

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

Health & Wellness MAGAZINE

October 2025

Collier Edition - Monthly

FREE 

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month

New Frontiers in Detection, Treatment and Hope

Ultherapy PRIME®

Now Available at Naples Aesthetic Institute

Finding Confidence in a New Smile

UNDERSTANDING THE BI-RADS CLASSIFICATION

The Language of Mammograms

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Finding Confidence in a New Smile:

Taylor Rafferty's Veneer Transformation at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

For many people, the thought of dental work brings anxiety—especially when past experiences have left painful memories. For Taylor Rafferty, that hesitation was real. Yet when she decided it was time to transform her smile, she found both comfort and confidence with Dr. Long at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry. Health & Wellness Magazine sat down with Taylor to learn more about her journey.

Health & Wellness Magazine: Taylor, thank you for taking the time to share your story. Can you tell us what first led you to Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry?

Taylor: I actually found Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry through a flyer in the mail. At the time, I was really nervous about dentistry in general—I have a fear of needles and had gone through some painful dental experiences before. But when I saw the information about veneers, it made me curious.

Health & Wellness Magazine: You chose veneers to enhance your smile. What life event or concern prompted you to make that decision?

Taylor: I had braces when I was younger, and after they came off, a permanent retainer was placed behind my front teeth. A few years later, the retainer just broke on its own. I never had it replaced, and over time a gap started forming again between my two front teeth.

At that point, I could have gone back to braces or even tried Invisalign, but I really didn't want to deal with all the hassle and discomfort again. I was looking for something that would improve my smile quickly and be pretty much pain-free. Veneers seemed like the perfect solution.

Health & Wellness Magazine: Many patients describe veneers as not just cosmetic but life changing. How has your new smile impacted you?

Taylor: Getting my new smile has honestly been life changing. I finally feel confident smiling with my teeth, which I almost never did in photos before. Now, I feel like the best version of myself.



It reminds me of my smile after braces, but even better. My natural teeth were a little shorter than average, and Dr. Long gave me exactly what I'd always hoped for—a bigger, straighter, brighter smile that I absolutely love. I was nervous at first, but I have zero regrets about moving forward.

Health & Wellness Magazine: That's wonderful to hear. Many patients mention how their smile affects not only their personal life but also their professional confidence. How has your new smile influenced your work life?

Taylor: I'm a Media and Marketing Manager for a staffing agency. Since I work remotely, I don't do a lot of face-to-face interactions. But I know that if I did, this would absolutely boost my confidence even more. Even on video calls, I feel better knowing that my smile looks the way I always wanted it to.

Health & Wellness Magazine: That's so inspiring, Taylor. Before we close, is there one piece of advice you'd give to someone who might be considering veneers but is hesitant, maybe because of fear of dental pain like you once had?

Taylor: I would say—don't let the fear stop you. I was so nervous before I went in, but the process was easier than I ever imagined. And the results... I'm just so happy I didn't hold myself back. If you've been thinking about it, go for it.

A Lasting Transformation

Taylor's story is a reminder that dentistry goes beyond fixing teeth—it restores confidence, self-image, and joy in everyday moments. For Taylor, Dr. Long and the Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry team delivered more than veneers. They gave her the freedom to smile fully, both in pictures and in life.



Change Your Smile... Change Your Life!



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UNDERSTANDING THE BI-RADS CLASSIFICATION: THE LANGUAGE OF MAMMOGRAMS

By Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

When you receive the results of a mammogram, you may notice a term called "BI-RADS" followed by a number. This system can seem confusing at first, but it is an important tool that radiologists use to communicate findings clearly and consistently. Understanding what BI-RADS means can help you feel more informed and confident about your breast health.

What is BI-RADS?

BI-RADS stands for Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System. It is a standardized system developed by the American College of Radiology to describe the findings on mammograms, breast ultrasounds, and breast MRIs. Think of BI-RADS as the "language" that radiologists use to ensure everyone—doctors, surgeons, and patients—understands the results in the same way.

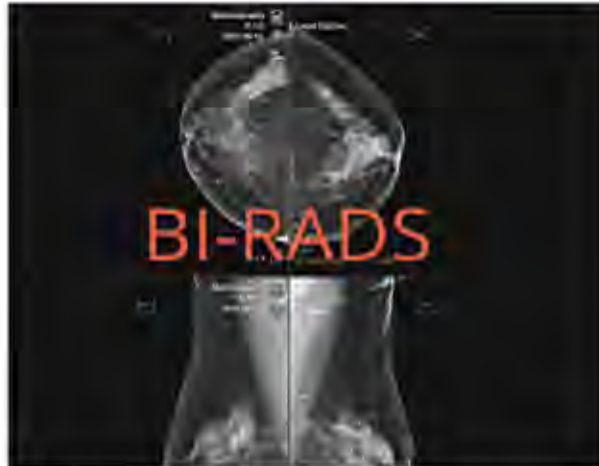
The BI-RADS Categories

BI-RADS uses numbers from 0 to 6, each representing a specific level of concern and recommended next steps:

- **BI-RADS 0:** Incomplete—more imaging or information is needed.
- **BI-RADS 1:** Negative—no signs of cancer; routine screening recommended.
- **BI-RADS 2:** Benign (non-cancerous) finding—routine screening recommended.
- **BI-RADS 3:** Probably benign—less than 2% chance of cancer; short-term follow-up suggested.
- **BI-RADS 4:** Suspicious abnormality—biopsy should be considered.
- **BI-RADS 5:** Highly suggestive of malignancy—appropriate action should be taken.
- **BI-RADS 6:** Known biopsy-proven malignancy—treatment is underway.

"Probably Benign" makes me nervous!

One of the most misunderstood categories is BI-RADS 3: Probably Benign. When you see this on your report, it means that the radiologist has identified something that is almost certainly not cancer. In fact, the chance of cancer is less than 2%. The recommendation is usually to repeat the imaging in 6 months, rather than immediately doing a biopsy.



Is BI-RADS 3 Subjective?

It's important to know that BI-RADS 3 is not a subjective opinion. Radiologists use strict criteria to assign this category. Features that are considered "probably benign" have been studied extensively and are known to have a very low risk of being cancer. Examples include certain types of small, round masses or tiny cysts that have not changed over time.

Why Not Just Do a Biopsy?

Because the risk of cancer is so low, immediate biopsy is not recommended for BI-RADS 3 findings. Instead, short-term follow-up imaging is suggested to make sure the finding does not change. This approach avoids unnecessary procedures, anxiety, and potential complications.

What Should You Do if You Receive a BI-RADS 3 Result?

- Follow the recommended schedule for repeat imaging, usually in 6 months.
- Understand that this is a cautious, evidence-based approach designed to keep you safe while avoiding unnecessary interventions.
- Know that most BI-RADS 3 findings remain stable or even disappear over time.

In Summary

The BI-RADS system is the universal language of mammogram reports, designed to make breast imaging results clear and actionable. A BI-RADS 3 result means "probably benign" and is based on well-established criteria—not just a radiologist's opinion. Following the recommended follow-up ensures that any changes are caught early, while also minimizing unnecessary worry and procedures.



Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

If you have questions about your mammogram report, your healthcare team is always available to help explain what your results mean for you.



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By Dr. Kiran Gill

Ultherapy PRIME®

Now Available at Naples Aesthetic Institute

Naples Aesthetic Institute is excited to announce the addition of Ultherapy PRIME®, the latest breakthrough in non-invasive skin lifting and tightening technology. This cutting-edge advancement represents the next generation of aesthetic treatments, offering patients enhanced precision, comfort, and results without the need for surgery or downtime.

The Evolution of Non-Invasive Lifting

While traditional Ultherapy has been a trusted treatment in the aesthetic industry for years, Ultherapy PRIME® takes this proven technology to new heights. As the only FDA-cleared non-invasive lifting device of its kind, this innovative system utilizes advanced ultrasound technology to naturally stimulate your body's own collagen production from within, creating lasting results that improve over time.

How Ultherapy PRIME® Works

What sets Ultherapy PRIME® apart from conventional treatments is its ability to work beneath the skin's surface, targeting the deeper foundational layers that support facial structure. Unlike lasers or other surface-level treatments, this revolutionary system penetrates to the same depths addressed in surgical facelifts, but without any incisions or recovery time.

The enhanced real-time imaging technology allows Dr. Gill and her team to visualize the treatment area with unprecedented clarity, ensuring precise energy delivery to exactly where it's needed most. This upgraded precision means more effective treatment of even the most delicate areas around the face, neck, and décolletage, while maximizing patient comfort throughout the session.

Advanced Benefits for Superior Results

The PRIME upgrade brings several significant improvements to the Ultherapy experience. Patients can expect faster treatment sessions without compromising results, thanks to the system's enhanced efficiency. The upgraded technology also provides improved comfort levels, making the treatment more pleasant while maintaining the powerful lifting and tightening effects that Ultherapy is known for.



