detect breast cancer early and improve their chances of successful treatment. While mammography remains a cornerstone of breast cancer screening, it's essential to recognize its limitations and explore complementary screening methods that can provide a more comprehensive assessment of breast health.

As we strive to improve outcomes for all women, exploring additional screening options that can complement mammography and provide a more comprehensive assessment of breast health is essential. By advocating for personalized screening strategies and engaging in proactive discussions with healthcare providers, women can take control of their breast cancer risk and improve their overall health and well-being.

Reference:
United States Preventive Services Task Force. (Online First). Screening for Breast Cancer: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. JAMA. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.18828

YOUR JOURNEY TO BREAST HEALTH

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

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

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

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



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



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PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

A WIDESPREAD BUT TREATABLE CONDITION

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Chronic pain is a debilitating issue that impacts millions worldwide. Of the over 116 million people suffering from various chronic pain disorders, an estimated 20 million are afflicted by peripheral neuropathy specifically. However, experts believe this number could be significantly higher due to frequent misdiagnosis and underreporting of the condition.

Peripheral neuropathy results from dysfunction or damage to the peripheral nerves - the vital neural pathways that transmit sensory information from the extremities to the brain and spinal cord. These nerves extend from the central nervous system out to the arms, hands, legs, and feet. When compromised, they can produce distressing and disruptive symptoms.

The Peripheral Neuropathy Puzzle

While peripheral neuropathy is complex, the core issue revolves around impaired nerve signaling caused by nerve damage or degeneration. A variety of potential root causes can initiate this deterioration, including chronically high blood sugar levels, poor circulation reducing oxygenation, vitamin/nutrient deficiencies, toxic exposures, and unchecked inflammation.

As the longest nerves in the body, those serving the lower extremities are often the first to manifest symptoms as the condition progresses. However, if left unchecked, the upper extremities can eventually become affected as well as the neuropathy advances through the peripheral nervous system.

Recognizing the Signs

Peripheral neuropathy can produce a range of troubling sensory, motor, and physiological symptoms, including:

- Numbness, tingling, or "pins and needles" sensations
- Burning pain or aching in the limbs
- Joint swelling, stiffness, and diminished range of motion
- Loss of proprioception (spatial positioning awareness) leading to balance/coordination issues
- Muscle cramping, weakness, and atrophy
- Discolored, thickened, or abnormally textured skin
- Non-healing sores, rashes, or ulcers on the feet and ankles

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Painkillers

Conventionally, nerve pain and numbness are often simply "masked" with prescription narcotic painkillers like opioids. However, this approach fails to address the underlying neuropathy while exposing patients to the grim risks of addiction and potentially fatal overdose. In fact, the opioid crisis has become so severe that certain states now lead the nation in drug abuse and overdose rates.

There is a better way. Pioneering physical medicine clinics are achieving remarkable results in treating peripheral neuropathy through integrative, non-narcotic therapies that can actually regenerate damaged nerves and restore proper functioning.

Regenerative Neuropathy Treatments

At the forefront of this emerging treatment approach is Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute in Naples, Florida. Their comprehensive peripheral neuropathy program revolves around advanced regenerative therapies like:

- Red LED and infrared light to stimulate nerve repair
- Gentle electrical nerve stimulation to reduce pain and improve mobility
- Stem cell allografts and platelet-rich plasma injections to accelerate tissue healing
- Therapeutic shockwave to disrupt pain signals
- Targeted supplements to aid remyelination of nerve coatings

In clinical studies, a remarkable 88% of neuropathy patients experienced significant improvements after this multimodal treatment regimen. Reduced pain, numbness, tingling, temperature sensitivity, and restless legs were just some of the benefits reported. Improved sleep quality, balance, coordination, and range of motion were also frequently noted - along with lowered dependence on oral medications.

Most importantly, patients gained greater mobility and reduced fall risk by restoring protective sensation and positional awareness in their feet and ankles. This decreased risk of potentially devastating injuries.

Embracing a Brighter Future

For over two decades, Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute has been a trusted leader in pioneering physical medicine solutions in the Naples area. By fusing compassionate care with the latest evidence-based therapies, their team of chiropractic neurology experts is helping countless neuropathy sufferers reclaim their health and vitality.

Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute

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

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

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- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Headaches, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- Disc bulge or herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

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

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



By Dr. Kiran Gill

MEN'S HEALTH MONTH:

Modern Cosmetic Solutions for the Contemporary Man

In June, Men's Health Month brings attention to health issues that uniquely affect men. While conversations typically revolve around cardiovascular health and cancer screenings, the modern healthcare landscape increasingly recognizes that aesthetic concerns significantly impact men's overall well-being and confidence. Today's men are embracing cosmetic procedures that were once predominantly marketed to women, breaking stigmas and prioritizing self-care in new ways.

Male Facelifts: Refreshed, Not Refined

Men's facial anatomy differs significantly from women's, requiring specialized techniques for successful outcomes. Male facelifts address the specific aging patterns in men, focusing on the lower neck and jawline where signs of aging are most prominent. Unlike women's procedures that often aim for softer contours, men's facelifts maintain stronger, more angular features while eliminating loose skin and reducing fat under the chin and jawline.

Modern techniques preserve the masculine hairline and natural beard growth patterns, resulting in a refreshed appearance rather than a dramatically altered one. The ideal outcome leaves colleagues wondering if you've been getting more sleep or have returned from vacation—not questioning whether you've had work done.

Injectables for Men: The "Botox" Revolution

The male injectable market has exploded in recent years, with "Botox" treatments becoming mainstream in professional settings. These quick, minimally invasive procedures address the stressed, anxious, or angry expressions that develop from years of facial expressions. Strategic injections can:

- Reduce forehead lines while maintaining natural expressiveness
- Diminish crow's feet without creating an overly smooth appearance
- Create a more defined, chiseled jawline
- Address laugh lines and smoker's lines around the mouth

The key to successful male injectables lies in conservative application that maintains masculine features while reducing signs of aging or stress. When expertly administered, these treatments appear completely natural rather than artificial or "worked on."



Male-Specific Facials: Beyond Basic Skincare

Men's skin produces more oil, tends to be thicker, and experiences different stressors than women's skin. Traditional facials often fail to address male-specific concerns like razor burn, ingrown hairs, and testosterone-induced oiliness. Specialized men's facials now target these issues with treatments that:

- Deep clean pores affected by increased oil production
- Calm inflammation from regular shaving
- Address sun damage from outdoor activities
- Provide hydration without feeling heavy or greasy

These treatments represent a significant upgrade from basic soap-and-water routines, offering therapeutic benefits alongside relaxation.

Gynecomastia Surgery: Addressing a Common Concern

Gynecomastia—enlarged male breast tissue—affects approximately 30% of men at some point in their lives, often causing significant psychological distress and affecting everything from intimate relationships to clothing choices. Despite its prevalence, many men suffer in silence due to embarrassment.

Modern surgical approaches offer discreet, effective solutions through minimally invasive techniques:

- Liposuction for fat-predominant cases
- Fine-incision mastectomy for glandular tissue removal
- Combined approaches for comprehensive results



Recovery typically requires just days of downtime, with results visible once swelling subsides. Beyond aesthetic improvements, addressing gynecomastia often prompts men to seek treatment for underlying hormone imbalances that may contribute to low energy, decreased libido, and reduced muscle mass.

As Men's Health Month continues to evolve, the conversation increasingly recognizes that physical appearance and self-confidence are integral components of overall well-being. These modern cosmetic interventions represent not vanity but self-investment—allowing men to align their outward appearance with their inner vitality and confidence in professional and personal settings alike.

Take Action This June

Don't let another Men's Health Month pass without addressing the aesthetic concerns that may be affecting your confidence and quality of life. The expert team at Naples Aesthetic Institute, led by Dr. Kiran Gill, specializes in male-specific cosmetic procedures with natural-looking results that maintain masculine features. Schedule a confidential consultation today by calling 239-596-8000 to discuss which treatments might be right for you. Their personalized approach ensures you'll receive care tailored to your unique goals and anatomy, with treatment plans designed to fit your lifestyle and recovery preferences. Make this June the month you invest in yourself—contact Naples Aesthetic Institute to begin your transformation journey.



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HEALTHY AGING FOR YOUR BRAIN BEGINS WITH YOUR DIET

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

Maintaining brain health as we age is paramount for preserving cognitive function and overall well-being. While genetics certainly plays a role in the aging process, it's crucial to understand that lifestyle factors such as nutrition significantly impact brain health and the risk of age-related cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases. This understanding empowers us to make informed dietary choices that can positively influence our brain health. It involves delving into the intricate relationship between nutrition and brain function, including the influence of macronutrients and micronutrients on the microbiota-gut-brain axis.

Our digestive system takes part in hormone production and regulates our mood and appetite! Many believe our GI tract communicates directly to our brain and vice versa to ensure homeostasis.

1. Macronutrients and Brain Health: Macronutrients, including carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, are essential for providing energy and supporting various physiological functions, including brain health. Keeping a balance of each macronutrient is vital in controlling stable blood sugar and energy levels. Something we need to consider as we age is blood sugar control. PET scans have been used to show impaired glucose transport in neurons of older adults suffering from Alzheimer's in the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. Also, the greater variability in our glycemic control the worse our cognitive dysfunction. This is caused by the oxidative stress and neuroinflammation from high glucose levels and insulin resistance. It is vital to prioritize complex carbohydrates such as starchy vegetables and fruits as they provide sustained energy release and essential nutrients.

Something we need to consider as we age is blood sugar control. PET scans have been used to show impaired glucose transport in neurons of older adults suffering from Alzheimer's in the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. Also, the greater variability in our glycemic control the worse our cognitive dysfunction. This is caused by the oxidative stress and neuroinflammation from high glucose levels and insulin resistance.

2. Fats and Brain Function: Healthy fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids found in fatty fish, nuts, and seeds, play a crucial role in maintaining brain structure and function. Studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids are associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline and may help protect against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Additionally, monounsaturated fats found in olive oil and avocados have been linked to improved cognitive function.

Olive oil contains a monounsaturated fatty acid, oleic acid, which is neuroprotective!

3. Proteins and Cognitive Health: Protein is essential for building and repairing tissues, including brain tissue. Adequate protein intake supports neurotransmitter function, vital for communication between brain cells. Including lean protein sources such as chicken, turkey, grass fed beef, bison, pasture raised pork, salmon, shrimp, scallops, eggs, and good quality protein powders/supplement in the diet can help maintain cognitive function and muscle mass, especially in older adults.

4. Microbiota-Gut-Brain Axis and Nutrition: Emerging research has highlighted the importance of the microbiota-gut-brain axis in brain health and cognitive function. The gut microbiota, composed of trillions of microorganisms, plays a crucial role in regulating inflammation, neurotransmitter production, and nutrient metabolism, all influencing brain health. Consuming a diverse range of fiber-rich foods, fermented foods, and prebiotics supports healthy gut microbiota, which in turn benefits brain function.

Some great fermented foods to include are kefir, plain yogurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi!

5. Micronutrients and Brain Aging: Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, are essential for various biochemical processes in the brain. For example, antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene help protect brain cells from oxidative stress, which is implicated in neurodegenerative diseases. B vitamins, including folate, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12, are crucial for cognitive function and the production of neurotransmitters. Adequate intake of micronutrients through a balanced diet can support brain health and slow mental decline with age.

Eating a variety of colorful foods is a great way to ensure you are getting as many micronutrients as possible. Things like Brussel sprouts and purple cabbage have a compound present called sulforaphane which has antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties. Beets and blueberries have anthocyanins present which have antioxidant properties and help with inflammation!

Another nutrient pack food is liver! Liver has B12, folate, iron, magnesium, selenium, zinc, and vitamin A. 3.5 ounces of beef liver contains 860% of your daily intake for Vitamin A!

6. Nutrition and Neurodegeneration: Poor dietary habits characterized by excessive intake of processed foods, sugars, and unhealthy fats are associated with an increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Conversely, adherence to a Mediterranean-style diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and olive oil has been linked to a lower risk of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease. The Mediterranean diet's emphasis on healthy fats, and protein intake provides a wealth of nutrients that support brain health and reduce inflammation.

The relationship between nutrition and brain health is multifaceted, with various macronutrients and micronutrients playing critical roles in maintaining cognitive function and reducing the risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Individuals can support their brain health as they age by prioritizing a balanced diet rich in whole foods. However, consulting with a healthcare provider or registered dietitian for personalized nutrition recommendations based on individual health status and dietary needs is essential. Aging well involves nurturing the body and nourishing the mind through informed nutritional choices.

Sources:
Melzer TM, Manosso LM, Yau S-y, Gil-Mohapel J, Brocardo PS. In Pursuit of Healthy Aging: Effects of Nutrition on Brain Function. International Journal of Molecular Sciences. 2021; 22(9):5026. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms22095026>



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Mesenchymal Stem Cell Exosomes: A Promising Frontier in Alzheimer's Treatment

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

As we observe Brain Awareness Month, a spotlight shines on Alzheimer's disease—a condition affecting over 6 million Americans and counting. In the landscape of emerging treatments, Wimmer Orthopedics and Regenerative Medicine stands at the forefront with innovative approaches utilizing mesenchymal stem cell exosomes to address this devastating neurodegenerative disorder.

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease progressively deteriorates memory, thinking abilities, and eventually, the capacity to perform simple daily tasks. The hallmark pathology includes abnormal protein accumulations—beta-amyloid plaques and tau tangles—that disrupt neural communication and lead to neuronal death. Conventional treatments have primarily focused on symptom management rather than addressing the underlying disease mechanisms.

The Regenerative Medicine Revolution

Dr. Wimmer and the specialized team at Wimmer Orthopedics and Regenerative Medicine are pioneering treatments that move beyond symptom control to target the disease's root causes through cellular repair mechanisms. Their approach leverages the remarkable properties of mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) exosomes.

What Are MSC Exosomes?

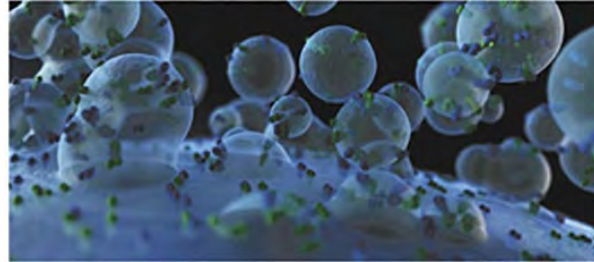
Exosomes are microscopic vesicles released by cells that play crucial roles in intercellular communication. When derived from mesenchymal stem cells, these exosomes carry specific proteins, lipids, and genetic material that can stimulate tissue repair and regulate immune responses.

Unlike whole stem cell treatments, exosomes offer distinct advantages for neurological applications:

- They can cross the blood-brain barrier more effectively
- They present minimal risk of immune rejection
- They deliver powerful regenerative signals without the complications of cell transplantation

How MSC Exosomes Target Alzheimer's Pathology

The therapeutic potential of MSC exosomes in Alzheimer's treatment stems from multiple mechanisms:



1. Reducing Inflammation: Chronic neuroinflammation accelerates brain damage in Alzheimer's. MSC exosomes have potent anti-inflammatory properties that help calm the overactive immune response in the brain.

2. Promoting Neural Regeneration: These exosomes deliver growth factors that support the survival of existing neurons and potentially stimulate neural stem cells to replace damaged tissue.

3. Clearing Toxic Proteins: Research indicates that MSC exosomes may enhance the clearance of beta-amyloid plaques and reduce tau phosphorylation—addressing the hallmark pathologies of Alzheimer's disease.

4. Restoring Mitochondrial Function: Exosomes can transfer healthy mitochondrial components to cells with damaged energy production systems, revitalizing neurons affected by Alzheimer's.

The Wimmer Approach to Exosome Therapy

At Wimmer Orthopedics and Regenerative Medicine, the approach to exosome therapy is comprehensive and personalized. The process typically involves:

- Thorough neurological assessment and advanced diagnostic imaging
- Customized treatment protocols based on disease progression and individual health factors
- Precisely administered exosome treatments using state-of-the-art techniques
- Comprehensive follow-up care with cognitive monitoring and therapy adjustments as needed

Early Results and Future Directions

While still considered an investigational therapy, preliminary clinical observations at Wimmer Orthopedics suggest promising results. Patients receiving MSC exosome treatments have reported improved cognitive function, enhanced mood stability, and better quality of life measures.

The field continues to advance rapidly. Ongoing research aims to refine exosome isolation techniques, optimize delivery methods, and identify the most effective dosing regimens. Wimmer Orthopedics remains committed to incorporating the latest scientific evidence into their treatment protocols.

A Multifaceted Approach to Brain Health

Dr. Wimmer emphasizes that exosome therapy works best as part of a comprehensive brain health strategy. The clinic advocates for complementary approaches including:

- Brain-healthy nutrition and targeted supplementation
- Regular physical activity and sleep optimization
- Cognitive stimulation and stress management techniques

Looking Ahead

As Brain Awareness Month reminds us of the urgent need for effective Alzheimer's interventions, the work at Wimmer Orthopedics and Regenerative Medicine represents a beacon of hope. By harnessing the regenerative power of MSC exosomes, they're pioneering treatments that may fundamentally change how we approach this challenging condition.

For families affected by Alzheimer's, these advances offer something precious—hope that the disease's progression might be slowed or even reversed, preserving the memories and personalities of those we cherish.

Compassionate Healthcare

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

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PROSTATE ARTERY EMBOLIZATION: A Minimally Invasive Breakthrough in the Treatment of BPH (Enlarged Prostate)

By Dr. Shivank Bhatia, M.D. FSIR

Interventional Radiologist, Founder of Florida Prostate Centers® and Naples Prostate Center®

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, affects approximately 50% of men over age 50 and up to 90% over age 80. The resultant lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS)—including urinary frequency, urgency, nocturia, weak stream, and incomplete bladder emptying or Urinary Retention—can significantly diminish quality of life. Traditionally, management options have included pharmacotherapy and surgical interventions such as transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP). However, for many patients, particularly those with comorbidities or aversion to surgical risks, Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE) has emerged as a safe, effective, and durable minimally invasive alternative.

What is PAE?

Prostate Artery Embolization is a catheter-based endovascular procedure performed under conscious sedation. It involves selective catheterization of the arteries supplying the prostate followed by embolization—controlled blockage—of these vessels using calibrated microspheres. The occlusion reduces blood flow, inducing ischemia in hyperplastic prostatic tissue. Over time, this leads to volume reduction and symptomatic improvement.

Patient Selection and Pre-Procedural Considerations

Optimal candidates are typically men with moderate to severe LUTS due to BPH who wish to preserve their ejaculation, sexual function or prefer a minimally invasive option. PAE is a size independent option – it serves patients with both moderate (<80cc) and large prostates (>80 cc), where traditional surgery carries higher complication risks and options are limited.

Evaluation includes detailed urologic history, physical examination, International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS) assessment, Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) level and imaging—most commonly a pelvic MRI or ultrasound—to evaluate the health of prostate and bladder. A collaborative approach with urologists ensures comprehensive care and proper diagnosis.

The PAE Procedure

PAE begins with percutaneous arterial access—usually via the femoral artery (groin access) using image-guided fluoroscopy. Through a microcatheter, the interventional radiologist navigates into the prostatic arteries bilaterally. Embolic microspheres (typically 300–500 µm in size) are then injected until stasis is achieved.

Technical challenges include arterial tortuosity and variability in pelvic vascular anatomy. However, advancements in microcatheter technology, experienced operators and imaging have improved success rates. In the hands of experienced operators like those at Naples Prostate Center®, bilateral embolization is achievable in over 97% of cases.

Clinical Outcomes and Efficacy

A Cochrane review comparing PAE to TURP based on up to 24 months' follow-up, showed that PAE and TURP may work similarly well in helping to relieve symptoms. Men's quality of life may be also improved similarly.

Long-term outcomes of PAE are favorable. Our study of 1075 PAE patients—the largest in the US—published in the prestigious, *Peer-Reviewed Journal*—showed sustained symptom relief at three to five years post-PAE in over 84% of patients. Importantly, PAE preserves sexual function—an often under-recognized concern with surgical options like TURP or laser ablation, which carry risks of retrograde ejaculation and erectile dysfunction.

This article can be accessed at:



Prostatic Artery Embolization: Mid-to Long-Term Outcomes in 1,075 Patients - Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology

Safety Profile and Complications

PAE has a strong safety profile. Minor complications, such as transient urinary discomfort, and bladder spasms typically resolve within few days and are managed by over the counter medications. Major complications are rare (<1%), especially in experienced hands. The non-surgical nature of the procedure allows it to be performed without need for anesthesia, avoiding systemic risks. This safety profile, minimally invasive nature and preservation of sexual function make PAE a preferred option for most men.

Advantages of PAE in the Modern Therapeutic Landscape

In the context of modern value-based care, PAE stands out for several reasons:

1. **Minimally-Invasive** – No incisions, no general anesthesia.
2. **Outpatient Procedure** – Typically performed in under an hour, with same-day discharge.
3. **Lower Risk Profile** – Reduced risk of bleeding, infection, or incontinence.

4. **Preservation of Sexual Function** – A significant factor for many men.
5. **Durability of Results** – Sustained symptom improvement with a low reintervention rate.

Conclusion: With personal experience of over 1800 PAE procedures, I am an advocate for patient-centred, minimally invasive therapies, I have witnessed first-hand the transformative impact PAE can have on patients suffering from BPH. For residents of Collier and Lee counties, access to this advanced treatment offers new hope—particularly for those seeking alternatives to traditional surgery.

While no treatment is universally appropriate, PAE provides a compelling option in the evolving algorithm for BPH management. We ensure that patients receive the most appropriate and individualized care.

About the Author:

Shivank Bhatia, M.D. FSIR, is a board-certified interventional radiologist and founder of Florida Prostate Centers. He served as Chairman and Professor of Interventional Radiology at UHealth - University of Miami Health System from 2019 - March 2025.

