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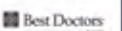
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Taking Charge of Your Sexual Health: Essential Conversations with Your Doctor

By Stéphane Calvino, MD

Sexual health is an integral part of overall well-being, yet many people feel uncomfortable discussing it with their healthcare providers. However, open and honest communication with your primary care doctor about sexual health concerns is crucial for maintaining optimal health and catching potential issues early. This article will explore key topics you should consider discussing with your doctor during your next visit.

First and foremost, it's important to remember that your doctor is a professional trained to address a wide range of health concerns, including those related to sexual health. They've likely heard it all before, so there's no need to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Your honesty can lead to better care and potentially life-saving interventions.

One essential topic to discuss is your sexual history and current sexual practices. This information helps your doctor assess your risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and recommend appropriate screening tests. Be prepared to discuss the number of sexual partners you've had, the types of sexual activities you engage in, and whether you use protection consistently.

Regular STI testing is crucial for sexually active individuals, regardless of relationship status. Ask your doctor about which tests are recommended for you based on your age, gender, and sexual practices. Common STI tests include those for chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis. Some tests may be performed through simple urine samples or blood tests, while others may require swabs or physical examinations.

If you're experiencing any unusual symptoms, such as genital pain, itching, unusual discharge, or sores, it's vital to bring these to your doctor's attention. These could be signs of an STI or other condition that requires prompt treatment. Don't wait for your annual check-up if you notice concerning symptoms – schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

For those interested in starting a family or preventing pregnancy, discussing contraception options and fertility concerns is essential. Your doctor can help you choose the most suitable birth control method based on your health history, lifestyle, and preferences. If you're planning to conceive, your



doctor can provide preconception counseling and recommend necessary tests or lifestyle changes to optimize your chances of a healthy pregnancy.

Sexual function issues are another important topic to address with your primary care doctor. Whether you're experiencing difficulties with arousal, orgasm, or pain during intercourse, your doctor can help identify underlying causes and recommend appropriate treatments. These issues can sometimes be indicative of other health problems, so it's crucial not to ignore them.

For individuals approaching or going through menopause or andropause, discussing how hormonal changes affect sexual health is important. Your doctor can provide guidance on managing symptoms like vaginal dryness or erectile dysfunction and discuss hormone replacement therapy options if appropriate.

Lastly, don't hesitate to discuss any concerns about sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship dynamics that may impact your sexual health. Your doctor should provide a non-judgmental, supportive environment to address these topics and can refer you to specialized resources if needed.

Remember, your primary care doctor is there to help you maintain your overall health, which includes sexual health. By initiating these conversations, you're taking an active role in your well-being. If you feel uncomfortable with your current doctor's approach to sexual health topics, consider finding a healthcare provider who specializes in sexual medicine or who has experience addressing these concerns.

Taking charge of your sexual health through open communication with your primary care doctor is an essential step towards a healthier, more fulfilling life. Don't let embarrassment or fear prevent you from addressing these crucial aspects of your well-being. Your future self will thank you for your proactive approach to sexual health.

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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 Calvins 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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By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

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ABOUT AXEL RUIZ MD, DABFP, CWS

Axel Ruiz MD, DABFP, CWS is a member of the American Academy and a Board of Regenerative Medicine Researcher. Axel has been harnessing the Power of Stem Cells in Joint Pain Management since 2024.

Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS, brings over 20 years of dedicated experience to family medicine, with a passion for delivering exceptional patient care. Board-certified in Family Practice (DABFP) and specializing in wound care (CWS), Dr. Ruiz offers a comprehensive and compassionate approach to health and wellness.

He is known for his ability to explain conditions thoroughly and build strong, trusting relationships with his patients. Practicing in Lehigh Acres, FL, Dr. Ruiz is affiliated with HCA Florida Lehigh Hospital, where he contributes to a high standard of hospital-based care. His commitment to ongoing learning and patient-centered treatment makes him an invaluable partner in your health journey.

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PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE: A Silent Threat Starting in Your Feet

By Sahiba Singh, DPM, AACFAS

As a podiatrist, I see the silent signs of Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) every day in my practice. September is PAD Awareness Month, and it's a critical time to shine a light on this common, yet often misunderstood, circulatory condition. PAD affects millions of people, yet many don't realize they have it until the disease has progressed to a more serious stage. It's a condition where plaque builds up in the arteries, narrowing them and reducing blood flow, most commonly in the legs and feet. This poor circulation can lead to significant pain, mobility issues, and, in severe cases, even amputation.

The Role of the Podiatrist

You might wonder why a foot doctor is so concerned with circulatory issues. The answer is simple: the feet are often the first place to show symptoms of PAD. Because the feet are the furthest from the heart, they are the most susceptible to the effects of poor circulation. When I examine a patient's feet, I'm not just looking at their skin, nails, and bones; I'm also assessing their vascular health. I'm checking for signs like a weak or absent pulse in the feet, non-healing sores, a change in skin color (especially when elevated), and a difference in temperature between the two feet. These are all red flags that can point to PAD.

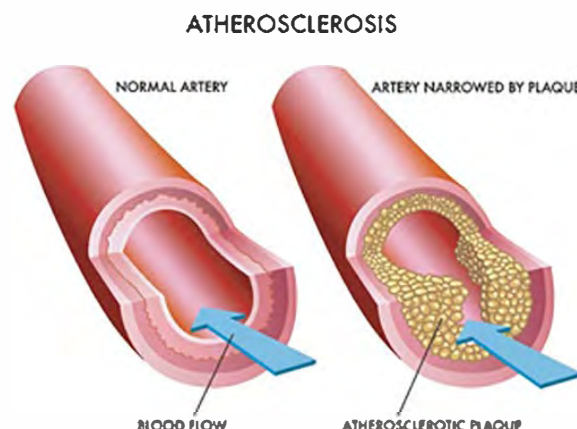
Many patients come to me with symptoms they attribute to aging or other conditions. They might complain of leg cramps, aching feet, or a feeling of heaviness after walking. These symptoms, known as claudication, are often the classic sign of PAD. It's a cramp-like pain or fatigue in the leg muscles that occur during exercise and is relieved by rest. It's the body's way of telling you that your muscles aren't getting enough oxygen-rich blood.

Risk Factors and Who's at Risk

The risk factors for PAD are very similar to those for heart disease and stroke, which is no coincidence—they are all part of a larger systemic problem called atherosclerosis.

The primary risk factors include:

- **Smoking:** This is the single most significant risk factor. The chemicals in tobacco damage the lining of blood vessels, accelerating the buildup of plaque.



- **Diabetes:** High blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels throughout the body, making people with diabetes highly susceptible to PAD.
- **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension):** Uncontrolled high blood pressure puts extra strain on artery walls, leading to damage and plaque formation.
- **High Cholesterol:** A high level of "bad" cholesterol (LDL) contributes directly to the plaque that clogs arteries.
- **Age:** The risk of PAD increases with age, particularly after 50.
- **Family History:** A family history of PAD, heart disease, or stroke also increases your risk.

Why Awareness Matters

Early diagnosis is key to preventing the most severe consequences of PAD. Many people dismiss the early warning signs, thinking it's just a normal part of getting older. This is a dangerous misconception. If left untreated, PAD can lead to critical limb ischemia, a severe form of PAD that can cause chronic pain, gangrene, and necessitate amputation. In fact, a non-healing foot wound is often the last stop before an amputation, and it's a situation I work tirelessly to prevent.

Beyond the limb-related complications, PAD is a strong indicator of a higher risk for heart attack and stroke. The same plaque that is clogging your leg arteries is likely present in the arteries supplying your heart and brain. Therefore, a diagnosis of PAD is a wake-up call to manage your overall cardiovascular health more aggressively.

What You Can Do

The good news is that PAD is manageable, and early intervention can significantly improve your quality of life and reduce your risk of serious complications.

- **Talk to Your Doctor:** If you're experiencing any symptoms, especially leg pain or cramps, don't ignore them. Bring it up with your primary care physician or a podiatrist. A simple, non-invasive test called an AnkleBrachial Index (ABI) can be performed in the office to diagnose PAD. The ABI compares the blood pressure in your ankle to the blood pressure in your arm.

- **Lifestyle Changes:** Quitting smoking is the most important step you can take. A healthy diet and regular exercise are also essential for managing risk factors like blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes.

- **Proper Foot Care:** As a podiatrist, I can't stress this enough. If you have PAD, inspect your feet daily for any cuts, sores, or changes in color. Because of the reduced blood flow, even a small blister can become a serious problem. Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes to prevent injuries.

September is a great time to schedule an appointment with your doctor to discuss your vascular health. It's also an excellent opportunity to help spread the word among your friends and family. PAD is a serious condition, but with awareness and proactive care, we can help people live healthier, more mobile lives and prevent the devastating consequences of this disease.

