

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

June 2025

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

FREE 

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**OH NO,
WHAT DID I
JUST STEP ON?**

**UNDERSTANDING
AND TREATING
PUNCTURE WOUNDS
OF THE FOOT**

**UNSEEN
BATTLES**

**THE SILENT
TOLL OF PTSD**

**HEART
ATTACKS**

DON'T DISCRIMINATE

**EARLY
DETECTION**

**OF PROSTATE
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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING AS SMOKING CESSATION TOOLS

Are you looking to quit smoking? Have you tried to quit several times with little to no success? Are you frustrated and running out of ideas that could help you kick the habit for good? You are not alone! In fact, 7 out of 10 tobacco users want to quit and may struggle with these same questions. Some tobacco users might be tempted to turn to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, vape pens, and other vaping devices) to ease the transition from traditional cigarettes to not smoking at all.¹ Though this may seem like a novel option for some, the question we must ask is whether using e-cigarettes or vaping is better for you than using tobacco products. According to Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H., director of clinical research at the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, there are several important factors to consider:

1. E-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless “water vapor.”²

The aerosol used in e-cigarettes contains chemicals that can be harmful to health, including:

- Nicotine²
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs²
- Flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease²
- Volatile organic compounds²
- Cancer-causing chemicals²
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead²

2. The nicotine in tobacco and vaping products is addictive.

According to Dr. Blaha, nicotine is a toxic substance that raises your blood pressure and spikes adrenaline which increases your heart rate and the likelihood of having a heart attack.¹ Emerging data also suggests links to chronic lung disease and asthma.¹

3. Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional ones.¹

Many e-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a combustible tobacco product as many vaping devices offer extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine to get a greater hit of the substance. ¹ This can be counterproductive to an individual’s goal to quit as higher doses of nicotine result in a stronger nicotine addiction.

4. E-cigarettes are not an FDA approved cessation tool.¹

E-cigarettes have not received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval as smoking cessation devices.¹ There are many FDA approved products on the market that are effective for quitting nicotine including the nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges.

If you are a tobacco user looking to quit smoking, help is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Tobacco Free Florida AHEC Cessation Program—offers free tobacco cessation sessions that are available to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group cessation sessions, held virtually and in-person, provide information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. Free nicotine replacement



therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) are provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

References:

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, June 23). Quick facts on the risks of e-cigarettes for kids, teens, and young adults. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved August 5, 2022, from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html?s_cid=OSH_emg_GL0004&gclid=Cj0KCQjw_7KXBhCoARIsAPdPTfhcghfeM1Nt942E9T9NEC5ZacheqTfaRJoU10p52M2wpiyEe8h9pQaAqhPEALw_wcB#why-is-nicotine-unsafe

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Heart Attacks Don't Discriminate

On Christmas Eve 2023, newlyweds Lauren and Kahler Cox were headed back from vacation on the Gulf Coast of Florida when Kahler, 29, started to experience a severe case of acid reflux, which turned into chest pain and difficulty breathing.

The Coxes went to the ER at Manatee Memorial Hospital where, within minutes, he went into cardiac arrest and CPR was started. In less than an hour, Kahler was taken to the Cath Lab where Cardiologist S. Jay Mathews, MD, MS, FACC, FSCAI, placed four stents in his heart to open the arteries. Kahler was discharged on Christmas Day.

Lauren and Kahler Cox were overjoyed to welcome a baby girl, Karissa, this past fall - a true blessing after a challenging year. They are deeply grateful to Manatee Memorial Hospital for the care and support that helped make this miracle possible.

The Manatee Heart and Vascular Center and the Valve Institute at Manatee Memorial Hospital provide patients with an individualized approach to heart care that includes assessment, diagnosis, planning, intervention and evaluation.

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Lauren and Kahler Cox with
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"OH NO, WHAT DID I JUST STEP ON?" - Understanding and Treating Puncture Wounds of the Foot

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

We've all had that moment—walking barefoot through the kitchen, across the beach, or in the garden—when suddenly, *zap!* A jolt of pain shoots through your foot. You freeze, wondering, "What did I just step on?" Was it something harmless, like a Lego or dog toy? Or something more dangerous—glass, a rusty nail, a jagged shell, or a splintered piece of wood?

Sometimes the pain is immediate and obvious. Other times, it's subtle. You may remember some discomfort that seemed to pass, only to notice later a stain on your sock or a red, irritated spot on your foot. That's when it hits you: *"Maybe I really did step on something after all."*

These scenarios often result in a puncture wound—a small, but potentially serious injury caused by a sharp object piercing the skin. Unlike cuts, puncture wounds are narrow and deep. Because the entry point is small, it often closes quickly, trapping bacteria—or pieces of the object—inside.

Why Puncture Wounds Matter

If you're lucky, the object might come out cleanly without further problems. But sometimes fragments remain embedded in the foot. This is especially risky if the object was dirty or contaminated.

People with reduced sensation—such as those with diabetes or neuropathy—are especially at risk. Without the ability to feel pain properly, they may not realize they've been injured and continue to walk on the wound, worsening it.

If left untreated, a puncture wound can lead to infection, abscesses, or even deeper issues involving joints or bone. What starts as a small nuisance can escalate into a serious health concern.