Dr. Shivank Bhatia is an internationally renowned for his expertise in minimally invasive image-guided therapies that can treat various common medical conditions. Dr. Bhatia's career highlights include:

- Performed over 1800 PAE procedures – one of the largest in United States
- Pioneered prostate artery embolization in the U.S.
- Served as a PI on 3 clinical trials related to PAE
- Published the largest series of 1075 PAE patients to date in U.S
- Led an FDA approved Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) study for investigating the effects of GAE (Geniculate Artery Embolization) for knee osteoarthritis.
- Awarded Fellow of Society of Interventional Radiology, January 2020
- Delivered more than 100 invited lectures and published dozens of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals on the topic of interventional radiology
- Trained more than 400 physicians on techniques related to prostate artery embolization

With a strong background in radiology and advanced training in interventional techniques, Dr. Bhatia has dedicated his career to improving patient outcomes through innovative approaches. Dr. Bhatia has contributed significantly to advancing literature supporting the adoption of PAE as a standard of care for BPH (enlarged prostate).

Jung et al: PAE for the treatment of LUTS in men with BPH. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2022, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD012867.

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SUN SAFETY AND MELANOMA: PROTECTING FLORIDA'S SUN-LOVING COMMUNITY

As June ushers in longer days and heightened sunshine across the Sunshine State, and as we celebrated Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month back in May, we want to continue this critical reminder for Floridians who face unique skin cancer risks. With Florida ranking second nationally for new melanoma cases, our focus on skin protection takes on special significance for our sun-drenched communities who need to remain vigilant about skin health education and prevention year-round.

Florida's Skin Cancer Challenge

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

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

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

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

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

How Art of Dermatology Can Help

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

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

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

Act This Summer

This summer is the perfect opportunity to prioritize your skin health. Schedule your annual skin check at Art of Dermatology and take advantage of our special awareness month initiatives:

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

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

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

The Art of Dermatology Difference

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

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

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

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

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



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Strong, Silent—and at Risk: A NEW ERA FOR MEN'S HEALTH

By Lana Uhrig, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Cancer Foundation

How a Conversation Could Save Your Life

Growing up in a family with four brothers and a father who were the classic strong, silent types, I learned early on that men communicate their concerns differently than women. It wasn't that they didn't feel deeply or worry about things—they just rarely said so out loud. Pain was pushed aside. Fear was swallowed. And vulnerability? That stayed hidden behind humor or silence.

In my father's case, that silence delayed the care that could have changed everything. He was diagnosed with cancer far too late, in part because he was hesitant to bring up his symptoms. He didn't want to seem like he was complaining. He didn't want to worry anyone. And like many men of his generation, he thought waiting it out might somehow make it go away.

Years later, now working in cancer care—and married to a strong, silent type myself—I've come to see just how deeply this pattern persists. Too often, men wait too long to speak up. They avoid the doctor, delay screenings, and downplay symptoms. But the cost of that delay can be devastating—not only for individuals and families, but for our healthcare system as a whole. With a background in nursing and public health, I view Men's Health Month not just as a personal wellness campaign, but as a critical public health opportunity. When men engage in preventive care, detect disease earlier, and address mental health challenges, the impact ripples outward—reducing healthcare costs, preserving family structures, and increasing years of healthy life in our communities.

Why Men Wait—and Why We Need That to Change
Statistically, men are at greater risk of being diagnosed late in the course of many diseases. For example:

- Men are 24% less likely than women to have visited a doctor in the past year.
- One in three men believes they don't need annual checkups.
- Depression in men often goes unrecognized or is expressed through anger, withdrawal, or physical symptoms rather than sadness.

This isn't just a matter of personal reluctance. It's also about systems that have historically under-prioritized men's health promotion—and a culture that hasn't always encouraged open dialogue. Changing that begins with awareness, education, and access.

The Big Four: Cancers Men Should Talk About
Here are four cancers where early detection and timely intervention make a measurable difference:

PROSTATE CANCER

The most common cancer in men, often with no early symptoms. A Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test is a simple way to screen for changes that might signal a problem.

COLORECTAL CANCER

Increasing among men under 50. Screening now starts at age 45, or earlier if you have risk factors. This can be done with a colonoscopy or a stool-based test. It's one of the most preventable—and treatable—cancers when caught early.

LUNG CANCER

Often silent in early stages, but highly treatable when detected early with a low-dose CT scan (LDCT)—a special type of X-ray that takes just a few minutes.

SKIN CANCER

More common and more deadly in men over 50. Men are also less likely to use sunscreen or visit a dermatologist. Watch for changes in moles or spots and ask your doctor about a full-body skin exam if you've had significant sun exposure.

Each of these cancers is easier to treat when caught early. Yet countless lives are lost each year because men don't speak up or know what to ask.

Longevity Isn't a Guess—It's a Strategy

Good health doesn't come down to luck. It's built on a foundation of informed choices and steady, sustainable habits. Public health research consistently shows that when men take consistent action in a few key areas, the benefits extend across every domain of life. Here's where to start:

1. Make preventive visits a habit, not a reaction.
2. Physical activity reduces cancer risk, boosts mood, and protects your heart.
3. Prioritize whole foods, reduce processed meats and alcohol, and focus on nutrition that supports energy and cellular health.
4. Rest isn't lazy—it's essential for repair and resilience.
5. Whether it's stress, symptoms, or uncertainty, open dialogue leads to timely action—and peace of mind.

When Men Thrive, Families and Communities Thrive
Supporting men's health isn't just about helping individuals. It's about strengthening families, workplaces, and communities. When men live longer, healthier lives, they're able to be more present for their children, partners, and missions in life. That's why improving men's health is not only a clinical goal—it's a public health imperative.

This Men's Health Month, we challenge men—and those who love them—to begin with a simple step: start the conversation. Don't wait for a crisis. Don't wait for symptoms. Don't wait until it's too late.

Your Next Step Starts Here

If you or someone you love has received a cancer diagnosis and is looking for guidance, Naples Cancer Advisors provides free, expert consultations to help you navigate your options. Whether you're seeking a first or second opinion, a referral, or connection to clinical trials, our team is here to support you.

**Call 239-846-2273 (CARE) or visit
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*Because being strong isn't about staying silent.
It's about showing up—for yourself, and for
those who need you.*

About Lana Uhrig

Lana Uhrig is the Executive Director of the Cincinnati Cancer Foundation, powering Naples Cancer Advisors and Cincinnati Cancer Advisors. She holds a Ph.D. in Public Health from The Ohio State University with research focused on oral cancer prevention, plus an MBA and Doctorate of Community Leadership from Franklin University, and a Bachelor's in nursing from Ohio University. Previously serving as Vice President & Chief Nursing Officer at Emory Healthcare-Winship Cancer Institute and Executive Director at University of Cincinnati Cancer Institute, Lana brings over 30 years of healthcare experience. In 2023, she opened Naples Cancer Advisors, providing free platinum-level consultation services to Southwest Florida cancer patients through this 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



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HOW A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY CAN ADD YEARS—AND LIFE—TO YOUR RETIREMENT

By Greg Pascucci

People are living longer than ever before, but just as important as how long we live is *how well* we live. That's why many experts are turning their attention to healthspan, the years we spend in good health, free from serious illness or disability. For older adults, maintaining a strong healthspan often begins with embracing a lifestyle centered around wellness, safety and connection. Today's senior living communities are helping make that possible by supporting longer, fuller and more vibrant lives.

For example, at The Carlisle Naples, an active retirement community, residents enjoy a lifestyle that supports healthspan in every sense. From chef-prepared meals that cater to individual dietary needs to a full calendar of wellness classes and programs, every detail is designed to promote vitality and independence. Social events and lifelong learning opportunities also contribute to an environment where residents can thrive.

"Initially, I was attracted to The Carlisle Naples' convenient location in North Naples," said resident Andrew Murphy. "But the community has everything I need. There are so many health benefits to living at The Carlisle – from the food to the many activities that keep us active and engaged."

The Science Behind the Lifestyle

In a study conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, seniors who lived in independent living communities reported better physical health, improved emotional well-being and a greater sense of purpose compared to their peers who remained at home.

Researchers attributed this to a combination of social engagement, regular activity, good nutrition and proactive healthcare access, all core components of senior living today.

At The Carlisle Naples, residents have the added benefit of onsite healthcare through partnerships like MyCare Clinic, which ensures easy access to medications and health support, and EmpowerMe



Wellness, which offers physical, occupational and speech therapies. Having healthcare professionals onsite or nearby also means residents are more likely to receive prompt attention for health concerns, preventing small issues from becoming bigger ones. This proactive approach helps maintain independence and quality of life.

"Here, wellness is way of life," said Executive Director Bill Diamond. "Residents have access to various programs tailored to different ability levels, from strength training and yoga to water fitness and a walking club. Balanced, chef-prepared meals take the guesswork out of nutrition and accommodate dietary needs such as heart-healthy, plant-forward or low-sodium options."

Redefining Purpose in Retirement

Senior living isn't the end of an active lifestyle; it's often the beginning of a more fulfilling one. Many residents find new meaning through social roles, volunteering, mentoring or simply exploring hobbies they never had time for before.

Whether joining a resident council, leading a book club or teaching a painting class, older adults are finding new ways to contribute and connect. This sense of purpose is a key ingredient in both happiness and longevity.

It's Never "Too Early"

A common misconception is that senior living is a decision to be made only when health declines. In reality, the earlier someone moves, the more they can benefit from everything the lifestyle has to offer. By making the move while still active and independent, residents can access resources that help them stay that way longer.

Today's senior living communities are reshaping what it means to age well. With a lifestyle designed to promote health, connection and joy, residents aren't just adding years to their lives, they're adding life to their years.

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



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WHEN BLOOD PRESSURE IS ELEVATED

A FUNCTIONAL MEDICAL DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

It would be nice if before people get to the point where they need blood pressure medications, they would have access to preventive checkups where the root causes of any potential future hypertension would be picked up and addressed. Functional Medicine, which is a modern holistic outgrowth of Internal Medicine, starts by looking for the reasons why the patient may be developing an elevated blood pressure. Some of the causes of Hypertension we investigate are:

Medications which patients happen to be taking, like non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), Birth Control pills, Steroids, some anti-depressants, certain nasal sprays, some weight loss medications, and medications used for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

We also look for and treat underlying medical conditions which can prompt high blood pressures, such as:

Sleep Apnea, Thyroid or Parathyroid disease, Kidney disease, Obesity, Hyperlipidemia, Environmental exposure to Lead, cadmium, or arsenic, and disease of the adrenal glands to name a few. In functional medicine philosophy, oxidative stress poses a key clinical imbalance in the development of hypertension. What does that mean? Well, as our bodies work to disarm all the toxic substances which we encounter in our diet and environment, there are these very nasty characters forming in the blood called reactive oxygen species (ROS). It is the combination of the abundance of these nasty ROS and the shortage of our natural defenses against them which create oxidative stress.

Oxidative stress makes our blood vessels dysfunctional, promotes insulin resistance, creates inflammation everywhere and leads to higher blood pressures.

A functional medicine doctor can measure important markers of oxidative stress in your blood and nip the disease in the bud, before it has a chance to affect the end organs, like kidney,



pancreas, heart, liver, etc. We also measure micronutrient levels to assess our patients' defense antioxidant reserves. This gives us a chance to provide targeted supplementation of micronutrients to those who need it.

The result? Hypertension reversed.

Another thing that recently got functional doctors' attention is how our inappropriately triggered immunity can lead to hypertension and vascular disease, Covid 19 being the best example. When they started looking into how exactly vascular disease develops, they noticed that it starts with the disturbance of the innermost layer called endothelium. One of the major disturbances is the decreased production of the vasodilating substance called Nitric Oxide, an increase in the production of its antagonist ADMA, and another is the excess of the endogenously produced substance called Homocysteine. We can measure all these markers with simple blood tests, to confirm that these issues are present in a particular patient. You must be thinking: but what can you do if you discover these early precursors of hypertension and vascular disease?

The good news is that thanks to cutting-edge research, functional doctors work to address these disturbances with professional grade supplements, botanicals, nutritional interventions, and lifestyle modifications. Here is a real-life example from my own private practice: a new patient who had signed up with my practice, was discovered during her intake examination to have newly elevated

blood pressures. While going through her medications list, I discovered that she has been taking over the counter Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs). These were recommended to her by her doctor years ago to help with her gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), and she was reflexively buying these pills over the counter for years.

On in-depth testing, I discovered high levels of ADMA in her blood and wisely remembered that PPIs increase ADMA and decrease Nitric Oxide causing an impaired ability of the blood vessels to expand to maintain normal BP levels. I then promptly took this patient off the PPI medication. As a result, her blood pressure and vascular dysfunction markers have normalized within several weeks. We also successfully treated her GERD with appropriate non-pharmaceutical functional supplements, changes in the foods she was eating, and tweaking her daily routine.

Changes in my patient's lifestyle routines are powerful natural medicines for the elevated blood pressure. For example, regular aerobic activity like brisk walking at least 30 minutes /day decreases my patients blood pressure anywhere between 5-10 mm. By the same token, restricting their sodium intake to 2.4 g/day decreases BP by another 2-8 mm. There are many more natural functional approaches to hypertension and my hope is that someday we can at best avert and at least reverse the public health burden of Hypertension which affects 116 million Americans.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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

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TIMELESS RESULTS, THOUGHTFULLY DONE

Regenerative Treatments and Innovative Technology to Deliver Lasting and Natural Results

By Dr. Aldene McKenzie

Summer is around the corner—and if you've been thinking about refining your look or simply feeling your best in your own skin, this is the perfect time to start. At Kenzi MedSpa & Wellness Center, we take a thoughtful, natural approach to aesthetic care that's designed to enhance—not change—who you are.

A Smarter Way to Approach Summer Weight Loss

Forget quick fixes. Our physician-led weight loss programs focus on sustainable, long-term health. Depending on your goals, your personalized plan may include:

- Nutritional guidance tailored to your body and lifestyle
- Medical-grade supplements to support metabolism and energy
- Movement strategies that complement your treatment plan

Patients often report feeling more energized and balanced—confidence that goes far beyond swimsuit season.

Refined, Natural Results with Injectables

For those moments when you're reconnecting with friends and family, injectables can offer a subtle refresh:

- Botox® and Dysport® for smoothing dynamic wrinkles
- Dermal fillers for restoring volume where it's naturally diminished
- Kybella® to contour under the chin

We focus on precision, proportion, and maintaining the facial harmony that makes you, you.

Skin Tightening That Works Beneath the Surface

Heat-based technologies like radiofrequency, ultrasound, and laser energy can stimulate deep



collagen production to tighten skin and refine texture. These are ideal for areas where skin has begun to lose firmness over time.

CoolSculpting®: A Non-Invasive Way to Tackle Stubborn Fat

CoolSculpting® works by freezing and permanently eliminating fat cells in common problem areas like the abdomen, thighs, arms, and under the chin. The best part? No downtime—and results that continue to improve over time.

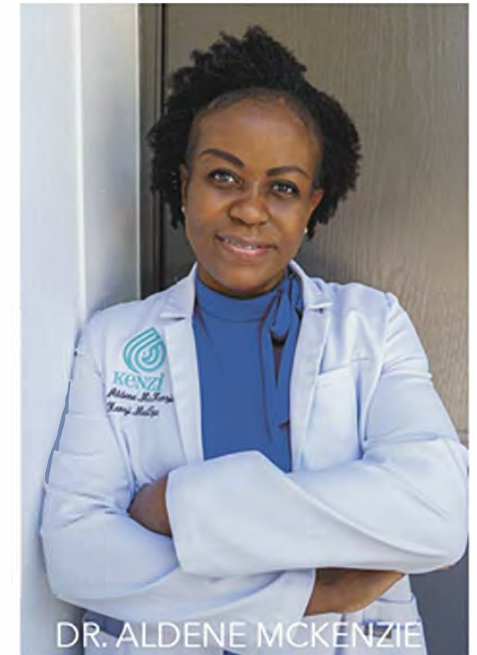
Why Timing Matters

Many treatments—especially body contouring and skin regeneration—take a few weeks to show full results. Starting now gives your body time to respond naturally so you're glowing, confident, and photo-ready when it matters most.

Let's Build Your Summer Treatment Plan

Whether you want to target one area or take a more comprehensive approach, our team will guide you through a custom treatment strategy. We combine science, artistry, and experience to help you look like the best version of yourself—refreshed, never overdone.

Book a consultation to learn more and explore what's possible.



Providing A Healthy, Happy and Confident Lifestyle for All

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

Reach out to book your complimentary consultation.



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Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness: How Advanced Technology is Making a Difference

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

June marks Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, bringing critical attention to neurodegenerative conditions affecting millions of Americans. While Alzheimer's disease remains one of the most challenging neurological disorders of our time, advancements in diagnostic technology and specialized care are offering new hope to patients and families navigating this difficult journey.

Understanding the Impact

Alzheimer's disease affects approximately 6.7 million Americans, with numbers expected to rise dramatically as our population ages. Beyond memory loss, this progressive condition impacts cognitive function, behavior, and eventually the ability to perform daily activities. Early detection and intervention remain crucial factors in managing symptoms and potentially slowing progression.

The disease creates ripple effects beyond patients themselves, with over 11 million Americans providing unpaid care for Alzheimer's patients. This emotional, physical, and financial burden highlights why improved diagnostics and treatment options are so essential for public health.

The Warning Signs

While occasional memory lapses are normal, Alzheimer's symptoms typically include persistent patterns that worsen over time: forgetting recently learned information, difficulty solving problems or completing familiar tasks, confusion about time or place, trouble understanding visual images, and changes in mood or personality. Recognition of these warning signs can lead to earlier intervention.

Advanced Diagnostics Making a Difference

At Advanced Neurology Specialists, Dr. Cory Lamar is pioneering the use of sophisticated electroencephalograph (EEG) technology to transform how Alzheimer's and other neurological conditions are diagnosed and monitored.

"Traditional diagnostic methods often detect Alzheimer's only after significant damage has occurred," explains Dr. Lamar. "By utilizing advanced EEG technology, we can identify subtle brain activity changes that may indicate early neurodegeneration before obvious symptoms appear."



How EEG Technology Works

EEGs measure electrical activity in the brain through sensors placed on the scalp. These readings create a map of brain function that can reveal abnormalities in neural communication patterns often present in Alzheimer's patients. Specific EEG signatures have been associated with different stages of cognitive decline, making them valuable biomarkers for assessment.

Dr. Lamar specializes in two particularly effective EEG approaches:

In-office EEGs: provide detailed snapshots of brain activity in a controlled clinical environment. These tests can detect abnormal patterns that correlate with specific types of cognitive impairment. The procedure is non-invasive and painless, typically taking 30-60 minutes to complete.

Ambulatory EEGs: allow patients to wear portable monitoring equipment for 24-72 hours while maintaining their normal daily routines. This extended monitoring captures brain activity fluctuations that might be missed during shorter in-office tests, providing a more comprehensive picture of neurological function. Patients keep a diary of activities, which helps correlate brain activity patterns with specific behaviors or symptoms.

Personalized Treatment Plans

The detailed data collected through these advanced diagnostic tools allows Dr. Lamar to develop highly personalized treatment strategies for each patient. Early detection through EEG technology can guide interventions that may help preserve cognitive function longer.

"Our goal isn't just diagnosis," says Dr. Lamar. "It's about using the most advanced tools available to develop comprehensive care plans that address each patient's unique neurological profile and needs."

Comprehensive Care Approach

Advanced Neurology Specialists doesn't stop at diagnosis and medical treatment. Dr. Lamar's practice emphasizes a holistic approach that includes lifestyle recommendations, family education, and connection to community resources. Patients benefit from guidance on diet, exercise, cognitive stimulation activities, and stress management techniques that complement medical interventions.

For families facing an Alzheimer's diagnosis, this patient-centered approach provides not only medical care but also crucial support and guidance through an often overwhelming journey.

As Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month reminds us of the challenges ahead, innovative specialists like Dr. Lamar at Advanced Neurology Specialists represent the leading edge of care—combining advanced technology with compassionate expertise to make a meaningful difference in patients' lives.

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



**Advanced Neurology
Specialists, LLC**

239-667-5878

advancedneurofl.com

730 Goodlette-Frank Rd. N, Suite 205
Naples, FL 34102



LASER + DECOMPRESSION: The Dynamic Duo for Disc Healing

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

Chronic back pain is one of the most common and debilitating conditions affecting adults in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 40% of adults report experiencing back pain within the past three months. While medications and surgery are often considered the next step after conservative care fails, advanced non-surgical therapies are proving to be a game-changer for many patients. At the state-of-the-art clinic of Dr. Michael Shaffer, two of the most effective non-invasive treatments—spinal decompression therapy and the M7 MLS Therapy Laser—are being used together to achieve optimal results.

This combination targets both the mechanical causes of spinal pain and the inflammatory response that keeps patients locked in cycles of discomfort, stiffness, and reduced function.

Understanding Spinal Decompression Therapy

Spinal decompression with the HiLDT table is designed to relieve pressure on the spine's intervertebral discs and nerves. Patients lie comfortably on the table where the spine is gently stretched and relaxed, with an actuator system in controlled, computerized cycles. This process creates negative pressure within the discs, encouraging retraction of herniated or bulging material and promoting the influx of oxygen and nutrients into the disc space.

Decompression therapy is especially beneficial for conditions such as:

- Herniated or bulging discs
- Degenerative disc disease
- Sciatica
- Spinal stenosis
- Facet joint syndrome
- Chronic neck or low back pain

Clinical research supports its effectiveness. In a study published in the *American Journal of Pain Management*, 71% of patients treated with spinal decompression reported significant pain reduction, and many were able to avoid surgical intervention altogether.

The Role of MLS Laser Therapy

While spinal decompression addresses the structural cause of spinal pain, the M7 MLS Laser Therapy system targets inflammation and tissue damage at the cellular level. MLS stands for Multiwave Locked System, a patented dual-wavelength laser technology that delivers synchronized light energy to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and accelerate healing.