The treatment stimulates natural collagen production deep within the skin's foundational layers, gradually restoring firmness and elasticity. This process continues working for months after treatment, with results that look completely natural and continue to improve over time. Patients typically see initial improvements within a few weeks, with optimal results visible at three to six months post-treatment.

Comprehensive Treatment Areas

Ultherapy PRIME® effectively addresses multiple areas of concern in a single treatment approach. The face benefits from overall lifting and tightening, particularly around the jawline and cheeks where sagging commonly occurs. The neck area sees significant improvement in skin laxity and texture, while the décolletage receives renewed firmness and smoothness.

The Naples Aesthetic Institute Advantage

Under Dr. Gill's expert care, patients receive personalized treatment plans tailored to their specific aesthetic goals and skin concerns. Her extensive experience with advanced aesthetic technologies ensures optimal results while maintaining the highest safety standards.

The convenience of Ultherapy PRIME® cannot be overstated – patients can return to their normal activities immediately following treatment, making it an ideal choice for busy individuals seeking effective anti-aging solutions without lifestyle disruption.



Schedule Your Consultation

Experience the future of non-invasive skin lifting and tightening with Ultherapy PRIME® at Naples Aesthetic Institute. Dr. Gill and her team are ready to help you achieve naturally refreshed, lifted results that restore your confidence and enhance your natural beauty. Contact Naples Aesthetic Institute today to schedule your consultation and discover how this revolutionary technology can help you look and feel your best.



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What to Know About Pulmonary Care

By Edward Salerno, MD, Pulmonology Specialist at Millennium Physician Group

When breathing becomes difficult, so does living well. It's estimated that more than 34 million Americans live with chronic lung conditions, and many more experience occasional breathing problems that interfere with their daily lives.

Whether it's a lingering cough, sudden shortness of breath, or a chronic condition like asthma, pulmonary care can play a critical role in diagnosing, managing, and improving your lung health.

What is Pulmonary Care?

Pulmonology is a medical specialty that focuses on the respiratory system: the lungs, airways, and other structures that allow us to breathe. Pulmonologists are often referred to as "lung doctors," and they complete years of specialized training to understand how the respiratory system works and how to diagnose and treat its many conditions.

Because many lung and heart conditions share similar symptoms, pulmonologists frequently work alongside cardiologists and other specialists to ensure an accurate diagnosis. A pulmonologist may focus on general pulmonary medicine or on subspecialties like asthma, sleep disorders, or critical care. Some even specialize by age group, caring for pediatric or geriatric patients.

How Your Pulmonary System Works

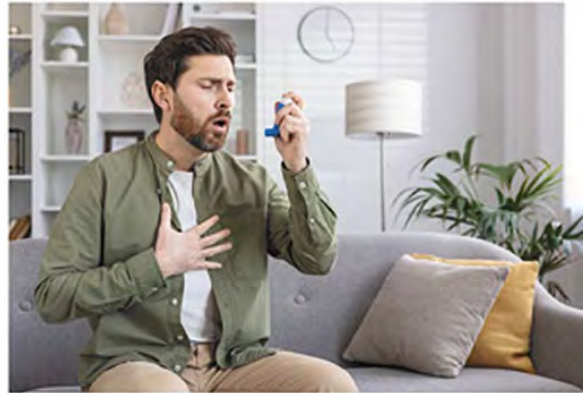
Your pulmonary system – also known as the respiratory system – has two main jobs: to deliver oxygen from the air into your bloodstream and to remove carbon dioxide from your body.

When you inhale, air enters through your nose or mouth, travels down your trachea (also known as the windpipe), and moves into your lungs through branching airways. At the end of these airways are millions of tiny air sacs called alveoli, which transfer oxygen into your blood.

When you exhale, the process is reversed, with carbon dioxide moving out of your bloodstream, back through the alveoli and airways, leaving your body. Because every cell in your body relies on this exchange, even small disruptions to your pulmonary system can have widespread effects on your health and quality of life.

Conditions Treated by Pulmonologists

Pulmonologists diagnose and manage a wide range of conditions. Some are acute, like pneumonia, while



others are chronic or progressive, requiring lifelong care. Conditions commonly treated include:

- Asthma
- Bronchial disorders
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Emphysema
- Interstitial lung disease
- Long COVID-related respiratory complications
- Lung cancer
- Occupational lung conditions (such as black lung or silicosis)
- Pulmonary hypertension
- Sleep apnea

By identifying the root cause of your symptoms, a pulmonologist can create a treatment plan tailored to your condition that may include medication, lifestyle changes, pulmonary rehabilitation, or coordination with other specialties.

When Should You See a Pulmonologist?

Not every cough or episode of shortness of breath requires a specialist in lung care. Your primary care physician or an urgent care provider can often manage mild respiratory infections or allergies. However, if your symptoms persist, are severe, or remain unexplained, your healthcare provider may refer you to a pulmonologist. Common reasons for referral include:

- A cough lasting more than three weeks
- Shortness of breath, especially if it worsens
- Wheezing or chest tightness
- Recurrent chest infections or bronchitis
- Daytime sleepiness or loud, disruptive snoring
- Abnormal findings on imaging tests, such as lung nodules seen on a CT scan

In some cases, pulmonary issues can overlap with other health problems. For example, sleep-disordered breathing can increase the risk for heart disease and diabetes, while chronic lung conditions may contribute to fatigue, anxiety, or depression. Pulmonologists not only address the respiratory system but also help coordinate care to protect your overall health.

What to Expect from Pulmonary Care

If you're referred to a pulmonologist, your first visit will include a thorough review of your medical history, physical exam, and diagnostic tests such as a breathing test, exercise test, and oxygen saturation testing. Once a diagnosis is made, your physician will work with you to create a personalized care plan. Many treatments focus on managing symptoms and improving day-to-day function. Because lung conditions are so complex, ongoing care and follow-up appointments are important. Pulmonologists provide long-term care management, helping patients adapt their care plans as their health or lifestyle changes.

Pulmonary Care at Millennium Physician Group

If you're concerned about your lung health, talk to your Millennium Physician Group primary care provider to see if a pulmonology referral is right for you. Our pulmonary specialists and internal medicine care providers work together to ensure our patients receive the best care when they need it. From evaluation to personalized care plans to ongoing support, our team helps you manage your health and improve your quality of life.

Attention Medicare-Eligible Patients: Medicare's Open Enrollment Period runs from October 15 through December 7. This is the time each year to review your coverage and make any changes to your Medicare Advantage or Part D prescription drug plan. You can learn more at www.medicare.gov or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

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Take Control of Your Health with BodyView Preventive MRI by Encore Imaging

In an era where healthcare costs continue to rise and medical conditions often go undetected until they become serious, preventive medicine has never been more crucial. Encore Imaging's BodyView Preventive MRI represents a revolutionary approach to health screening, offering comprehensive peace of mind in under 60 minutes through advanced, radiation-free technology.

Knowledge Is Your Greatest Health Asset

The old adage "knowledge is power" takes on profound meaning when applied to personal health. BodyView Full Body MRI empowers individuals to take charge of their wellbeing by providing detailed insights into their body's current state. This innovative screening technology transforms the traditional reactive approach to healthcare into a proactive strategy that can literally save lives.

For individuals with a family history of cancer or other hereditary conditions, the psychological burden of uncertainty can be overwhelming. BodyView MRI addresses this concern head-on, offering a simple yet comprehensive scan that can deliver worry-free results or identify potential issues while they're still manageable. The relief that comes from knowing your body is healthy – or the advantage of early detection – cannot be overstated.

Comprehensive Screening Without Compromise

What sets BodyView apart from traditional screening methods is its remarkable scope and safety profile. This radiation-free scan screens for cancer and over 500 different medical conditions across 13 vital organs, providing a full internal snapshot of your health in a single session.

The scan examines critical areas including the brain, thyroid, spine, lungs, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, adrenal glands, bladder, and reproductive organs (ovaries, uterus, and prostate). This thorough approach means that potential health issues across multiple body systems can be identified simultaneously, eliminating the need for multiple separate screenings and reducing the overall time and cost associated with comprehensive health monitoring.



The Power of Early Detection

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of BodyView Preventive MRI is its ability to reveal hidden conditions before they become symptomatic. Many serious health conditions, including various forms of cancer, develop silently over months or years. By the time symptoms appear, treatment options may be more limited and outcomes less favorable.

BodyView MRI changes this narrative by enabling early intervention. When conditions are detected in their initial stages, treatment is typically more effective, less invasive, and often less expensive. For health-conscious individuals who understand the value of prevention, this technology represents the ultimate proactive health tool.

Safety and Convenience Combined

Unlike traditional CT scans or other imaging methods that expose patients to ionizing radiation, BodyView MRI utilizes magnetic resonance technology that is completely radiation-free. This safety advantage makes it suitable for regular health monitoring without the cumulative radiation exposure concerns associated with other screening methods.