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.

Sahiba Singh DPM, AACFAS

For more information, you may contact Dr. Sahiba Singh at Family Foot & Leg Center at (239) 430 - 3668 (FOOT). Family Foot & Leg Center has 8 locations throughout Collier, Lee, & Charlotte Counties to quickly resolve all your foot and ankle problems.



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EXERCISE IS MEDICINE

By RICK WEBER

In a concerted effort to address the urgent need for targeted health interventions, Florida Gulf Coast University is championing a global health initiative to make physical activity assessment and promotion a standard practice in health care for everyone.

The aging statistics are astonishing: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 4.4 million Americans will turn 65 in 2025. That's 12,000 people per day. By 2030, all Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) will have reached this milestone.

Exercise Is Medicine (EIM) Active Aging aligns with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) in its mission to integrate physical activity into routine healthcare, bridging the gap between older adults and evidence-based exercise programs led by qualified professionals. By prioritizing Active Aging, ACSM is taking a leadership role in meeting the growing demand for education, programs and policies that improve older adult health.

The Exercise Science Program at FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services and FGCU's University Recreation and Wellness Department are working together to offer EIM-OC, or Exercise is Medicine on Campus, which calls upon colleges and universities to promote physical activity and encourage faculty, staff and students to work together toward improving the health and well-being of the campus community.

And that flows upward to every segment of Southwest Florida.

"What we learn with EIM-OC can be applied and revised to fit any community, corporation or group with shared interests and resources," says Dr. Patti Sawyer-Simmons, an Associate Professor in the Exercise Science (ES) program at FGCU's Marieb College of Health and Human Services. "Lessons learned on campuses can impact student lives beyond higher education, help with employee morale and wellness, be shared across campuses and ultimately expand to surrounding communities through community-engaged learning and impactful evidence-based programming interventions and collaborations beyond campus."

There's no better time to celebrate the work being done at FGCU, because September is National Cholesterol Education Month.

"The concept of exercise as medicine and the use of physical activity to help with certain conditions related to health and well-being ties into National Cholesterol Education Month by being a tool to help prevent dyslipidemia/hypercholesterolemia through exercise—in conjunction with a healthy diet," Sawyer-Simmons says. "Physical activity and exercise have been shown to increase 'good' cholesterol, or HDLs, as well."

EIM-OC makes movement a part of the daily campus culture; assesses physical activity at every student health visit; provides students with the tools necessary to strengthen healthy physical activity habits that can last a lifetime; and connects university health care providers with university health fitness specialists to provide a referral system for exercise prescription.

Over 90 participants (mostly students, but some faculty and employees) have taken advantage of this free PA promotion intervention since 2022, with more than 50 students—mostly Exercise Science majors—volunteering as EIM-OC mentors to support participants on their physical activity journey. Each year, hundreds of students and FGCU employees participate in EIM-OC-sponsored events such as FitCraze, EIM-OC Week in October and Movement Matters Day in the spring.

"That being said, we are still relatively unknown and are working to increase program awareness, promotion, participation and overall buy-in on campus," Sawyer-Simmons says.

Marieb College's Exercise Science Program also facilitates Community-Engaged Learning, in which students complete two full-time experiential learning internships at local cardiac rehab centers, wellness facilities, senior living communities and strength and conditioning programs.

"Students are exposed to various settings that align to the workforce's needs in the area," says Barbara Tymczyszyn, FGCU's ES Program Director. "Students get the opportunity to work directly with clients."

Often, older adults are perceived as becoming frailer, but the students quickly learn that older adults are very capable of being active, exercising and building strength—which ultimately helps with their quality of life. They also learn that keeping older adults healthy for longer through functional movement is a win-win situation for everyone."

She says the program provides a direct pipeline for local employers seeking qualified, field-ready professionals. The internship program is essentially a four-month interview process during which students have the opportunity to make their mark.

They work in such areas as fitness, wellness, cardiac and pulmonary rehab delivering exercise prescriptions, wellness programming and preventative care education. They also bring value to a community site by applying current, research-backed practices to improve the outcomes in strength, endurance, balance, mobility and quality of life. The FGCU EIM-OC program is one of the ES program's internship opportunities, working with the University Recreation and Wellness Department.

"Community partners report that their participants enjoy working with the students," Tymczyszyn says. "Students also often develop tools such as fitness plans, wellness workshops, exercise videos and educational materials that can be reused by the sites."

She says it's important for the community to understand that through these programs, FGCU is shaping the future of evidence-based practice in the field of exercise science.

"Our program is committed to developing well-rounded professionals who are prepared to work with a diverse range of clients—from elite athletes to individuals managing multiple chronic conditions," she says. "While we provide a strong academic and practical foundation, we also challenge our students to think critically and adapt within a constantly evolving industry. In an age of information overload, it is essential to prepare practitioners who can not only apply the science, but also discern credible sources and make informed, ethical decisions in practice."

FGCU

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NATURAL HEALING FOR PCOS: HOW ACUPUNCTURE AND HERBAL MEDICINE OFFER HOPE

By Dr. Angelina Pullen, DAcCHM, LAc, BS, Dipl. OM, LMT

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) affects up to 10% of women of reproductive age, making it one of the most common hormonal disorders. At Lotus Holistic Wellness, we understand the frustration and challenges that come with managing PCOS symptoms, from irregular menstrual cycles and weight gain to fertility concerns and mood fluctuations. While conventional treatments often focus on symptom management through medications, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) offers a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of hormonal imbalance.

Understanding PCOS Through a Holistic Lens

PCOS is characterized by elevated androgen levels, insulin resistance, and irregular ovulation. From a TCM perspective, this condition often stems from imbalances in kidney essence, spleen Qi deficiency, and blood stasis. These imbalances disrupt the body's natural rhythm and can manifest as the complex array of symptoms women with PCOS experience daily.

The beauty of acupuncture and herbal medicine lies in their ability to work synergistically with a body's natural healing mechanisms. Rather than simply masking symptoms, these ancient practices help restore hormonal balance, improve circulation, and strengthen the body's overall health.

The Power of Acupuncture for PCOS

Acupuncture has shown remarkable promise in treating PCOS by targeting multiple pathways simultaneously. Research indicates that regular acupuncture treatments can help regulate menstrual cycles, reduce testosterone levels, and improve insulin sensitivity. The treatment works by stimulating specific acupoints that influence the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, the body's primary reproductive control center.

During an acupuncture session at Lotus Holistic Wellness, our experienced acupuncture physician selects acupuncture points based on your individual constitution and symptoms. Common treatment points include those that regulate Qi flow, support kidney function, nourish and promote blood circulation throughout the reproductive organs.



Many patients report improvements in cycle regularity within three to six months of consistent treatment.

Beyond hormonal regulation, acupuncture also addresses secondary symptoms of PCOS. It can help reduce stress and anxiety, which often exacerbate hormonal imbalances, while also supporting healthy weight management and improving sleep quality. The treatment's anti-inflammatory effects may also help reduce the chronic inflammation often associated with PCOS.

Herbal Medicine: Nature's Pharmacy for Hormonal Balance

Chinese herbal medicine offers another powerful tool in managing PCOS naturally. At Lotus Holistic Wellness, we carefully craft individualized herbal formulas to address your symptoms while being mindful of allergies, current medications, supplements, medical conditions and lifestyle. These formulas can help to nourish kidney essence, strengthen spleen Qi, and promote healthy blood circulation to restore balance within the body.

Commonly used herbs for PCOS can include Cinnamon Bark (Rou Gui) to warm the kidney yang, White Peony (Bai Shao) to nourish blood and regulate menstruation, and Licorice Root (Gan Cao) to harmonize other herbs, ease muscle spasms, and support digestive function. Formulas may also include herbs like Rehmannia Root (Shu Di Huang) for nourishment of kidney yin, blood and kidney essence, in addition to many others that support the body's innate healing mechanisms.

The advantage of herbal medicine is its gentle yet effective approach to hormonal regulation. Unlike synthetic hormones, herbal formulas work gradually to restore natural balance without suppressing the body's own hormone

production. Many patients find that herbal medicine helps stabilize their mood, increase energy levels, and improve overall well-being alongside reproductive health benefits.

A Comprehensive Treatment Approach

At Lotus Holistic Wellness, we believe in treating the whole person, not just the condition. Our PCOS treatment protocols typically combine acupuncture and herbal medicine with lifestyle counseling, nutritional guidance, and stress management techniques. This integrated approach addresses all aspects of health that influence hormonal balance.