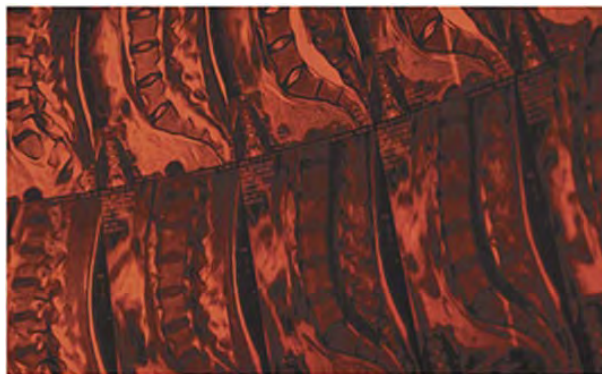


This therapy works by stimulating cellular activity in damaged tissues—a process known as photobiomodulation. The M7 robotically scans the treatment area and delivers consistent, calibrated energy across joints, muscles, ligaments. It is FDA-cleared and backed by decades of research around the world.

Key benefits of MLS Laser Therapy include:

- Reduction of inflammation and edema
- Improved circulation and oxygenation
- Accelerated tissue repair
- Decreased nerve sensitivity
- No side effects or recovery downtime

In a randomized, double-blind clinical study, MLS laser therapy showed a greater than 80% success rate in reducing chronic musculoskeletal pain, particularly in patients with arthritis, neuropathy, and spinal disc conditions.



Why These Two Therapies Work Better Together

Pain in the spine is rarely due to a single factor. It often involves disc dysfunction, nerve compression, inflammation, and muscular imbalance, all of which need to be addressed for lasting relief. By combining spinal decompression with MLS laser therapy, patients benefit from a dual-action approach:

- Spinal decompression creates negative pressure within the disc, reduces pressure on nerves, and promotes disc healing through rehydration.
- Laser therapy reduces inflammation, calms nerve activity, and accelerates tissue regeneration at the cellular level.

Together, these therapies complement each other to treat both the cause and the symptoms of pain. In clinical practice, patients often experience significant pain relief and improved mobility when these advanced technologies are used synergistically.

Who Is a Candidate?

Patients with the following conditions are often excellent candidates for combined decompression and laser therapy:

- Chronic low back or neck pain not responding to conventional treatment
- Sciatica or radiating nerve pain from disc bulges
- Post-surgical spine patients with lingering pain
- Degenerative joint or disc disease
- Athletes recovering from spine-related injuries

These therapies are particularly beneficial for patients who want to avoid opioids, steroid injections, or surgery, and are looking for a safe, evidence-based alternative to manage their condition.

When to Seek Help

If you're living with persistent pain, tingling, numbness, or reduced mobility, it's time to explore advanced non-surgical solutions. Left untreated, spinal conditions can worsen over time, potentially leading to permanent nerve damage or loss of function. Early intervention with spinal decompression and laser therapy can prevent further deterioration and restore quality of life.

Dr. Shaffer's goal is to identify the root cause of your pain and provide effective, personalized care using today's most advanced technologies. Call today to schedule your consultation and discover how this powerful combination therapy can help you move and feel better—without surgery or medication.

Personalized Care at Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A.

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



Rely on Clinical Expertise and Experience

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UNDERSTANDING BUNIONS: CAUSES, TREATMENT, AND THE PATH TO RELIEF

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

Bunions are a common and painful foot condition that affects millions of people regardless of gender. These bony protrusions at the base of the big toe not only cause discomfort but can significantly impact quality of life when left untreated. For those suffering from bunions, understanding this condition is the first step toward finding relief.

What Are Bunions?

A bunion (hallux valgus) is a progressive deformity that occurs when the big toe begins to angle toward the other toes, causing the joint at its base to protrude outward. This creates the characteristic bump on the side of the foot that often becomes inflamed and painful, especially when wearing shoes.

Many people notice bunion development after age 40, when the joint begins to hurt and, in moderate to severe cases, visibly protrudes. Once this happens, painful sores can form where shoes rub against the bunion, and the joint may begin to swell, causing increasing discomfort.

Causes: Not Just a Fashion Problem

While tight, narrow shoes can certainly exacerbate bunion pain, the misconception that bunions are solely caused by footwear choices is incomplete. Heredity plays a significant role in bunion development. Many patients report family members—mothers, fathers, siblings, or aunts—who also suffered from bunions, indicating a genetic component to this condition.

Bunions represent one of several inflammatory arthritic conditions that can affect the feet, and they are equally problematic for both men and women, though women may experience symptoms more frequently due to certain footwear choices.

Conservative Treatment Options

When bunions begin causing discomfort, several non-surgical approaches may provide temporary relief:

- Wearing more accommodating, comfortable shoes with adequate toe space
- Using gel toe spacers or bunion pads to maintain proper toe alignment
- Applying ice to reduce inflammation
- Taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen to manage pain



However, it's crucial to understand that bunions NEVER heal on their own. These conservative measures can help manage symptoms, but they cannot reverse the progressive nature of the condition.

When Surgery Becomes Necessary

As bunions progress, conservative treatments often become less effective at controlling pain and maintaining mobility. At this point, surgery becomes the definitive solution.

Modern bunion surgeries are tailored to each patient's specific condition. The procedures vary in complexity depending on the severity of the deformity:

- For mild to moderate bunions, the surgeon may simply cut the bone and use a small screw for stabilization
- More severe cases, particularly where the joint has become arthritic, might require plates and screws for proper correction

At Collier Podiatry, Dr. Petrocelli uses advanced surgical techniques that include numbing behind the knee (providing 24 hours of pain relief) combined with anesthesia for maximum comfort during the procedure.

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Recovery from bunion surgery typically spans several months, with the initial two to four weeks requiring protection via a special boot or cast. During this time, patients can remain mobile but must take precautions to protect the surgical site and allow proper healing.

Following the initial recovery period, a gradual return to normal activities is possible as the foot continues to strengthen and adapt to its corrected alignment.

Expert Care Makes the Difference

With over 33 years of podiatric practice, Dr. Michael Petrocelli at Collier Podiatry brings extensive experience to bunion treatment. His approach begins with a comprehensive evaluation of each patient's symptoms and pain levels, from which he creates individualized treatment plans.

Dr. Petrocelli emphasizes the importance of addressing bunions proactively, before they progress to advanced stages that cause severe pain and limitation. Early intervention often means simpler surgical procedures and faster recovery times.

Taking the First Step Toward Relief

If you're experiencing bunion pain, don't wait for the condition to worsen. Unlike many foot problems that may resolve with time and conservative care, bunions are progressive and require proper medical attention.

The team at Collier Podiatry is ready to answer your questions and help you find the relief you deserve. Their kind and well-trained staff understand the impact foot pain can have on your daily life and are dedicated to helping you get back on your feet. Contact Collier Podiatry today to schedule your evaluation with Dr. Petrocelli.

Visit www.collierpodiatry.com or call (239) 775-0019 to take the first step toward living free from bunion pain.



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

239-775-0019
www.collierpodiatry.com

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

EMSELLA: A Revolutionary Approach to Sexual Dysfunction Treatment

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Sexual dysfunction affects millions of Americans, impacting both physical health and emotional wellbeing. Whether experiencing erectile dysfunction (ED) in men or sexual dysfunction in women, these conditions can significantly diminish quality of life and strain intimate relationships. Fortunately, innovative technologies like Emsella are providing new hope for patients seeking non-invasive treatment options.

How Emsella Works

Emsella is an FDA-cleared treatment that utilizes High-Intensity Focused Electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology to deliver thousands of high intensity pelvic floor muscle contractions in a single session. This groundbreaking approach effectively stimulates the muscles responsible for sexual function and bladder control without requiring surgery, medication, or downtime.

During a typical 30-minute treatment, patients remain fully clothed while sitting on the Emsella chair. The electromagnetic stimulation penetrates deep into the pelvic floor, triggering muscle contractions far more powerful than those achievable through voluntary Kegel exercises. A single session produces approximately 11,200 contractions – equivalent to performing thousands of perfect Kegel exercises.

Benefits for Erectile Dysfunction

For men experiencing ED, the pelvic floor plays a crucial role in maintaining proper blood flow and sustaining erections. Weak pelvic floor muscles can contribute to difficulties achieving or maintaining erections. Emsella strengthens these essential muscles, potentially improving:

- Blood circulation to the genital area
- Erectile function and firmness
- Sexual stamina and performance
- Overall confidence and satisfaction

Many men report noticeable improvements after completing a recommended series of treatments. The non-invasive nature of Emsella makes it an attractive alternative to medications that may cause side effects or more invasive surgical options.

EMSELLA®
SAY GOODBYE TO ED

- Improve sexual wellness
- Treat incontinence
- Non-invasive
- Stay fully clothed
- No recovery time



Addressing Female Sexual Dysfunction

Women experiencing sexual dysfunction often struggle with decreased sensation, difficulty achieving orgasm, or pain during intercourse. These issues frequently have a physical component related to pelvic floor weakness, which Emsella directly addresses. The treatment can help women by:

- Increasing blood flow to vaginal tissues
- Improving vaginal tone and sensitivity
- Strengthening orgasmic potential
- Reducing pain associated with intercourse

Many women report enhanced sexual satisfaction and renewed confidence after completing their treatment regimen. The ability to strengthen the pelvic floor without the need for internal examinations makes Emsella particularly appealing to those who may feel uncomfortable with more invasive approaches.

The Treatment Experience

Emsella treatments are quick, convenient, and comfortable. Patients typically undergo a series of six sessions scheduled twice weekly for optimal results. During each session, patients may feel a tingling sensation and muscle contractions but report the experience as generally comfortable. There is no downtime, allowing patients to return immediately to their daily activities.

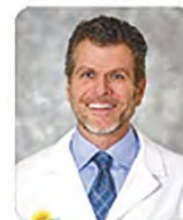
Results may begin to appear after just a few sessions, with continued improvement over the following weeks as muscle strength increases. Many patients report both improved sexual function and additional benefits such as better urinary control.

Expert Care at Florida Bladder Institute

For those struggling with sexual dysfunction, seeking expert medical guidance is essential. Dr. Joseph Gauta at the Florida Bladder Institute specializes in pelvic health and offers personalized Emsella treatment plans for both men and women. With extensive experience in urogynecology and pelvic floor disorders, Dr. Gauta provides comprehensive evaluations to determine if Emsella is right for you.

To learn more about how Emsella can address your sexual dysfunction concerns or to schedule a confidential consultation with Dr. Gauta, contact the Florida Bladder Institute today at (239) 449-7979 or visit www.floridabladderinstitute.com. Take the first step toward renewed sexual wellness and confidence with the expert care and innovative treatments available at the Florida Bladder Institute.

*It's time to start living your life to the fullest.
Regain control of your life.*



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Tabitha Lane, PA-C


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www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com

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Shedding Light on Cataracts: Understanding and Addressing the Impact

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

Cataract Awareness Month: A Call to Action

Every June, a spotlight shines on one of the most prevalent yet often misunderstood eye conditions: cataracts. Cataract Awareness Month serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for proactive measures to address this common ailment. With an aging population and increasing prevalence worldwide, understanding cataracts and promoting awareness about prevention and treatment options are more critical than ever.

Understanding Cataracts: Unveiling the Cloudiness

Cataracts occur when the clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to blurred vision, sensitivity to light, and difficulty seeing at night. While age-related changes are the primary cause of cataracts, other factors such as genetics, injury, and certain medications can also contribute to their development. Over time, untreated cataracts can significantly impair vision, impacting daily activities and diminishing quality of life.

The Global Impact: A Growing Concern

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide, responsible for approximately 51% of all cases. With the global population aging rapidly, the prevalence of cataracts is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. This increase underscores the urgent need for awareness campaigns, early detection, and access to affordable treatment options.

Prevention Is Key: Nurturing Vision Health

While cataracts cannot always be prevented, several lifestyle choices can help reduce the risk of developing them. Protecting the eyes from excessive sunlight by wearing sunglasses and hats, maintaining a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, and avoiding smoking are all beneficial practices for preserving vision health. Regular eye examinations, especially for individuals over the age of 40, can also aid in early detection and timely intervention.

Empowering Communities: Promoting Awareness and Education

Cataract Awareness Month provides an invaluable opportunity to engage communities, healthcare professionals, and policymakers in dialogue about vision health. Educational initiatives, outreach programs, and media campaigns play a vital role in dispelling myths, raising awareness about risk factors, and promoting the importance of regular eye exams. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can encourage proactive steps towards preserving vision and preventing avoidable blindness.

Breaking Barriers: Access to Care

Despite significant advancements in cataract treatment, access to care remains a challenge for many communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers can hinder individuals from seeking timely diagnosis and treatment. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in healthcare infrastructure, training of local healthcare providers, and greater collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

Innovations in Treatment: Restoring Clarity

Fortunately, cataract surgery remains one of the most successful and cost-effective medical procedures, with a high rate of success in restoring vision. Technological advancements, such as phacoemulsification and intraocular lens implants, have revolutionized cataract surgery, making it safer, more efficient, and more accessible to a broader population. Moreover, initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of surgery and improving post-operative care are instrumental in ensuring equitable access to treatment for all individuals affected by cataracts.

Looking Ahead: A Vision for Change

As we observe Cataract Awareness Month, let us recommit ourselves to the fight against preventable blindness and vision impairment. By raising awareness, advocating for equitable access to care, and embracing innovation in treatment, we can make significant strides towards eliminating the burden of cataracts on individuals and communities worldwide. Together, let us work towards a future where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy clear vision and a brighter tomorrow.

Conclusion

Cataract Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for concerted efforts to address cataracts. By understanding the impact of this common eye condition, promoting prevention strategies, and advocating for improved access to care, we can make meaningful progress towards eliminating preventable blindness and preserving vision for generations to come. Let us join hands in spreading awareness, fostering education, and championing innovation to ensure a world where clarity of vision is within reach for all.



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

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

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

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

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

Retina Group of Florida

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

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



**Retina Group
of Florida™**

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

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239-325-3970

www.retinagroupflorida.com

NAPLES BRAIN REJUVENATION CLINIC:

Comprehensive Integrative Approaches to Alzheimer's Care

Welcome to our brand-new Naples based Brain Rejuvenation Clinic. We offer a comprehensive, integrative approach to Alzheimer's care by combining advanced therapies such as BAHl Therapy (see below), Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) Therapy, and Nutritional Counseling and Supplementation. We also do state-of-the-art testing such as WAVi Brain Scans and ANS (Autonomic Nervous System) Testing, and Brain Functional Testing. Listed below are some ways that each can be beneficial for people struggling with Alzheimer's Disease.

BAHI THERAPY: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COGNITIVE SUPPORT

BAHI Therapy, an acronym for Blood Circulation, Antioxidant, Hormonal Balance, and Immunity, is a multi-modal treatment designed to enhance cellular function and systemic health. Its components are particularly relevant to the pathophysiology of Alzheimer's disease:

1. Sonicwave Vibration Therapy

This modality employs low-frequency vibrations to stimulate blood and lymphatic circulation, effectively "awakening" red blood cells by breaking up clumps and enhancing microcapillary activity. Improved circulation facilitates better oxygen and nutrient delivery to brain tissues, potentially mitigating cognitive decline. Stimulating the Lymphatic System also stimulates detoxification of the tissues.

2. Photobiomodulation (PBM) and Molecular Hydrogen Inhalation

PBM utilizes specific wavelengths of light (green, red, and near-infrared) to penetrate tissues, stimulating mitochondrial activity and ATP production, which are crucial for neuronal health. Mitochondria are tiny organelles within each cell responsible for producing energy that the cell utilizes to function and to repair. The Brain has as many as 10,000 Mitochondria per cell which signifies the need for huge amounts of cellular energy.

3. Molecular Hydrogen Inhalation

Molecular Hydrogen Inhalation offers antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, neutralizing harmful free radicals and supporting the body's natural defenses against oxidative stress. Research indicates that hydrogen inhalation can reduce oxidative stress and inflammation, improve mitochondrial function, and promote neurogenesis, all of which are beneficial in managing Alzheimer's disease. Clinical studies have

shown that patients undergoing hydrogen therapy experienced improvements in cognitive function and neuronal integrity, with some benefits persisting even after the treatment ended.

4. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)

HBOT involves breathing air in a pressurized environment, increasing oxygen saturation in tissues. This helps the oxygen and the hydrogen inhaled during the Hydrogen Inhalation treatment to be effectively pushed deeper into the brain and muscle tissue. Studies have shown that HBOT can reduce neuroinflammation, decrease amyloid-beta and tau protein accumulation (characteristic of Alzheimer's Disease), and improve cognitive functions in Alzheimer's models.

UNDERSTANDING PEMF THERAPY

PEMF therapy involves the application of electromagnetic fields to the body to promote healing and wellness. The therapy has been used for various conditions, including pain relief, bone healing, and depression. It works by sending a series of electromagnetic pulses through the body, which in turn, promotes better cell volt potential and triggers cellular repair and regeneration and detoxification of waste products.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PEMF THERAPY FOR ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS

Research into the application of PEMF therapy for Alzheimer's disease is ongoing, with some studies suggesting potential benefits:

1. Reduction of Amyloid- β Accumulation

Accumulation of amyloid- β peptides in the brain is a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease. A study published in *Scientific Reports* indicated that repeated electromagnetic field stimulation (REMFS) could lower amyloid- β levels in human brain tissue cultures.

2. Cognitive Function Enhancement

PEMF therapy has shown promise in improving cognitive functions such as memory and attention. A clinical trial reported in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* demonstrated that patients receiving PEMF therapy exhibited significant improvements in cognitive performance compared to those who did not receive the therapy.

3. Improved Sleep Quality

Sleep disturbances are common in Alzheimer's patients and can exacerbate cognitive decline. Studies have shown that PEMF therapy may help regulate sleep patterns, leading to better rest and potentially slowing disease progression.

4. Enhanced Blood Flow

PEMF therapy may improve cerebral blood circulation, ensuring that brain tissues receive adequate oxygen and nutrients, which is crucial for maintaining neuronal health.

WAVI BRAIN SCAN: MONITORING AND PERSONALIZING TREATMENT

The WAVi Brain Scan is a non-invasive EEG-based tool that assesses brain function by measuring electrical activity and event-related potentials. Its applications in Alzheimer's care include:

- **Early Detection:** Identifying subtle changes in brain activity that may signal cognitive decline before clinical symptoms appear.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Evaluating various aspects of brain function, including attention, memory, executive function, and processing speed.
- **Personalized Monitoring:** Tracking the effectiveness of interventions like BAHl Therapy over time, allowing for tailored treatment adjustments.

INTEGRATING BAHl THERAPY AND WAVI BRAIN SCAN IN ALZHEIMER'S CARE

Combining BAHl Therapy with the WAVi Brain Scan offers a synergistic approach to Alzheimer's management:

- **Targeted Intervention:** BAHl Therapy addresses key pathological processes in Alzheimer's, such as oxidative stress and impaired circulation.
- **Objective Monitoring:** The WAVi Brain Scan provides measurable data on cognitive function, enabling clinicians to assess treatment efficacy and make informed adjustments.

This integrative strategy aligns with naturopathic principles, emphasizing individualized care and the body's innate capacity for healing. Call us at (239) 877-2900 to schedule a consultation or a treatment.



239-877-2900

BrainRejuvenationClinic.com

1729 Heritage Trail, # 901 Naples, FL 34112

NIAGEN PLUS AND IV THERAPY OFFER NEW HOPE DURING BRAIN HEALTH MONTH

As Brain Health Month puts cognitive wellness in the spotlight, emerging treatments like Niagen Plus and specialized IV therapies are gaining attention for their potential benefits in supporting brain function and potentially slowing cognitive decline associated with conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

The NAD+ Connection: How Niagen Plus Supports Cellular Brain Health

Niagen Plus contains nicotinamide riboside (NR), a precursor to nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD+), a critical coenzyme found in every cell in the body. As we age, NAD+ levels naturally decline, potentially contributing to cognitive challenges and neurodegenerative conditions.

Research suggests that boosting NAD+ levels through supplements like Niagen Plus may help support brain health through several mechanisms:

Enhanced Mitochondrial Function: By improving cellular energy production, Niagen Plus helps ensure brain cells receive adequate energy for optimal performance.

Protection Against Oxidative Stress: The brain is particularly vulnerable to oxidative damage. NAD+ plays a crucial role in activating sirtuins, proteins that help protect against cellular stress and inflammation.

DNA Repair Support: NAD+ is essential for the function of enzymes that repair DNA damage, potentially protecting brain cells from degeneration.

IV Therapy: Delivering Nutrients Directly to Support Brain Health

While oral supplements like Niagen Plus provide foundational support for brain health, IV therapy offers a complementary approach by delivering nutrients directly into the bloodstream, bypassing digestive limitations and achieving higher concentration levels in the brain tissue.

Specialized IV therapies for brain health typically include:

Antioxidants: High-dose vitamin C, glutathione, and other antioxidants delivered intravenously can help neutralize free radicals that contribute to neurodegeneration.

B Vitamins: Essential for neurotransmitter production and nerve function, B vitamins delivered via IV can help support cognitive performance and mood regulation.

Magnesium: This mineral plays a crucial role in nerve transmission and may help protect against excessive excitatory signals that can damage brain cells.

Promising Applications for Alzheimer's Support

For those facing Alzheimer's disease, the combination of Niagen Plus supplementation and targeted IV therapy represents a multifaceted approach to supporting brain health that addresses several underlying factors:

Reducing Neuroinflammation: Both NAD+ boosters and specific IV nutrients may help modulate inflammatory responses that contribute to Alzheimer's progression.

Supporting Cellular Energy: The mitochondrial dysfunction common in Alzheimer's may benefit from NAD+ enhancement and direct nutrient delivery.

Enhancing Neuroplasticity: Providing optimal nutrition through both pathways may support the brain's ability to form new connections, potentially compensating for damage in affected areas.