In less than an hour, patients receive a comprehensive health screening followed by a virtual consultation with a physician to review the results in detail, which would traditionally require multiple appointments,

various specialists, and extensive testing. This efficiency makes preventive screening accessible to busy professionals and anyone who values their time while prioritizing their health.

Investing in Your Future Self

BodyView Preventive MRI represents more than just a medical screening – it's an investment in your future health and quality of life. The peace of mind that comes from comprehensive health knowledge allows individuals to plan confidently, whether that means pursuing aggressive career goals, planning family expansion, or simply enjoying life without the nagging worry about undetected health issues.

For those ready to embrace truly preventive healthcare, Encore Imaging's BodyView MRI offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain comprehensive health insights quickly, safely, and conveniently. In the world of modern medicine, this level of preventive screening allows you to be in control of managing your health and your future.

Take the first step. It's peace of mind and early detection when it matters most.

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Transform Your Look for the Holidays with Cutting-Edge Regenerative Treatments for Beautiful, Natural Results

By Dr. Kenzie

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

A Smarter Way to Approach Winter Weight Loss

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

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

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

Refined, Natural Results with Injectables

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

- Botox® and Dysport® for smoothing dynamic wrinkles
- Dermal fillers for restoring volume where it's naturally diminished
- Sculptra® stimulates natural collagen production, restoring facial structure and volume — and can even be used to lift and shape the buttocks.

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

Skin Tightening That Works Beneath the Surface

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



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

Venus Bliss MAX: A Non-Invasive Way to Tackle Stubborn Fat

Venus Bliss MAX™ is an advanced three-in-one solution for body treatments. The workstation targets fat, muscle, and skin with three distinct technologies in an effective and comfortable manner, maximizing results and patient satisfaction by tailoring the right modality for each indication.

Why Timing Matters

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

Let's Build Your Winter Treatment Plan

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

Book a consultation to learn more and explore what's possible before this coming holiday season.



DR. ALDENE MCKENZIE

Providing A Healthy, Happy and Confident Lifestyle for All

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

Reach out to book your complimentary consultation.



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

By Dr. Shivank Bhatia, M.D. FSIR

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

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

What is PAE?

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

Patient Selection and Pre-Procedural Considerations

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

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

The PAE Procedure

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

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

Clinical Outcomes and Efficacy

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

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

This article can be accessed at:



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

Safety Profile and Complications

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

Advantages of PAE in the Modern Therapeutic Landscape

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

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

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

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

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

About the Author:

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

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

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

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

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

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WHAT DOES MY COUGH MEAN?

UNDERSTANDING COMMON CAUSES BEHIND YOUR PERSISTENT COUGH

By Tyrone Medina MD, FACEP

A cough is one of the most common symptoms that sends people searching for answers, and for good reason. While often dismissed as a minor annoyance, your cough can provide valuable clues about what's happening in your respiratory system. Understanding the different types of coughs and their potential causes can help you determine when to seek medical attention and what treatment might be most effective.

Common Cold and Upper Respiratory Infections

The most frequent culprit behind acute coughs is the common cold or other upper respiratory infections. These typically produce a dry cough that may become productive as the infection progresses. Cold-related coughs usually resolve within 7-10 days and are often accompanied by other symptoms like runny nose, sore throat, and mild fever. Upper respiratory infections can linger longer, sometimes causing a persistent cough that lasts several weeks even after other symptoms disappear.

Bronchitis: When Airways Become Inflamed

Bronchitis occurs when the bronchial tubes become inflamed, often following a cold or respiratory infection. Acute bronchitis typically produces a persistent, hacking cough that may bring up yellow or green mucus. The cough can be particularly troublesome at night and may last 2-3 weeks. Chronic bronchitis, often related to smoking, causes a productive cough that persists for months.

Asthma and Allergies: The Reactive Airways

Asthma-related coughs are often dry and may worsen at night or with physical activity. They're frequently accompanied by wheezing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath. Allergic coughs share similar characteristics but are typically triggered by specific allergens like pollen, dust mites, or pet dander. Both conditions involve airway inflammation and can cause persistent, irritating coughs that may seem to come and go with exposure to triggers.

Acid Reflux: The Unexpected Cause

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a surprisingly common cause of chronic cough. When stomach acid backs up into the esophagus, it can irritate the throat and trigger a persistent dry cough.



This type of cough is often worse when lying down and may be accompanied by heartburn, though some people experience coughing as their only symptom.

When to Seek Medical Attention

While many coughs resolve on their own, certain signs warrant medical evaluation. Seek professional care if your cough lasts more than three weeks, produces blood, is accompanied by high fever, or significantly interferes with sleep or daily activities. Additionally, if you experience chest pain, difficulty breathing, or unexplained weight loss alongside your cough, prompt medical attention is important.

Getting the Right Diagnosis

Understanding your cough's characteristics—timing, triggers, and accompanying symptoms—can help you and your healthcare provider identify the underlying cause and develop an appropriate treatment plan for lasting relief. A thorough medical evaluation may include listening to your lungs, reviewing your medical history, and potentially ordering tests like chest X-rays or pulmonary function tests.

Different cough types respond to different treatments. While over-the-counter cough suppressants might help with cold-related coughs, asthma requires bronchodilators, GERD needs acid-blocking medications, and bacterial infections may require antibiotics. Self-diagnosis can lead to ineffective treatment and prolonged discomfort.

Take Action for Your Health

Don't let a persistent cough disrupt your life or potentially indicate a more serious underlying condition. The experienced medical professionals at Pinnacle Health Specialists can help identify the root cause of your cough and develop a personalized treatment plan to get you back to feeling your best.

Whether you're dealing with a lingering cough from a recent cold, struggling with asthma symptoms, or experiencing unexplained respiratory issues, professional medical evaluation is the key to effective treatment and peace of mind.

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2026 Annual Enrollment is Here!

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

VERY IMPORTANT: Regarding Medicare it is illegal for an insurance agent to call, text, e-mail, knock on your door, hang anything on your door or vehicle or approach you without your consent. If they do as for their National Producer Number NPN, and you will hear a click and removed from their list. If they don't hang-up get their number and report them to Medicare. There is so much fraud where people are being switched to plans that they never approved or were miss led. Shop local, do background checks before you give anyone your personal information. You can google them, google reviews, check their Facebook, etc. Make sure that if you are working with someone you can call them personally if you have any questions or concerns.

Medicare Annual Enrollment is October 15-December 7th for January 1st, 2026, effective. What can be changed at this time is Medicare Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. You should have received your Notification of Change from your current insurance plan. This outlines the current year to the new year changes, as an example if your specialist provider costs \$20 now it might say \$35 in 2026 (no correlation just an example).

Substantial changes to Medicare Part D "most insurance carriers have taken away insurance agents' ability to help you with your Part D Only drug plans his does not apply to most Advantage plans", standalone drug plans as well as Advantage Plans, you won't have to pay more than \$2,100 in out-of-pocket costs, which include deductibles, co-pays, coinsurance. It is especially important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. 2026 RX deductible will be capped at \$615.00. As a reminder the cost of the plan is not as important as the cost plus your medications, that is what you look at, the total cost. It is important to know what the medication is used for to determine if it is covered by the plan. Example Wycovy may be covered but in order to be covered it must be used for certain heart conditions or diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time. Many carriers are consolidating Part D plans or eliminating them completely. As a reminder if you choose NOT to ENROLL in a Part D drug plan and in later years you will have to wait

for Annual Enrollment and then you will assed a penalty for every month you did not have a drug plan, that penalty will last for the REST OF YOUR LIFE! Careful not choosing a drug plan.

Resource: medicare.gov

Medicare Part C / Advantage Plans, most carriers have raised out of pocket limits and copays along with decreased extra value benefits for 2026. Annually Medicare Advantage Plans make changes. They must include all the same features as Original Medicare but not at the same cost share. They can have a premium, Medical and or Prescription deductible, copays and coinsurance can change. Extra Value such as Vision, Dental, Over the Counter, Part B Give Back, transportation, etc. can all change or be eliminated. Medicare sets the annual in-network out of pocket maximum; in 2025 it is \$9,350 for in-network and \$14,00 out-of-network services combined. However, individual insurance plans may set lower limits.

The old saying if it is not broken do not fix it DOES NOT apply to Annual Enrollment. Every year I see many people that have not checked/compared their current plan to what is new. I have saved so many people hundreds and in many cases thousands of dollars. You should be working with a broker that represents many insurance companies. Make sure you check them out, especially if you are going to allow someone in your house. I recommend meeting in their office. For myself we represent most insurance carriers in our area and carrying all their literature with me is almost impossible. We use three large screens so that our clients can clearly see and compare the differences between the plans. The minimum information always needed is all your doctors, medications: names, milligrams, and dosage. We load your current plan and then compare it to all the other companies in your area. What companies have all your doctors, the price for your medication normally makes a significant difference. Then the Extra Value what is most important to you. We do NOT CHARGE for our review and if warranted to change your insurance plan. Ethics is most important and if you are on the best plan we will tell you, plus you can see for yourself.