We also recognize that each woman's experience with PCOS is unique. Some may struggle primarily with fertility concerns, while others deal mainly with metabolic issues or emotional symptoms. At Lotus Holistic Wellness, we take our time to understand your individual challenges and goals, creating a personalized treatment plan that evolves with your progress.

Regular monitoring and adjustments ensure that your treatment remains effective as your body responds and heals. Many patients find that this personalized, patient-centered approach offers hope and tangible results where other treatments have fallen short.

Natural healing for PCOS requires patience and commitment, but the results can be transformative. By addressing the underlying imbalances that contribute to PCOS, acupuncture and herbal medicine offer a path toward lasting hormonal health and overall wellness.

Located in Southwest Florida, we're committed to helping our community achieve optimal health through time-tested natural therapies. Contact Lotus Holistic Wellness today to schedule a consultation and discover how acupuncture, herbal medicine, and homeopathy can work together to strengthen your immune system and enhance your overall vitality.

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Protecting Your Vision

The Surprising Link Between Cholesterol and Eye Health

Jie Sun, M.D.

As September marks National Cholesterol Education Month, it's crucial to understand that high cholesterol doesn't just affect your heart—it can also significantly impact your vision. While most people associate cholesterol with cardiovascular health, few realize its important role in eye health. This connection underscores the importance of maintaining healthy cholesterol levels for overall well-being, including preserving your eyesight.

Cholesterol, a waxy substance found in your blood, is essential for building cell membranes and producing hormones. However, when levels become too high, it can lead to various health issues, including eye problems. The eyes, like other organs, rely on a network of blood vessels to function properly. When these vessels are compromised by high cholesterol, it can result in serious eye conditions that may threaten your vision.

One of the most common eye problems associated with high cholesterol is retinal vein occlusion. This condition occurs when cholesterol deposits block the veins that drain blood from the retina, leading to swelling, bleeding, and potential vision loss. The sudden onset of blurry vision in one eye is often the first sign of this condition, which requires immediate medical attention to prevent permanent damage.

Another concern is arcus senilis, a gray or white arc visible around the cornea's outer edge. While this condition is common in older adults and usually harmless, its presence in younger individuals can indicate high cholesterol levels. It serves as a visible reminder of the importance of regular cholesterol checks and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Perhaps most alarmingly, studies have shown a link between high cholesterol and an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in older adults, affecting the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision. While the exact mechanism is not fully understood, researchers believe that cholesterol buildup in the eye may contribute to the development and progression of this condition.

Fortunately, many of the steps you can take to lower your cholesterol also benefit your eye health. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help reduce bad cholesterol levels

while providing essential nutrients for eye health. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, sardines, and flaxseeds, are particularly beneficial for both cholesterol management and eye health.

Regular exercise is another crucial factor in maintaining healthy cholesterol levels and supporting eye health. Physical activity helps increase HDL (good) cholesterol while lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol. Moreover, exercise improves blood circulation throughout the body, including the eyes, which can help prevent vision problems.

Quitting smoking is also vital for both cholesterol management and eye health. Smoking not only lowers good cholesterol levels but also increases the risk of various eye diseases, including cataracts and AMD. If you smoke, consider seeking support to quit as part of your overall health improvement plan.

During National Cholesterol Education Month, it's an excellent time to schedule a comprehensive eye exam along with a cholesterol check. Many eye care professionals can detect signs of high cholesterol during a routine eye examination, potentially catching issues before they become more serious. These exams can include dilated eye exams, which allow your doctor to examine the blood vessels in your retina for signs of cholesterol buildup or other issues.

If you're prescribed cholesterol-lowering medications, such as statins, it's important to take them as directed. Some studies have suggested that statins may have additional benefits for eye health, potentially reducing the risk of certain eye conditions. However, always consult with your healthcare provider about the best treatment plan for your individual needs.

In conclusion, the connection between cholesterol and eye health highlights the importance of a holistic approach to health care. By maintaining healthy cholesterol levels through diet, exercise, regular check-ups, and appropriate medical interventions, you're not just protecting your heart—you're also safeguarding your vision. This National Cholesterol Education Month, take proactive steps to lower your cholesterol and keep your eyes healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for the clear vision ahead, allowing you to fully enjoy life's precious moments with sharp, vibrant sight.



Jie Sun, M.D.

Dr. Jie Sun is an ophthalmologist and accomplished medical retina and uveitis specialist with more than two decades of experience in clinical care, academic research, and healthcare administration.

She brings a rich background in medical retina, uveitis, and global ophthalmic leadership to Retina Group of Florida.

Dr. Sun earned her M.D. in Clinical Medicine from Shandong Medical College, graduating with top honors, and completed a Ph.D. in Ophthalmology at Qingdao University Medical College. She also holds a Master of Public Health from Harvard University, with a concentration in Health Care Management and Policy.

She completed a Clinical Fellowship in Uveitis at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School, and a Clinical Fellowship in Medical Retina at Duke Eye Center, Duke University. Her previous roles include serving as an Attending Physician at the prestigious Beijing TongRen Hospital and holding clinical research leadership positions at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Dr. Sun is a member of numerous professional organizations including the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS) and the American Uveitis Society (AUS). Passionate about community service, she has contributed to public health initiatives and international relief efforts. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family, hiking, and reading.

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 (941) 743-3937 today to schedule your eye exam. When necessary same day appointments can often be accommodated.



Retina Group
of Florida™

WELCOME

Jie Sun, M.D.

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MEMORY CARE, PERSONALIZED FOR YOU

Parkside's Gender-Specific Approach to Alzheimer's Treatment Sets Area Standard

Parkside Assisted Living and Memory Care has established itself as a pioneering force in dementia care by implementing a unique, gender-specific memory care model that stands alone in the area. This innovative approach recognizes that men and women with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia often experience different behavioral patterns, communication styles, and comfort levels, making gender-specific care environments potentially more therapeutic and calming.

Understanding the Gender-Specific Model

At Parkside's memory care cottage, male residents live on one dedicated floor while female residents occupy another, creating distinct living environments tailored to each gender's specific needs. This separation isn't about discrimination—it's about optimization. Research indicates that individuals with dementia often feel more comfortable and exhibit fewer behavioral challenges when surrounded by others who share similar life experiences and communication patterns.

The male-focused floor features activities and décor that resonate with traditional masculine interests and experiences. Common areas might showcase sports memorabilia, workshop-style activity spaces, and programming centered around topics like automobiles, military service, or professional trades. Meanwhile, the female-focused floor incorporates elements that often appeal to women of the residents' generation, such as kitchen-style gathering spaces, garden themes, and activities involving cooking, crafts, or family-centered discussions.

The Science Behind Gender-Specific Care

Memory care professionals understand that Alzheimer's and Dementia affects men and women differently, both neurologically and behaviorally. Women with dementia often maintain social connections longer and may feel more comfortable in nurturing, relationship-focused environments. Men, particularly those from older generations, may feel more at ease in environments that honor traditional masculine roles and interests.

This gender-specific approach can reduce anxiety, agitation, and confusion that sometimes occur in mixed-gender settings. Often, men may inadvertently intimidate women by entering their apartments uninvited while searching for their own rooms.



When individuals with dementia feel more comfortable in their environment, they often experience improved sleep patterns, better appetite, reduced sundowning behaviors, fewer non-consensual sexual encounters, and enhanced overall quality of life.

Comprehensive Memory Care Services

Beyond the unique living arrangement, Parkside provides comprehensive memory care services designed to support residents at every stage of their journey. The community employs specially trained care-partners who understand the complexities of dementia care and use evidence-based approaches to provide compassionate, dignified care.

Memory care programming includes cognitive stimulation activities, physical therapy, medication management, and behavioral support. Each Cottage maintains its own dining areas, activity spaces, and outdoor access, ensuring residents can enjoy structured routines while feeling secure in familiar surroundings.

The nursing team receives ongoing education in dementia care best practices, including techniques for managing challenging behaviors, communication strategies for different stages of cognitive decline, and methods for maintaining residents' dignity and independence as long as possible.

Family-Centered Approach

Parkside recognizes that memory care extends beyond the individual to encompass entire families. The community provides extensive family education and support services, helping loved ones understand the progression of dementia and learn effective communication techniques. Regular family meetings ensure care plans remain aligned with each resident's changing needs and preferences.

Setting the Standard for Innovation

As the only memory care community in the area to implement this gender-specific memory care model, Parkside demonstrates commitment to innovative, person-centered care. This approach challenges traditional memory care models and shows how communities can adapt their environments to better serve residents' unique needs.

The success of Parkside's model may inspire other communities to consider how gender-specific programming and environments could enhance their own memory care services. By prioritizing resident comfort and implementing evidence-based environmental modifications, Parkside has created a new standard for memory care excellence that puts individual dignity and comfort at the forefront of treatment.