A Holistic Approach During Brain Health Month

Brain Health Month reminds us that cognitive wellness requires a comprehensive strategy. While Niagen Plus and IV therapies show promise, they work best as part of an integrated approach that includes:

- Regular physical exercise to promote circulation to the brain
- Cognitive stimulation through learning and problem-solving
- Quality sleep to support brain detoxification
- Stress management techniques
- Heart-healthy nutrition

As research continues to evolve, these innovative approaches offer hope for better supporting brain health across the lifespan and potentially changing the trajectory of neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.



Consult with healthcare providers specializing in brain health to determine if Niagen Plus supplementation and IV therapy might be appropriate additions to your cognitive wellness plan during Brain Health Month and beyond.

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THIS ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH, DON'T OVERLOOK YOUR HEARING

By Sarah Sessler, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month—a time dedicated to better understanding how we can protect and preserve brain health as we age. At Decibels Audiology, we talk a lot about the connection between hearing loss and the brain, because one of the most common questions I hear from patients is: *"Is it true that hearing loss can lead to Alzheimer's?"*

The short answer is: **There is a strong connection between untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline, but the relationship isn't as simple as cause and effect.** And the good news? There's a lot we can do about it.

Let's unpack the research and clear up a few common myths.

Myth #1: Hearing Loss Causes Alzheimer's Disease

This is one of the biggest misunderstandings I hear. While untreated hearing loss has been linked to an increased risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's, it's not accurate to say that hearing loss *causes* the disease. Alzheimer's is a complex neurological condition influenced by many factors—age, genetics, cardiovascular health, and more.

But what we do know is that hearing loss can be a **significant risk factor**. In fact, a major 2020 report from The Lancet Commission identified hearing loss as the **single most modifiable risk factor** for dementia. That means addressing your hearing loss is one of the most powerful steps you can take to protect your brain.

Myth #2: Hearing Aids Are Just About Hearing

We often think of hearing aids as tools to help us hear conversations or watch TV more clearly. And while they do that, their benefits go far beyond sound.

When your hearing starts to decline, your brain works harder to fill in the gaps. This extra effort—called "cognitive load"—can reduce mental sharpness, memory, and energy over time. You may not even realize it's happening, but your brain is reallocating resources just to help you follow everyday speech.

Wearing hearing aids helps **relieve that mental strain**, freeing up your brain to focus on other tasks. Studies have shown that individuals who treat their hearing loss with properly fitted hearing aids experience **slower rates of cognitive decline**, maintain better social connections, and report higher overall quality of life.

Myth #3: My Hearing Isn't Bad Enough to Worry About

This is something I hear all the time, especially from younger retirees or adults in their 50s and 60s. But here's the truth: **even mild hearing loss can increase your risk of cognitive decline** if it's left untreated.

The brain is highly adaptable, but it's also use-it-or-lose-it. If the auditory pathways in your brain aren't being stimulated regularly, they can begin to weaken. That's why early detection and treatment are so important.

I always recommend a **baseline hearing screening by age 55**—and sooner if you've noticed signs like turning up the TV, asking others to repeat themselves, or struggling in noisy environments. You don't have to wait until hearing loss is severe to take action.

The Social Connection

One of the most overlooked consequences of hearing loss is how it impacts **social engagement**. When conversations become frustrating or exhausting, many people begin to withdraw—skipping out on dinners, avoiding phone calls, or feeling left out of family events. Over time, this isolation can lead to loneliness, depression, and increased risk of cognitive decline.

Maintaining strong social relationships is critical for brain health. That's why treating hearing loss is about more than just hearing—it's about **staying connected to the people and experiences that keep us mentally and emotionally well**.

What the Latest Research Says

Recent studies continue to reinforce the link between hearing loss and brain function:

- A 2023 Johns Hopkins study found that older adults with untreated hearing loss were more likely to experience faster cognitive decline compared to those who wore hearing aids.
- Another large-scale study showed that **treating hearing loss reduced the risk of developing dementia by nearly 50%** in older adults with other risk factors.

These findings are not meant to alarm—they are meant to **empower**. Hearing care is one of the few areas of health where you can take simple, proactive steps to improve your long-term cognitive health.

A Whole-Health Approach to Hearing

At Decibels Audiology, we take a holistic view of hearing care. Our goal isn't just to help you hear—we want to help you live better, longer, and more connected. We work with all major hearing aid manufacturers to find the best solution for your **unique hearing profile, lifestyle, and budget**.

If you're already wearing hearing aids, make sure to schedule regular follow-ups to keep your devices performing at their best. If you've never had a hearing test, now is the perfect time to establish a baseline and take that first step toward protecting your brain health.

Let's Hear It for Your Brain

This Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, I invite you to think of your hearing not just as a sense—but as a **vital part of your brain's overall wellness**.

Whether you've noticed hearing changes or simply want to be proactive, we're here to help. A simple hearing screening could be the first step toward clearer sound, stronger connections, and a healthier future.

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Back Braces and Physical Therapy: A Powerful Duo for Back Pain Recovery

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

As a spinal neurosurgeon, I often meet patients who feel defeated by back pain, convinced that every twinge signals a lifetime of limitations. Whether your pain stems from a vertebral compression fracture, a herniated disc, or chronic strain, two tools stand out in the journey to recovery: back braces and physical therapy. When used thoughtfully, these approaches work synergistically to support and strengthen the core and low back muscles, paving the way for pain relief and restored mobility. Let's explore how these treatments can help you reclaim your life, offering both practical guidance and hope for a stronger, pain-free future.

Understanding Back Pain and the Role of Core Strength

Back pain is a universal human experience, affecting nearly 80% of adults at some point. The lower back, or lumbar spine, bears the brunt of our daily activities—lifting, twisting, sitting, or even standing for long periods. At the heart of this region's stability is the core, a group of muscles including the abdominals, obliques, and deep stabilizers like the transversus abdominis and multifidus. These muscles act like a natural corset, supporting the spine and distributing forces evenly. When they're weak or imbalanced, the spine becomes vulnerable, leading to pain, poor posture, and injury.

Conditions like vertebral compression fractures (often linked to osteoporosis), muscle strains, or degenerative disc disease amplify this vulnerability. Pain can trigger a vicious cycle: discomfort limits movement, inactivity weakens muscles, and weakened muscles exacerbate pain. Breaking this cycle requires a strategy that both protects the spine and rebuilds strength—enter back braces and physical therapy.

The Role of Back Braces in Recovery

A back brace is like a temporary scaffold for your spine, providing external support while your body heals. By limiting excessive motion in the lumbar spine, a brace reduces strain on injured tissues, alleviates pain, and prevents further damage. For patients with vertebral compression fractures, for example, a brace can stabilize the spine, allowing the fractured vertebra to heal without constant aggravation from bending or twisting.

There are several types of braces, each tailored to specific needs. Rigid braces, often used post-fracture, offer maximum support by restricting movement. Semi-rigid or soft braces, like lumbar corsets, provide moderate support while allowing some flexibility, ideal for chronic pain or post-injury recovery. A spine specialist

will recommend the right brace based on your condition, ensuring it fits snugly without restricting breathing or circulation.

Braces shine in the early stages of recovery. For instance, a patient with a recent compression fracture might wear a rigid brace for 6-12 weeks to immobilize the spine, reducing pain during daily activities like walking or sitting. The brace also promotes proper posture, counteracting the forward hunch (kyphosis) that fractured vertebrae can cause. By creating a stable environment, the brace gives muscles and ligaments a chance to rest and heal, setting the stage for active rehabilitation.

However, braces are not a long-term fix. Prolonged use can lead to muscle weakening, as the body becomes reliant on external support. This is where physical therapy steps in, transitioning you from passive support to active strength.

Physical Therapy: Building a Resilient Core & Low Back Physical therapy (PT) is the cornerstone of lasting back pain recovery. A skilled physical therapist designs a program to strengthen the core and low back muscles, improve flexibility, and enhance overall spinal stability. Unlike a brace, which provides external support, PT empowers your body to support itself, addressing the root causes of pain and preventing recurrence.

The first goal of PT is pain management. Therapists use techniques like manual therapy, heat, to reduce discomfort and relax tight muscles. Once pain is under control, the focus shifts to strengthening exercises. Core-specific movements, such as pelvic tilts, bridges, and bird-dog exercises, target deep stabilizers that protect the spine. Low back exercises, like partial curls or Superman poses, build endurance in the erector spinae and other lumbar muscles. These exercises are typically low-impact, starting with small, controlled movements to avoid strain.

Balance and posture training are equally critical. Poor posture—think slouching at a desk—overloads the spine, while weak balance increases fall risk, especially in older adults with osteoporosis. Therapists incorporate exercises like single-leg stands or tai chi-inspired movements to improve coordination and stability. Over time, these efforts translate to better movement patterns in daily life, from lifting groceries to climbing stairs.

A good PT program is progressive, gradually increasing intensity as your strength improves. For example, a patient recovering from a lumbar strain might start with isometric exercises (contracting muscles without movement) and progress to dynamic ones, like planks or

resistance band exercises. The therapist also educates you on body mechanics—how to bend, lift, and sit properly—to minimize future stress on the spine.

The Synergy of Braces and Physical Therapy

Back braces and physical therapy are most effective when used together. The brace provides immediate relief and stability, allowing you to move with less pain during the early healing phase. Meanwhile, PT builds the muscle strength and endurance needed to transition away from the brace, ensuring long-term resilience. This combination is particularly powerful for conditions like vertebral compression fractures, where initial immobilization is crucial, but restoring function is the ultimate goal.

Consider a patient I treated recently: a patient with a compression fracture from osteoporosis. She started with a rigid brace to manage her acute pain, which dropped from an 8/10 to a 3/10 within weeks. Concurrently, she began PT with gentle core exercises and posture training. By week 12, her pain was minimal, her core strength had increased significantly, and she was brace-free, confidently walking her dog daily.

Practical Tips for Patients

- 1. Work with Specialists:** Consult a spine specialist to choose the right brace and a physical therapist to design a tailored PT plan.
- 2. Be Consistent:** Wear the brace as prescribed and attend PT sessions regularly. Home exercises are just as important.
- 3. Listen to Your Body:** Avoid overexertion, but don't shy away from gradual challenges in PT—they're key to progress.
- 4. Adopt Healthy Habits:** A diet rich in calcium and vitamin D and protein supports bone health, while quitting smoking and staying active enhance recovery.
- 5. Stay Patient:** Recovery takes time, but small, steady gains add up.

A Path Forward

Back braces and physical therapy offer a balanced approach to back pain recovery, blending immediate relief with lasting strength. As a neurosurgeon, I've seen patients transform from pain-ridden to empowered, moving with confidence and ease. If back pain is holding you back, don't wait—reach out to a spine care team. With the right support, you can build a stronger core, a healthier spine, and a life free from pain's grip.



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CELEBRATE MEN'S HEALTH MONTH BY OPTIMIZING TESTOSTERONE LEVELS

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

June is Men's Health Month, an annual opportunity to raise awareness about preventable health issues and encourage early detection and treatment among men and boys. One key focus area is declining testosterone levels, which can have wide-ranging impacts on male health and vitality.

Testosterone is the primary male sex hormone. It plays a crucial role in male sexual and reproductive function, but also influences muscle mass, fat distribution, red blood cell production, and bone health. After age 30, most men begin experiencing a gradual decline in testosterone. By age 70, the decrease in testosterone levels can lead to deficiency symptoms in some men.

Signs and Symptoms of Low Testosterone

Common symptoms associated with low testosterone include:

- Low sex drive
- Erectile dysfunction
- Depressed mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Loss of muscle mass and strength
- Increased body fat
- Breast development (gynecomastia)
- Thinning of bones (osteoporosis)

While a certain decline in testosterone is a normal part of aging, some men experience a more significant drop, leading to a condition called hypogonadism or low testosterone. This can result from dysfunctions in the testes, pituitary gland, or hypothalamus which control testosterone production.

Benefits of Testosterone Replacement Therapy

For men diagnosed with low testosterone by a blood test, testosterone replacement therapy can provide significant benefits by restoring hormone levels to the normal range. Potential benefits include:

Increased Muscle Mass and Strength: Testosterone plays a key role in building and maintaining muscle mass. Low levels make it extremely difficult to build muscle, while replacement therapy increases lean muscle and strength.

More Energy: The fatigue and lack of stamina associated with low testosterone is often relieved with proper treatment, providing a renewed sense of vitality.

Better Mood: Low testosterone often coincides with irritability, depression, and poor concentration. Replacement therapy can help stabilize mood and mental clarity.

Improved Libido and Sexual Function: Perhaps the most well-known benefit, testosterone therapy has been shown to increase sexual desire and help reverse erectile dysfunction related to low hormone levels.

Boosted Bone Density: Testosterone increases bone density during puberty and helps maintain it throughout life. Therapy can help prevent or restore bone loss from osteoporosis.

Reduced Body Fat: While not a sure path to weight loss, testosterone can shift the body's proportion of fat to lean muscle mass when combined with a healthy diet and exercise.

Other Benefits: There's also evidence that testosterone therapy can provide protection against heart disease, cognitive decline, anemia, and insulin resistance in diabetics.

Getting Testosterone Replacement Therapy

If you are experiencing potential symptoms of low testosterone, the first step is to get a simple blood test to check your levels. Prepared for Men's Health Month, doctors are ready to test and diagnose any deficiencies.

For those diagnosed with low testosterone by their doctor, there are several different delivery methods for testosterone replacement therapy approved by the FDA:

- Gels or patches applied to the skin
- Injections given every 1-2 weeks
- Pellets implanted under the skin every 3-6 months
- Oral medications

The different delivery methods can affect how quickly testosterone enters the bloodstream and

maintains normal levels. Your doctor will work with you to find the safest and most effective approach based on your specific needs.

Potential Side Effects and Risks

While testosterone replacement therapy can have tremendous benefits, it also carries some risks if not properly monitored and adjusted. Excessive or poorly controlled therapy can potentially lead to:

- Polycythemia (too many red blood cells)
- Acne or other skin reactions
- Sleep apnea
- Enlarged prostate
- Acceleration of pre-existing prostate cancer

However, the latest research shows that when therapy is dosed and monitored appropriately, these risks are low for otherwise healthy men. Following your doctor's orders for therapy and attending regular checkups is essential for safe and effective results.

This Men's Health Month, don't ignore depleted testosterone levels and the toll it can take on your overall vitality, energy, and wellbeing. See your doctor to get tested, and if diagnosed with low testosterone or hypogonadism, discuss therapeutic options that could help you reclaim peak physical, sexual, and mental performance. With proper treatment, you can Celebrate Men's Health Month by feeling like your best, most virile self again.

Are you ready for a consultation?

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CRYPTOCURRENCY IN FLORIDA DIVORCE: Navigating the Hidden Challenges

By Ross E. Schulman, Associate Attorney

Cryptocurrency—like Bitcoin, Ethereum, and countless altcoins—has surged into the mainstream, transforming divorce settlements in Florida. These digital assets, unlike traditional bank accounts or real estate, create a minefield of challenges in equitable property division.

Their wild price swings, decentralized structure, and ease of concealment can turn a divorce into a financial nightmare without expert legal guidance.

Florida's equitable distribution laws strive for fairness, not a 50-50 split, but cryptocurrency's complexities—skyrocketing or plummeting values, hidden wallets, tax traps, and costly asset tracing—demand specialized expertise to ensure a fair outcome.

What Makes Cryptocurrency So Tricky?

Cryptocurrencies are digital assets powered by blockchain, a decentralized ledger free from banks or government oversight. Stored in digital wallets or on exchanges, they can be traded, held, or spent. But their digital nature is a double-edged sword: while secure, they're also easy to hide. A spouse could stash Bitcoin in an obscure wallet or muddy transaction histories, making it nearly impossible to uncover without forensic expertise. Add in other digital assets like NFTs, and the complexity skyrockets.

Equitable Property Division in Florida

Florida is an equitable distribution state. Florida's equitable distribution model seeks a fair division of marital assets—think income, homes, retirement accounts, and yes, cryptocurrency acquired during the marriage. Separate property, like pre-marriage assets or inheritances, usually stays off the table. But fairness hinges on transparency, and crypto's elusive nature threatens that.

Courts weigh factors like financial contributions, marriage length, and economic needs, but they also punish misconduct—like hiding assets. Cryptocurrency's volatility and anonymity make it a prime tool for deception, so full disclosure is non-negotiable. Without it, you risk losing your fair share.



The Challenge of Valuing Cryptocurrency

Cryptocurrency is unstable. The price of these assets can move up and down in a matter of hours, turning valuation into a high-stakes guessing game. Courts typically peg assets to a specific date, but when Bitcoin's price rollercoasters daily, pinning down a "fair" value feels like chasing a mirage. A \$50,000 holding today could be \$30,000—or \$80,000—tomorrow. Not only do you need to access the proper valuation, you may have to justify the date you are basing the valuation and why this particular date should be relied on by the Court.

Courts often require valuation at a specific cutoff date, but determining a fair division can be difficult when prices swing unpredictably.

Adding to the challenge of properly valuing Bitcoin, is finding that it exists in the first place. Tucked away in digital wallets or obscure exchanges, it's easier to conceal than other assets. In contentious divorces, a spouse might transfer Bitcoin to a secret wallet or time sales to skew valuations, leaving the other spouse shortchanged. Uncovering these assets often requires forensic accountants and tech-savvy attorneys—expertise most don't have on speed dial.

Division Strategies for Cryptocurrency in Divorce
Splitting cryptocurrency is no simple task, thanks to its volatility and tax implications. Smart planning is critical to avoid costly missteps. Common approaches include:

- **Buyout Agreement** – One spouse compensates the other in cash for their share of the crypto.
- **Asset Division** – The cryptocurrency is split between spouses based on its current market value.
- **Liquidation** – The couple agrees to sell the crypto and divide the proceeds, however selling triggers capital gains taxes that can eat into your share.

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Cryptocurrency in divorce isn't just an asset—it's a puzzle wrapped in a riddle. From tracking hidden wallets to nailing down valuations and dodging tax pitfalls, the stakes are high, and the margin for error is slim. An attorney skilled in crypto and Florida divorce law can uncover assets, negotiate fair divisions, and protect your financial future. If you are ready to discuss the complex nature of dividing digital marital assets, Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. are here to help.

Call or email Attorney Ross E. Schulman for a consultation and to learn more.



About the Author

Ross E. Schulman is a highly rated family law and estate planning attorney at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. in Naples, Florida. He is licensed to practice law in Florida and New York and is a Certified Financial Litigator (CFL™). Ross' Juris Doctorate is from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Yeshiva University. He recently completed the University of Miami School of Law, Heckerling Graduate Program in Estate Planning, with a Master of Laws in Estate Planning LL.M.

Before becoming a lawyer, Ross worked in finance and gained strong negotiation skills while working on Wall Street. He traded financial products at Spear Leeds & Kellogg (later Goldman Sachs) and Bear Stearns. He also worked as a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley, where he gained extensive knowledge about asset classes and various financial products. Ross is highly qualified to help you handle a variety of legal issues.



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Beat the Heat: Protecting Yourself from Heat Illness During Florida's Scorching Summer

By Tyrone Medina, MD

Florida's summer temperatures can be unforgiving, with heat indices often soaring well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. As residents and visitors navigate the Sunshine State's intense heat and humidity, understanding heat-related illnesses becomes crucial for staying safe and healthy. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are serious medical conditions that can develop rapidly, but with proper knowledge and prevention strategies, they are entirely avoidable.

Understanding Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat illness occurs when your body's natural cooling system becomes overwhelmed by extreme temperatures. The human body typically maintains its core temperature around 98.6°F through sweating and increased blood flow to the skin. However, when ambient temperatures rise significantly, especially combined with high humidity levels common in Florida, these natural cooling mechanisms can fail.

Heat exhaustion represents the milder form of heat illness, characterized by heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, headache, and dizziness. While uncomfortable and concerning, heat exhaustion can typically be managed with immediate cooling measures and rest. However, if left untreated, it can rapidly progress to heat stroke.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the body's core temperature rises above 104°F. This condition can cause permanent organ damage or death if not treated immediately. Warning signs include altered mental state, confusion, agitation, hot and dry skin (though sweating may still occur), rapid pulse, and potentially loss of consciousness.

High-Risk Populations

Certain individuals face elevated risks for heat-related illnesses. Adults over 65 have reduced ability to regulate body temperature and may take medications that impair heat regulation. Young children, particularly infants, cannot regulate their body temperature as effectively as adults and may not communicate their discomfort clearly.

People with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or respiratory conditions are more vulnerable to heat stress.



Additionally, individuals taking certain medications including diuretics, beta-blockers, or psychiatric medications may have impaired heat tolerance. Outdoor workers, athletes, and anyone engaging in strenuous physical activity during peak heat hours also face increased risk.

Prevention Strategies

Preventing heat illness requires proactive planning and awareness. Stay hydrated by drinking water regularly throughout the day, even before feeling thirsty. Avoid alcohol and excessive caffeine, which can contribute to dehydration. Plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day, typically before 10 AM or after 6 PM.

Dress appropriately in lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing that allows air circulation and reflects heat. Seek shade whenever possible and take frequent breaks in air-conditioned environments. Never leave children, elderly individuals, or pets in parked vehicles, even for short periods.

Recognize your personal limits and listen to your body's warning signals. If you begin feeling dizzy, nauseous, or excessively fatigued, move to a cooler environment immediately and begin cooling measures.

Treatment and When to Seek Help

For heat exhaustion, immediately move to a cool, shaded area and remove excess clothing. Apply cool water to the skin, use fans if available, and sip cool fluids slowly. Rest with legs elevated and monitor symptoms closely.

Heat stroke requires immediate emergency medical attention. Call 911 immediately while beginning aggressive cooling measures. Remove clothing, apply ice packs to neck, armpits, and groin areas, and fan the person while applying cool water to their skin.

Professional Medical Care

Florida's extreme heat conditions make access to quality medical care essential for residents and visitors alike. Whether you're experiencing heat-related symptoms or need preventive care advice for high-risk conditions, having a trusted healthcare provider is invaluable.