If your plan was CANCELLED/DROPPED for 2026, you have a guaranteed issue into a Medigap/Medicare Supplement. This is huge and very important, know your options!

As a reminder it is illegal for an insurance agent to contact you unless you give them permission. There are specific forms that you should sign, such as a Scope of Appointment which outlines what you want to talk about. This form should be signed at least 48 hours prior to your meeting or if you walk into their office, prior to speaking about Medicare.

Medicare Seminar's they are good for general information. A one-to-one appointment where you can dive into your doctors and medication is best, plus you can then compare other companies in one place.

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare, once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A". Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want Medicare you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D, and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue; you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6 months on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! **Especially important:** when you **move** you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

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FOCUSING ON EYE SAFETY: CONTACT LENS AND EYE INJURY PREVENTION MONTH

As we observe Contact Lens and Eye Injury Prevention Month, it's crucial to shine a spotlight on the importance of maintaining optimal eye health and safety. Our eyes are irreplaceable organs that deserve utmost care and attention. This month-long awareness campaign serves as a reminder to both contact lens wearers and the general public about the significance of proper eye care practices and injury prevention measures.

Contact lenses have revolutionized vision correction for millions of people worldwide. However, improper use and care of these tiny optical devices can lead to serious eye problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 45 million people in the United States wear contact lenses. While these lenses provide excellent vision correction, they also come with responsibilities.

One of the primary focuses of this awareness month is educating contact lens wearers about best practices. Proper hygiene is paramount when handling contact lenses. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your lenses or your eyes. This simple step can significantly reduce the risk of introducing harmful bacteria into your eyes.

It's also essential to follow the recommended wear schedule for your lenses. Overwearing contact lenses, especially sleeping in them when not approved by your eye care professional, can increase the risk of eye infections and corneal ulcers. Always remove your lenses before sleeping, swimming, or exposing your eyes to water, as these activities can introduce harmful microorganisms to your eyes.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of contact lenses are crucial. Use only the solutions recommended by your eye care professional, and never reuse or top off old solution. Replace your lens case every three months to prevent bacterial buildup. These habits can go a long way in preventing eye infections and ensuring the longevity of your lenses.

Beyond contact lens care, this month also emphasizes the importance of preventing eye injuries in various settings. Whether at work, home, or during sports activities, eye protection should always be a priority. According to the American Optometric Association, about 90% of eye injuries are preventable with proper safety eyewear.

In the workplace, especially in industries involving construction, manufacturing, or laboratory work, wearing appropriate safety goggles or face shields is crucial. At home, be cautious when using cleaning products, performing DIY projects, or working in the yard. Simple precautions like wearing safety glasses can prevent devastating eye injuries.

Sports enthusiasts should also take note. Activities like basketball, baseball, and racquet sports pose significant risks to the eyes. Wearing sports goggles or protective eyewear can prevent traumatic eye injuries and potential vision loss.

This awareness month also serves as a reminder for everyone, regardless of whether they wear contact lenses, to schedule regular comprehensive eye exams. These check-ups can detect early signs of eye diseases and ensure your vision prescription is up to date.

As we navigate through Contact Lens and Eye Injury Prevention Month, let's commit to making eye safety a year-round priority. By adopting proper contact lens care habits, using appropriate eye protection, and staying vigilant about potential eye hazards, we can significantly reduce the risk of eye injuries and maintain healthy vision for years to come.

Remember, your eyes are windows to the world – treat them with the care and respect they deserve. Whether you're a contact lens wearer or not, take this month as an opportunity to reassess your eye care routine and make any necessary improvements. Your future self will thank you for the gift of clear, healthy vision.



Penny Orr, O.D.
Optometric Physician

Dr. Orr is an optometric physician that provides a wide variety of primary eye care to patients. She completed her bachelor's degree at Florida Southern College, followed by her Doctor of Optometry degree at the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis. She completed internships at Winter Haven Eye Clinic in Winter Haven, Florida, and St. Luke's Eye Institute in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Dr. Orr is a member of the American Optometric Association, Florida Optometric Association, Southwest Florida Optometric Association, Contact Lens Association of Optometrists, and the Kiwanis Club. She has dedicated her time to the Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity, an organization that facilitates the provision and sustainability of vision care worldwide for people who can neither afford nor obtain such care. She has traveled to Belize, Santo Domingo, Costa Rica, Haiti, and Panama. Dr. Orr serves on several local boards, including the Humane Society of Lee County, Parkinson's of Southwest Florida, and Alzheimer's Association Florida Gulf Coast Chapter.

Originally from Maine, Dr. Orr has lived in Southwest Florida since 1989. Dr. Orr is active in sports, particularly tennis, golf, and cycling. She is passionate about animal rescue and enjoys crafting and traveling.



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FATTY LIVER: WHY IT MATTERS AND HOW WE CAN TAKE ACTION

By Svetlana Kogan, MD IFMCP

Most of us don't give much thought to our liver — yet it quietly works around the clock to keep us healthy. This organ acts like the body's ultimate "processing plant." It filters toxins, manages blood sugar, processes cholesterol, and produces bile to help us digest fats. But when fat begins to build up inside the liver, its ability to do all of these jobs gets disrupted.

This buildup is called Fatty Liver Disease, or more recently, Metabolic Dysfunction-associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD). It's one of the fastest-growing health concerns in the U.S. and understanding it could literally save lives.

Why Should We Care?

Fatty liver often develops quietly — with little or no symptoms at first. But it can set off a chain reaction in the body.

Take the example of an average middle-aged man. He grabs fast food on busy days, enjoys soda with lunch, and has gained some weight over the years. During a routine check-up, his doctor notices abnormal liver tests. An ultrasound confirms fatty liver. At first, our guy feels fine. But over time, the liver's reduced ability to handle insulin can push him toward prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Cholesterol and triglycerides creep upward, raising his risk for heart attack and stroke. He begins to feel more tired and sluggish, a common but often overlooked symptom. If the fat in his liver causes inflammation and scarring, it can progress to a more serious condition known as NASH (nonalcoholic steatohepatitis), fibrosis, or even cirrhosis — permanent liver damage.

Research confirms this. The American Heart Association notes that people with fatty liver are more likely to die of heart disease than liver disease itself. That's powerful motivation to pay attention early.

How Common Is It?

The numbers are staggering. According to the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, about one in four Americans has fatty liver disease. That's around 75–100 million people.

The American Liver Foundation adds that up to 75% of people who are overweight and up to 90% of those with severe obesity are affected.

The Food Connection

So how did we get here? Diet plays a vital role. From a functional medicine perspective, fatty liver isn't just about overeating — it's about the quality of food we consume.

The biggest culprits are ultra-processed foods. These are products loaded with added sugars, refined grains, unhealthy fats, preservatives, and artificial ingredients. They're cheap, tasty, and convenient — but they overwhelm the body with calories and starve it of nutrition.

Here are some common examples linked to fatty liver risk: sodas, energy drinks, packaged cookies and pastries, chips, fast-food burgers, fried chicken, pizza with processed meats, hot dogs, bacon, sugary cereals, boxed mac & cheese, and ice cream or flavored yogurts.

As one scientific review put it: "Dietary intervention alone can significantly reduce liver fat content, independent of weight loss" (Journal of Hepatology). That means it isn't just about calories — it's about what's on the plate.

Healthy Swaps for a Happier Liver

The good news? Change is possible. Making small, realistic adjustments to everyday meals can make an enormous difference. Try these swaps:

- **Soda** → sparkling water with lemon or berries
- **Chips** → nuts or roasted chickpeas
- **Fast food burger & fries** → grilled chicken salad or wrap
- **White bread** → whole-grain or sprouted bread.
- **Ice cream** → plain frozen Greek yogurt with fruit.
- **Processed deli meats** → sliced turkey, chicken, or lentil-based options



Tip: Start with one or two swaps you enjoy and build from there. Your liver will thank you!

Recent research demonstrates that weight loss of 7–10% is associated with significant histological improvement and can resolve steatohepatitis.

In plain language: losing even a modest amount of weight and improving diet quality can dramatically improve liver health.

Unlike many chronic conditions, fatty liver is not a life sentence if addressed early. The liver is remarkably resilient — it wants to heal. By making better food choices, moving more, and catching the condition before it progresses, millions of people could avoid diabetes, heart disease, and liver failure.

Think of it this way: every time you choose water over soda, a home-cooked meal over drive-thru, or a walk over another hour on the couch, you're giving your liver a chance to thrive.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

The author of 'Diet Slave No More!', Svetlana Kogan, MD is a Board-Certified Internal Medicine, Holistic & Functional Medical Doctor with 25 years of experience. She has appeared as a health expert on prime-time TV and radio stations and has authored hundreds of holistic health articles for internet and print. She moved her Concierge Practice from Manhattan NYC to Naples in 2019. Her Functional Medicine Primary Care Practice is focused on prevention and holistic approach to illness, and longevity.