For families seeking memory care options, Parkside's innovative approach represents a thoughtful alternative that recognizes the complex, individual nature of dementia care while providing the specialized support that residents and families deserve during this challenging journey.

To learn more about Parkside Assisted Living and Memory Care's groundbreaking gender-specific memory care program and how it might benefit your loved one, call 941-207-8609 today. Their experienced team is ready to discuss your family's specific needs and provide a personalized tour of their unique facilities.

Our care is the difference.

Discover our compassionate care, personalized services, and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for seniors in a community you can call home.



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FL Assisted Living License #13075

STEP INTO YOUR BEST LIFE:

The Critical Role of Proper Foot Care in Maintaining Mobility and Independence as We Age

It's often forgotten that your feet are the foundation of your overall health and well-being. Despite their vital role in supporting weight, facilitating movement, and maintaining balance, feet often receive little attention until discomfort arises. As we age, maintaining optimal foot health becomes increasingly important not only for comfort but also as a cornerstone for sustaining mobility and independence throughout life's later years.

Understanding Foot Health and Aging

The aging process brings complex changes to many body systems, including the feet. With advancing age, it is common to experience alterations in foot structure and function that can significantly affect mobility. These include weakening muscles, reduced fat padding under the soles, joint stiffness, and decreased flexibility all of which contribute to diminished shock absorption and changes in gait efficiency.

One frequent change we observe is the gradual flattening of the arches, which can disrupt proper foot alignment. This misalignment may create abnormal stress not only in the feet but also in the knees, hips, and lower back, sometimes resulting in chronic discomfort and altered movement patterns. When foot discomfort persists, it can lead to reduced physical activity, further weakening strength and balance, and increasing the risk of falls, a leading concern for older adults due to the potential for injury and loss of independence.

Foot Care as a Foundation for Mobility

Proactive foot care is essential to preserve mobility and prevent fall-related injuries. Proper support and care can alleviate pain, enhance stability during walking, and improve balance. Research has shown that appropriate arch support and improved foot alignment can reduce strain on lower extremity joints and promote better posture, lowering fall risk. Because each person's feet and movement patterns are unique, a personalized approach to foot care is critical. Generic insoles or one-size-fits-all solutions often fail to address the specific structural and functional needs many older adults experience.

The Personalized Arch Support Approach

At The Good Feet Store, they provide a personalized arch support system designed to optimize foot function. Custom-fitted arch supports help realign foot posture, redistribute pressure, and reduce pain



caused by imbalances in foot structure and function. This realignment often results in improved walking patterns and less stress on surrounding joints.

Trained Arch Support Specialists perform thorough evaluations of your foot structure and gait to ensure your arch supports are tailored specifically to you. There are also follow-up visits to adjust your supports as needed, recognizing that feet and bodies can change over time.

This individualized approach to foot care has been shown to reduce pain, improve mobility, and build confidence allowing our clients to maintain active, independent lifestyles.

Maintaining Foot Health Every Day

In addition to personalized arch supports, there are everyday practices that support foot health:

- **Stay Active:** Gentle exercise such as walking, swimming, or yoga keeps your feet flexible and muscles strong.
- **Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash and dry feet thoroughly, especially between toes, to prevent infections.
- **Choose Supportive Footwear:** Shoes with good arch support, cushioning, and stability protect your feet and joints.
- **Routine Care:** Inspect feet regularly and trim nails carefully to avoid complications like ingrown nails or infections.

Combining these habits with customized arch supports helps sustain foot function and overall mobility.

Stories of Positive Change

There are plenty of firsthand accounts of how attentive foot care transforms lives. For example, clients who initially faced chronic foot discomfort and limited mobility often report noticeable improvements in pain levels, walking ability, and activity participation after receiving personalized arch supports and foot care guidance.

These success stories highlight the importance of integrating specialized foot care into health plans for older adults. By addressing foot health proactively, individuals can maintain their autonomy and reduce the risk of fall-related setbacks.

Conclusion

Foot health is a fundamental pillar of healthy aging, directly affecting mobility, balance, and independence. Age-related changes in foot anatomy and function call for careful assessment and individualized intervention. Customized arch supports, combined with proper footwear and healthy lifestyle choices, can significantly alleviate discomfort and enhance stability.

At The Good Feet Store, they are committed to providing personalized foot care solutions that support our clients in living their best lives. By helping to maintain strong, comfortable feet, they contribute to the ability to move confidently, remain active, and fully enjoy the rich experiences life offers.

Invest in your foot health today, your future self will thank you. Visit for a complimentary foot evaluation and personalized arch support fitting.

The Good Feet Store®

America's Arch Support Experts®

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Arch Support Specialists are ready to help you take the first step toward greater comfort and improved mobility.

UNDERSTANDING DE QUERVAIN'S TENDINITIS: A MODERN EPIDEMIC OF THE DIGITAL AGE

By Dennis O. Sagini, MD

In my years of practice, I've witnessed a significant increase in patients presenting with a sharp, stabbing pain at the base of their thumb that radiates up their forearm. This condition, known as de Quervain's tendinitis, has become increasingly common in our smartphone-dominated society, earning it the nickname "mother's thumb" or "texting thumb."

What Is De Quervain's Tendinitis?

De Quervain's tendinitis is an inflammatory condition affecting the tendons on the thumb side of the wrist. Specifically, it involves the abductor pollicis longus and extensor pollicis brevis tendons, which control thumb movement and pass through a narrow tunnel called the first dorsal compartment. When these tendons become swollen or irritated, they struggle to glide smoothly through this tight space, causing pain and restricting movement.

The Modern Triggers

While this condition was first described by Swiss surgeon Fritz de Quervain in 1895, today's triggers are distinctly contemporary. The repetitive thumb movements required for texting, gaming, and smartphone use have made this condition remarkably prevalent among younger demographics. New mothers are particularly susceptible due to hormonal changes during pregnancy and the repetitive lifting motions required when caring for infants.

Other common causes include repetitive wrist movements in occupations such as carpentry, gardening, or assembly line work. Athletes involved in racquet sports or rowing may also develop this condition due to repetitive gripping motions.

Recognizing the Symptoms

Patients typically describe a gradual onset of pain and swelling near the base of the thumb. The pain often worsens with thumb and wrist movement, particularly when making a fist, grasping objects, or turning the wrist. Many report difficulty performing simple tasks like opening jars, turning door handles, or even holding their morning coffee cup.

The hallmark diagnostic test is Finkelstein's test, where patients make a fist with their thumb tucked inside their fingers, then bend their wrist toward their little finger. A positive test reproduces the characteristic sharp pain along the thumb side of the wrist.



Treatment Approaches

Early intervention is crucial for optimal outcomes. Initial treatment focuses on rest and activity modification. I often recommend patients avoid repetitive thumb movements and consider ergonomic adjustments to their workspace or device usage patterns.

Conservative treatment includes ice application during acute phases, followed by gentle stretching exercises. Thumb spica splinting can provide significant relief by immobilizing the affected tendons. Anti-inflammatory medications may help reduce swelling and pain.

For persistent cases, corticosteroid injections into the tendon sheath can provide dramatic relief. However, when conservative measures fail after several months, surgical release of the first dorsal compartment may be necessary.

Prevention and Prognosis

Prevention centers on ergonomic awareness and activity modification. Taking regular breaks from repetitive activities, maintaining neutral wrist positions, and strengthening exercises can significantly reduce risk.

With proper treatment, most patients experience complete resolution of symptoms. The key is early recognition and appropriate intervention, preventing this manageable condition from becoming a chronic, debilitating problem that affects daily quality of life.

If you're experiencing thumb or wrist pain that may be related to de Quervain's tendinitis, don't let it progress to a more serious condition. Early diagnosis and treatment are essential for the best outcomes. Contact our office at 239-302-3216 to schedule a consultation and take the first step toward pain-free movement and improved quality of life.



Dennis O. Sagini, MD

TD. Sagini is an orthopedic surgeon with specialization in hand and upper extremity surgery. He specializes in arthritis of the hand, nerve compression, muscle and tendon injury, fracture care, and upper extremity dysfunction.

He completed his Bachelors of Science in Microbiology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma in 1998 and his Doctor of Medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA in 2002. It was during medical school training that Dr. Sagini developed an interest in orthopaedic surgery. His residency in orthopaedic surgery was completed at Howard University Hospital, Washington, DC. Dr. Sagini completed his fellowship training in Hand and Upper Extremity surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

Dr. Sagini is a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, the American Medical Association, the Florida Medical Association, and the American Society for Surgery of the Hand.

Dr. Sagini is active in research and community service and has a passion for overseas medical mission work. He also enjoys running, traveling, listening to music, cooking, tennis, and spending time with his family and friends.