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What is Rhinitis?

An In-Depth Look at This Common Nasal Condition

Rhinitis is an incredibly prevalent condition, impacting over 20 million adults and 7 million children in the United States annually. Despite its widespread nature, many people remain unfamiliar with this nasal nuisance. So, what exactly is rhinitis?

At its core, rhinitis refers to inflammation of the nasal passages and mucous membranes. While often mistaken for sinusitis, the majority of presumed "sinus" issues are actually cases of chronic rhinitis. Recognizing this key distinction is critical for proper diagnosis and treatment.

The Hallmark Symptoms

The telltale signs of rhinitis include nasal congestion, difficulty breathing through the nose, frequent sneezing, runny nose, post-nasal drip, itchy nose and eyes, and headaches. These bothersome symptoms arise when the sensitive nasal lining becomes inflamed and swollen.

Under normal circumstances, the nasal mucous membranes act as a filter, trapping dust, pollen, bacteria, and other airborne particles in a thin mucus layer. Tiny hair-like projections called cilia then sweep this debris down the throat to be expelled from the body. However, when irritated, these membranes react by producing excess mucus, swelling up, and obstructing airflow - giving rise to the characteristic rhinitis symptoms.

While rhinitis is typically not a serious condition, its effects can significantly disrupt daily activities like sleeping, exercising, and concentrating.

Two Main Types

Rhinitis can be classified into two overarching categories: acute and chronic. Acute cases are short-lived, resolving within just a few days for most people. In contrast, chronic rhinitis lingers for weeks or months at a time, often recurring repeatedly.

Allergic Rhinitis: The Usual Culprit

In the vast majority of cases, rhinitis stems from an allergic reaction. When the immune system mistakenly identifies a harmless substance (known as an allergen) as a threat, it kicks into overdrive. This prompts the production of antibodies called Immunoglobulin E (IgE) to neutralize the perceived danger.

However, this process also triggers the release of inflammatory chemicals like histamine, which then cause the swelling and irritation characteristic of allergic rhinitis. Common allergens include pollen, dust, dander, mold, certain foods, and more.

Allergic rhinitis can be further divided into seasonal and perennial categories. Seasonal cases are caused by allergens present during specific times of year, such as spring tree pollen. Perennial rhinitis, on the other hand, persists year-round due to ongoing exposure to triggers like dust mites or pet dander.

The Diagnostic Process

If you visit an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist with suspected rhinitis, they will gather detailed information about your symptoms, their onset and progression, potential triggers, prior treatments or testing, medical history, and more.

The physician will then carefully examine the interior of your nasal passages, evaluating the condition of the mucous membranes, assessing mucus color and amount, and checking for any abnormalities like polyps or a deviated septum that could contribute to obstruction.

Depending on the exam findings, additional diagnostic tests may be recommended, such as allergy testing, pulmonary function tests, imaging studies like CT scans or X-rays, or laboratory analysis. Many of these can be conveniently performed in the ENT clinic.

Once a rhinitis diagnosis is confirmed, your doctor will develop a personalized treatment strategy tailored to your specific needs, symptoms, and triggers.

Treating the Nuisance

For cases of mild allergic rhinitis, your treatment plan may start with environmental control measures, nasal saline irrigation, antihistamines, or corticosteroid nasal sprays to reduce inflammation.

If these initial steps prove insufficient, your ENT may recommend additional interventions like decongestants (for short-term use), turbinate reduction to reduce obstructive nasal tissue, or minimally invasive procedures like balloon sinuplasty to improve sinus drainage.

For severe, persistent allergic rhinitis, immunotherapy remains the most effective long-term solution. Through a course of allergy shots or sublingual (under-the-tongue) therapy, your immune system can be gradually desensitized to your specific triggers over time.

In some cases, surgical procedures like rhinoplasty or septoplasty may be considered to correct structural nasal abnormalities that exacerbate symptoms.

No matter the rhinitis type or severity, an individualized multimodal treatment plan is key to achieving lasting relief and an improved quality of life.

By combining patient education, environmental control strategies, medical management, and specialized ENT services, the experts can tackle even the most stubborn cases of this nasal nuisance. Don't let rhinitis disrupt your daily routine - seek expert care to overcome those congested, drippy, sneezy days for good.



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

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



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



Carly Treibits, PA-C is a graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University and is a Board Certified Physician Assistant. She is a member of the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

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Innovative Teaching is Integral to FGCU's Mission

Marieb College of Health & Human Services employs cutting-edge educational technology

Innovative teaching is one of the keys to preparing the next generation of highly skilled healthcare professionals. At Florida Gulf Coast University, Marieb College of Health & Human Services is pioneering a new era in healthcare education with immersive learning experiences and cutting-edge technology that ensure graduates are ready to excel in the rapidly evolving health professions.

Imagine stepping into a classroom where a holographic image isn't just Hollywood special effects but tangible reality. That's the vision realized by Marieb College, where seven state-of-the-art units from Proto Hologram have been integrated into the curriculum. The college has one EPIC Hologram, about 4.5 feet wide and a little over 7 feet tall, that can deliver a life-size holographic-style image. Using 2D images or video, the unit creates a 3D-like experience. The other six units in Marieb College are tabletop models, making them easy to transport from classroom to classroom.

All seven units have the same capabilities; each has a smart camera enabling two-way communication and projects 4k images and video. Eventually, the units will be housed in a new center planned for FGCU's next academic building. With the help of such advanced technology, students experience realistic scenarios and develop skills needed to provide better patient care.

With the click of a button, they are transported into a telepresence healthcare technology known as Dr. Hologram. This innovative tool allows students to engage with virtual patients in a safe and controlled environment, honing their diagnostic and empathetic skills, according to Joe Buhain, director of interprofessional simulation and emerging technology in Marieb College. Buhain recently received the Citizen of the Year Award from SWFL Inc., a regional chamber of commerce serving businesses in Lee, Collier and Charlotte Counties, for his efforts organizing a simulated disaster exercise on campus that involved dozens of community partners.

The possibilities of interactive technology in education are endless. Whether it's presenting pre-recorded cases or beaming in standardized patients or guest speakers, Dr. Hologram bridges the gap between theory and practice. In healthcare simulations, the idea is to create realistic environments to increase the ability of the learner to suspend disbelief.

Putting theory through its paces

By immersing nursing, social work and health sciences students in lifelike scenarios, Marieb College is cultivating a new generation of healthcare professionals equipped to tackle real-world challenges with confidence. Nursing students perfect their skills in labs that emulate operating rooms, intensive care units and other patient care environments that are equipped with state-of-the-art mannequins that talk, bleed and present like humans. Exercise science students get hands-on experience using anti-gravity technology and gold-standard equipment such as Bod Pod body composition analysis systems.

With such experiences complementing rigorous classroom instruction, Marieb College maintains 100% graduate employment rate within six months of degree completion.

But Marieb College's educational innovation doesn't stop there.

The "Nursing Escape Room" at FGCU was designed to reinforce nursing fundamentals in an adrenaline-fueled setting. Picture a hospital room transformed into a labyrinth of clues and puzzles, where students race against the clock to diagnose a simulated patient's condition.

In this high-stakes game, every decision matters. Guided by faculty, teams of nursing students embark on a quest to unravel the mystery of "Mr. Jones," a lifelike human patient simulator. With each clue discovered and problem solved, they inch closer to the correct diagnosis, reinforcing classroom learning along the way.

In the safe confines of simulation, students are empowered to make errors and learn from them, ensuring they're better prepared for the realities of patient care. These simulations not only sharpen clinical skills but also instill confidence and resilience in Southwest Florida's future healthcare professionals. All of this contributes to FGCU's ranking among the top-10 registered nursing education programs in Florida.

But the Nursing Escape Room isn't just about solving puzzles. It's about fostering teamwork, communication and critical thinking skills essential for success in the field. In an era where healthcare delivery is increasingly team-based, students are encouraged to work alongside peers from diverse backgrounds, gaining invaluable insights into the interconnected nature of modern healthcare systems.

Marieb College fosters such collaboration and interdisciplinary learning through its innovative approach to education. With cutting-edge tools like hologram technology and immersive simulation, graduates of the college's seven bachelor's and 12 graduate programs are poised to embark on a transformative journey toward becoming the next generation of healthcare leaders.

Compassion. Skill. Discipline. Critical thinking. Professionalism. The healing professions require all in equal degrees. Marieb College creates well-rounded, 360-degree practitioners through hands-on learning, intensive clinical experience and personalized attention.

For more information about Marieb College's programs, go to fgcu.edu/mariebcollege.



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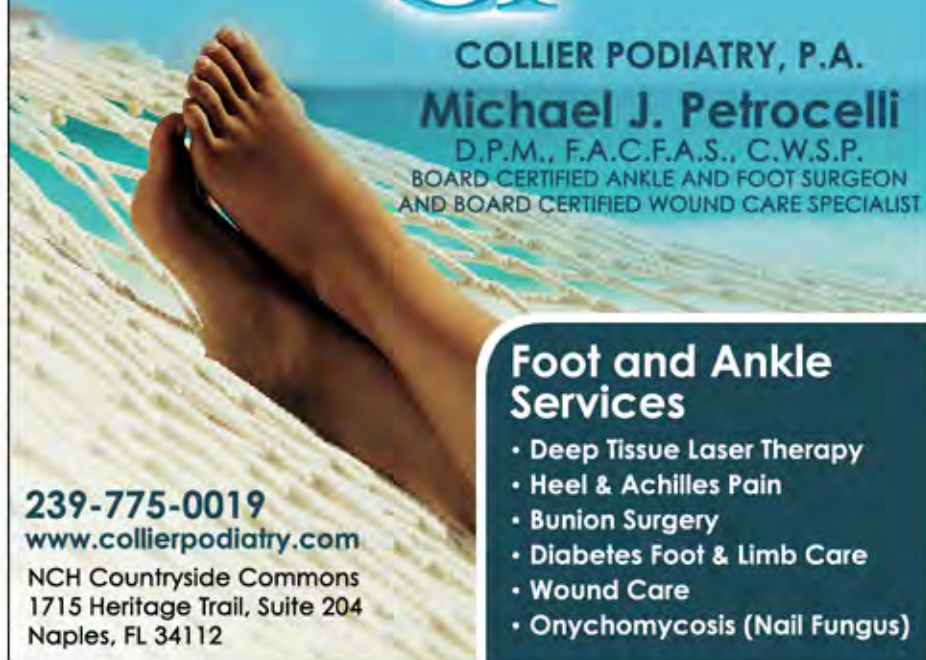
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Hip Fractures After a Fall:

What I Learned From My Hip Fracture

By Susan Keller, BSN, MPH

On election day, 2022, I enthusiastically rode my bicycle to the local voting precinct to cast my vote. After quickly stopping bicycle, my foot failed to clear the bicycle seat, sending me crashing onto my left hip.

I lay in the street motionless, in childbirth like pain, unable to properly move my left leg.

I didn't wait for someone to ask if they should call an ambulance, I begged bystanders to call an ambulance, I asked every minute, where was the ambulance? Two guys lifted me up. The pain and abnormal position of my dangling leg was a sure indication something was wrong.

The ambulance ride to the hospital seemed to take hours, yet ER triage time seemed to take just minutes. There was a flurry of healthcare team introductions, forms to sign and then preparation for an x-ray.

My belt wasn't even unbuckled when the nurses knew my new pair of J Crew shorts would have to be cut off. I was in significant pain and didn't care.

I was fortunate to have fallen mid-day, as the hospital had an orthopedic surgeon on call and readily accessible.

Dr. Robert Swift, my orthopedic surgeon addressed the fracture head on, preparing me for surgery, which I surely thought could wait at least three days. He informed me this was not the case, as the situation was an urgency.

Two hours later, my sedation had worn off and I was welcomed to the orthopedic unit. I thought surely an indwelling catheter would have been inserted so I wouldn't have to get out of bed to pee, but there was none. Getting out of bed, if to just go to the bathroom, was instrumental in the recovery process.

My mindset changed from "I can't move" to how to "how can I move so it's not painful?"

During my week stay at the hospital, the nursing staff inspected the surgical dressing, assessed my pain and recovery progress. Physical therapy taught me how to reposition myself, get me out of bed and how to walk using a walker.

The goal of the healthcare team was to ensure I was healing and to provide me with the knowledge, motivation and tools to have a successful recovery at home. I was transferred to an inpatient rehabilitation

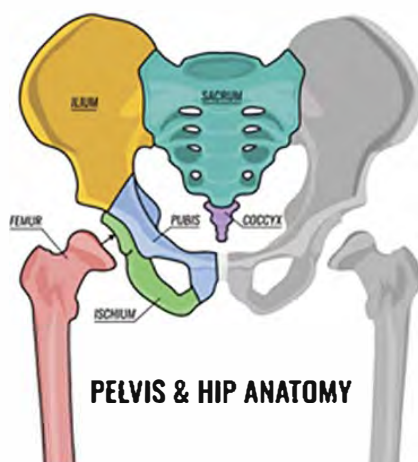
program at a local rehabilitation hospital. Physical therapy was scheduled daily, progressing from two sessions a day, increasing to four times a day by week's end.

Home physical therapy was scheduled before the hospital discharge. Physical therapy reinforced the leg exercises taught in the hospital. I progressed from using a walker to using a rollator. While I was sometimes uncomfortable performing the exercises, they were instrumental in my healing process. Ice, pain medication and my mantra "I can do this" helped the healing process even more.

The partnership between my health care provider and orthopedic surgeon gave me peace of mind that progress was being made.

Almost two months after my hip surgery successfully completing physical therapy. I rode my bike past my neighbors, only to find her sprawled in her driveway, in obvious pain. We elected to drive to the hospital. While she was fortunate not to need surgery, the CT scan revealed she had a pelvic fracture. Fortunately, Dr. Swift was her orthopedic surgeon as well.

There is confusion about what exactly a hip fracture is. Is it a femur fracture? Is there a hip bone? Is a pelvic fracture worse? The hip is made up of the femur and the pelvis. When there is a fall onto the side all of those structures are at risk. There can be fractures of the femur through the top part of the bone. There can be fractures that separate the ball of the femur through the neck. There can be surrounding fractures around the pelvis on the front and even into the back of the pelvis. Many of these fractures are referred to as "hip fractures."



Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bone's mineral density and mass is decreased, thereby negatively impacting bones strength, thereby increasing the risk of bone fracture (broken bones).

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Race
- Women greater then.
- Age (age 50 and over)
- Men with low testosterone levels
- Smokers and heavy drinking (more than two drinks a day on most days)
- Weight (less than 125 pounds)
- Previous bariatric surgery
- Previous fragility fracture as a senior
- Kidney failure, inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, liver disease or an eating disorder
- Taking oral corticosteroids on a daily basis, or other high-risk medications (e.g., thyroid hormone replacement, immunosuppressant drugs, warfarin)

Osteopenia is a loss of bone mineral density (BMD) that weakens bones, normally this occurs first and if untreated can progress to Osteoporosis.

Signs and risk factors, including:

- Height loss
- Receding gums
- Curved, stooped forward shape of the spine
- Lower back pain
- Prior fragility fractures with mild impact can occur at the shoulder, elbow, wrist, spine and ankle.

My hip fracture motivated me to reduce my osteoporosis risk factors that I could control, including maintaining a proper weight, working on flexibility and range of motion exercise, performing resistance exercises, eating a healthy diet, and participating in daily weight bearing activities.

A fall is just not a fall, see your Orthopedic Surgeon or go to the ER. In my case Dr. Swift worked to get me to the operating room urgently. This prevented me from lying in a hospital bed in pain waiting to go to the Operating room. Early intervention got me out of bed and on to a speedy recovery. Early intervention was a key to my early recovery, and a hallmark of Dr. Swift's commitment to care.

Feel free to contact Dr. Robert Swift or ask for him in the Emergency Department if you fall and have concern for a fracture.

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The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

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

Of the many hormones in the body, a select few are typically categorized as being for one gender or for the other. Many people are often surprised to learn, though, that despite these hormones being more prominent in one gender, they are essential for proper body functioning in both.

One example of these hormones is progesterone, which is often considered for women, although it has many essential roles in men. However, progesterone can decline in both genders for a number of reasons, including with age or due to health conditions. When progesterone levels fall, unpleasant symptoms can occur, which is why progesterone replacement is a crucial treatment for those with unbalanced hormones.

What Is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone most often known to be released by the corpus luteum after a woman has ovulated. Also referred to as the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy by thickening the lining and preventing muscle contractions that would expel an egg.

Despite its primary role in preparing the female body for pregnancy, though, progesterone is also vital for men, albeit with different roles.

Let’s further discuss the role of progesterone in both genders and why it is crucial for men and women to have balanced progesterone levels.

The Role of Progesterone in Women

Progesterone varies considerably through a woman’s menstrual cycle, with it being produced in low levels during the first half but rising considerably following ovulation. If a woman becomes pregnant, progesterone remains high throughout the pregnancy and aids in breast milk production upon delivery of the baby.

While the ovaries initially produce progesterone, the placenta begins producing progesterone at a higher rate after 8 or 10 weeks of pregnancy. This increase in progesterone keeps the body from releasing more eggs and prepares the breasts to produce milk.



Despite the role of progesterone in pregnancy, it can also be used to prevent pregnancy. In fact, progesterone is often used by itself or in combination with estrogen in hormonal contraceptives. When in this format, it helps the cervical mucus thicken, making it difficult for sperm to reach and fertilize an egg. It can also cause the uterine lining to thin, or it may stop ovulation entirely.

Because of these extremes in the body, promoting an ideal amount of progesterone is critical for healthy fertility, if pregnancy is a woman’s goal.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Women

Some signs of low progesterone in women include:

- missing periods or having abnormal periods
- uterine bleeding
- repeated miscarriages
- spotting and pain while pregnant
- infertility

Progesterone and estrogen are also closely related, so if progesterone is too low, it may cause estrogen levels to become high, which can cause weight gain, headaches, or mood swings.

The Role of Progesterone in Men

Despite being considered the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone is also an essential hormone in men.

In men, progesterone plays a vital role in mood regulation and keeping the mind calm. It also impacts libido and promotes fertility from the man’s side. This is because progesterone influences spermiogenesis, or the creation of sperm; if the amount of progesterone in a man is too low, the body might not be able to produce as much sperm, which can influence a couple’s ability to conceive.

Progesterone is also crucial for the biosynthesis of testosterone, otherwise known as the male sex hormone, which is responsible for the development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair, muscle growth, and a deeper voice.

Progesterone also plays an essential role in the male body regarding counteracting the effects of estrogen, which can cause testosterone levels to decline. Proper progesterone levels ensure that these sex hormones are in the correct balance.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Men

Some of the signs of low progesterone in men include:

- hair loss
- low libido
- fatigue
- weight gain
- depression
- breast growth
- muscle loss
- bone loss
- erectile dysfunction

Low progesterone levels can also increase the risk of certain health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and prostatism.

Estrogen Dominance and Progesterone

Progesterone is an antagonist to estrogen, giving it an important role in keeping estrogen levels in check. However, this also means that if progesterone levels are too low, estrogen levels can become high without anything to keep them in the correct range, a condition called estrogen dominance.

While estrogen dominance is most often referred to in women, it can affect men as well, with both genders having shared and also different symptoms.

Women with estrogen dominance may have symptoms that include:

- swelling and tenderness in the breasts
- low libido
- bloating
- weight gain
- mood swings
- headaches
- increase premenstrual syndrome symptoms
- fatigue
- cold hands or feet
- memory problems
- anxiety and panic attacks

Men can share some of the above symptoms in addition to experiencing infertility issues, breast tissue growth, or erectile dysfunction.

Normal estrogen levels in adult, menopausal women range from 15 – 350 pg/ml. In adult men, estrogen levels should range from 10 – 40 pg/ml. Estrogen counts higher than these ranges may signify low progesterone.

What Causes Low Progesterone?

There are many causes of low progesterone, some due to a temporary situation, whereas others may be more chronic.

Hypothyroidism

Many of the hormones in the body interact, which is evident between the thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and progesterone. With hypothyroidism, the thyroid does not produce enough hormones, and since the thyroid is responsible for regulating the endocrine system, this can then influence how well the body is able to produce progesterone.

It is also possible for low progesterone to lead to hypothyroidism, so this connection is bi-directional.

Low Cholesterol

Cholesterol is needed by the body in order to make progesterone. So, if your cholesterol is low, your body does not have enough of the building blocks required to produce enough progesterone.

Stress

Stress contributes to many health conditions, and low progesterone is one of them. This is because the hormone secreted by the body when in a perceived stressful situation, cortisol, utilizes the resources needed to make progesterone.

Essentially, when the body is stressed, it halts progesterone production in order to increase the amount of cortisol produced. For those experiencing chronic stress, this means that cortisol continually interferes with progesterone production.

Anovulatory Cycle

An anovulatory cycle is a menstrual cycle where ovulation does not occur. Since a rise in progesterone is triggered by the release of an egg and the empty follicle it leaves behind called the corpus luteum, an anovulatory cycle results in no increase in progesterone.

Anovulatory cycles are common in those on certain types of birth control or with PCOS.

Abnormal Bodyweight

Your body weight can play a prominent role in progesterone production because of its impact on the menstrual cycle. This is because women need a certain amount of body fat in order to have a regular cycle, which leads to ovulation and a rise in progesterone. Because of this, low body weight may impede ovulation, leading to no progesterone production.

Problems can occur at the other end of the spectrum as well, though. This is because fat cells produce estrogen, so high body fat can result in an overproduction of estrogen, which can lead to low progesterone. Studies have shown this correlation between obesity and low progesterone in men as well.

Prolactin Disorder

Prolactin is a hormone produced by the pituitary, and it negatively affects the production of sex hormone precursors. Those with hyperprolactinemia produce too much prolactin, which can disrupt the menstrual cycle, keeping progesterone from being produced.

Correcting Low Progesterone

Progesterone replacement therapy involves progestins, which are synthetic compounds mimicking the effects of progesterone on the body.