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TIPS FOR FINDING A RETIREMENT COMMUNITY THAT FITS YOUR LIFESTYLE

By Greg Pascucci

As we think about the future and what retirement living may look like, one of the most important considerations is whether a community will truly reflect our preferences. Retirement today isn't about fitting into a pre-set mold; it's about creating a lifestyle that feels authentic, whether that means peace and quiet, new friendships or a mix of both.

Here are five tips for choosing a community that honors individuality and empowers residents to live life their way:

1. Pay Attention to Staff Longevity

The people who work in a community are just as important as the buildings and amenities. Long-tenured staff often create a strong sense of trust and familiarity. They know residents well and can anticipate needs in a way that newer staff may not.

During a tour, don't hesitate to ask: How long have most of your team members been here? Communities where employees stay for many years often foster deeper relationships, creating an environment where residents feel genuinely cared for.

2. Look for Resident Feedback Opportunities

A community thrives when residents have a voice in shaping daily life. One way to ensure this is through a Resident Council or similar forum, where they can share ideas and feedback directly with leadership. This collaboration helps make the community feel more inclusive and responsive to residents' needs.

At The Carlisle Naples, a luxury senior rental community, residents meet regularly with the leadership team to discuss everything from dining preferences to upcoming activities. It's not uncommon for the executive chef to preview a new dish with residents before adding it to the menu or for the Zest Director to coordinate an outing based on resident requests. This ongoing dialogue makes daily life feel more personalized and meaningful for residents.

3. Check for Accreditation

When comparing communities, ask if accreditation has been achieved and maintained. It can give added peace of mind that you're considering a place with verified best practices and a dedication to continuous improvement.

At The Carlisle Naples, for example, the community has been accredited by CARF International since 2008, most recently receiving reaccreditation in 2023. This distinction is considered the senior living equivalent of a five-star hotel rating. It provides reassurance to residents and families that the community is committed to excellence well beyond the basics.

4. Ask About Dining Flexibility

Dining is central to daily life, and choice is key. Fixed mealtimes and limited options can feel restrictive, so it's important to look for communities that provide flexibility and variety.

The Carlisle Naples offers 12-hour dining, giving residents the freedom to enjoy meals on their own schedule. In addition to classic menu favorites, a FreshZest plant-forward menu provides nutritious, seasonal choices for those who want lighter or health-conscious meals.

No matter where you're considering, find out if the dining program mirrors the way you like to eat at home: on your own time and with options that fit your preferences.

5. Consider Transition Support

Moving into a community can feel overwhelming, especially in the first few weeks. Some communities make this transition easier by connecting newcomers with resident ambassadors, neighbors who walk alongside new residents, make introductions and provide companionship as they settle in.

According to Bill Diamond, The Carlisle Naples' Executive Director, "Transitions are not just smooth, they're personal. We don't tell you what to do. We listen to how you want to live, and then make that possible."

When evaluating communities, ask about the support systems in place for easing the transition. Resident ambassadors, orientation programs and long-tenured staff can make the difference between simply moving in and truly feeling at home.

6. Seek Out a Culture of Choice

Above all, the hallmark of a strong retirement community is respect for resident choice. Whether you want

want a quiet day with a good book, a bustling outing with friends or something in between, the community should support that decision.

At The Carlisle Naples, some residents prefer tranquil mornings, while others take advantage of outings, wellness classes or social clubs. And, best of all, there is peace of mind for residents and families in knowing supportive care is available, if and when needed.

Choosing a retirement community isn't about finding the busiest calendar or the most elaborate dining room. It's about finding a place that reflects your individuality and offers the freedom to live the way you want.

"Every resident is different, and that's the point," added Diamond. "At The Carlisle Naples, we don't just welcome you, we help you thrive on your own terms."

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



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HEALTHY AGING: The Promise of Stem Cell Therapy

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

As we age, our bodies naturally experience a decline in cellular regeneration, leading to reduced energy, slower recovery, and increased susceptibility to age-related conditions. However, advances in regenerative medicine are offering new pathways to support healthy aging, with stem cell therapy emerging as a promising intervention. Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine has developed an innovative quarterly stem cell injection program designed to help individuals maintain vitality and promote cellular renewal throughout the aging process.

Understanding Stem Cells and Aging

Stem cells are the body's master cells, possessing the unique ability to differentiate into various cell types and repair damaged tissues. As we age, our natural stem cell populations decline, contributing to the physical manifestations of aging such as decreased muscle mass, joint stiffness, reduced cognitive function, and slower wound healing. By supplementing the body's diminishing stem cell reserves through therapeutic injections, patients may experience enhanced cellular repair and regeneration.

The science behind stem cell therapy for aging focuses on the cells' ability to release growth factors and cytokines that promote tissue repair, reduce inflammation, and stimulate the body's natural healing processes. These biological signals can help rejuvenate aging tissues, potentially improving overall health and quality of life.

The Wimmer Orthopedics Quarterly Program

Recognizing that consistent, sustained treatment often yields better results than sporadic high-dose interventions, Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine has developed a unique quarterly stem cell injection protocol. This innovative approach distributes a full therapeutic dose across four intramuscular injections throughout the year, with each quarterly treatment delivering one-quarter of the total annual dose.

The program operates on a convenient subscription model, with patients paying \$200 monthly to receive their quarterly injections. This affordable payment structure makes advanced regenerative therapy accessible to more individuals seeking to



optimize their aging process. The consistent dosing schedule ensures that patients maintain steady levels of therapeutic stem cells in their system, potentially providing more sustained benefits compared to single large-dose treatments.

Benefits of the Quarterly Approach

The quarterly injection protocol offers several advantages over traditional single-dose treatments. By spacing injections evenly throughout the year, patients may experience more consistent therapeutic effects without the peaks and valleys associated with intermittent high-dose treatments. This steady approach allows the body to continuously benefit from the regenerative properties of stem cells.

The intramuscular delivery method ensures efficient absorption and distribution of stem cells throughout the body. Muscle tissue provides an ideal environment for stem cell integration, allowing the cells to migrate to areas where they can provide the most benefit. This delivery method is also minimally invasive and well-tolerated by most patients.

What to Expect

Patients enrolled in the Wimmer Orthopedics quarterly program can expect to receive their injections every three months, administered by trained medical professionals in a clinical setting. Each injection session is typically brief and performed using sterile techniques to ensure safety and efficacy.

Many patients report improvements in energy levels, joint comfort, recovery time from physical activities, and overall sense of well-being. While individual results may vary, the consistent dosing schedule helps maintain therapeutic levels that may support ongoing cellular regeneration and repair processes.

The Future of Healthy Aging

As regenerative medicine continues to evolve, programs like Wimmer Orthopedics' quarterly stem cell injection protocol represent a shift toward proactive, preventive approaches to aging. Rather than simply treating age-related conditions as they arise, this innovative program focuses on supporting the body's natural regenerative capacity to promote healthy aging from within.

The combination of cutting-edge stem cell therapy with an accessible, patient-friendly delivery model makes this treatment option particularly appealing for individuals seeking to optimize their aging experience. As more research emerges supporting the benefits of regular stem cell therapy, such programs may become increasingly important tools in the pursuit of healthy longevity.

For those interested in exploring how stem cell therapy might support their healthy aging goals, consultation with the experienced team at Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine can provide personalized insights into whether their quarterly injection program aligns with individual health objectives and lifestyle needs. Contact Wimmer Orthopedics & Regenerative Medicine today at 239-829-4300 to schedule your consultation and discover how regenerative medicine can transform your path to healthy aging.

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FROM MELANOMA SURVIVOR TO PATENT HOLDER: Local Inventor Develops Patented Skincare Applicator

When Kathe D'Alfonso faced melanoma, the Penfield resident knew her daily routine had to change. Suddenly, applying sunscreen to every inch of her body became not just important—it became life-saving. But like most people, she discovered a frustrating reality: reaching the middle of her back was nearly impossible.

Rather than accept this limitation, the 55-year-old inventor decided to create her own solution. Three years of development later, D'Alfonso holds a patent for Solo Beauty, a flexible wand applicator that's transforming how people approach their skincare routines.

Innovation Born from Necessity

Solo Beauty features a unique design: a sturdy wand topped with a flexible, mitt-covered head that angles perfectly to reach those troublesome spots between the shoulder blades. The interchangeable mitts come in three varieties—a lotion applicator made from material that resists absorption, a body exfoliator, and a face exfoliator.

"I don't know anyone who can reach the middle of their backs," D'Alfonso said with a laugh, highlighting the universal problem her invention solves.

The path to patent approval wasn't guaranteed. D'Alfonso's attorney cautioned her that patent acquisition is far from automatic. When the U.S. Patent Office approved her application in April 2024, it validated not just her design but her persistence through years of prototype development.