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VIO Med Spa Introduces New Aesthetic Treatments for Enhanced Natural Beauty

VIO Med Spa is excited to announce the addition of five cutting-edge treatments to their comprehensive aesthetic services menu, each designed to help clients achieve their beauty goals through advanced, scientifically-backed procedures. These innovative treatments represent the latest in aesthetic medicine, offering both immediate and long-lasting results for various cosmetic concerns.

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy:

Harnessing Your Body's Natural Healing Power

Leading the new service offerings is Platelet-Rich Plasma therapy, available for both under-eye rejuvenation and hair restoration. This revolutionary treatment utilizes the patient's own blood, making it a natural and biocompatible option for those seeking aesthetic improvements. The process begins with drawing a small amount of blood, which is then processed in a centrifuge to concentrate platelets rich in growth factors.

For hair restoration, the concentrated PRP solution is strategically injected into areas of the scalp where growth factors work to activate and rejuvenate dormant hair follicles, stimulating natural hair growth. When used for under-eye treatment, PRP addresses common concerns including fine lines, wrinkles, dark circles, and hollows by stimulating collagen production and promoting tissue repair for a more youthful, refreshed appearance.

Sculptra: The Gradual Volume Restorer

VIO Med Spa now offers Sculptra, an injectable dermal filler that takes a unique approach to facial rejuvenation. Made of poly-L-lactic acid (PLLA), Sculptra works by stimulating the body's own collagen production over time rather than providing immediate volume. This gradual process leads to more natural-looking results as facial volume is restored and wrinkles and lines are reduced through the body's own enhanced collagen synthesis.

RHA Fillers: Dynamic Movement Solutions

Resilient Hyaluronic Acid (RHA) fillers represent another exciting addition to VIO Med Spa's treatment portfolio. These specialized dermal fillers are specifically designed to address dynamic wrinkles and folds that appear with facial movement. Unlike



traditional fillers, RHA fillers are engineered to move naturally with facial expressions while maintaining their effectiveness in smoothing lines and restoring facial contours.

SKINVIVE™ by JUVÉDERM: Revolutionary Skin Hydration

The innovative SKINVIVE™ treatment offers a new approach to skin improvement through intradermal injection of hyaluronic acid. Unlike traditional fillers that add volume, SKINVIVE™ is injected between the layers of skin to improve overall skin smoothness and hydration. This treatment is ideal for clients seeking enhanced skin quality and texture rather than volumizing effects.

Daxxify: The Long-Lasting Neurotoxin

Completing the new service lineup is Daxxify, an advanced injectable neurotoxin specifically formulated to address moderate to severe frown lines between the eyebrows. What sets Daxxify apart from other neurotoxin treatments, including Botox, is its extended duration of effectiveness. This longer-lasting formula means fewer treatment sessions are needed to maintain smooth, wrinkle-free results.

A Commitment to Advanced Aesthetic Care

These five new treatments demonstrate VIO Med Spa's commitment to staying at the forefront of aesthetic medicine. Each service is administered

by trained professionals using the latest techniques and highest safety standards. Whether clients are seeking hair restoration, facial rejuvenation, enhanced skin quality, or wrinkle reduction, these new treatments offer personalized solutions tailored to individual aesthetic goals.

VIO Med Spa continues to provide comprehensive consultations to help clients choose the most appropriate treatments for their specific needs and desired outcomes.

The VIO Med Spa Advantage

As a nationally recognized leader in aesthetic treatments with over 56 locations across 20 states, VIO Med Spa has built its reputation on delivering consistent, high-quality results. The Fort Myers location, owned by Marissa and Ryan Kartheiser, brings over 20 years of combined expertise in cosmetology and medical aesthetics to their practice.

This experience ensures that every Sculptra treatment is customized to meet individual client needs and aesthetic goals, creating natural-looking results that enhance each person's unique beauty while promoting long-term skin health.



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Are YOU "Sick and Tired of Being Sick ...and Tired?"

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

Let me ask you something, and **Be Honest...**

Do you wake everyday exhausted as you did when you went to sleep...?

Do you dread going to as sleep because you know you're not going to sleep anyway but lay there staring at the ceiling, waiting for the Sandman, who never arrives...?

Do you ever feel like you're fighting your body to do daily activities, and more challenging tasks are almost impossible...?

You make excuses to family and friends not to Go outside, join social events, do activities with the family, exercise, or do the things that you enjoy... Right?

You were told by your doctors that the reason you are **"So Damn Tired"** because:

You are "Just Getting Old", "You're a Female", "That's the way it is for women"...

And because "You're Not Exercising, Overweight, Too Lazy"...

"It's Genetic, and you can't do anything about it"... "You "Beat Your Body Up Too Long, and I can't fix it"...

You're just "Too Sick, Too Lazy, Take Too Many Meds", so they can't help you...

Then they whip out the "Tried and True" Defense for Their Incompetence... The Worst Thing a Doctor Can Say to You... They use "The F-Word"... **FIBROMYALGIA...!?!**

(What the hell is "fibromyalgia" anyway? Is it a "Real Diagnosis"...? NO! It's a "File 13" for People Who Don't Know Why You're Sick and Tired!)



Let me give you a **"REALITY CHECK"!**

These Doctors who "Spend 3-5 Minutes" with you on a "So-Called Office Visit", are NOT going to figure out the "who, what, when, where, why, how, how long, what diagnosis", or anything that even resembles a comprehensive evaluation and treatment plan for You and Your Specific Medical Issues and Problems...!

(YOU Deserve Better...Yes?)

When's the last time a doctor actually did a "Real Physical Evaluation"? (You remember those, don't you?) When doctors actually had to do physical diagnostic testing for that painful knee or shoulder joint, or checked the multiple areas of pain generators in your spine for an accurate and treatable diagnosis... Do you remember those days?

When was the last time your "Professional Health Care Practitioner" actually prescribe something that was **"Not Drugs or Surgery..."**

Anyone...? Anyone...? Bueller...? Bueller...?

So, we now know that the "Who" is YOU, and the Doctor, the "What" is the Correct Diagnosis and Treatment Plan, "When" is at your many health care appointments, the "Where" is at the doctors' office, and "How Long" is the mere 3-5 minutes that most doctors spend with each their patients.

That leads us to "Patient Need to Know WHY" this is the case, and this is where it starts to get Very Interesting... "Why" is American Health Care So Badly Broken...?

Could it be because "Regular Doctors Only Prescribe Drugs and Surgery" that have an Incredibly High Failure Rate, only to "Prescribe MORE Drugs and Surgery"...? No Autonomy, Time, Inclination, or Allowance for anything other than the **"Tired Old Traditional Treatments"** that do not work...

They will tell you excuses: "Oh, it's the economy", "it's the rules", "it's your insurance", or "that's just the way it is"..., but **it's actually GREED!**

Pure and simple. This is a very old problem, with a new twist... "American Capitalist" at its' best! Please let me explain...

During the pandemic Doctors were told that they have to see "Double the Number of Patients" in the same amount of time (from about 25-30 to 50-60 per day), because the Medical Group Owners Experience the **10% pay cut across the board** for all doctors, nurses, hospital, and nursing homes, which was passed on by the Health Insurance Companies, which was imposed by Dr. Fauci, who somehow they thought was a good idea to slash healthcare payments in the middle of the Covid pandemic... (Thanks Anthony... GREAT Idea! What were you thinking???)

Then, **"Who Suffers the Most"** when Healthcare fees and programs are cut by the government...? Is it the Health Care Groups, the Doctors, the Nurses, or the American People...?

I believe **"They All Suffer"** in one way or another from the continuous barrage of "Substantial Yearly Healthcare Pay-Cuts" by All Government and Private Health Insurance Companies, because of what again...? **GREED, Which is Not Good!**

This then results in under staffed and overworked medical personnel with a very high burnout rate. So, Good Healthcare Staffing is Hard to Find these days, and very expensive, further taxing a system that is already broken for all Americans, and our Brave Veterans. Our government has the audacity

to send our Most Revered Citizens, Our Veterans, to even Worse Facilities with Tighter Budgets and Less Actual HEALTH Care at our VA facilities...

And people wonder why it's called "Sick Care" in America...

THIS is Unacceptable, and We Can Do Better!

Ultimately, we end up with patients who have absolutely nowhere to go and end up in the ER with the incredibly diverse and complex urgent and chronic medical problems that receive the "Treat-Em and Street-Em" emergent care.

Therefore, as a consequence, patients just keep adding layers of problems, pain, and dysfunction, year by year, on top of the current insufferable diseases, with no ability to simply live a healthy life, which result in patients being literally:

"Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired!"

American Healthcare is an Oxymoron, with an emphasis on "moron", and a joke around the world... American Health Care "Doesn't Make You Healthy, and They Don't Care...!"