Some reasons why someone may be treated with progesterone hormone therapy are to:

- correct a low amount of progesterone due to underproduction
- bring on menstruation
- reverse low progesterone resulting from certain medications
- replace progesterone that is limited due to specific medical procedures

There are many different forms of progesterone hormone therapy, such as:

- injections
- oral capsules
- vaginal gels
- vaginal inserts
- vaginal suppositories

The ideal method of progesterone replacement will depend on gender, symptoms, and personal preferences.

The Importance of Progesterone Replacement

Besides helping to address problems with fertility, progesterone replacement can also be essential for a healthy pregnancy in women. For example, women who are pregnant, but have low progesterone, may be at a greater risk of preterm delivery or miscarriage. Replacing progesterone can help prevent these complications from occurring.



Progesterone replacement produces similar benefits in men regarding improving fertility due to its role in spermatogenesis and the fact that low progesterone can lead to erectile dysfunction.

Progesterone can also help with other symptoms affecting well-being, including those that appear in men with low progesterone. These benefits can include an improvement in mood, better sleep, and stronger bones.

Some cases of low progesterone are temporary, but for those suffering significantly from low progesterone, it is likely due to a chronic cause, and the only way to find relief is by addressing the hormonal imbalance.

Progesterone can be supplemented in many forms, such as injections, pills, or creams, which help raise progesterone levels and assist the body in functioning correctly, reversing unpleasant symptoms. Working with a doctor who specializes in hormones can also ensure that you get just the right amount of progesterone, as too much can also cause problems, especially for those looking to conceive.

By adequately balancing progesterone, all other hormones in the body can work in balance again, significantly improving your quality of life.

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New Advances in the Treatment of Coronary Artery Disease

By James V Talano MD MBA FACC, Director: SWICFT Institute Naples Florida

Although coronary artery disease (CAD) remains the leading cause of death in the United States, I am excited to share with you that we are in an era of advances that are transforming the way we treat CAD. By understanding these developments, you can be better informed about the options available for your heart health.

Understanding CAD

CAD occurs when the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become narrowed or blocked by a buildup of fatty plaque and calcium (atherosclerosis). This can lead to angina (chest pain), heart attacks, heart failure, and other serious complications. Traditional treatments have included lifestyle changes, medications, angioplasty with stenting, and coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). While these approaches remain effective, we now have newer tools and techniques that further improve outcomes.

Personalized Medicine and Genetic Risk Profiling

One of the most promising frontiers in CAD management is Precision Medicine—tailoring treatment based on an individual's genetic makeup, environment, and lifestyle. Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic are developing risk prediction models that incorporate polygenic risk scores, allowing us to identify patients who may be genetically predisposed to CAD even before signs and symptoms arise [Cleveland Clinic, 2023].

This approach enhances early detection and allows for preventive strategies well before disease develops, especially in younger patients with strong family histories of coronary heart disease.

Advanced Imaging for Better Diagnosis

Recent advancements in non-invasive imaging, particularly coronary CT angiography (CCTA) a coronary angiogram performed with a CT without invasive catheters, are helping us detect CAD more accurately and earlier than ever before. The SCOT-HEART trial, cited by Massachusetts General Hospital, showed that using CCTA in patients with suspected angina reduced heart attacks and cardiac deaths over five years compared to standard care [Massachusetts General Hospital, 2022].

Newer software using AI-assisted image analysis is also being used to better assess plaque characteristics and degree of artery blockage to identify patients at high risk of cardiovascular events.

High-Intensity Lipid-Lowering Therapies

While statins remain the first-line therapy for lowering cholesterol, recent drugs offer powerful new tools for patients who don't achieve target LDL levels or cannot tolerate statins.

- PCSK9 inhibitors such as alirocumab (Praluent) and evolocumab (Repatha) dramatically lower LDL cholesterol and have been shown to reduce cardiovascular events, especially in high-risk patients [Mayo Clinic, 2022].
- Inclisiran, a small interfering RNA (siRNA) therapy, provides twice-yearly injections to reduce LDL by silencing PCSK9 production in the liver. Its long-acting nature improves compliance and reduces cardiovascular risk over time [Cleveland Clinic, 2023].
- Bempedoic acid (Nexleto) is another novel oral agent approved for patients with statin intolerance. It works upstream from statins in the cholesterol synthesis pathway and shows promise in reducing major cardiac events [American College of Cardiology, 2023].

Anti-Inflammatory Therapies

Recent studies have underscored the role of inflammation in progressing atherosclerosis, leading to the development of therapies targeting inflammatory pathways.

The CANTOS trial, supported by the American Heart Association, demonstrated that canakinumab, an interleukin-1 β inhibitor, reduced recurrent cardiovascular events in patients with a prior heart attack, independent of cholesterol levels [AHA, 2022]. Although not yet widely used due to cost and side effects, these findings open the door to future anti-inflammatory treatments for CAD.

Just recently another very commonly used drug for treating inflammation in joints ie colchicine has now been shown to halt progression of soft atherosclerotic plaque in coronary arteries as detected by CTCA.

Drug-Eluting Stents: The Next Generation

Percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) with stenting has evolved significantly. Today's next-generation drug-eluting stents (DES) use ultrathin struts and more biocompatible or even bioresorbable polymers, reducing the risk of in-stent thrombosis (clotting) and restenosis.

Recent trials, such as those led by the Cleveland Clinic and the American College of Cardiology, have demonstrated that these new stents offer superior outcomes, especially in patients with complex lesions or diabetes [Cleveland Clinic, 2023].

Bioresorbable scaffolds, which naturally dissolve over time, are being refined and may provide a more natural restoration of coronary function in the future.

Minimally Invasive Coronary Bypass

Traditional open-heart surgery for multivessel CAD is effective but comes with a longer recovery time. Minimally invasive options, like robot-assisted or endoscopic CABG, are now being performed at major centers including Mayo Clinic and Mass General [Mayo Clinic, 2023] and soon to be instituted at Naples Community Hospital.

These techniques involve smaller incisions, reduced chest trauma, shorter hospital stays, and quicker return to normal activities—all while achieving outcomes comparable to conventional surgery in appropriately selected patients.

Cardiac Rehabilitation 2.0: Virtual and AI-Enhanced

The traditional model of cardiac rehab—supervised exercise and education in a hospital or clinic setting—has expanded. Now, telehealth-based programs allow patients to participate from home, using wearable devices that transmit real-time data to care teams. The Cleveland Clinic has successfully implemented such programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic [Cleveland Clinic, 2022].

Additionally, AI-driven coaching platforms help patients adhere to diet, exercise, and medication plans with real-time feedback, improving long-term outcomes.

Future Directions: Gene and Cell Therapies

Ongoing trials at academic centers like Mass General are exploring the use of gene therapy to promote new blood vessel growth in ischemic areas and stem cell therapies at University of Miami to regenerate damaged heart tissue. These remain experimental but may revolutionize how we treat advanced or refractory CAD in the coming decade.

Final Thoughts

Coronary artery disease is no longer a one-size-fits-all diagnosis. Today's advances allow us to tailor treatment and prevention strategies more precisely and less invasively than ever before. Whether through cutting-edge medications, precision diagnostics, or innovative procedures, we are better equipped to prevent heart attacks and improve quality of life for our patients.

As a cardiologist, I encourage you to remain engaged with your care, ask questions, and consider how these evolving therapies might fit into your personalized treatment plan.

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Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

Polycystic kidney disease is the fourth leading cause of kidney failure and 600,000 people in the United States have the disorder. Polycystic kidney disease (PKD) affects the kidneys with cysts that grow and are filled with fluid. These cysts can damage the kidneys, and essentially take over the kidney's ability to work properly, especially if there are numerous cysts growing at one time. These cysts can severely reduce kidney function.

Poly cystic kidney disease can also affect other organs in the body including the spleen, ovaries, liver, pancreas, bowels, brain, and heart. Most people don't develop PKD until middle age, and the symptoms can range from mild to severe.

The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

- High blood pressure
- Back or side pain
- Swollen abdomen
- Blood in the urine
- Frequent bladder and/or kidney infections
- Fluttering or pounding chest
- Chest pain
- Headaches

50 to 60 percent of individuals with PKD will develop kidney failure.

PKD Treatment

Individuals with PKD will need dialysis and possibly a kidney transplant. There are also medications that can help treat the disorder and certain diets that will help to prevent the growth of the cysts, which can stop the progression of the disease. PKD can be genetic, so it's best to speak to your physician about your children's health or any planned pregnancies.

How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

1. Keeping blood pressure under 130/80 or if you have diabetes or protein in the urine, under 125/75.
2. Taking certain types of medications called ACE-Inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers.

3. If you are diabetic, keeping blood sugars tightly controlled (HbA1c less than 7.0).
4. Avoiding medications that harm your kidneys such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. (NSAIDs). Examples are Motrin, ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, Naprosyn. A Cox-2 inhibitor called Celebrex is also harmful.
5. Avoiding, if possible, IV contrast dye used for CT scans and heart catheterizations and gadolinium used in MRIs.
6. Controlling your cholesterol.
7. Quit smoking.
8. If overweight, losing weight.
9. Treating anemia if present.
10. Avoiding Fleet phospho-soda (oral) and Fleet enemas for patients in Stage 4 and 5 chronic kidney disease.

Associates in Nephrology

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Managing these complications and preparing patients for renal replacement therapy is a complex process of visits, treatment, and teaching sessions. Our medical team consists of nephrologists (kidney doctors), nurse practitioners, registered dietitians, nurses, and medical assistants.

Services Provided

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

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

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

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HOME HEALTH SAFETY

By Scott Briggs - American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC

The Importance of Humidity and Mold Checks

Maintaining a healthy home environment is crucial for overall well-being, particularly for vulnerable populations such as young children, those with other health issues and the elderly. Among the many aspects of home health safety, two often overlooked but significant factors are humidity control and mold prevention. These elements are intricately linked, as excessive humidity creates a conducive environment for mold growth, which can have detrimental health effects.

The Role of Humidity in Home Health

Humidity refers to the amount of moisture in the air. While some humidity is necessary for comfort and health; excessive or insufficient levels can lead to problems. The ideal indoor humidity level is generally between 30% and 50%.

The Dangers of Mold

Mold is a type of fungus that thrives in moist or humid environments. It reproduces through tiny spores that are not visible to the naked eye and can easily become airborne. In addition mold produces a byproduct in addition to spores called mycotoxins. A poison which causes illness. Once inhaled, these spores and mycotoxins can cause a range of health problems. The health risks associated with mold include:

- 1. Respiratory Issues:** Mold spores can trigger asthma attacks and allergic reactions, including sneezing, coughing, and throat irritation.
- 2. Infections:** People with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of developing fungal infections from mold exposure.
- 3. Toxic Effects:** Certain types of mold, such as *Stachybotrys chartarum* (black mold), produce mycotoxins, which can cause more severe health issues like chronic fatigue, headaches, and neurological problems.

Why the Elderly Are More Susceptible

The elderly are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of mold for several reasons:

- 1. Weakened Immune Systems:** Aging naturally weakens the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight off infections and allergens.



- 2. Existing Health Conditions:** Many elderly individuals have pre-existing health conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or cardiovascular diseases, which can be exacerbated by mold exposure.

- 3. Reduced Mobility:** Limited mobility can make it difficult for the elderly to maintain a clean environment or to notice and address areas of excessive moisture or mold growth.

Steps for Controlling Humidity and Preventing Mold
Effective humidity control and mold prevention require a proactive approach. Here are some practical steps to help maintain a healthy home environment:

- 1. Use a Hygrometer:** Regularly monitor indoor humidity levels with a hygrometer/humidity meter. Since rooms can vary based on air flow it's better to place several throughout the home. Place them where you are likely to view to keep monitoring. Aim to keep humidity between 30% and 50%. Seeing a jump can indicate a new water intrusion or malfunction in your HVAC.
- 2. Ventilation:** Ensure proper ventilation in high-moisture areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements. Use exhaust fans (may have to leave on for longer than you plan on being there, leave the doors open to reduce moisture levels. Tip: Check how good your exhaust fan is working by placing a single piece of toilet paper by it to see if it is strong enough to hold at the fan. If not then replace with a stronger motor unit.

- 3. Dehumidifiers and Air Conditioners:** Use dehumidifiers in damp areas and air conditioners during humid months to maintain optimal humidity levels especially if you notice your humidity is not staying below 50%.

- 4. Fix Leaks Promptly:** Repair any leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing to prevent moisture buildup. You typically have 24-48 prior to mold forming even if you cannot see. Remember mold is invisible to the eye until which time it has massively grown to a visual colony. Regularly check for signs of water damage underneath sinks, around tubs/showers, dishwashers and washers.

- 5. Use Mold-Resistant Products:** In areas prone to dampness, use mold-resistant drywall, paint, and insulation materials.

- 6. Regular Cleaning:** Clean and dry any damp or wet materials within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth. Use mold-killing products for cleaning.

- 7. Professional Inspections:** Consider having a professional conduct regular inspections for mold and humidity levels, especially if you notice persistent issues.

Conclusion

Maintaining proper humidity levels and preventing mold growth are critical components of home health safety. These measures are particularly important for protecting the health of the elderly, who are more susceptible to the harmful effects of mold. By monitoring humidity, ensuring proper ventilation, promptly addressing leaks, and using mold-resistant materials, homeowners can create a safer and healthier living environment. Regular mold and humidity checks are not just preventive steps; they are essential actions that contribute to the overall well-being and comfort of all household members.

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Revolutionizing Bone Health: The Cutting-Edge REMS Echolight Assessment

By Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

In the evolving landscape of preventive healthcare, bone health assessment has taken a quantum leap forward with REMS Echolight Technology. This revolutionary diagnostic tool is transforming how medical professionals evaluate, monitor, and treat bone conditions by providing comprehensive insights into both bone density and fragility—a dual approach that sets it apart from conventional methods.

Beyond Traditional Bone Density Scans

For decades, healthcare providers have relied primarily on DXA (Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scans to measure bone mineral density (BMD). While valuable, these scans tell only part of the story. REMS (Radiofrequency Echographic Multi Spectrometry) Echolight technology represents a paradigm shift by measuring not just how dense bones are, but also how fragile they might be—a critical factor in predicting fracture risk.

"The distinction is crucial," explains Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk. "Two patients can have identical bone density measurements but vastly different fracture risks due to variations in bone microarchitecture and quality. REMS Echolight captures these nuances."

How REMS Echolight Works

This non-invasive technology utilizes ultrasound waves that pass harmlessly through bone tissue. Unlike traditional methods that use ionizing radiation, REMS Echolight is radiation-free, making it suitable for regular monitoring without exposure concerns.

The system analyzes the returned ultrasound signals using sophisticated algorithms to create detailed maps of bone structure. These maps reveal critical information about bone mineral density, elasticity, strength, and microstructural organization—all factors that contribute to fracture risk assessment.

The entire procedure takes only 5-10 minutes and provides immediate results, enabling on-the-spot consultation.

Clinical Applications and Benefits

REMS Echolight technology has proven particularly valuable for early detection, identifying subtle changes in bone quality before significant density loss

occurs. By measuring both density and fragility, it provides a more complete picture of fracture risk than traditional assessments.

The technology also excels in monitoring treatment effectiveness, allowing clinicians to track how bones respond to medications, dietary changes, or exercise regimens in real-time. Its portable nature means this advanced technology can be deployed in various clinical settings, from major medical centers to community clinics.

The Future of Bone Health Management

With osteoporosis affecting approximately 200 million people worldwide and osteopenia affecting millions more, precise diagnostic tools are essential. REMS Echolight technology represents a significant advancement in addressing this growing public health concern.

"We're moving toward a more personalized approach to bone health," notes Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk. "REMS Echolight gives us the detailed insights needed to tailor treatment plans to each patient's specific bone composition and risk factors."

As healthcare continues its shift toward preventive strategies, technologies that can identify potential problems before they manifest as clinical symptoms become increasingly valuable. For patients concerned about bone health—particularly those with risk factors such as family history, certain medications, or hormonal changes—REMS Echolight offers peace of mind through precise, radiation-free assessment.

This technology represents not just an improvement on existing methods, but a fundamentally different approach to understanding and preserving bone health throughout life.

The Strength Lab Plus Promise

We stand at the forefront of a healthcare revolution that sees patients not as passive recipients of treatment, but as active participants in their healing journey. Our holistic approach to reversing osteoporosis naturally represents more than a treatment protocol—it's a comprehensive wellness strategy that restores strength, confidence, and quality of life.

By integrating advanced technology, personalized functional medicine, and innovative exercise protocols, we offer hope and tangible results for individuals seeking to overcome osteoporosis naturally.

Functional and Integrative Medicine with Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

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

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

Services Include:

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

Why Choose Us?

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

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FROM HOSPITAL HEALTHCARE LIMBO TO HOME

By Guest Author - Melissa Weigle

I spend a lot of time in the hospital. No, I am not fighting a rare disease or having some "work done." In my line of work, it is well known that hospitals are full of people who need help figuring out the next right step. In my role as Advisor, Senior Living and Care with Senior Care Authority, I know a lot about helping people in difficult situations. It was during one of those hospital visits in late 2023 that I met David.

I was walking the halls with my social worker colleague when I noticed a man aimlessly wandering the hall behind a group of hospital residents. He was dressed in clothes that screamed, "I am not a medical professional!" but the group of eager physicians seemed content with their tagalong. I asked Mary about what I was seeing, and she said, "Oh, that's just David."

She went on to tell me that David was in what they refer to as "health care limbo." It is more common than I knew. A variety of factors lead to patients being left in a hospital with no discharge options including language barriers, mental illness, or simply being abandoned. In David's case, he had new medical needs that his caregiver could no longer handle and his financial resources were limited. Because a hospital cannot discharge a patient without a safe place to go, David spent more than 9 months occupying a hospital bed long after being medically needed while a team of social workers and discharge planners worked for a solution.

Patients in health care limbo cost hospital systems upwards of \$2,600 per day. In David's case, his 325 day stay came with a nearly \$850,000 price tag. Not to mention the toll it took on his well-being, spending his days in a clinical setting reserved for the sickest individuals. Mary and I decided to team up and find David a better alternative.

Before we could do anything to assist David, he first needed a legal representative, someone to assist with making health care decisions in his best interest. A guardian is a surrogate decision maker appointed by the court for these situations. While guardians are largely known for helping minors, adult guardianship is a growing need, especially in Florida.



When patients are in healthcare limbo many nursing facilities and assisted living communities are apprehensive about admitting them into their community. These patients can be labeled as difficult or raise red flags, at no fault of their own. Just making phone calls and inquiring about openings was not enough in David's case. The team needed to build a story of need so an assisted living community would consider taking a second look.

And I found just that community nestled in North Collier County. A new team of Executive Director and Sales Manager were open to meeting David to see how they could help. On their first visit, David was in the 4th floor hospital lobby, watching the news and paging through the newspaper. He could have easily passed as a nervous family member awaiting news of his first grandchild. After spending time with David they saw he needed out of the hospital and into a room of his own with comfy furnishings, home cooked meals, and daily activities to stimulate his brain and body. They were on board!

The thumbs up from the community was a big hurdle, but bigger still, we had to figure out how to pay for it. The process of applying for Medicaid is lengthy. If we waited for approval, David could spend another three to six months institutionalized.

The team met and the plan was set....we would ask the hospital system to cover the cost of his care until Medicaid services could be approved.

Hospital systems have what is known as a benevolent care program, with a purpose of supplementing the expenses of medical care, which could include writing off a hospital bills, finding accommodations for a mother who needs a place to stay while her newborn is receiving life saving care, funeral and burial arrangements, and in our case, paying for assisted living community until Medicaid could be finalized.

The hospital system approved our proposal and after three full seasons on the intermediate care floor, David attended his going away party complete with balloons, noise makers and his favorite meal of roast beef and mashed potatoes, made special by the hospital dining services. His doctors, therapists, nurses, discharge planners, custodians, and hospital administrators showed up to see him off. We even found a transport company willing to donate their services. And his first full day at his new assisted living home was marked with eggs to order, cuddles with baby goats, and happy hour with dueling pianos. What a stark change from the clinical halls of the hospital to the homey living room of the assisted living community.

I love what I do, but never more than when I was able to build a team of like minded professionals with one goal: to find David a place to live that was warm, comfortable, and safe.



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UNDERSTANDING THE ANNUAL CHECK-UP PANEL

When it comes to taking control of your health, prevention and regular monitoring are key. The Annual Check-up Panel at Any Lab Test Now offers a comprehensive screening solution that provides valuable insights into your overall health status without requiring a doctor's prescription or insurance approval.

The Annual Check-up Panel is designed to evaluate multiple aspects of your health through a single blood draw. This convenient testing package includes essential markers that healthcare professionals typically review during yearly physical examinations. The panel analyzes various components of your blood to assess organ function, detect potential health issues, and establish baseline measurements for future comparison.

One of the primary components of the panel is the Complete Blood Count (CBC), which examines red and white blood cells, platelets, and hemoglobin levels. This provides crucial information about your immune system function, oxygen-carrying capacity, and ability to fight infections. The CBC can also help identify conditions such as anemia, infections, or blood disorders.

The Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP) is another vital element of the annual check-up. This portion evaluates liver and kidney function, electrolyte and fluid balance, and blood sugar levels. By measuring proteins, enzymes, and minerals in your

blood, the CMP can reveal potential issues with major organ systems before symptoms become apparent.

Lipid profile testing is included to assess cardiovascular health by measuring cholesterol levels – both the "good" HDL and "bad" LDL cholesterol – as well as triglycerides. These results help evaluate your risk for heart disease and stroke, enabling early intervention through lifestyle changes or medical treatment if necessary.

The panel also includes thyroid function tests, which measure hormones that regulate metabolism, energy levels, and various bodily functions. Thyroid disorders are common but often go undiagnosed without proper screening.

Any Lab Test Now makes the testing process straightforward and accessible. Appointments are typically not required, and results are usually available within 24-72 hours. The company's certified laboratories maintain high standards of accuracy and confidentiality, ensuring reliable results you can trust.