Engineering for Real-World Use

D'Alfonso's commitment to quality shows in her development process. She created eight different prototypes before settling on the final design, testing each version rigorously. Her current prototype has survived more than 550 machine wash cycles—a testament to the product's durability.

"The biggest thing is it has the right angle," she explained. "Just hold it up and put it over your shoulder. The mitt can be washed and dried. There's no product out there that does that."

This washability factor sets Solo Beauty apart from competitors while offering environmental benefits. Unlike similar products with disposable heads, Solo



Beauty's reusable design reduces waste and saves customers money over time.

Expanding Beyond the Original Vision

While D'Alfonso initially created Solo Beauty for sunscreen application, customer feedback revealed broader applications. People with arthritis, Parkinson's disease, and mobility limitations have found the tool invaluable for maintaining independence in their skincare routines. Others use it to apply topical medications without exposing their hands to the treatment.

"Customers absolutely love it," D'Alfonso reported. "It solves a lot of problems and has been helping people."

The response from wheelchair users has been particularly meaningful to her. "Some customers use wheelchairs. They go through a lot of struggles and this helps," she noted, emphasizing how the product addresses accessibility challenges she hadn't initially considered.

Local Manufacturing, Personal Touch

D'Alfonso has built her business around local partnerships. She cuts all materials herself and works with a local seamstress for mitt construction, while sourcing wands from regional suppliers. This approach keeps production close to home and allows for customization—including one memorable request for Holstein cow print mitts.

Her sales channels reflect this personal approach. Starting at the Webster Farm Market, D'Alfonso now operates a physical store in Irondequoit and maintains an online presence at solobeautyroc.com. The direct customer interaction has been rewarding, she says, with repeat customers and enthusiastic word-of-mouth recommendations driving growth.

Looking Forward

Solo Beauty retails for \$28.99 online, with replacement mitts available for \$12.99 to \$14.99. For D'Alfonso, the success isn't just measured in sales figures but in the problems solved.

"For the average person, this product solves a problem and makes your life easier," she reflected. "Once you use it, you'll never stop."

What started as one woman's response to a health challenge has evolved into a solution that addresses universal accessibility needs in personal care. D'Alfonso's journey from melanoma patient to patent-holding entrepreneur demonstrates how personal necessity can spark innovations that benefit entire communities.

As Solo Beauty continues to reach new customers, D'Alfonso's story serves as inspiration for other would-be inventors: sometimes the best business ideas come from solving your own problems first.



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A Groundbreaking Implant to Alleviate Pain From Arthritic Conditions of The Big Toe

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

Bunions are a form of arthritis and can cause painful, red, boney, growths; consequently, bunions can also be hereditary and run in families, especially in females. More women than men experience the painful boney growth on their big toe, known as a bunion, or Hallux Valgus. More often than not, bunions hurt more when wearing shoes. Wearing shoes causes pressure on your toe joint, which in turn starts to ache, become fluid filled and can have boney growths. We all need to wear shoes, so is there anything that really works to heal bunions?

Non-Surgical, Conservative Approach

For a conservative approach, many individuals will start out trying to alleviate their pain by wearing more comfortable shoes, or by wearing gel toe inserts that help keep the toes in the proper alignment. Icing the foot can help to tamp down inflammations, as well as taking NSAID's (ibuprofen) as needed to lessen the discomfort. However, this is usually not beneficial. **Because most bunions fail to heal on their own, surgery is usually recommended.**

In traditional bunion surgery, the toe bone is cut in half, and part of the bone is removed. In many cases, there is a need to relieve tension on surrounding ligaments and tendons to try and realign the joint and bones. The total recovery can take a few months, but initially, you will be in a protective boot or cast for the first two to four weeks.

A groundbreaking Hallux Joint Implant can alleviate arthritic pain from bone on bone friction. It allows pain free movement of the joint.

There is a Cutting Edge Procedure called CARTIVA® SCI

Joint resurfacing with CARTIVA® SCI is simple, does not require significant removal of healthy tissue, and typically results in nominal surgical trauma and rapid recovery. It's minimally invasive and uses unique instruments to deliver the synthetic cartilage to the damaged joint.



The CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) device is comprised of an organic hydrogel polymer made of polyvinyl alcohol and saline. CARTIVA® SCI has a high water content, and its elastic and compressive mechanical properties are similar to articular cartilage. The device is intended to replace focal areas of painful damaged cartilage thereby reducing pain and maintaining range of motion in the first metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint.

CARTIVA® SCI is the first implant that behaves like the natural cartilage of your joint to relieve pain and improve mobility for patients suffering from big toe arthritis. **WHY CARTIVA® SCI?** Unlike fusion surgery, CARTIVA® SCI reduces joint pain without sacrificing your foot's natural movement

Your big toe joint is uniquely designed for movement and provides most of the force needed for walking and running. Unlike fusion surgery, which locks the joint in place, CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) reduces pain while also allowing your joint to move how it's supposed to.

Quick Procedure & Quick Recovery

Implanting CARTIVA® SCI is 40% faster than the alternative fusion surgery. There are no casts or crutches required. Patients can typically bear weight immediately after receiving CARTIVA® SCI.

Long Term Results

CARTIVA® SCI is proven to provide long-term pain reduction and increased foot mobility, with 97% reduction in pain demonstrated at almost six years post-procedure.

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Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 33 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. If you are experiencing any foot pain or foot conditions, please contact Collier Podiatry. Their kind and well-trained staff are ready to answer your questions and concerns and get you back on your feet again.

Contact Collier Podiatry to make your appointment. Please visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com, or call them at (239) 775-0019.

Source:
<https://www.cartiva.net/what-is-cartiva/why-cartiva/>



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Pain, Dryness & Irritation:

How Women Are Rejuvenating Their Lives

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Who doesn't want to feel better and more confident about their sexual health? Many women try to hide their condition from their partner, or suffer in silence because they believe it's "normal" for them. That couldn't be further from the truth. Whether your pain is caused by endometriosis, pelvic conditions, vulvovaginal atrophy, hormonal dysfunction, or from medications, there are answers.

Female Sexual Dissatisfaction Has Many Causes

Natural processes like aging, childbirth and menopause can have deleterious effects on a woman's sexual well-being and sensations. Since we all tend to avoid anything that doesn't feel good, a woman's sexual desires and success in achieving them are inversely related to the atrophy and scarring in the vaginal canal that these life-events can create, like tearing of the vagina during childbirth, dryness of the vaginal tissues after menopause, and the laxity of the vagina causing decreased sexual sensation. Sexual satisfaction can be negatively impacted by hormonal changes after menopause, but many women cannot take vaginal estrogens or do not find this treatment to be effective or convenient enough. This is where laser energy comes in: CO2 laser energy has been proven to regrow normal collagen (a necessary protein found in all of our organs) in the vaginal and vulvar tissues leading to improved "accommodation" and "stretchiness" of the vagina which in turn leads to greater sexual satisfaction and lubrication and a decrease in discomfort during and after sex.

CO2RE Intima

Although, hormone therapy can be used to treat vaginal vulvar atrophy and dyspareunia (painful intercourse), sometimes it isn't enough. The CO2RE Intima procedure has helped countless women enjoy life like they used to. It is noninvasive, nonsurgical and is performed in your physician's office.



You don't have to live with pain and dryness any longer. There is a better way to age well, enjoy intimacy again and regain your life.

CO2RE Intima Benefits:

- CO2RE Intima is an in-office, non-surgical laser procedure to restore vaginal health, by improving hydration and promoting healthy vaginal pH
- Each CO2RE Intima treatment relieves symptoms of vulvovaginal atrophy, rejuvenates vaginal tissue and treats exterior tissue to improve vaginal cosmetic appearance.
- 100% showed significant improvement in vaginal health (elasticity, fluid volume, pH level, epithelial integrity and moisture)
- 91% reported an improvement in dryness

CO₂RE[®] Intima
Women's Intimate Wellness



CO2RE Intima might be for you if:

- You want to relieve the signs of childbearing and aging in the vaginal area.
- You desire enhancement in sexual functioning and a better sexual experience.
- You seek vaginal cosmetic improvement and you want to feel more confident about your feminine health.

**10 Minute, Hormone Free,
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Ask us today if CO2RE Intima is right for you

To discuss CO2RE Intima or any other options that are best for you, please call 239-449-7979



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WHY YOU DON'T NEED TO TRAVEL TO TURKEY FOR HAIR TRANSPLANTS

By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

In recent years, Turkey has become a popular destination for individuals seeking hair transplants. However, with advancements in regenerative medicine, there is no longer a need to travel overseas for hair restoration. Right here in Florida, innovative approaches using exosomes and stem cells are offering promising results for natural hair growth without surgery.