When to Seek Help

Always seek medical attention after a puncture wound, even if it seems minor. Warning signs that should never be ignored include:

- Ongoing or worsening pain
- Redness or swelling, especially if spreading
- Pus or other drainage



- Bleeding that won't stop
- Trouble walking or putting weight on the foot
- Fever or chills
- Seeing part of the object still in the skin

These signs suggest infection or retained material—both of which need prompt treatment. A podiatrist or other medical provider can help evaluate the injury and offer appropriate care.

What Happens at the Doctor's Office

Your provider will review your medical history and examine your foot. X-rays are often used to check for foreign objects. However, not all materials show on standard X-rays—wood, for example, can be hard to detect—so ultrasound or MRI might be needed.

If the object is close to the surface, it might be removed in the office. If it's deeper or there's infection, surgery could be necessary. If signs of infection are present, a culture swab may be taken to guide antibiotic treatment.

And don't forget about tetanus. If you were injured by a rusty or dirty object and haven't had a booster recently, a tetanus shot may be recommended.

Prevention Is the Best Cure

While you can't always avoid accidents, wearing the right footwear greatly reduces your risk. This means:

- **Water shoes** at the beach, pool, or lake
- **Sturdy work boots** on job sites
- **Supportive slippers or house shoes** at home

This is especially important for people with numbness in their feet. Without normal sensation, even a small wound can go unnoticed and untreated.

When in Doubt, Get It Checked Out

It's tempting to brush off a puncture wound as no big deal—but these injuries can become serious quickly if not handled properly. Even if the object came out and the pain has gone away, seeing a medical professional is wise.

If you're unsure what to do, don't hesitate to contact your podiatrist. Prompt care can prevent infection, complications, and even the need for surgery. Your feet carry you everywhere—keep them protected and pain-free.

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

Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, FACFAS, DABPM

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

Call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com to make an appointment. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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UNSEEN BATTLES: THE SILENT TOLL OF PTSD

By Matthew Rocklage

Millions of people walk among us with hidden mental health challenges. It's a battle that doesn't always come with visual indicators. One of these conditions is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). For veterans, survivors of abuse, first responders and countless others, PTSD is not just a mental health diagnosis – it's a daily struggle for peace and healing.

This experience can be isolating, making sufferers feel alone. However, when there is understanding, support and appropriate treatment, recovery is possible.

There's a common misconception that PTSD only affects combat veterans, but it can impact a variety of individuals. PTSD can affect anyone whose nervous system responds to a traumatic event with a heightened sense of fear or danger. Everyone is different, and what's traumatic for one person might not be for others. This could include natural disasters, physical assault, domestic violence or even a car accident. However, whether PTSD develops is unique to each person, so individuals may experience PTSD from sustained hardships like bullying, medical issues, family issues or grief. Each year, nearly 9 million people are affected by PTSD.

In Florida specifically, residents may experience hurricane-related PTSD.

With several significant storms in the past few years, it's common to feel fearful and vulnerable when hurricane season begins. A range of emotions, from anxiety to depression, can last for days, weeks or even months after the storm. People who experience particularly traumatic events during a hurricane, including being trapped or injured, or suffering the loss of a loved one or pet, may be at a higher risk of developing PTSD.

What are the symptoms of PTSD?

The most common warning signs include:

- Nightmares or flashbacks that vividly recall traumatic events leading to distressing emotions or even physical sensations.
- Avoidance behaviors, where you try to avoid people, places or situations that remind you of the trauma.
- Increased irritability, anger or difficulty concentrating, leading to challenges at home, work or school.



- Hyperarousal or being easily startled, having difficulty sleeping or feeling a constant sense of unease.
- Increased alertness, also known as hypervigilance, which can result in increased anxiety, persistent worrying or difficulty sleeping.
- Persistent feelings of guilt, shame or self-blame, even when you are not at fault.

Experiencing any of these symptoms can significantly impact your mental and physical well-being. They can also affect your daily activities, relationships and diminish your overall quality of life.

Who can experience PTSD?

PTSD is a mental health condition that can impact anyone, regardless of race, gender or background. However, the way it presents in children is often different than adults.

Very young children might have trouble describing their experiences, but there may be noticeable changes in their behavior, mood or academic performance. You may even see milestone regression in some children. In extreme cases, some children may stop talking entirely.

Adolescents may have dramatic shifts in their social behaviors, friend groups or stop taking part in hobbies and interests.

Recognizing the symptoms or spotting changes in your child's behavior is essential. You can help them get early intervention from a professional mental health provider, which is the first step towards recovery. Without treatment, the effects of PTSD can continue indefinitely.

Treatment options

Early diagnosis and intervention from a professional are key to effectively managing PTSD symptoms.

PTSD treatment plans often include a range of therapeutic approaches. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and talk therapy are commonly used to

treat PTSD. In other cases, medication may also be utilized as part of the treatment approach. There isn't one specific treatment plan that works for everyone, so it's important to work with a professional you trust for individualized support.

How can you help someone with PTSD?

Caregivers play a vital role in supporting their loved ones with PTSD. Whether you're caring for a parent, spouse or child, it's crucial to educate yourself about the disorder and its effects.