Why, Because America Buys (up to) 95% of its' medications from Big Foreign Pharma Companies... And at (up to) 10 Times Normal Prices!!!

They are Literally Laughing at How Stupid We Are....!

These Foreign Entities "Just Pay the Politicians" (LEGALLY!?!), as ALL American Politicians have "Nothing to Lose" without term limits... Right? (Tell me I'm wrong... You Can't!)

So, How Do Americans Get Real Health Care...? First things first.

First, we have to know What Does "Real Medical Care" Look Like, and Who Actually Practices These Rare and Highly Sought After Services...? (I know a guy... ME!)

I am Dr. William J. Cole, Jr. and I have the privilege of working with Dr. Sandeep Kola, as we are Osteopathic Board Certified in PMR Intervention (which means we can target just about any spot in the body within 1/2mm) Dr. Kola and I take the time to actually gather the "Full Historical Picture" of your injuries, illnesses, diseases, disorders, dysfunctions, accidents, surgeries, family history, prior treatments, and then do "Comprehensive Physical Diagnostic and Testing", to find the "Pattern of Pain"... (The body tells you what's wrong with it... We just have to pay attention!)

These "Pain Patterns" are the same for all of us, as we are basically made with the Same, Neurologic and Musculo-Skeleton Wiring and Blueprint. There are always variations, but the Patterns Don't Change "Follow the Pattern to Find the Pain Source"... Easy Peasy!

The body always tells you what's wrong with it... "You just have to listen!"

And you have to "Listen to the Patient", because "Nobody Knows Their Body Better Than the Actual Patient". (Also, my grandma said that I should always listen... Because I have two ears and one mouth, for a reason!)

With our comprehensive "Physicians Based Care", you will receive the time, care, and consideration that "You Desire, and Deserve", to assist you in getting the diagnosis and treatment plan right the first time.

Why is this important? Because "You Can't Fix What You Don't Know", Right!

Then we "Prioritizing the Patients Disorders", so we can establish a "Comprehensive and Effective Treatment Plan" to start "Fix the Worst First", so that no matter what, once your treatments begin, your "Quality of Life Improves!"

And isn't that what Matters the Most? Quality of Life... Yes?

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Did you know that I, Dr. Cole, am "Double Board Certified", and have achieved "Regenerative Medicine Board Certification", which now makes me "One of Five" in the World with my Regenerative Credentials. THAT is my level of commitment to "Bringing the Future of Medicine" to my patients and Veterans, as there is no end to the sicknesses that can affect all of us, and Regenerative Medicine can assist in the resolution of just about all of them.

There are literally "Hundreds of Disorders, Diseases, and Dysfunctions" that can affect the human body that can be Successfully Treated with Regenerative Medicine! From wear and tear, autoimmune, metabolic, genetic, trauma, injury, acquired, Exposure, Failed Surgery Syndrome, misdiagnosis.

Hence, "You Need a Caring Healthcare Partner" to be evaluated properly, diagnosed correctly, explain to the patient, and only treated with what is appropriate, effective, economic, and will actually "Make YOUR Life Better". Otherwise, what's the point?!?

You need to know about MTHFR, EBV, Long-Covid Syndrome, Lupus, Lyme Disease, Red-Head Syndrome, Restless Legs, Chronic Pain, Failed Surgery Syndrome, Low Back Pain, Pinched Nerves, Unhealed Fractures, MS, Parkinsons, Dementia, Heavy Metal Toxicity, Gulf-War Syndrome, PTSD, Medical-Grade CBD/ CBA/ CBS/ CBN/ CGB, Ozone Therapy, Exosomes, Master Stem Cells, Wharton's Jelly, Advanced IV Immunoboost, Supplements, Peptides, NeuroStim, How to Rebuild Bodies and Brains Naturally with Life-Changing Results, and YOU DESERVE TO KNOW!

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Advanced PET/CT Imaging: A Powerful Tool for Diagnosing and Managing Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and Dementia

When you or a loved one begins experiencing memory problems, movement difficulties, or other concerning neurological symptoms, getting an accurate diagnosis becomes paramount. Early detection and proper treatment planning can significantly impact quality of life and slow disease progression. At Radiology Associates of Venice, Englewood and Sarasota (RAVE), advanced PET/CT technology offers hope and clarity for families facing these challenging conditions.

Understanding PET/CT Technology

Positron Emission Tomography combined with Computed Tomography (PET/CT) represents a breakthrough in medical imaging. Unlike traditional scans that only show structural changes, PET/CT reveals how your brain functions at the cellular level. This dual-imaging approach provides both detailed anatomical pictures and metabolic information, allowing doctors to detect disease processes years before symptoms become severe.

Benefits for Parkinson's Disease Diagnosis

Parkinson's disease affects movement and coordination, but early symptoms can be subtle and easily confused with normal aging. PET/CT imaging can identify decreased dopamine activity in specific brain regions, even before classic tremors or rigidity appear. This early detection enables patients to begin treatment sooner, potentially slowing disease progression and maintaining independence longer.

The scan can distinguish Parkinson's from essential tremor, drug-induced movement disorders, or other neurological conditions that may appear similar but require different treatments.

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Detection

Memory concerns naturally worry patients and families, but not all memory changes indicate Alzheimer's disease. PET/CT can detect the characteristic patterns of reduced glucose metabolism in brain regions affected by Alzheimer's, often years before significant cognitive decline occurs.



The imaging also identifies amyloid plaques and tau protein tangles—hallmark features of Alzheimer's—helping distinguish it from other forms of dementia. Each type requires different management approaches, making accurate diagnosis crucial for optimal care planning.

Treatment Planning and Monitoring

Beyond diagnosis, PET/CT serves as a valuable tool for monitoring treatment response. Doctors can track how medications affect brain metabolism and adjust therapies accordingly. PET/CT results provide concrete information about disease progression, helping families make informed decisions about care needs and long-term planning.

Why Choose RAVE for Your PET/CT Imaging

RAVE's state-of-the-art PET/CT equipment delivers exceptional image quality with patient comfort in mind. Our experienced technologists understand that neurological testing can feel overwhelming and provide compassionate support throughout the process. The shorter scan times and improved image resolution mean less time in the scanner while providing doctors with the detailed information needed for accurate diagnosis.

Our board-certified radiologists specialize in neurological imaging interpretation, ensuring your scan results receive expert analysis. We coordinate closely with your neurologist or primary care physician to ensure seamless communication about your results and next steps.

Getting answers about neurological symptoms doesn't have to be a lengthy, uncertain process. PET/CT imaging at RAVE provides the clarity and precision you and your medical team need to move forward with confidence.

KEY BENEFITS OF PET/ CT NEUROLOGICAL IMAGING

Early Detection - Identifies disease years before severe symptoms appear

Accurate Diagnosis - Distinguishes between different neurological conditions that appear similar

Treatment Optimization - Monitors medication effectiveness and guides therapy adjustments

Peace of Mind - Provides definitive answers when symptoms are concerning

Advanced Technology - RAVE's state-of-the-art equipment delivers exceptional image quality

Expert Analysis - Board-certified radiologists specializing in neurological imaging

For more information about the diagnostic imaging services available at Radiology Associates of Venice, Englewood and Sarasota. Call the Venice office at 941-488-7781 or the Englewood office at 941-475-5471 or the Sarasota office at 941-342-7283.



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EMBRACING HEALTHY AGING:

NURTURING HEARING, BALANCE, AND COGNITION IN SEPTEMBER AND BEYOND

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

As September ushers in Healthy Aging Month, it's an opportune time to focus on key aspects of well-being that become increasingly important as we age. Among these, hearing, balance, and cognition play crucial roles in maintaining independence and quality of life. This article explores the interconnected nature of these faculties and offers practical advice for preserving and enhancing them throughout our later years.

Hearing is often taken for granted until it begins to decline. Age-related hearing loss, or presbycusis, affects approximately one-third of adults between 65 and 74, and nearly half of those over 75. While some degree of hearing loss is common as we age, proactive measures can slow its progression and mitigate its impact. Regular hearing check-ups, protecting ears from loud noises, and addressing hearing issues promptly can make a significant difference. Modern hearing aids have become increasingly sophisticated, offering improved sound quality and discreet designs that can help maintain social connections and overall well-being.

Balance, closely linked to our auditory system, is another critical factor in healthy aging. The inner ear houses the vestibular system, which plays a vital role in maintaining equilibrium. As we age, this system can deteriorate, leading to an increased risk of falls—a major concern for older adults. Engaging in regular balance exercises, such as tai chi or yoga, can help improve stability and reduce fall risk. Additionally, staying physically active and maintaining strong leg muscles contribute to better balance and overall mobility.