Exosomes and Stem Cells: The New Frontier

Exosomes and stem cells are powerful biological tools that help rejuvenate the scalp and stimulate the hair follicles. Unlike traditional transplants that involve surgical procedures and downtime, these regenerative methods work by enhancing the natural healing and regenerative capacity of the body. Patients in Florida now have access to these advanced therapies without having to board a plane.

Benefits of Local Hair Regeneration in Florida

- 1. Non-Surgical** – No cutting, no stitches, and minimal discomfort.
- 2. Faster Recovery** – Most clients return to normal activities the same day.
- 3. Natural Results** – Stimulates your own hair follicles for authentic growth.
- 4. Convenience** – Receive world-class care without traveling overseas.
- 5. Safety** – Local oversight ensures you receive care that meets U.S. standards.

Real Results You Can See

Before and after results demonstrate the effectiveness of exosome and stem cell applications for hair growth. These photos highlight the visible difference achieved with this innovative approach.

The Future of Hair Restoration is Here

Traveling abroad for hair transplants is no longer necessary. Florida residents now have access to cutting-edge regenerative medicine that promotes natural hair growth safely and effectively. With exosome and stem cell therapies, the future of hair restoration is available right here at home.



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.

If you have questions about the opportunities available to you in our programs, feel free to send us a message or call (855) 734-3620. We will get back to you as soon as possible.



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THE LIFE-SAVING POWER OF REGULAR SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS: WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

In a world where health consciousness is on the rise, one critical aspect of preventive care often goes overlooked: regular skin cancer screenings. With skin cancer being one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, the importance of early detection through routine check-ups cannot be overstated. This article delves into why staying vigilant about your skin health, particularly in checking for melanomas, could be a life-saving decision.

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow abnormally, often due to damage from UV radiation. While there are several types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most dangerous. Melanoma develops in the melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing skin pigment. Although it's less common than other skin cancers, melanoma is far more likely to spread to other parts of the body if not caught early.

The Power of Early Detection

The key to successfully treating skin cancer, especially melanoma, lies in early detection. When caught in its initial stages, the five-year survival rate for melanoma is an impressive 99%. However, this rate drops dramatically to 27% for melanomas that have spread to distant parts of the body. These statistics underscore the critical importance of regular skin checks and professional screenings.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

While professional screenings are crucial, being aware of your own skin and any changes is equally important. The "ABCDE" rule is a helpful guide for identifying potential melanomas:

Asymmetry: One half of the mole doesn't match the other half.

Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, or blurred.

Color: The color is not uniform and may include shades of brown, black, or tan.

Diameter: Melanomas are usually larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).

Evolving: The mole changes in size, shape, or color over time.

Any mole or skin growth exhibiting these characteristics warrants immediate medical attention.

The Screening Process

A professional skin cancer screening is a quick, painless procedure that can be performed by a dermatologist or trained healthcare provider. During the screening, the doctor will thoroughly examine your skin, paying close attention to areas frequently exposed to the sun. They may use a dermatoscope, a special magnifying tool, to get a closer look at suspicious spots.

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

While everyone should be mindful of their skin health, certain factors increase the risk of skin cancer:

- Fair skin
- History of sunburns or excessive sun exposure
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Family history of skin cancer
- Weakened immune system

For those at average risk, an annual skin check is recommended. However, individuals with higher risk factors may need more frequent screenings. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate screening schedule for your specific situation.

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

In between professional screenings, monthly self-examinations are crucial. These self-checks allow you to become familiar with your skin's normal appearance and help you spot any changes quickly. Use a full-length mirror and a hand mirror to examine your entire body, including hard-to-see areas like your back, scalp, and between your toes.

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

While regular screenings are vital, prevention remains the best strategy against skin cancer. Protect your skin by:

- Applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 daily
- Wearing protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses
- Seeking shade, especially during peak sun hours (10 am to 4 pm)
- Avoiding tanning beds and sun lamps

The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings


Regular skin cancer screenings don't just benefit individuals; they have a broader societal impact. Early detection reduces the overall burden on healthcare systems by catching cancers when they're most treatable. It also helps raise awareness about skin cancer, encouraging others to prioritize their skin health.

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

In the grand scheme of health maintenance, skin cancer screenings are a relatively small investment of time that can yield enormous benefits. By making these screenings a regular part of your health routine, you're taking a proactive step in protecting yourself against one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. Remember, your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense against the environment. Treating it with the care and attention it deserves isn't just about aesthetics—it's about preserving your overall health and potentially saving your life.

Don't wait for a problem to arise. Schedule a skin cancer screening today and empower yourself with the knowledge and vigilance needed to keep your skin healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for this simple yet powerful act of self-care.

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH: NEW FRONTIERS IN DETECTION, TREATMENT, AND HOPE

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

As we move through 2025, the landscape of breast cancer research and treatment continues to evolve rapidly. This year has brought significant advancements in early detection, personalized therapies, and survivorship care, offering new hope to millions affected by this disease worldwide.

Revolutionizing Early Detection

One of the most exciting developments of 2025 is the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in mammography screening. Advanced machine learning algorithms have dramatically improved the accuracy of breast cancer detection, reducing false positives and catching subtle abnormalities that human radiologists might miss. This technology is now being integrated into standard screening protocols across many healthcare systems, potentially saving countless lives through earlier diagnosis.

Additionally, liquid biopsy tests have made significant strides this year. These blood-based tests can detect circulating tumor DNA, allowing for non-invasive early detection and monitoring of breast cancer. The latest versions of these tests boast improved sensitivity and specificity, making them a promising complement to traditional imaging techniques.

Personalized Treatment Approaches

The era of one-size-fits-all breast cancer treatment is firmly behind us. In 2025, oncologists are leveraging sophisticated genomic profiling techniques to tailor therapies to each patient's unique tumor characteristics. This approach, known as precision medicine, has led to the development of several new targeted therapies that have shown remarkable efficacy in clinical trials.

One standout example is the new class of PARP inhibitors specifically designed for patients with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. These drugs have demonstrated unprecedented success in treating aggressive forms of triple-negative breast cancer, offering hope to a patient group that has historically had limited treatment options.

Immunotherapy continues to make waves in breast cancer treatment. This year saw the approval of novel combination therapies that pair immune



checkpoint inhibitors with traditional chemotherapy, significantly improving outcomes for certain subsets of breast cancer patients.

Advancements in Surgical Techniques

Breast-conserving surgery has taken a leap forward in 2025 with the introduction of fluorescence-guided surgery. This technique uses specialized dyes that accumulate in cancer cells, allowing surgeons to visualize tumor margins more accurately during operations. The result is more precise tumor removal and better cosmetic outcomes for patients.

Robotic-assisted mastectomies have also gained traction this year. These procedures offer increased precision and potentially faster recovery times compared to traditional surgical methods. While still not widespread, early adopters are reporting promising results, and more hospitals are beginning to invest in this technology.

Radiation Therapy Innovations

Proton beam therapy, a highly targeted form of radiation treatment, has become more accessible in 2025. This technology allows for more precise targeting of tumor sites while sparing healthy surrounding tissue. For breast cancer patients, this can mean reduced risk of heart and lung complications, particularly for those with left-sided breast tumors.

Additionally, hypofractionated radiation therapy – which delivers higher doses of radiation over a shorter period – has become the new standard of care for many breast cancer patients. This approach not only reduces treatment time but also minimizes side effects and improves quality of life during treatment.

Survivorship and Quality of Life

As survival rates continue to improve, there's an increased focus on long-term quality of life for breast cancer survivors. 2025 has seen the launch of several large-scale studies examining the long-term effects of various treatment modalities, with the aim of developing better survivorship care plans.

Virtual reality (VR) technology is being increasingly used to help patients manage treatment-related side effects such as chemotherapy-induced nausea and pain. VR programs designed specifically for breast cancer patients have shown promise in reducing anxiety and improving overall well-being during treatment.

Looking Ahead

While these advancements offer much to celebrate, challenges remain. Disparities in access to cutting-edge treatments persist, and researchers continue to grapple with drug resistance in metastatic disease. However, the pace of innovation in breast cancer research shows no signs of slowing.

As we look to the future, ongoing clinical trials in areas such as cancer vaccines and nanotechnology-based drug delivery systems hint at even more groundbreaking developments on the horizon. The breast cancer landscape of 2025 is one of hope and progress, with each new discovery bringing us one step closer to a world where breast cancer is no longer a life-threatening disease.

KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

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



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Welcome to October's Cincinnati Cancer Advisors (CCA)/ Naples Cancer Advisors, Monthly Article

By Robin Zon, MD, FASCO, FACP - 2024-2025 ASCO President

Every October, the healthcare community ushers in Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Although our group has written about breast cancer in prior years, I think it's extremely important to reiterate the following message: **Awareness Saves Lives.** This month is an opportunity to amplify the message that early detection is the strongest weapon we have against breast cancer.