Emotional support is one of the most valuable contributions caregivers can offer. Creating a safe space for someone to express their emotions and actively listening without judgment can make a significant difference. This especially applies for children, as they likely don't understand what they're experiencing and need support from a family member or loved one to process these feelings.

Even though it can be scary, it's critical to encourage your loved one to seek professional help and assist them in finding the right therapist. You can also provide support by attending their appointments with them.

Recovery is possible – even when it feels entirely out of reach. Healing doesn't mean forgetting the trauma or pretending it never happened; it means learning to live with the past without it controlling you. With timely intervention, professional help and a compassionate support system, the brain can unlearn fear and rebuild trust. The path may be difficult, but there is hope.

About the Author

Matthew Rocklage, DNP, PMHNP-BC, is a board-certified psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner at Elite DNA Behavioral Health's North Palm Beach location. Elite DNA is one of Florida's largest mental health providers, offering accessible and affordable in-person and virtual behavioral health services for children, adolescents, and adults at more than 30 locations across the state. For more information, visit EliteDNA.com.



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THE HEART HEALTH BENEFITS OF HEALTHY WEIGHT LOSS

Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial for overall health and well-being, but its impact on heart health is particularly significant. With obesity rates rising worldwide, understanding the cardiovascular benefits of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is more important than ever. This article explores how healthy weight loss can support better heart health and provides insights into effective weight management strategies.

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

Our expert-designed weight loss plans integrate GLP-1 medications, nutrition, and lifestyle coaching to deliver effective, lasting results. Clients benefit from comprehensive health assessments and individualized guidance tailored to their unique goals. Join the Premiere Weight Loss + Wellness community today for proven, compassionate support on your journey to better health.

Understanding the Connection Between Weight and Heart Health

Obesity is a major risk factor for various cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including heart attacks, strokes, and hypertension. Excess body weight can lead to increased cholesterol levels, elevated blood pressure, and added strain on the heart. According to the American Heart Association, even a modest weight loss of 5–10% can significantly improve heart health markers—underscoring the importance of focusing on sustainable weight goals.

Benefits of Healthy Weight Loss for Heart Health

1. Improved Blood Pressure: One of the most immediate benefits of weight loss is a reduction in blood pressure. Excess weight puts strain on the heart and blood vessels, increasing the risk of hypertension. Losing weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise can help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.



2. Lower Cholesterol Levels: Weight loss can lead to improvements in lipid profiles. Many individuals with excess weight have high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL)—the "bad" cholesterol—and low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL)—the "good" cholesterol. Healthy weight loss helps normalize these levels and may reduce the risk of atherosclerosis.

3. Reduced Inflammation: Obesity is often linked to chronic inflammation, which can damage blood vessels and contribute to heart disease. Losing weight has been shown to reduce inflammatory markers, promoting better cardiovascular health.

4. Enhanced Insulin Sensitivity: Excess weight is associated with insulin resistance, a precursor to type 2 diabetes—a major risk factor for heart disease. Losing weight through diet and physical activity can improve insulin sensitivity and help prevent or manage diabetes.

5. Better Heart Function: Carrying less weight reduces the workload on the heart. With less strain, the heart can pump more efficiently, improving overall cardiac function and physical stamina.

6. Increased Physical Activity: Weight loss often enables more comfortable movement, making it easier to engage in physical activity. Regular exercise strengthens the heart, improves circulation, and helps manage stress—key components of heart health.

Strategies for Healthy Weight Loss

To achieve the heart health benefits of weight loss, it is essential to approach weight management safely and sustainably. Consider these strategies:

- **Balanced Diet:** Focus on nutrient-dense such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit intake of processed foods high in sugar, sodium, and trans fats.
- **Regular Physical Activity:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week (e.g., brisk walking or cycling), plus strength training exercises twice a week.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Avoid extreme dieting. Instead, target gradual, steady weight loss—typically 1 to 2 pounds per week—for long-term success.
- **Monitor Progress:** Use food journals, apps, or trackers to keep tabs on eating habits and physical activity. Monitoring supports accountability and highlights areas for improvement.
- **Seek Support:** A support system can make a big difference. Join a group, work with a coach, or team up with friends or family to stay motivated.

Healthy weight loss is one of the most effective ways to improve heart health. From lowering blood pressure and cholesterol to reducing inflammation and enhancing heart function, reaching and maintaining a healthy weight can significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. With balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, and the support of an expert team, individuals can take confident steps toward a healthier heart and a more vibrant life.

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Lymphedema and Vein Disease

By Dr. TC Lackey II

What is Lymphedema?

The lymphatic system protects the body against harmful bacteria and transports fluid from body tissues into the vascular system. Lymph vessels are thin walled to absorb fluid, bacteria, and protein for transport to the lymph nodes which eliminate waste and bacteria. Together, lymph vessels and nodes help maintain a healthy fluid balance. Lymphedema occurs when there is impairment of the lymphatic system, which disrupts normal fluid transport. If the lymphatic system is overwhelmed, damaged, or blocked, chronic swelling can occur. Over time this swelling can cause thickening of the skin and recurrent skin infections (cellulitis). It is a permanent condition which worsens over time if not properly treated. There is no cure, but symptoms can be managed which improve the quality of life.

What Causes Lymphedema?