Once you receive your results, you can share them with your healthcare provider for interpretation and guidance. This proactive approach to health monitoring can lead to earlier detection of potential health issues, more informed discussions with your doctor, and better-managed healthcare decisions.

The Annual Check-up Panel is particularly valuable for individuals who:

- Want to establish baseline health measurements
- Need regular monitoring of existing conditions
- Are interested in preventive healthcare
- Have family histories of specific health conditions
- Wish to track the effectiveness of lifestyle changes or treatments

Regular annual check-ups through comprehensive testing can help identify potential health concerns before they become serious issues. By providing a detailed snapshot of your health status, the Annual Check-up Panel at Any Lab Test Now serves as a fundamental tool in maintaining and optimizing your well-being through informed, proactive healthcare management.

Any Lab Test Now Naples is staffed by certified technicians who can properly collect samples for blood tests, urine tests, saliva tests, hair tests and more. They are knowledgeable about all the tests offered and can help customers select the right screening for their needs. Test results are typically available within 24-48 hours.

With the opening of the Naples location, residents of Collier County now have convenient access to professional lab testing services. Stop by Any Lab Test Now on Immokalee Road and take control of your health today.

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Acupuncture for Men's Health: ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN WELLNESS

By Quiet Waters Wellness Center

As Men's Health Month unfolds this June, more men are seeking holistic approaches to address their unique health challenges. Among these approaches, acupuncture—a cornerstone of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) dating back thousands of years—is gaining recognition for its effectiveness in treating conditions that specifically affect men.

Beyond Skepticism: Why Modern Men Are Turning to Acupuncture

Traditionally, men have been hesitant to explore alternative therapies like acupuncture. However, as research continues to validate its benefits, the thin needles of this ancient practice are breaking through the thick armor of male skepticism.

"We see many male clients who are apprehensive due to a fear of needles or who don't understand how acupuncture will help their situation. Most are amazed after their first treatment, but by their third treatment they are won over," explains Tasha Perez.

Targeting Male-Specific Health Concerns

Acupuncture works by stimulating specific points along the body's meridians—pathways through which qi (vital energy) flows. When these points are activated, they can help address numerous male health concerns:

Stress and Mental Health: Men often internalize stress, leading to anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. Acupuncture can trigger the release of endorphins and regulate cortisol levels, promoting relaxation and mental clarity.

Sexual Health: For issues like erectile dysfunction and low libido, acupuncture can improve blood flow to reproductive organs and balance hormones naturally, offering an alternative to pharmaceuticals.

Prostate Health: Regular treatments may help reduce inflammation and improve urinary function in men with prostate concerns.

Athletic Performance and Recovery: For active men, acupuncture accelerates muscle recovery, reduces inflammation, and improves range of motion—benefits that professional athletes have embraced for years.

The Father's Day Gift of Preventative Care

This Father's Day, instead of another tie or gadget, consider the gift of preventative health. Acupuncture



excels as a preventative measure, identifying and addressing energy imbalances before they manifest as physical symptoms.

"Western medicine excels at crisis intervention, but Eastern medicine shines in prevention," explains Perez. "Most men wait until something breaks before fixing it. Acupuncture offers a maintenance schedule for the body."

Getting Started: What Men Should Know

For men considering acupuncture, here are key points to remember:

First sessions typically include a comprehensive health history review, tongue and pulse examination, and discussion of treatment goals. Treatments are relatively painless—most men report feeling relaxed or energized afterward. For optimal results, consistent sessions are recommended, typically starting with weekly visits.

Insurance coverage for acupuncture has expanded significantly, with many plans now covering treatments for specific conditions. Most importantly, finding a licensed practitioner with experience in men's health issues is crucial.

The Modern Man's Approach to Ancient Wisdom

As workplace stress, environmental toxins, and sedentary lifestyles continue to challenge men's health, integrative approaches that address both body and mind become increasingly relevant.

This June, as we focus on men's health awareness, acupuncture offers a bridge between ancient wisdom and modern wellness—a complement to conventional healthcare that empowers men to take control of their wellbeing. For the man who has everything, better health might be the ultimate gift—one thin needle at a time.



LeeTasha Perez, AP, DOM

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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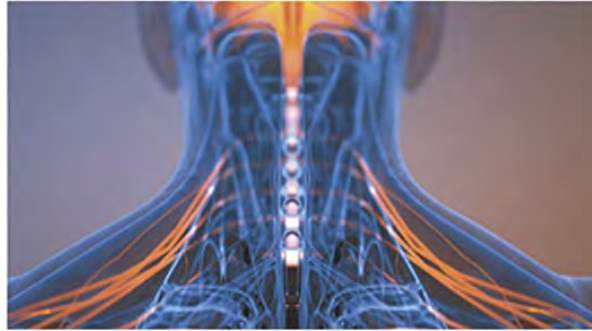
The Matterhorn Method: A Seamless Integration Between Pain Relief and Performance

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

The leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naples-based Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat thousands of active seniors, over 70 professional athletes and 11 Olympians, in as little as two weeks. Through their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it quickly, and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods and still live with pain. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain. The team spent the next five years compiling various techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan's rehabilitation. The results were immediate and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.



"When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered," says Vesce. "So we started testing our new process on pro athletes, and it worked. We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method worked so well that our clients told all of their family and friends about it. That's when we knew we had something really special. Within 2 weeks, virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today. The process worked fast. The culture was inspiring, and we began to take off."

WHY IT WORKS

The reason why Matterhorn Fit has been able to consistently relieve pain in two weeks is credited to their proprietary process called the Matterhorn Method. The Matterhorn Method identifies the root cause of the issue from a neurological level and allows for muscles that were inactive to support the body again which eliminates the pain response from the brain.

The first step in Matterhorn Fit's process is a comprehensive initial evaluation. Through their evaluation, they will be able to identify any neurological compensation in the client's system. If they do find compensations, there is a very high probability that they can improve the client's pain in two weeks.

"Through our initial evaluation we will be able to determine IF we can help you. If we do find something that we can fix, then we will start you with 6 sessions over a two week period to resolve your symptoms," says Vesce. "Over 94% of our clients have reported a major reduction of pain within two weeks. After the symptoms are resolved, we build a personalized movement plan to prevent the problem from returning."

To schedule an initial evaluation visit
matterhornfit.com or call the office at
239.676.5342.

Matterhorn Fit

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BREAKING THE SILENCE: Addressing Men's Mental Health

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

As we celebrate Men's Health Month this June, it's imperative to shine a light on an often-overlooked aspect of a man's well-being: mental health. While strides have been made in recent years to destigmatize mental health challenges, there remains a significant gap when it comes to addressing the unique needs of men in this area. From societal expectations of masculinity to ingrained notions of strength, many men find it difficult to unwrap their mental health struggles. Let's explore the pressing issues surrounding men's mental health, different approaches to support, and the importance of breaking down barriers to care.

The Stigma Surrounding Men's Mental Health

One of the most significant barriers to men seeking help for mental health issues is the stigma attached to vulnerability and emotional expression. Society often reinforces the idea that men should be stoic, strong, and unyielding in the face of adversity. As a result, many men feel pressure to suppress their emotions and tough it out alone, leading to underreporting of mental health issues and reluctance to seek treatment.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), men are less likely than women to seek mental health treatment despite experiencing similar rates of mental illness. Men are more likely to die by suicide, with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reporting that men die by suicide at a rate nearly four times higher than that of women. These statistics underscore the urgent need to address the stigma surrounding men's mental health and encourage open dialogue about emotional well-being.

Approaches to Supporting Men's Mental Health

Breaking through the barriers of masculinity and strength requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges and respects men's unique needs. Mental health professionals must create safe spaces where men feel comfortable discussing their emotions without fear of judgment or ridicule. This may involve employing different therapeutic modalities, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or mindfulness-based techniques, tailored to resonate with men's experiences and communication styles.

Additionally, outreach efforts targeting men should aim to challenge traditional gender norms and promote positive masculinity. By celebrating vulnerability as a sign of courage rather than weakness, we can empower men to prioritize their mental health and seek help when needed. Peer support groups and online forums can also provide invaluable opportunities for men to connect with others facing similar challenges and share their stories in a supportive environment.

Depression and Anxiety in Men:

Recognizing the Signs

Depression and anxiety are among the most common mental health disorders affecting men, yet they often go unrecognized and untreated. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), men are less likely than women to be diagnosed with depression, despite experiencing comparable symptoms. This discrepancy may be attributed to societal expectations that discourage men from acknowledging sadness or vulnerability.

Recognizing the signs of depression and anxiety in men is crucial for early intervention and treatment. Symptoms may manifest differently in men compared to women, with men more likely to report irritability, anger, and physical symptoms such as headaches or digestive issues. Additionally, men may engage in risky behaviors or substance abuse as a coping mechanism for underlying mental health issues.

Moving Forward: Breaking Down Barriers, Building Resilience

As we observe Men's Health Month this June, let us recommit ourselves to breaking down the barriers preventing men from seeking mental health help. By challenging outdated notions of masculinity and strength, fostering open dialogue, and providing tailored support, we can create a culture of acceptance and resilience where every man feels empowered to prioritize his mental well-being.

Sources:

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)

Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, don't hesitate to reach out to a qualified mental health professional for support and guidance.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of a mood disorder or other mental health issues, there is help in Southwest Florida. Dr. Richard Capiola, MD, is a board-certified psychiatrist with specialty certifications in addiction and forensic psychiatry and over 31 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1990. Be sure to call Dr. Capiola ahead of time to book an appointment.

RICHARD J. CAPIOLA, MD

With triple board certification in general psychiatry, addiction psychiatry and forensic psychiatry, Dr. Richard J. Capiola has been in practice for 27 years. During his training at Tulane Medical School and UCLA, Dr. Capiola developed a keen interest in the treatment of depression and anxiety overlapping with drug and alcohol abuse. This focus led to his role as chief medical officer for Oglethorpe Inc., which specializes in the treatment of mental health and addiction. He has been instrumental in the clinical development and oversight of 12 specialty treatment centers in five states.

Dr. Capiola's specialties include adult and adolescent psychiatry, treatment of anxiety, depression, and substance use problems, and forensic psychiatry, where he evaluates patients with legal issues related to mental health.

Dr. Capiola is the chief of psychiatry for Physicians Regional Medical Center and was the medical director for the Wilough at Naples for many years. He's served 10 years with The Joint Commission, which evaluates hospitals nationwide for quality of care and safety.

Dr. Capiola was the featured neuropsychiatrist in the recent book "Don't Give Up On Me" with Darryl Strawberry. His confidential private practice focuses on using each individual's inherent strengths to achieve the goal of living a healthy, well-balanced life.

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SHOCKWAVE THERAPY:

A Revolutionary Treatment for Tennis and Golfer's Elbow

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

Breaking the Cycle of Chronic Elbow Pain

Living with the persistent pain of tennis elbow or golfer's elbow can significantly impact your quality of life. These common conditions, medically known as lateral and medial epicondylitis, affect millions of Americans each year. At Orchidia Medical Group, we're proud to offer a cutting-edge solution that's changing how these conditions are treated: Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT).

Understanding Tennis and Golfer's Elbow

Tennis elbow affects the outside of the elbow, while golfer's elbow impacts the inside. Despite their names, these conditions aren't limited to athletes—they can affect anyone who performs repetitive arm motions, from office workers to homemakers. Traditional treatments like rest, anti-inflammatory medications, and physical therapy offer relief for some patients, but many continue to struggle with chronic symptoms.

How Shockwave Therapy Works

Shockwave therapy delivers high-energy acoustic waves to the affected area using a specialized device. These waves penetrate deep into the tissue, stimulating:

- Increased blood flow to accelerate healing
- Release of growth factors that promote tissue regeneration
- Breakdown of calcium deposits
- Reduction in pain signal transmission

This non-invasive treatment works with your body's natural healing processes to address the root cause of your pain, not just the symptoms.

The Orchidia Medical Group Difference

Our approach to shockwave therapy combines advanced technology with personalized treatment plans. Each session lasts approximately 15 minutes, with most patients requiring 3-5 treatments spaced about a week apart. Our specialists carefully calibrate the intensity and focus of the shockwaves based on your specific condition and pain level.

Benefits Beyond Traditional Treatments

Shockwave therapy offers several advantages that make it revolutionary in treating elbow conditions:

- Non-surgical and non-invasive
- No medications or injections
- Minimal side effects
- No downtime after treatment
- High success rates (70-80%) even for chronic cases
- Long-lasting results

Real Results for Real Patients

Our patients consistently report significant improvement after completing their shockwave therapy treatment course. Many experience a reduction in pain within days of their first session, with continued improvement over the following weeks as healing progresses.



Is Shockwave Therapy Right for You?

If you've been living with tennis or golfer's elbow pain that hasn't responded to conventional treatments, shockwave therapy may be your path to relief. At Orchidia Medical Group, we conduct comprehensive evaluations to determine if this revolutionary treatment is appropriate for your specific condition.

Don't let elbow pain limit your activities any longer. Contact Orchidia Medical Group today to learn more about how shockwave therapy can help you return to the activities you love—pain-free.



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By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dee) National Producer Number (NPN) 8853366

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CMS has made many changes for Medicare recipients. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone, you need to agree to be recorded, and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person, appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that authorizes us to talk to you about Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan. It does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics.

One of the biggest changes for 2025 related to Medicare Part D Prescriptions whether withing a Part C Advantage plan or a stand-alone Part D drug Plan. Your yearly Part D out-of-pocket costs will be capped at \$2,000 in 2025. You must buy medications using your plan and the medication must be in formulary to go toward the cap. You will also have a payment option to pay out-pocket costs in monthly amounts over the plan year, instead of paying when you receive the medications. This is done through the insurance company that you purchased your plan.

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare, once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A", Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue



you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6 months on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! **Especially important:** when you *move* you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

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Travel Insurance – Did you know that most health insurance does NOT cover you outside of the country and that includes a cruise, in international waters (4 miles out). Travel insurance is not just about trip cancelation but most importantly what if you got sick or had an accident on your trip. Medical Trip insurance is very important and most of the time not very costly when you out way the benefits.

Life Insurance – You are never too young to have life insurance, and many types offer living benefits. As an example, I purchase life insurance for my grandchildren almost as soon as they are born. Their policy continues to build cash value that they can use during their lives, for education, wedding or even a 1st home purchase. The younger you are the lower the cost. There are many types of life insurance, and it is important to understand the differences between them. You also have payment options, such as 10-Pay, this type of policy you can pay the premium in full in 10 years, there are other terms available as well.

Long Term Care Insurance – Overall, 48.7% of older adults with ADL difficulties (or an estimated 3 million persons aged 70 and older) reported needing some sort of personal assistance with one or more ADLs, and, of those individuals with need, 20.7% (or an estimated 629,000 persons) had an unmet need. Long Term Care Insurance helps pay for in-home or facility-based needs, such as assistance with acts of daily living or help with paying for a facility. Start shopping for this insurance in your 40's, but it's never too late to try. Your overall health will pay a major roll in the cost of the plan's premium. The sooner than later for affordability. You have payment options such as a single payment, 10-Pay where the premium is paid-in-full in 10 years. You also get a discount with most companies doing a joint policy with your spouse. Remember Medicare is NOT meant for Nursing Home Care/Skilled Nursing.

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the carriers, we are happy to help you through the maze. This is what we do daily, it is second nature to us. We offer virtual seminars, one on one Webex, phone and in-person appointments.

To learn more about your options call to schedule an appointment contact: Logical Insurance Solutions for all your insurance needs, I am licensed in 36 states.

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KEEP YOUR PET SAFE FROM THE CANE TOAD

A species of warty, toxic toads invades Florida backyards every year as it multiplies across the southern part of the state. When you see heavy rains, be on the lookout for the Cane Toad. The cane toad, also known as the bufo toad, is a poisonous amphibian that, when provoked, can produce a milky white toxin on its back, a substance that is particularly dangerous to house pets.

The toxin could leave a dog or cat in serious distress or dead in as little as 15 minutes, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. The creatures breed after periods of rainy weather, according to Toad Busters, a south Florida company specializing in the removal of the dangerous toads. The rainy season lasts through the summer.

The state's wildlife commission encourages homeowners to kill Cane Toads whenever possible. The white toxin is visible near the sacs on the left side of the toad. What do they look like? Honestly, cane toads are gross. They're tan to reddish-brown, dark brown or gray, and their backs are marked with dark spots, according to the University of Florida. They have warty skin. Cane toads have large, triangular parotoid glands on their shoulders that secrete a milky toxin. (Native toads' parotoid glands are oval.) Unlike native southern toads, cane toads do not have ridges or "crests" on top of the head.

Even cane toad tadpoles are toxic. You can spot a cane toad by its size and its triangular glands. Cane toads usually are 4-6 inches long, sometimes growing to 9½ inches. With very few exceptions, any toad in Florida that is larger than 4 inches is not native and almost certainly is an invasive cane toad,

according to the University of Florida. A cane toad's favorite place is the ground. They don't like to climb.



Cane toads are native to South and Central America and were introduced into Palm Beach County to control pests in sugar cane fields, according to the University of Florida. They can be found in central and south Florida and in an isolated population along the Florida Panhandle. They live in urbanized habitats and agricultural lands but also in some natural areas, including floodplain and mangrove swamps. The cane toad (*Bufo marinus*) can hurt or kill pets.

Cane toads prey on anything they can get into their mouths, according to the University of Florida, but they normally feed on beetles, centipedes, crabs, millipedes, roaches, scorpions, spiders and other invertebrates. They also have been known to eat frogs, snakes, small reptiles, small birds and small mammals.

If a pet bites, licks or even sniffs a cane toad, it could become sick and, if not treated, it could die. Symptoms of poisoning in pets include excessive drooling and extremely red gums, headshaking, crying, loss of coordination and sometimes convulsions. If a dog bites or encounters a cane toad, use a damp cloth or towel and wipe the inside of the dog's mouth to make sure no toxins were swallowed. Do not flush the dog's mouth with a hose. It could send toxins down the animal's throat.

Dogs should be taken to a veterinarian as soon as possible to treat symptoms such as seizures, heart problems such as arrhythmia and body temperatures that skyrocket, then plunge. Dog droppings should be picked up; cane toads are attracted to proteins in the droppings.

There is a humane way to get rid of cane toads. The University of Florida recommends euthanizing them by rubbing or spraying 20% benzocaine toothache gel or sunburn spray (not 5% lidocaine) on the toad. In a few minutes, it will become unconscious. Put the toad in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer for 24-48 hours to ensure it is humanely euthanized.

The best trapping method is a net and a deep bucket with steep sides, according to the University of Florida. Make sure to put a board or lid on top of the bucket. The Florida wildlife commission recommends wearing latex, rubber, or nitrile gloves to safely handle the toads.

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MEMORY MATTERS

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness month. This provides us an opportunity to spread the word about Alzheimer's disease, and its impact on all of us. President Ronald Reagan initiated the observance of June being Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness in 1983. Sadly, Alzheimer's disease would impact President Reagan personally and he died with the disease in 2004.

According to the 2025 Alzheimer's Association Facts and Figures report, nearly 7 million people in the United States have Alzheimer's disease. From a risk perspective, 1/5 women and 1/10 men at age 45 have a lifetime risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease impacts the entire family. About one in nine adults over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. Of those living with Alzheimer's disease two thirds (2/3) are women. In addition, older Black adults are twice as likely as older White adults to have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Older adults with a Hispanic/Latinx background are 1.5 times as likely to have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia than older White adults.

Talking about Alzheimer's disease is important. One third of people die with Alzheimer's or another dementia. There still may be a perceived stigma when one has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, which is not seen with other health concerns. The Alzheimer's Association reports that nearly 580,000 people in Florida are living with Alzheimer's and there are approximately 840,000 unpaid caregivers supporting them. Being a caregiver for someone with cognitive issues is stressful, and over 66% of those caregivers have health issues. Education and awareness are critical in eliminating the stigma! Alzheimer's disease is a brain disease, a process where brain cells, called neurons are damaged and die.

Taking care of our brains needs to be a top priority. Depending on what source you use, there are several approaches you can take proactively to keep your brain healthy. From Johns Hopkins University, here are five tips you can incorporate into your routine for a healthy brain:



Get your heart pumping through exercise. Of course, be sure to clear any exercise with your health care practitioner, particularly if you are new to an exercise routine.

Stay on top of any chronic medical issues, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and depression through regular visits to your health care provider.

Get your sleep! Many times, this is easier said than done. We know that sleep is important and two of the biggest sleep challenges are a result of sleep apnea and stress. If you are having issues with sleeping, talk to your health care provider.

Review your medications. Medications on their own can cause memory issues. Medication interactions can have a negative impact on memory and thinking. Discuss your medications with your health care provider or your pharmacist to evaluate if there are other options if necessary.

Stay socially engaged. Challenging our brains with new activities is helpful. When you are pursuing new activities and interests with others, you get the added benefit of social engagement.

In addition to these tips, we know that what we eat impacts all aspects of our health and wellness. The diet that shows some promising evidence is the **Mediterranean diet**, which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fish, and other seafood; unsaturated fats such as olive oils; and low amounts of red meat, eggs, and sweets. A variation of this, called MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) incorporates the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which has been shown to lower high blood pressure, a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Every June, the Alzheimer's Association sponsors a fundraising event called The Longest Day. On the summer solstice, people from across the world will fight the darkness of Alzheimer's disease through a fundraising activity of their choice. Choosing to "go purple" in June, shows your commitment and passion for not only finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease, but also shows your support of all those living with the disease and their care partners.

Learn more about the Longest Day here at <https://act.alz.org/site/TR?frid=17194&pg=informational&sid=24695>



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UNLOCKING MEN'S VITALITY:

Understanding Testosterone Replacement Therapy and Enclomiphene

By Jerry and Lisa Meloche, Pharm.D., Owners, Compounding Pharmacists

Men's health and testicular health, in particular, are often overlooked and under-discussed. June marks Men's Health Month and a pivotal moment to shed light on the importance of testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) and the emerging role of enclomiphene. As we explore hormonal balance for men, Creative Scripts Pharmacy highlights the benefits and nuances of these treatments, guided by medical evidence and clinical insights.