Cognition, our ability to think, learn, and remember, is perhaps the most complex aspect of healthy aging. While some cognitive changes are normal as we age, maintaining brain health can help preserve mental acuity and reduce the risk of dementia. Engaging in mentally stimulating activities like puzzles, reading, or learning new skills can help keep the mind sharp. Social interaction is equally important, as it provides cognitive stimulation and emotional support, both of which contribute to brain health.

Interestingly, hearing, balance, and cognition are more interconnected than many realize. Research has shown that untreated hearing loss can accelerate cognitive decline and increase the risk of dementia. This connection may be due to the increased cognitive load required to process sounds when hearing is impaired, as well as the social isolation that often accompanies hearing loss. Similarly, balance issues can lead to a fear of falling, potentially resulting in reduced physical and social activity, which in turn can negatively impact both physical and cognitive health.

A holistic approach to healthy aging involves addressing all these aspects simultaneously. Regular exercise that combines physical activity with mental engagement, such as dance classes or nature walks with friends, can benefit hearing, balance, and cognition. A healthy diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins can support overall brain health and potentially slow age-related hearing loss.

As we celebrate Healthy Aging Month this September, it's important to remember that aging well is a lifelong journey. By taking proactive steps to care for our hearing, balance, and cognitive health, we can enhance our quality of life and maintain independence for years to come. Regular check-ups with healthcare providers, staying socially active, engaging in physical and mental exercises, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are key components of this journey.

Ultimately, healthy aging is about embracing the changes that come with time while actively working to preserve and enhance our capabilities. By focusing on hearing, balance, and cognition, we not only improve these specific areas but also contribute to our overall well-being, enabling us to lead fulfilling and active lives well into our golden years.

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COMPREHENSIVE PELVIC FLOOR THERAPY: A Discreet Solution for Common but Treatable Conditions

By Michael Via, MSPT

At Michael Via Therapy and Services, Inc., we understand that pelvic floor dysfunction affects millions of people, yet many suffer in silence due to embarrassment or the mistaken belief that these symptoms are simply a normal part of aging or life after childbirth. The truth is, while these symptoms are common, they are not normal and respond remarkably well to specialized physical therapy treatment—even when symptoms have been present for many years.

Beyond Kegel Exercises:

A Comprehensive Approach

Many people assume that pelvic floor therapy consists solely of Kegel exercises, but effective treatment requires a much more comprehensive approach. The body's fascial tissue can exert up to 2,000 pounds per square inch of pressure on our organs, including the bladder and colon. This immense pressure, combined with muscular imbalances and poor habits, creates a complex web of dysfunction that requires targeted, professional intervention.

Our discreet, minimally internal Pelvic Floor Therapy program addresses these issues through a carefully structured three-part process designed to restore optimal function and improve quality of life.

The Three-Part Treatment Process

• Part One: Training and Conditioning:

The foundation of our program focuses on training and conditioning the pelvic floor musculature that controls bowel and bladder function. Using advanced biofeedback technology with surface electrodes, we help patients develop awareness and control of these often-neglected muscles. Through gentle, targeted exercises, we improve both the strength and mobility of the pelvic floor muscles, allowing the sphincters to function more optimally. This scientific approach provides measurable feedback, ensuring patients can see their progress and understand their body's responses.

• Part Two: Releasing Restrictions:

The second phase addresses the underlying mechanical issues that contribute to pelvic floor dysfunction. Through specialized Myofascial Release techniques and gentle visceral mobilizations, we work to decrease pressure on the bowel and bladder system.



These techniques target the fascial restrictions and muscular pulls that impair pelvic floor function, creating space for organs to function naturally and reducing the strain on supporting muscles.

• Part Three: Habit Modification

The final component focuses on bowel and bladder training habits that reduce stress on the pelvic floor system. This includes education on proper hydration, nutrition, and toileting techniques that support long-term success. Good hydration and proper nutrition are essential for optimal bowel and bladder function, and we provide personalized guidance to help patients develop sustainable, healthy habits.

Conditions We Treat

Our comprehensive program effectively addresses a wide range of pelvic floor dysfunctions, including:

- **Stress Incontinence:** Involuntary leakage during physical activities like coughing, sneezing, or exercise
- **Urge Incontinence:** Sudden, intense urges to urinate followed by involuntary leakage
- **Fecal Incontinence:** Inability to control bowel movements
- **Constipation:** Difficulty with regular, comfortable bowel movements
- **Pelvic Pain:** Chronic pain in the pelvic region that interferes with daily activities
- **Prolapse:** Weakening of pelvic floor muscles leading to organ displacement



Expert Care from Carolina Vasquez-Gallego, MS PT

Leading our pelvic floor therapy program is Carolina Vasquez-Gallego, MS PT, a licensed Physical Therapist with over 17 years of experience. Carolina brings exceptional credentials to our practice, having received specialized training through the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) for Pelvic Floor Therapy and certification in John F. Barnes Myofascial Release techniques.

Carolina is a dynamic, well-educated, and experienced Physical Therapist with a genuine desire to improve quality of life for her patients and help them reach their maximum potential for physical activities and sports. Her extensive experience spans all ages, from athletes and seniors to maternity patients, making her uniquely qualified to address the diverse needs of our pelvic floor therapy patients.

Inclusive Care for All

Our pelvic floor therapy services are available for both male and female patients. We recognize that pelvic floor dysfunction affects people of all genders and ages, and we provide compassionate, professional care tailored to each individual's specific needs and comfort level.

Take the first step toward reclaiming your quality of life. These symptoms don't have to be your new normal. Call 941-444-7688 today to learn more about our comprehensive Pelvic Floor Therapy program and schedule your consultation with Carolina Vasquez-Gallego, MS PT.



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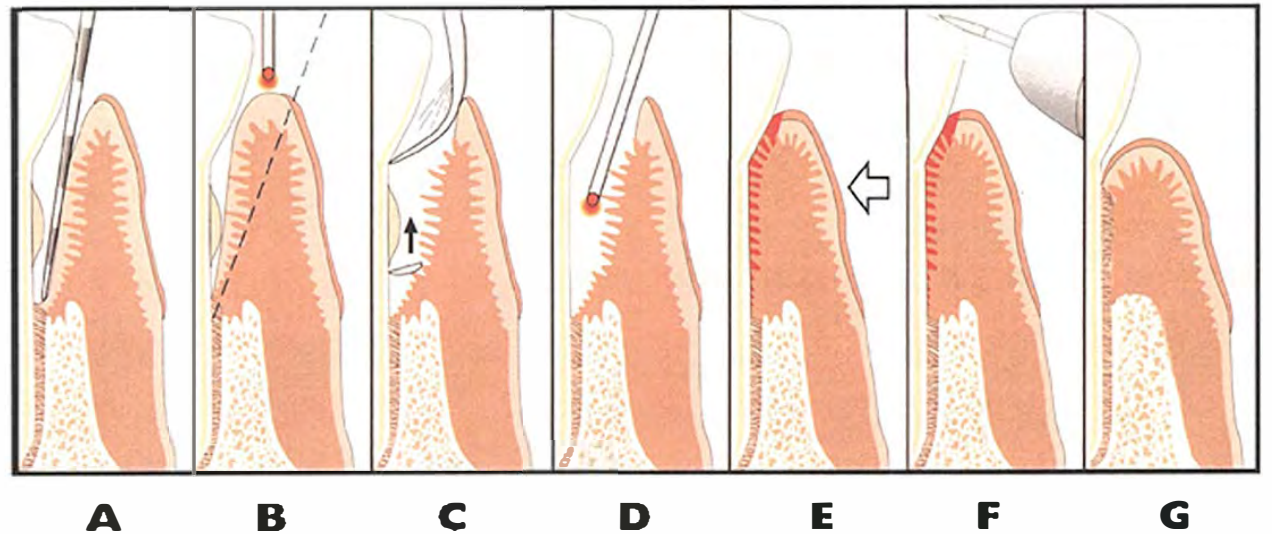
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What is Laser Periodontal Therapy?

By Dr. Joseph Farag

Finally, there's good news for those of you who suffer from gum disease (gingivitis and periodontitis). We now offer an exciting laser based technique for treatment of periodontal disease called Laser Periodontal Therapy™. Through the use of Millenium Dental Technologies, Inc., PerioLase® Laser, designed especially for Laser Periodontal Therapy™, we can treat your moderate to severe gum disease and you can quickly return to your normal routine! There's no incision (scalpel) and no stitches (sutures). You heal naturally with full retention of your gums. If you suffer from tender, red, swollen, or bleeding gums, call us today for an appointment to evaluate your condition.