The leading cause of lymphedema is cancer and its treatment. However, chronic venous insufficiency may be the most important predictor of lymphedema in the legs. Primary lymphedema can be present at birth or inherited. Secondary lymphedema is more common and due to disruption of the lymphatic system from vein disease, cancer, radiation or chemotherapy, trauma, surgery, and obesity. Common symptoms include limb heaviness and fatigue, toenails that look like a ski jump, pitting edema, dry warm skin, and open venous ulcers.

How Can I Counteract Lymphedema?

Exercise is one of the first steps to improve lymphatic function and to improve fluid removal. Additional treatment can include



manual lymphatic drainage, compression stockings, and pneumatic compression devices. Improved function can reduce cellulitis as well as fibrosis, and edema. Identifying underlying vein disease is one of the most important steps. The two diseases exist together, and you must treat the underlying vein disease in combination with lymphedema treatments for the best result.

If you have any concerns of lymphedema or vein disease, it is important to be evaluated. Minimally invasive treatments are offered in our offices, and there's no downtime! **Start your healing at Florida Lakes Vein Center with a FREE vein screening.** Once the vein component is treated, we will recommend continued follow up or use of a lymphedema pump for best results with improved quality of life.



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



Attention: All Florida Residents with Brain and Body Dysfunction, Disease, or Disorders Are Now Qualified for "Legal Stem Cell Treatments"

The Governor has just signed into law "HB1617", which states that "Only Qualified Pain Management, Orthopedic, or Wound Care Physicians who Stay Within Their Scope of Practice" may perform these Breakthrough Procedures with "Qualified Stem Cells".

By Contributing Author William J. Cole Jr., DO, FAACP, Regenerative Medicine Expert with RegenaMed.US® and Interventionist with OrthoMed® Pain & Sports Medicine

Dr. William J. Cole, Jr., the Foremost Authority on Advanced Stem Cell Brain and Body Regeneration, is Now Authorized to perform these Life-Changing Stem Cell Treatments "Legally," and with the Blessing of the State of Florida, the Governor, and the Florida Dept. of Health.

Thousands of patients have already experienced "The Future of Medicine" with Dr. Cole, who is a Double Board Certified in PMR Interventional and Regenerative Medicine, and has 2 Certified Pain Clinics practicing Orthopedic and Regenerative Medicine on the West Coast of Florida with his "Find-It, Fix-It" approach for over 20 years. Currently, Florida is the One and Only State to take the Bold Step by "Legalizing Stem Cell Treatments" by Qualified Physicians Only.

However, Patient Safety Must Be the Highest Priority with these Powerful and Transformative Treatments. Therefore, the New Stem Cell Law stipulates Stem Cells may be utilized ONLY if they are "Performed by an MD or DO" (no chiropractors, nurses, or assistants), and ONLY if the Qualified Physician Practices "Orthopedics, Pain Management, or Wound Care within their scope of practice", and utilize ONLY "Safe, Ethically Sourced, and Highly Vetted Stem Cells" from the most stringent labs are eligible and legal, to ensure Maximal Benefits and Minimal Risks to the Patients (without the complications, infections, or dangers that may occur from Computer Grown Cells, Bone Marrow Aspirate, or Fat Cell Liposuction procedures according to the New Florida Law).

Of course there are Never Embryonic, Fetal, or Aborted Stem Cells, No Animal Stem Cells according to this Legislative Bill, which also provides the Extra Level of Confidence to those patients in need of pain relief.

So many patients have chosen to "Rebuild Their Brain and Body" in ways that we never thought possible prior to Dr. Cole's Advanced Stem Cell Therapies. Some of the Brain disorders patients who have benefited from these treatments range from Long-Covid, CoVax Neurologic Disorders, Parkinson's, MS, Aging brain (white matter disease), TBI, SCI, CTE, Viral Infections, Sports injuries, Car Accidents, Work Injuries, Alzheimer's, and even Stroke Patients. There is "No Limit to The Future of Medicine!"

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Easy Ways to Age in Place with Confidence

by ArchWell Health

The more time that you spend in your home, the more you make it your own. There's a comfort in creating a living space that reflects who you are as a person. But as we age, safety can become a concern. Certain risk factors become more common and have the potential to impact your safety. Changes in vision, reduced balance, and side effects from medications are just a few of the challenges older adults face. Here are some ideas to help make your home a safer place for you.

Adapt your living space to your life.

The first thing on your list should be making your physical surroundings as safe as possible. Take a moment to look around your home for possible hazards. Make sure that all your walking paths are clear of clutter, and if you have area rugs, secure them with nonslip backings or double-sided tape.

Another important safety factor is lighting. Changes in vision happen as we age that make brighter and well-placed lighting essential. Brighter spaces make it easier to spot tripping hazards and help us avoid falls. Consider installing brighter bulbs in stairwells and darker areas. Night lights are great for added visibility in hallways and bathrooms. Other options for adaptive lighting include dusk-to-dawn or motion-sensing switches, and Bluetooth systems.

Certain home modifications can be a huge help. Installing grab bars and handrails on stairs and in bathrooms and showers can help you keep your balance and prevent falls. If you can't install them yourself, we recommend hiring a handyman or contractor for added peace of mind.

Move mindfully.