Understanding Testosterone Replacement Therapy (TRT)
Testosterone, often dubbed the "male hormone," plays a multifaceted role in men's health, influencing vitality, muscle mass, bone density, libido, and mood. However, testosterone levels naturally decline with age, contributing to a myriad of symptoms such as fatigue, decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, and diminished cognitive function.¹

TRT serves as a cornerstone in managing hypogonadism (testicular shrinkage), a condition characterized by low testosterone levels. According to recent studies, approximately 38% of men aged 45 and older experience testosterone deficiency.² Factors such as aging, obesity, chronic illness, and certain medications can precipitate hypogonadism.³

The benefits of TRT extend beyond symptom alleviation. Research indicates that TRT may enhance muscle mass, bone density, cognitive function, and overall quality of life in hypogonadal men.⁴ Moreover, TRT has shown promise in mitigating the risk of cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome.⁵

Introducing Enclomiphene: A Holistic Approach
Enclomiphene, an estrogen receptor modulator, emerges as a promising adjunct to TRT, particularly in cases of secondary hypogonadism. Secondary hypogonadism arises from dysfunction in the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis, leading to inadequate testosterone production despite normal gonadal function.⁶

Enclomiphene stimulates the release of gonadotropins, namely luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), thereby enhancing endogenous testosterone production.⁷ This mechanism offers a more physiological approach to restoring testosterone levels, circumventing the potential drawbacks of exogenous testosterone administration, such as testicular atrophy and infertility.⁸

Indications for Enclomiphene

Enclomiphene presents a viable option for men seeking fertility preservation or those desiring a more natural testosterone restoration process. Individuals with primary hypogonadism, characterized by testicular dysfunction, may benefit from enclomiphene therapy to augment endogenous testosterone secretion.⁹

Enclomiphene can optimize therapeutic outcomes, minimize adverse effects, and preserve fertility potential when used in conjunction with TRT, and is only available from compounding pharmacies. This synergy underscores the importance of personalized medicine and tailored treatment regimens offered at Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy.

The journey to empower men with vitality and well-being, integrating TRT and enclomiphene heralds a new era in men's health management. Through evidence-based practices and innovative solutions, Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the lives of men through bespoke pharmaceutical interventions.

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JUNE SPOTLIGHT: MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

June is Men's Health Awareness Month, making it the perfect time for men to take stock of their health and prioritize getting the necessary preventive screenings. While nobody enjoys going to the doctor more than necessary, routine screenings are crucial for detecting issues early when they're most treatable.

Over 90 percent of the premature deaths among men from unintentional injuries, cardiovascular disease, and suicide could potentially be prevented. One-third of men (33 percent) don't think they need annual health screenings, and almost two-thirds (65 percent) believe they are naturally healthier than others.



"Prevention is your strongest weapon against becoming a statistic," says **Dr. Ravi Ramaswami**, a family care physician with Lee Health/Lee Physician Group.

"Even if you're feeling fine, visit your doctor for an annual wellness exam. The same holds true with getting annual preventive screenings for heart disease, depression, and cancers. By prioritizing these regular screenings, you invest in your future well-being because it's not just about being healthy; it's about staying healthy."

So, don't be one of the statistics - take charge of your health by getting the following recommended preventive screenings:

Mental health screening

Taking care of yourself isn't only physical—check in with your doctor about your mental and emotional health, too. It's important because men are far less likely than women to be clinically diagnosed with depression. That's because men are less likely to discuss or report symptoms associated with depression, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The toll of avoiding help has proved enormously tragic. Undiagnosed and untreated depression in men carries a substantially higher risk of substance abuse, violence, and suicide.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that in 2021, men died by suicide at a rate 3.88 times higher than women. Middle-aged and older men were at increased risk, with white males accounting for nearly 70 percent of all suicides that year.

But there's hope and help. Depression and other mental illnesses are highly treatable when identified and when men are connected to appropriate support and care.

But it begins with having a talk with your doctor and/or reaching out to a mental health professional when the going gets rough mentally and emotionally. Early intervention, support, and open conversations around men's mental and emotional well-being can be life-saving endeavors.

If you've experienced any concerning behavioral changes, mood disturbances, or emotional difficulties, don't tough it out alone – reach out to an experienced, compassionate professional at Lee Health Behavioral Services at 239-343-9180.

Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Blood pressure screening

High blood pressure or hypertension increases your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other serious conditions but rarely causes obvious symptoms initially. That's why getting your blood pressure checked regularly is so important, says Dr. Ramaswami.

"Men should get screened for hypertension at least once per year if their levels are in the healthy range," he says. "More frequent monitoring is needed if your levels are high or borderline high. If there's a concern, your doctor can help you manage it and suggest lifestyle changes to help you stay healthier."

Cholesterol screening

High cholesterol leads to plaque buildup in the arteries, increasing heart attack and stroke risk. Like hypertension, high cholesterol often doesn't cause noticeable symptoms until significant cardiovascular issues arise.

Get your cholesterol levels checked every 4-6 years if they're in the healthy range, Dr. Ramaswami advises. Testing may be needed more often if your levels are elevated, or you have other cardiac risk factors.

Colorectal cancer screening

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer and cause of cancer deaths in American men. The good news is it is highly preventable through routine screening. Men at average risk should begin colorectal cancer screening at age 45 via colonoscopy, stool tests, or other approved methods. Earlier and more frequent screening is recommended for those at higher risk.

Prostate cancer screening

The goal of screening for prostate cancer is to find cancers that may be at high risk for spreading if not treated and to find them early before they spread, according to Dr. Joseph Klink, a board-certified urologic oncologist with Lee Health Cancer Institute.

He says most prostate cancers develop slowly or not at all.

"Prostate cancer typically grows slowly, so many cases don't require immediate treatment and aren't life-threatening," Dr. Klink says. "Prostate cancer can be serious, but most men diagnosed with it don't die from prostate cancer. In fact, in the United States, there are more than 3.1 million men diagnosed with prostate cancer who are still alive today. The takeaway message is that the earlier prostate cancer is caught, the easier it can be contained."

While screening requirements vary, the American Cancer Society recommends men discuss the potential benefits and risks of PSA testing with their doctor starting at:

- Age 50 for men at average risk
- Age 45 for men at high risk (African American/Black or with a close male relative diagnosed with prostate cancer)
- Age 40 for men at higher risk (more than one close relative diagnosed at an early age)

Diabetes screening

Men with obesity or other risk factors should get screened for diabetes every three years starting at age 45 if levels are normal. Those with high blood sugar readings indicating prediabetes may need more frequent screening.

Lung cancer screening

Annual lung cancer screening is recommended for men ages 50-80 who are at high risk for lung cancer due to a history of chronic smoking. Early detection of lung cancer greatly improves treatment outcomes. Screening is done using a low-dose CT scan.

Skin cancer screening

While screening recommendations vary, men should regularly examine their skin for suspicious moles or growths. Report any concerns to their doctor immediately. Those at higher risk, such as outdoor workers or fair-skinned individuals, may benefit from periodic total-body skin exams by a dermatologist.

While this list covers some key preventative screenings for men, it's not exhaustive. Talk with your doctor about your risk factors and the most appropriate screening recommendations. The bottom line is being proactive about preventive care gives you the best chance at identifying issues early and enjoying better health at every age.

Find a Lee Physician Group doctor here.



The Potential of CBD and THC for Treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a severe condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares, anxiety, and hypervigilance can severely impact a person's daily life and well-being. While traditional treatments like therapy and medications can help, many people with PTSD struggle to find lasting relief. This has led researchers to explore alternative treatment options, including the use of cannabinoids like CBD and THC found in cannabis plants.

Understanding CBD and THC

CBD (cannabidiol) and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) are two of the most well-known compounds present in cannabis. CBD is non-psychoactive, meaning it does not produce the "high" associated with cannabis use. It has shown potential therapeutic benefits, including anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and anti-anxiety effects. THC, on the other hand, is the primary psychoactive compound responsible for the mind-altering effects of cannabis.

The Potential of CBD for PTSD

Several studies have investigated the use of CBD as a treatment for PTSD symptoms, with promising results. CBD has demonstrated anxiolytic (anti-anxiety) and antidepressant properties, which could help alleviate the anxiety, fear, and emotional numbing associated with PTSD. Additionally, CBD may help reduce the intensity and frequency of nightmares and intrusive thoughts, common symptoms of PTSD.

The Role of THC in PTSD Treatment

While THC can potentially exacerbate anxiety and paranoia in some individuals, research suggests it may have therapeutic value in treating PTSD-related nightmares. A small study found that synthetic THC (nabilone) significantly reduced the frequency and intensity of nightmares in participants with PTSD. However, careful dosing and monitoring are essential when considering THC for PTSD treatment.

Combining CBD and THC

Some researchers are exploring the potential synergistic effects of combining CBD and THC for PTSD treatment. The theory is that CBD may help mitigate the potential adverse effects of THC, such as anxiety and paranoia, while enhancing its therapeutic benefits. A study published in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology* found that a combination of CBD and THC was more effective in reducing PTSD-related symptoms than either compound alone. However, more research is needed to understand the optimal ratios and dosages for a combined CBD and THC therapy approach.

Moving Forward with Caution and Optimism

While the use of CBD and THC for PTSD treatment shows promise, more large-scale, well-designed clinical trials are needed to fully understand the potential benefits, risks, and optimal dosing and administration methods. Additionally, legal and regulatory challenges surrounding the use of these compounds must be addressed, particularly in areas where cannabis remains illegal or heavily regulated.

Nonetheless, the potential of CBD and THC to provide relief for individuals suffering from PTSD is an exciting area of exploration. With continued research and a dedication to exploring safe and effective treatment options, these cannabinoids may offer new hope for those struggling with the debilitating effects of this complex mental health condition.

Additionally, it's crucial to address the legal and regulatory challenges surrounding the use of CBD and THC-based treatments, particularly in areas where cannabis remains illegal or heavily regulated.

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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

In this article we focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

The possibility of losing our cognitive abilities can be even scarier than the loss of physical abilities as we age. There are an estimated 5.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's, affecting millions more people caregiving for loved ones affected by the devastating disease, with no cure at the present moment. Therefore, many seniors and their families are wondering what they can do to be proactive and prevent the onset of Alzheimer's.

For the purposes of this article, we're going to focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

The name MIND diet surprisingly isn't in reference to the diet's supposed ability to improve cognitive functioning. Rather, it stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. The MIND diet meal plan is essentially a combination of two popular diets, the Mediterranean and DASH, with an emphasis on brain foods shown to improve cognitive functioning.

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

Dr. Martha Clare Morris, an expert in nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, introduced the MIND diet meal plan in 2015. Her studies on the diet tested and compared the effects

of the Mediterranean, DASH, and MIND diets in adults aged 58-98 years. The study found that diligently sticking to all three diets was associated with a reduced risk for Alzheimer's disease, but only the MIND diet showed lower risk even with moderate adherence. Another study showed that participants who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk for Alzheimer's by 54%. In addition to the MIND diet's effect on Alzheimer's prevention, Dr. Morris and her colleagues recently studied the diet's effect on the cognitive decline of stroke survivors.

Those in the study who were highly adherent to the MIND diet had substantially slower rates of cognitive decline than people who didn't follow the diet.

Given the newness of the MIND diet meal plan and relatively few scientific studies conducted, scientists still need to do more research, but the early results are certainly very promising. Some have even coined the phrase "Alzheimer's diet" when referencing the MIND diet meal plan, and US News and World Report ranked the MIND diet #5 in its list of Best Diets in 2018.

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

If you choose to follow the MIND diet for yourself or integrate it into the meal plan of a senior loved one, here are the brain foods you'll want to emphasize and recommended number of servings/week:

Leafy greens (spinach, mixed greens, kale): aim for at least 6 servings of leafy greens per week. In addition to cognitive benefits, leafy greens are high in vitamin K and many other essential nutrients.

Other veggies: in addition to leafy greens, try to eat one additional serving of vegetables per day.

Berries: aim for two or more servings a week. Smoothies are great for seniors to get their weekly servings of berries.

Nuts: at least five servings per week. Nuts are also a great source of protein and healthy fats.

Wholegrains: three or more servings a day. Common wholegrains include brown rice and whole-wheat pasta.

Oliveoil: replace butter with olive oil, and use it as your primary oil for cooking. Keep in mind that when sautéing, it's better to use standard olive oil than extra virgin olive oil.

Wine: a glass of wine, particularly red, a day has been proven to have cognitive benefits.

Fish: at least one serving per week. Salmon is especially beneficial and is loaded with Omega-3 fatty acids.

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

Red meat: aim for less than four servings per week, and choose leaner cuts. Think tenderloin, not rib eye.

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

Added sugar: avoid or limit unhealthy desserts, no more than five servings per week. Instead of pastries and ice cream, try dark chocolate.

Fast food: it's best to eliminate fast food altogether because it's typically loaded with sugar and sodium.

One of the big benefits of the MIND diet meal plan is that it's not a "fad diet" and doesn't require you to eliminate lots of foods from your diet. Rather, it calls for moderation of unhealthy foods and emphasizing healthy brain foods. This makes the MIND diet easier to follow for seniors than more extreme nutrition plans like the Paleo diet or Vegan diet.

For any questions, please contact your local Chefs For Seniors Office:

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A FIVE-OUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY 		
NO MORE THAN ONE TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE OLIVE OIL INSTEAD 	CHEESE, FRIED FOOD AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK 	
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5 Tips for Minimizing Toy Chaos in Your Home

by **maidpro**

Remember those days (before kids) when it was safe to walk barefoot across a room without risk of stepping on a Lego? When your visual field wasn't constantly being assaulted by assorted plastics in bright primary colors? When a tidy room might actually stay tidy for something longer than 3 minutes?

Right, us neither. If you have kids in the zero to preteen range (and that includes fur babies!), then toy chaos is a fact of life. You need to accept it, but don't have to succumb entirely. Here are 5 tips for minimizing toy chaos in your home.

Dedicate excess storage capacity for toys. Let's say, for example, you have 3 bins designated for daily toy storage. If those bins are stuffed full at the end of the day, you can pretty much count on them being dumped loudly and thoroughly at the start of the next day's play. Double bin capacity and fill each one only halfway, making it much easier for kids to rummage through and find what they are looking for. Sorting and labeling bins by major toy types, by kid/toy ownership, and so forth further minimizes the likelihood of dumping.

Schedule playdates wisely. Some kids are just natural born scatterers. Like, you are quite sure they stand in the middle of a room, flinging things around when you're not looking. Figure out who **THOSE** kids are and keep a closer-than-usual watch when they come over to play. Also, be honest.



If your kid is the scatterer, make sure they do at least their fair share of post-play tidying. If you are consistent with this, both dumping and scattering behaviors should abate over time.

Move toys in and out of heavy rotation. Keep a secret, well-out-of-reach space available for stowing away some portion of your kids' toys. Every so often, when your kids are either out or asleep for the night, remove and stow a few items from daily bins. If you notice your child looking for something, you can surreptitiously return it to daily rotation. Or you can magically find stowed items on bad-weather days, when kids' boredom levels are peaking. If a few weeks or months go by and a stowed item is never mentioned, you can be sure it's safe to move along. That goes for brand new stuff as well. So, for example, let's say you host a birthday party for your child's entire class of 25 kids. Few children will remember all 25 gifts they opened (especially if they unwrap the gifts during their exciting party). Pay close attention to how they react when opening each gift. When they're not looking, grab and stow the ones that receive the least-excited reactions. Add sticky notes to remind you who gave what and you can get away with re-gifting at other birthday parties or holidays.

Recruit kids for big toy cleanouts at least twice a year. Time these cleanouts for just prior to birthdays or big gift-giving holidays, so you can rationalize as "making space for all the new stuff you are going to get." Other good strategies for convincing kids to part with their beloved old toys include appealing to their sense of:

Growing up and maturing – "Let's give some of these old baby toys to your new cousin!"

Kindness and social justice – "Let's donate some of these toys to kids who are less fortunate than you." Community – "Let's help raise money for your school by donating some of these toys to the spring fair."

Money and saving – "Let's see if we can sell some of these toys on Facebook marketplace; you can use the earnings to start your own savings account at the bank."

Special occasion – "Let's make this fun; when we're done, we can enjoy [fill in something fun or typically disallowed]."

As always, before donating toys, ensure they are safe, intact, in good repair, and as clean as you would want them to be for your own child.

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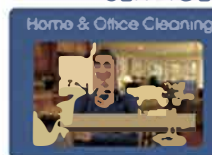
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Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

If the past few months have given you more time for introspection, use it to improve your financial plan in a big-picture way. Even for the privileged among us who still have our jobs, are not on the front lines with the pandemic, and have not had anyone close to us felled by COVID-19, the current crisis has brought hardships big and small.

Parents have confronted the daily struggle of trying to do their jobs while also home-schooling. Adult children have not been able to visit their elderly parents. Graduations, weddings, and even funerals have been put on hold or "Zoomified." Yet as difficult as it has been, there have been a few silver linings too, especially for those of us lucky enough to not be touched directly by the crisis. One of the most valuable is that pressing pause on our usual routines has given many of us the opportunity to take a step back, get out of our ruts, and take stock. What do we really value? What do we really miss? What can we not wait to do when this is all over? What "necessity" of our past lives, whether the daily purchased latte or frequent meals in restaurants, are we finding that we are quite happily doing without?

Travel may be someone's greatest longing, while others miss cooking and entertaining big groups of family and friends. Talking about how the pandemic has changed our thinking on a topic, or made us want to do more of something else, can help us feel like we are using the present situation productively. The current sense of isolation will not be for naught, because it is shaping how we intend to use our lives in the future, when we once again have a full set of choices before us.

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

It can be argued that now is a good time to put a fresh set of eyes on your financial plan, taking a similarly expansive view of it that you might not have been able to do when you were busy and mired in your day-to-day activities. Too often, one expert opined, financial plans (and planners) move straight to the "solution" phase, without stopping to ask some basic questions about what someone is trying to achieve and what their real problems are.

"Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things."

What will constitute "success" for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

Whether you are well into retirement or early in your career, it can be easy to backburner questions like these and move straight to logistics, determining your asset allocation and minimizing taxes, for example. Those are all worthy pursuits, but if you find yourself with a bit of extra time to think a bit more broadly and introspectively about your financial plan, here are some of the key questions to ask yourself.

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

As most investors know, the biggest determinant of whether you achieve financial success is how much you spend versus how much you save. But as important as it is to make sure your intake exceeds your outgo, budgeting can seem like sheer drudgery. Here is a different way to think about budgeting. Simply begin to take note of how various discretionary expenditures make you feel. It can be incredibly illuminating. Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things. Many would also argue that many of life's most memorable experiences cost very little.

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

Investors should strive to make smart allocations of financial capital across opportunity sets, not just saving versus spending but also debt pay down versus investing in the market, how much to allocate to retirement savings versus college, and so on. These are crucial topics worthy of significant analysis and introspection. Ultimately, the right answers are a matter of math (expected return on "investment") and personal preference.

Many of us pay much less attention to how we allocate an even more scarce resource, our time, even though that allocation will ultimately have an even greater impact on whether we feel like we have met our goals. Of course, some of our time expenditures are pre-ordained, the time we spend working or caring for children, for example. Even within those allocations it seems worthwhile to be more mindful, to help ensure that your allocation of time in a given day, week, or year aligns with your goals and vision for that period. An audit of how you are allocating your time currently is a good starting point. Technology tools can help you determine how much time you waste (uh, spend) on social media and other activities that could be detracting from your productivity and happiness.

What Is Your Definition of "Enough"?

Many of us are operating with an incredibly vague notion of how much we really need to save in order to achieve our financial goals and find security. Even financial planners might rely on rules of thumb when setting your retirement savings target. For example, they might assume that you will need 80% of your working income in retirement and extrapolate the rest of your plan from there.

As humans, we often have a natural tendency to reach for more more more, regardless of whether that "more" is actually bringing more happiness and security. Trying to keep up with the people around us, in terms of possessions and outward signs of success, can get exhausting and may not get us any closer to our life's goals. That is why, in this period of limited activity, spending, and social contact, it is worthwhile to think through your own definition of enough, both now and for the future.

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

When taking a strictly financial and estate-planning perspective, leaving a "legacy" is one of those topics that can seem overly narrow. It is about leaving assets behind for children, grandchildren, and other loved ones, as well as charity if we so choose. It is about making sure we do not burden the people we care about. Those are crucial considerations and they are why everyone needs an estate plan that includes wills, powers of attorney, and beneficiary designations, among other key documents.

While you are at it, why not think big picture about your legacy, too? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? What life philosophy or pieces of wisdom do you hope that your loved ones will always associate with you? If you find yourself with a bit of extra time for introspection, write down a few ideas along these lines. And no, you are not too young to start thinking about this. You can find templates for creating a "personal legacy" online, but some good advice is not to overthink it. Balance more serious ideas with more lighthearted ones. We all have credos that we live by; make sure your loved ones know yours.

**Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments,
Wintrust Wealth Management.**

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WINTRUST
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

239.687.5204

nazwoir@wintrustwealth.com

3401 Tamiami Trail North Naples, Florida

When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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Nina Azwoir
First Vice President, Investments

(239) 687-5204
nazwoir@wintrustwealth.com
3401 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, Florida

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Svetlana Kogan, M.D., IFMCP Functional Concierge Primary Care



Dr. Svetlana Kogan is a Cornell-educated, board-certified physician with over 25 years of experience blending traditional, functional, and holistic medicine. Trained and certified by the Institute for Functional Medicine, she brings deep expertise & compassion to every patient encounter.

Dr. Kogan has authored hundreds of articles, & has appeared as a medical expert on FOX, CBS, ABC, and NBC. She is also the author of the holistic book 'Diet Slave No More!'

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