Laser Gum Surgery Steps:

- Periodontal Pockets are measured
- Laser fiber optic is inserted into gum pocket and removes inflamed diseased tissue with light energy.
- Ultrasonic instruments are used to "scrub" root surfaces below the gum line and remove tartar and plaque.
- Laser is reinserted into clean pocket and used to disinfect and sanitize the pocket, a fibrin "bandage" is formed in the pocket.
- Healthy connective tissue is readapted to the root and the healing process begins.
- Teeth are adjusted to eliminate premature contact and heavy contact points, bite is equilibrated.
- After teeth have been stabilized and approximately 3-4 months after treatment, new attachment of the gum tissue to the tooth and regeneration of the bone is evident.



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We are proud to offer treatment through the internationally recognized Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) approach—the gold standard for managing lymphedema. This comprehensive method combines manual lymphatic drainage, compression wrapping, exercise, and skin care to effectively reduce swelling, improve mobility, and protect long-term health.

Our team treats lymphedema caused by a variety of conditions, including breast cancer treatment, chronic venous insufficiency, surgery, and trauma. Every plan is customized to meet the unique needs of the patient, with a focus on improving daily function and overall quality of life.

To help patients maintain results, we also provide in-house Durable Medical Equipment (DME) services. Our therapists measure, fit, and order compression garments tailored to each individual, ensuring the right solution for long-term management. By handling fittings directly, we simplify the process and remove common barriers to care.

At the heart of Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics is a mission to deliver evidence-based, compassionate care—where it matters most: at home. Whether you are recovering from surgery, managing a neurological condition, or living with lymphedema, our goal is to support your independence, confidence, and comfort every step of the way.



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Meet the Co-Owners:

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics is co-owned by James Ferrara, OTR/L, CLWT, and Lexie Lundquist, OTR/L, CLWT, who bring a powerful blend of experience, innovation, and dedication to patient care.



Jim Ferrara received his Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy from Spalding University in 2006, and has been a certified lymphedema therapist for over six years. As a seasoned business owner for

more than five years, he integrates advanced wound care and lymphedema management into effective therapy, helping patients achieve meaningful recovery even in complex cases.



Lexie Lundquist earned her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from the University of Florida in 2022 and became a certified lymphedema therapist in 2023. Lexie is passionate about

empowering patients through providing education, hands-on treatment, and personalized plans of care, and making a difference for her patient's lives.

Together, Jim and Lexie lead Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics with a shared vision: to bring gold-standard, patient-centered therapy directly to the people of Southwest Florida. CALL 239-558-0216 TODAY!

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*James Ferrara, OTR/L, CLWT,
Lexie Lundquist, OTR/L, CLWT*

Hope and Optimism

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

Hope is confidence in God...not wishful thinking. To have hope is to trust in God to meet our needs...even in the midst of difficult times. When we do go through tough times our confidence in God can get a little rattled, as the Old Testament figure Job experienced. In the midst of his pain and heartache he cried out, *"Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?"* (Job. 17:15)

Ultimately, hope comes from God. The Scriptures say, *"May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13) Hope is an essential element of the Christian's life. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul included hope as one of the top three qualities of a person's life: *"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."* (1 Cor. 13:13)

As followers of Christ, we are called to be dispensers of hope. We should exude a confidence and trust in God that demonstrates that we have hope. Yet I pose the question, "Can a person be filled with hope without being filled with optimism?" According to the encyclopedia, optimism is "to anticipate the best possible outcome." Can we demonstrate hope in God without anticipating the best possible outcomes of the situations we face?

I believe we can. In fact, I think hope is best exemplified when it is demonstrated in the face of negative circumstances. There are many times when hope and optimism go hand in hand. David had both when he faced Goliath. He had confidence in God and he expected the best possible outcomes...Goliath's defeat and an Israelite victory over the Philistines. And yet, there are many examples of people who had hope in God but did not anticipate the best possible outcomes.

Simon Peter is a good example. He and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They had worked so hard and yet still had nothing to show for their labors. And then Jesus tells them to cast out the net one more time. Simon did not expect to catch any fish. He was pessimistic. But, he had confidence in Jesus, so he cast the net. Though the circumstances did not look promising, his hope in God made up for his lack of optimism.

Esther is another good example. She had confidence that God would ultimately provide deliverance for the Jews but as she prepared to go before the King she said, *"...I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"* (Esther 4:16) She demonstrated hope but not necessarily optimism.

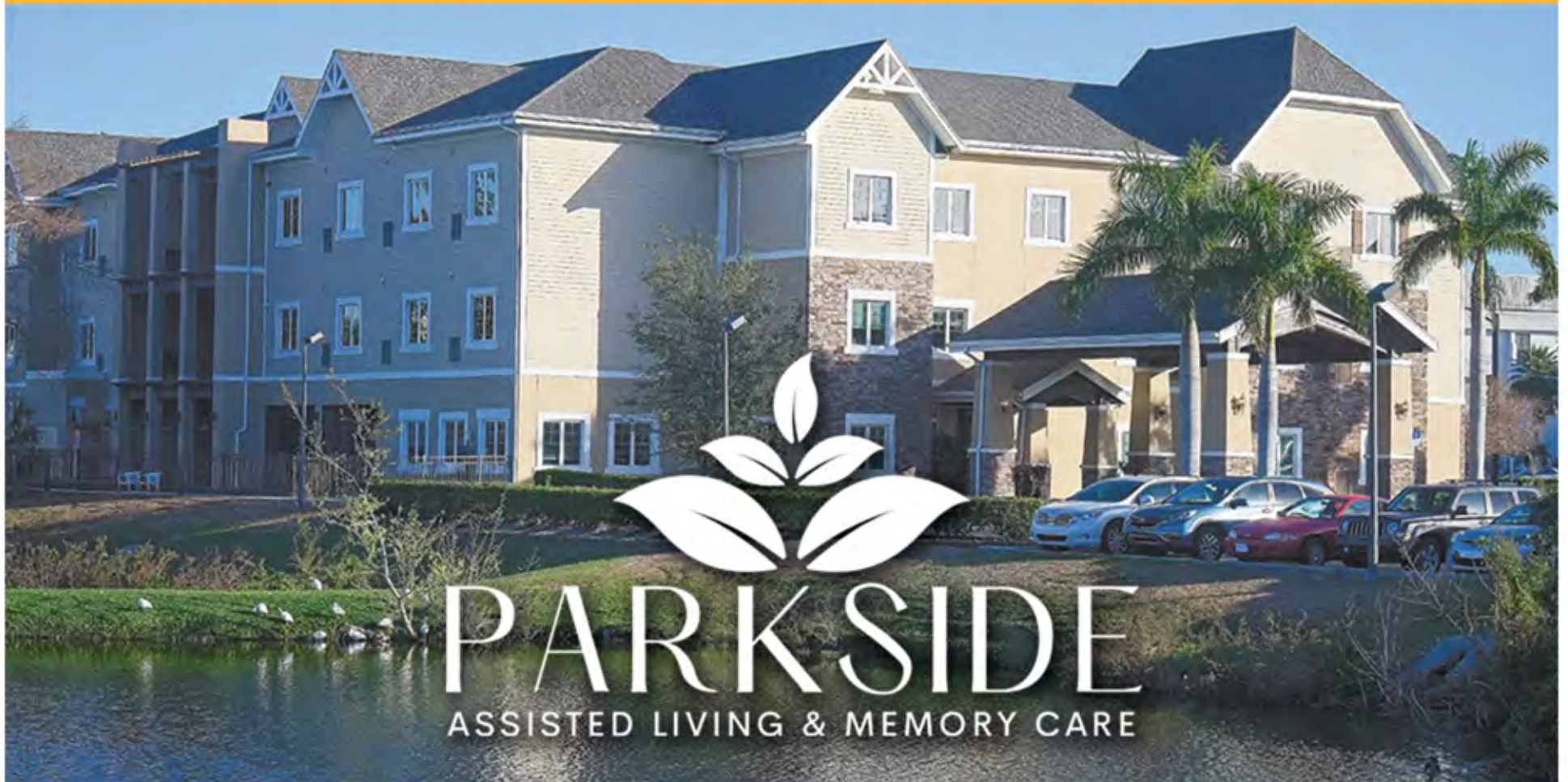
The point is this: hope and optimism are not the same thing. You can still be hopeful even if you are not optimistic. You can still be a dispenser of hope even if you think you are going to face hard times ahead because you know that God will meet your needs.

Jesus didn't sound very optimistic when he said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (a rather pessimistic view); but be of good cheer (maintain your hope), I have overcome the world (which is the basis of our hope)."* (John 16:33)

Hope doesn't mean that the best possible situations will always occur, but it does mean that in some way God will bring something good or useful out of the situation. As we look into the future, we may not always be filled with optimism, but we must always be filled with hope...God is still in control!



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