There are many ways to take control as you age. One simple approach is to move slowly and thoughtfully. Sit down when putting on shoes and clothing. Consider using a cane, walker, or grabber to help you maintain your balance and stability. Multitasking is a common cause of injury, so slow down and be patient with yourself. Saving time is never worth getting hurt.

Plan ahead.

Rushing out the door is one of the most common reasons older people cite for forgetting things—and it can lead to accidents. Set out your daily essentials like clothes and snacks the night before and always



allow adequate time to safely reach your destination. Good planning and preparation are key to keeping you safe each day.

Keep important paperwork organized.

Keeping your living space organized makes it easier to carry out your daily tasks. Keep a basket on a table for bill statements so you always know where your important paperwork is. Another good strategy is to use online bill payment. By automating your bills, you can be confident that they get paid on time—and you never have the hassle of missed payments or late fees.

Organize your prescriptions.

When thinking about home safety, organizing your medicine cabinet may not be at the top of your list, but it should be. By managing your medications properly, you can help prevent mishaps and protect your health. Certain medications come with side effects or interactions that can affect your everyday routine. For example, some cholesterol medications shouldn't be taken with grapefruit juice, while others can make you more sensitive to the sun. It's essential that you carefully read all medication labels and instructions to reduce the risk of mix-ups.

A pill organizer is a great way to organize your medications for the day, week, or month. You can also set calendar reminders on your smartphone or voice-assisted speaker like an Amazon Echo, Apple HomePod, or Google Nest—or using more specialized digital apps like MyTherapy or Medisafe.

Medicare Advantage covers a comprehensive medication review for ArchWell Health members with multiple chronic conditions. So, we recommend bringing a comprehensive list of your medications to your next appointment.

Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy.

Each pharmacy has a computer system designed to alert pharmacists about potential negative side-effects and drug interactions. However, that information may be limited to each store or retail chain. By trying to search out the best deal for each of your medications, you may risk overriding important warning systems.

A great way to save money while avoiding the hassle of multiple retail pharmacies is to use the ArchWell Health Prescription Services mail-order pharmacy. You can speak with a pharmacist directly by phone if you have questions or concerns, and they deliver your medications right to your front door.

Make your home a safe and comfortable place.

By recognizing the limitations you will face later in life and developing smart strategies for overcoming them, you can ensure that your home is a safe place to live for many years to come. Good planning, thoughtful organization, and simple updates will not only help you avoid injuries, they also help improve your quality of life and overall level of happiness.

If you need more support with home safety, we encourage you to talk with your ArchWell Health provider in person or by phone. Visit ArchWellHealth.com for more information.

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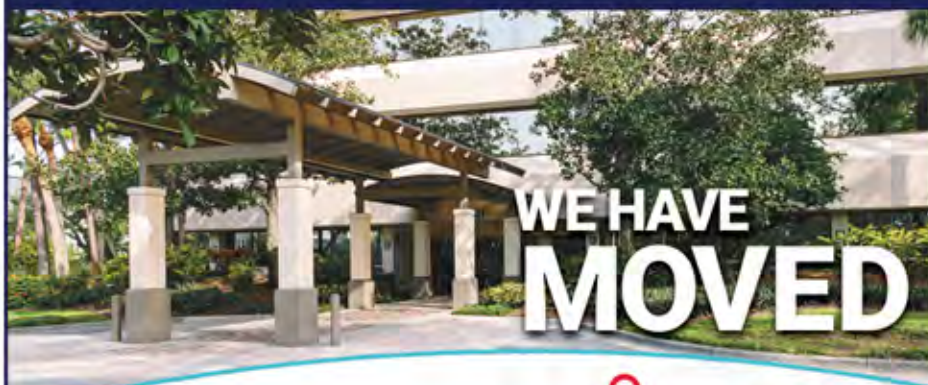
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Reclaiming Strength: Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness Offers New Hope for Muscle and Fitness After Weight Loss with Emsculpt NEO

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

In the evolving world of wellness and body contouring, Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness is redefining what it means to be strong — from the inside out. At the heart of their transformative approach is Emsculpt NEO, a cutting-edge device that is delivering measurable results for patients looking to build muscle, burn fat, and restore functional strength, especially following the use of GLP-1 weight loss medications.

Emsculpt NEO works by combining high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) energy with radiofrequency (RF) to simultaneously stimulate muscle contractions and reduce fat tissue — all without surgery or downtime. But at Calvino Family Medicine, this technology goes far beyond aesthetics. It's a tool for total body wellness, helping patients not only look better but feel stronger, move better, and reclaim their confidence.

"This isn't just about sculpting a six-pack," says the Calvino team. "It's about giving people their strength back — whether they're recovering from an injury, managing age-related muscle loss, or rebuilding after significant weight loss."

With the rising popularity of GLP-1 medications like semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy) to help patients lose weight, many are discovering a hidden challenge: loss of lean muscle mass. Emsculpt NEO addresses this head-on by preserving and even increasing muscle tone while continuing to reduce stubborn fat — helping patients achieve a more balanced, functional physique.

For those incorporating Emsculpt NEO into a functional fitness plan, the benefits are even greater. Targeted muscle stimulation boosts core strength, improves posture, and enhances overall mobility. Whether it's lifting groceries, chasing after grandkids, or improving athletic performance, patients are feeling the difference in their daily lives.

In addition to its physical benefits, Calvino Family Medicine offers Emsculpt NEO as part of customized wellness and recovery plans, often in combination with other therapies to amplify outcomes. It's a holistic approach that fits each person's unique body and goals.



"We're celebrating strength at every age," says the practice. "Confidence and vitality don't have an expiration date."

Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness invites the community to experience the Emsculpt NEO difference for themselves with a complimentary consultation. Discover what this powerful technology can do for your body, your confidence, and your future. *Call 941-637-0911 to schedule your free consultation and start your journey to renewed strength and wellness today.*

Start Your Health Journey with Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness is committed to providing innovative wellness solutions that go beyond traditional healthcare approaches. The practice now offers cutting-edge body contouring and pelvic floor health treatments through EmSculpt Neo and Emsella technologies. EmSculpt Neo helps patients build muscle and reduce fat through advanced electromagnetic and radiofrequency treatments, while Emsella provides a non-invasive solution for improving pelvic floor

strength, which can benefit both men and women experiencing urinary incontinence or seeking enhanced core muscle performance. By integrating these state-of-the-art treatments, Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness demonstrates its dedication to comprehensive patient care, empowering individuals to achieve their wellness and body confidence goals through advanced, non-surgical medical technologies.

Calvino Family Medicine & Wellness

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



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Shedding Light on Cataracts: Understanding and Addressing the Impact

George Skopis, M.D.

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.



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

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

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

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

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



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WHY SENIORS ARE CHOOSING LIFE PLAN COMMUNITIES OVER AGING IN PLACE

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

THE REALITIES OF AGING IN PLACE

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

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

WHAT IS A LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY?

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

Maintenance-free Living

Owning and maintaining a home is a lot of work, and there may come a time in life when you'd rather be relaxing or spending time with loved ones instead of doing chores around the house. When you move to a Life Plan Community, you can let the professionals



take care of lawn mowing, housekeeping, meal preparation, home repairs and more. You'll have more time to enjoy what you've earned, and more freedom to travel without worrying about who will take care of your home while you're away.

Financial Security

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

Resort-like Lifestyle

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

Social Engagement

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

Peace of Mind for Your Loved Ones

You can't predict the future, but you can take control of your options now so your loved ones don't have to worry. Moving to a Life Plan Community means they won't have to rush to find health care if the unexpected happens and you suddenly need help with

activities of daily living or round-the-clock care. Your family will have peace of mind knowing you'll have access to advanced levels of care, if needed, along with the safety of having staff available 24/7 should an emergency occur.

DISCOVER TRUE FREEDOM

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



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Chronic Headaches and Chronic Migraines Are Often Caused By a Prior Neck Injury

By Dr. Drew Hall

The head neck junction is one of the most complex biomechanical regions of the body. We have all heard the phrase "structure dictates function". This phrase intimates that structural abnormalities in the spine can have a negative effect on the normal function of the body, especially in the upper cervical spine. In this article we will talk about the relationship between injuries to the upper cervical spine and how they can lead to not only chronic headaches and migraine but also can be at the root of many different chronic health problems. We will discuss how injury to the neck affects the structure and how it is at the root CAUSE of many who suffer with chronic headaches.

But first listen to what one of our patients experienced following Blair upper cervical care:

Tracy Shaw - Verified Google Review

I have suffered from migraines since the age of three. I have tried everything from acupuncture, massage therapy, general chiropractic, as well as taking prescription medications from the neurologist. Nothing I have just listed has worked as well as what Dr. Hall has done for me. I have been under his care for about the past 7 years and each time I see him my migraines seem to disappear within hours after his visit or never come at all. I am a true believer in upper cervical care, and I must say that Dr. Hall has given quality back to my life. With the help of Dr. Hall I can once again function in my daily life. I highly recommend anyone who suffers as I must please go see Dr. Hall. It will change your life.

Upper Cervical Spine Anatomy

The head on average weighs 10-12 pounds and sits on the top vertebra in the neck called the atlas, weighing only two ounces. To make the engineering more precarious, these two structures sit on the end of a "stick", your neck. Life is inherently traumatic. Few of us make it through this life without having a car accident, slip and fall, or sports injury. Blunt trauma can cause one or several joints in the neck to misalign tearing the fibrous ligament surrounding the joint called the joint capsule. Once Injury occurs to the soft tissue a cascade of postural and neurophysiological events follows and can set the stage for headaches and other chronic health problems.



Figure 1

Joint misalignment leads to muscle imbalances throughout the spine. Once a joint is injured it loses its normal range of motion which fires bad information from the joint receptors back into the spinal cord which can lead to dysfunction through many different neurological pathways.

The Myo-Dural Bridge - an underlying cause of headache and nervous system interference

A rather new anatomical finding in the past ten years explains how headaches can be caused by upper cervical spine joint misalignment. This new anatomical finding was coined "myo-dural bridge". Myo means muscle and dural refers to the thin sheath like covering over the spinal cord. About ten years ago anatomists found a muscle at the base of the skull named the rectus capitus posterior minor (RCPM) muscle that connects or "bridges" to the dura covering the spinal cord. This new finding opened a new bio mechanical mechanism that could explain tension headaches, migraine, and other chronic health issues related to abnormal nervous system function.

As we discussed earlier injury to the neck can cause spinal misalignment at the joint level. This injury causes loss of motion that then causes the muscles of the neck to become unbalanced and chronically tight. When the RCPM muscle becomes tight it "tugs" on dural sheath covering the brainstem (the most vital part of your nervous system located at the base of the skull). The myo-dural bridge has been implicated as the source of a large percentage of patients who suffer with chronic tension headaches and migraine.

If you have chronic headaches and other chronic health problems it is a wise to get to a Blair upper cervical chiropractor who is specially trained to locate, analyze, and correct any upper cervical spine misalignment to ensure the brainstem and central nervous system are working optimally.

How does a Blair Upper Cervical Chiropractor Locate Upper Neck Misalignments?

When you enter a Blair upper cervical office you will be assessed for upper cervical spine misalignment from a battery of tests that determine if you have a misalignment and what level of the spine. Once the patient shows evidence of structural misalignment, and nervous system interference, a precise 3-d image called cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) is taken. (Fig.1) This imaging allows the doctor to view the spinal joints to determine the direction and magnitude of misalignment. Once determined the patient is corrected with the data gleaned from the imaging. The Blair procedure uses precision and finesse not force to restore normal motion to the misaligned vertebrae. The correction involves no twisting, popping, or pulling and it's end goal is the restore normal function to the central nervous system so the body can return to normal function and health.

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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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MEN'S HEALTH MONTH:

Modern Cosmetic Solutions for the Contemporary Man

By Dr. Kiran Gill

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 "Brotox" Revolution

The male injectable market has exploded in recent years, with "Brotox" 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.



Naples Aesthetic Institute

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NaplesAestheticInstitute.com

Early Detection of Prostate Cancer Saves Lives

Prostate cancer is a fairly serious blip on the male health radar as the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. Chances are you know someone who has battled prostate cancer because statistically speaking; one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. The average age of diagnosis is 65, in fact 60% of those diagnosed are 65 and older.

Prostate cancer – and other prostate issues – can cause considerable discomfort, pain and even death, if they are left undiagnosed and untreated. No man looks forward to the annual prostate exam; but if you're smart, you'll bite the bullet and go anyway because early detection can save your life.

Regular screenings cannot only save you a lot of pain and discomfort – they may just save your life.

What is the prostate – and why does it need to be examined?

The prostate gland is a doughnut-shaped organ that is part of the male reproductive system. A healthy prostate in a younger man is only about the size of a walnut. The prostate sits just under the bladder and is wrapped around the beginning of the urethra. It is surrounded by nerves that control erections and its primary function is to produce a liquid that enriches and protects sperm.

Unfortunately, as men get older this little organ tends to act up. At times, some of the symptoms are simply a sign of aging; however, in many cases prostate trouble is an indication of a more serious problem. Prostate cancer is a primary concern, but other prostate disorders can be just as uncomfortable and a serious concern for male health.

So if you are experiencing symptoms like difficulty or discomfort while urinating, reduced ability to get an erection, blood in your urine or semen, or painful ejaculation, it's important to have your prostate checked out. Even if you aren't experiencing any symptoms, it's still wise to be screened from time to time, as you can pre-empt and prevent problems before they crop up.

Regular screenings ensure that problems are caught quickly. Catching a prostate problem right at the start, means that it can be treated and cleared up with far less difficulty.

So men, don't wait around till you run into trouble. A little momentary discomfort is a worthwhile trade for a long, happy, healthy life surrounded by your family and friends. Do yourself a favor and get your prostate checked out.

If there is concern as a result from the routine annual prostate exam, diagnostic imaging will be ordered. There are different imaging screenings available, the 3T wide bore MRI provides that best image quality in a non-invasive way.

Men travel from across the United States for advanced imaging with our Phillips 3T wide bore MRI.

Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood is pleased to offer 3T wide bore MRI scans for obtaining superior-quality MRI images for diagnostic accuracy and exceptional comfort in an expanded range of patient scenarios.

What is a 3T MRI?

The term "3T" stands for "3 Tesla." Tesla is the name given to a measurement unit that expresses the strength of the electromagnetic energy field that MRI devices use for generating images. Standard MRI scanners operate in the range of about 1.5 Tesla. This means that our 3T MRI operates at approximately twice the electromagnetic energy level of a standard MRI.

Benefits of 3T MRI

Our wide bore 3T MRI scanner combines the superb diagnostic image quality gained through a stronger electromagnetic field with the exceptional patient comfort of a wide-bore configuration—70 cm in diameter, a full 10 cm larger than standard MRI scanners. The scanner is also shorter in length than conventional MRI scanners. These factors make this scanner less confining to patients, reducing symptoms of claustrophobia. Additionally, large patients who have trouble fitting into conventional scanners can have their scans done in this machine, which can accommodate patients weighing up to 500 lbs.

The stronger magnetic field allows the machine to detect stronger signals from the patient during the imaging. This increased signal strength can be used to generate more detailed pictures or reduce the total imaging time. Often the imaging protocols are designed to generate better pictures while still saving time compared to other types of MRI scanners, giving patients the benefit of a shorter exam without sacrificing diagnostic quality.

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Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

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

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

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

How does VAX-D work?

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



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

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

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

Is VAX-D Right for Me?

You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:

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

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

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

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

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

BACK PAIN INSTITUTE OF WEST FLORIDA

5221 26th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207

Second Location: 7345 International Place, Suite 101
Lakewood Ranch, Sarasota 34240

Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



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

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

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



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

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

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

How Can GAINSWave Prevent & Treat ED?

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

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

GAINSWave
THE NEW WAVE IN MALE ENHANCEMENT

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



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

Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

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

Men are Preventing ED with GAINSWave

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

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

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

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When You Are At Your Wits End

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





Beauty, Reimagined

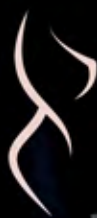
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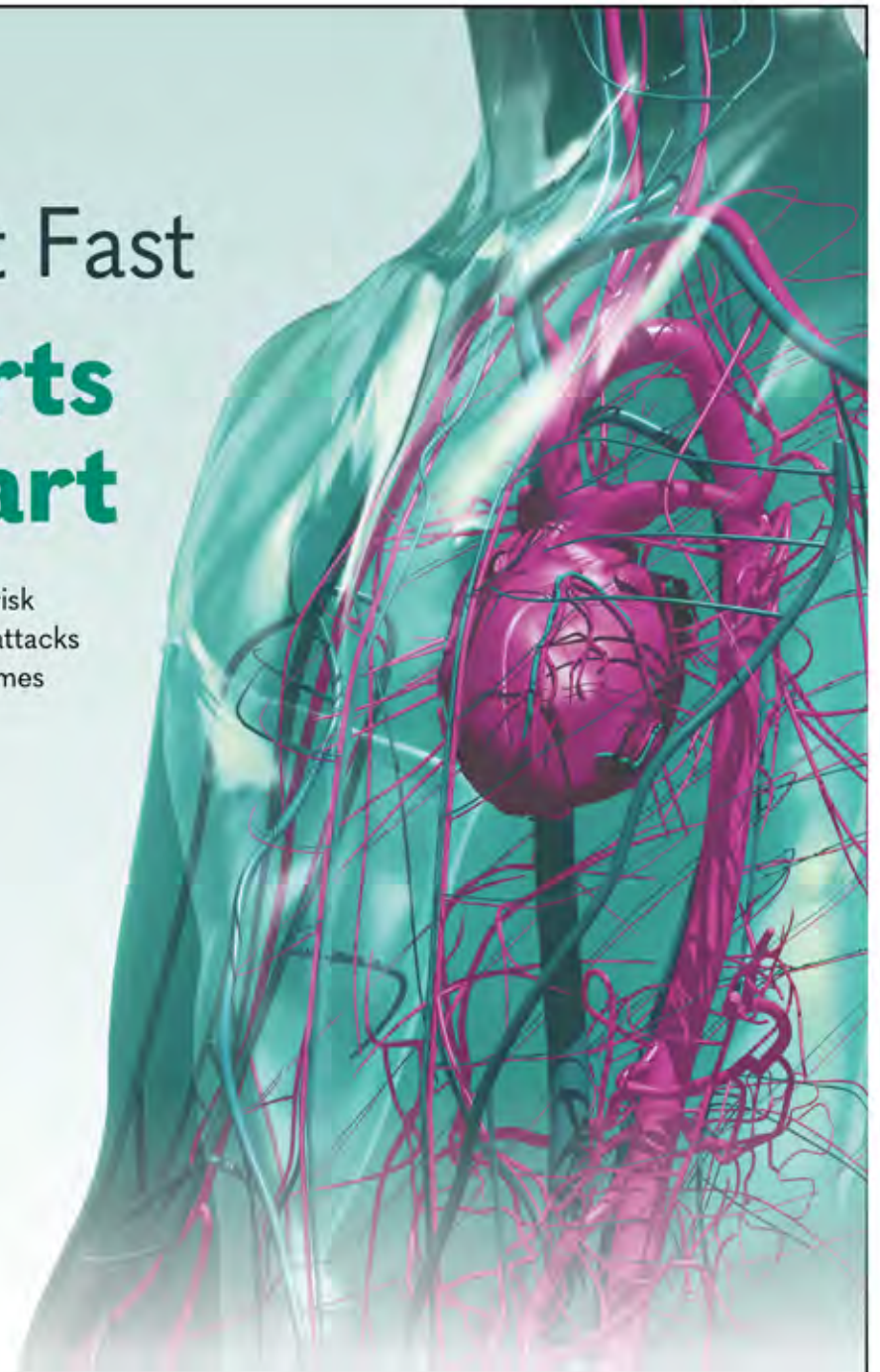
Men's Health Starts with a Strong Heart

Heart disease is often seen as an issue for older men with obvious risk factors – but the truth is, cardiac events don't discriminate. Heart attacks can affect men of all ages, backgrounds and health profiles, sometimes with little warning.

Know the signs of a possible heart attack – even the subtle ones.

- Chest pain, pressure or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in the shoulders, arms, back, neck or jaw
- Shortness of breath
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Nausea, lightheadedness or faintness
- Unusual fatigue
- Indigestion or heartburn

Skilled cardiologists and cardiothoracic surgeons at the Manatee Heart and Vascular Center and the Valve Institute at Manatee Memorial Hospital offer an award-winning, multidisciplinary approach to care. The faster a heart attack is treated, the better the chance of survival and recovery.



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