Just this week, I provided a CCA-sponsored free second-opinion consultation for a middle-aged woman whose screening mammogram detected her breast cancer early. This not only led to a more conservative surgery option, but will result in less treatment after surgery to keep her cancer-free. This is a perfect example of how and why screening mammograms are so important.

People often wonder why they need to have screenings. The answer is simple: one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer, and the risk increases with age, peaking at age 70, but continues for her lifetime. The good news is that when breast cancer is detected early, the five-year survival rate is over 90%.

Breast cancer is a disease which does not discriminate and can affect men as well. Furthermore, we know that access to care can challenge the ability to get appropriate screenings and care. So, closing the gap on access is essential for saving more lives.

During 2024-2025, I was honored to serve as President of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, working towards my theme "Driving Knowledge to Action: Building a Better Future," supported by engaging technology, embracing advocacy, and empowering the community.

My ultimate goal is to emphasize the importance of taking the knowledge, resources, and technologies that we already have, and applying them to everyone everywhere, thereby improving cancer care outcomes by preventing cancer, increasing cures, or turning cancer into a chronic disease.



What New Drugs Have Been Approved Since Last Year?

Great news! As a result of decades of investment in cancer research, by the NIH, NCI, and the pharma industry, we have more drugs approved for breast cancer, especially over the past 12 months. These advances not only are increasing cure rates for women with breast cancer but are also improving the quality of their lives. This past year, FDA approvals included expanding use of, and introducing, new drugs, called antibody-drug conjugates, such as Datopotamab and Enhertu. Additional drug approvals have focused on targeting the drugs against a particular characteristic that a cancer has, which means more precise treatments with better chances of working and fewer toxicities. We are also witnessing promising results in cancers related to genetic mutations, which some women harbor in the BRCA gene.

Technology and Early Detection Advances

Many people, if not everyone, are affected by, either knowingly, or unknowingly, artificial intelligence (AI). Healthcare may have been slower to adopt the benefits of AI, but this past year there is growing evidence of the usefulness of AI in cancer care, including a new deep learning model using digital breast tomosynthesis imaging, which basically enhances early detection and personalizes monitoring strategies in screening mammograms. This is a fantastic advancement demonstrating how engaging technology can improve the odds of catching cancers early and improving lives.

Beyond AI use in streamlining diagnostic tools, AI is also assisting pathologists in better classifying and distinguishing benign from cancerous tissue. In fact, one use case shows that by using AI to assist pathologists, patients who were not candidates for certain life-saving medicines have become eligible for the treatment due to better AI detection.



Robin Zon, MD, FASCO, FACP
2024-2025 ASCO President

Dr. Zon currently serves as the Director of Breast Cancer Oncology at the Cincinnati Cancer Advisors (CCA), a provider of no-cost second opinions to cancer patients in or near the Greater Cincinnati area. Prior to joining CCA, Dr. Zon served as Past President, and is now Physician Emeritus at Michiana Hematology Oncology in Mishawaka, Indiana.

She formerly served as Medical Director of Oncology Research at Memorial Hospital an NCI CCOP Associate and then Principal Investigator until 2013 for the Northern Indiana Cancer Research Consortium, the only NCI designated Community Cancer Oncology Program in the state of Indiana.

Dr. Zon is an active volunteer for ASCO, most recently being awarded ASCO's Advocate of the Year for her significant advocacy work on behalf of individuals living with cancer and their cancer care teams and was the recipient of ASCO's Distinguished Achievement Award. Dr. Zon is a Past Chair of ASCO's Government Relations Committee, where she provided distinguished leadership in the society's advocacy efforts and Past Chair of Clinical Practice Committee. She also served on the Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013, along with participating in many other ASCO related responsibilities. Dr. Zon was ASCO's President 2024-2025, and amplified her theme "Driving Knowledge to Action". Of her many activities, she is visiting all of the state societies and is the innovator of ASCO Edge. Currently, she serves as Chair of the Society's Board of Directors, Nominating Committee, Compensation Committee and Executive Committee.



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RELIEF IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

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

When back or neck pain lingers, it can affect every part of your life—from the way you move and sleep to how much you can enjoy your day. Patients now have access to one of the most advanced non-surgical treatments available: spinal decompression therapy on the Hill DT table.

This state-of-the-art system is more than just a therapy session—it's a carefully guided medical event designed to help your spine heal naturally.

How the Hill DT Table Works

The Hill DT table uses advanced computer technology that gently "listens" to your body in real time. During treatment, with precision actuators accomplishing the decompression, it reduces pressure on spinal discs and nerves. This process creates a healthier environment inside the spine, allowing oxygen, nutrients, and fluids to flow back into the discs where they are most needed.

The Hill DT table provides real-time feedback, ensuring that every session is precise, safe, and tailored specifically to the patient's needs. The result is a comfortable, relaxing experience that supports the body's ability to repair itself without surgery.

A Step-by-Step Healing Program

Each decompression appointment is designed as part of a larger healing program. As the table gently cycles through phases of stretching and relaxation, the spine is given the chance to recover in small, steady steps.

Over time, these sessions build on each other to:

- Reduce pain and pressure on nerves
- Restore healthy spinal movement
- Improve overall quality of life

Many patients describe their sessions as soothing—almost as though their spine is finally able to "breathe" again.

Conditions That Benefit from Decompression

Spinal decompression therapy can be especially effective for conditions caused by pressure, disc injury, or everyday wear-and-tear, including:

- **Herniated or bulging discs** – Gentle decompression can help retract the disc material and relieve pinched nerves.



- **Degenerative disc disease** – By promoting hydration and nutrient flow, decompression supports disc health.
- **Sciatica** – Reducing pressure on the sciatic nerve often helps ease radiating leg pain.
- **Chronic low back or neck pain** – Regular sessions may reduce ongoing discomfort and stiffness.
- **Facet joint problems** – Gentle stretching can help restore balance and reduce irritation in these joints.

For many patients, spinal decompression provides a non-invasive alternative to surgery or long-term medication. Laser therapy for pain management is recommended in combination with decompression treatments. Dr. Shaffer will make a treatment plan with you.

Why the Hill DT Table is Different

The Hill DT table stands apart because it combines comfort with medical precision. Some of its unique features include:

- **Gentle, Smooth Movements** – The table never uses sudden pulls; instead, it mimics natural body movements so patients can fully relax.
- **Real-Time Monitoring** – A smart computer system adjusts treatment instantly based on the body's feedback.
- **Pinpoint Accuracy** – Providers can target the exact spinal level that needs attention, adjusting angles and forces as needed.
- **Personalized Programs** – Each patient's plan is customized and progress is tracked over time.

This level of precision ensures every session is both safe and effective.



A Non-Surgical Path Toward Relief

With each visit, patients are not just lying on a table—they are taking part in a carefully designed medical event and healing process that supports spinal health and overall well-being.

Non-surgical spinal decompression with the Hill DT table offers new hope for those struggling with chronic back or neck pain, providing a gentle, targeted, and effective way to find relief.

If you are living with persistent spine-related pain, talk with Dr. Shaffer's team to see if non-surgical spinal decompression therapy may be right for you.

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

**Call today to schedule.
Appointments are filling quickly.**



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ADHD in Adults: Why Movement Matters for the Brain

By Dr. Waldo Amadeo

When most people think of ADHD, they picture racing thoughts, trouble focusing, or the frustration of unfinished projects. What often gets overlooked is that ADHD is not just a “thinking problem” — it’s also a coordination problem. The same brain areas that help us stay organized, remember details, and control impulses are also in charge of movement and balance. That means when we train the body, we’re also training the brain.

The Brain-Body Connection

Inside the brain, regions like the prefrontal cortex, basal ganglia, and cerebellum work together like an orchestra. The prefrontal cortex manages planning and organization, the basal ganglia control timing and transitions, and the cerebellum keeps rhythm and coordination smooth. In ADHD, these systems don’t communicate as efficiently as they should. That shows up not only in scattered thoughts, but also in clumsiness, poor posture, or difficulty with coordination.

How Movement Shapes Thinking

Movement is more than physical fitness — it’s a way of stimulating the brain. Exercise boosts growth factors like BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), which helps neurons form stronger connections. The cerebellum, sometimes called the “little brain,” plays a special role in both motor and mental coordination. When you practice balance, rhythm, or reflex exercises, you’re strengthening the same networks that help you sequence your thoughts and manage focus.

Think of it this way: if your brain is struggling to organize how your body moves, it’s going to have trouble organizing your ideas too. Improving one strengthens the other.

Movement in Clinical Practice

At Heal Thyself Institute, we often see adults with ADHD who struggle with focus, memory, and impulsivity — but also with movement patterns they didn’t realize were connected. We use therapies like:

- **Primitive reflex integration** to help the brain mature past early reflexes that hold it back.
- **Balance and vestibular training** to “wake up” the cerebellum and improve stability.
- **Functional eye exercises** to connect vision with attention.



When these therapies are combined with chiropractic adjustments, red light therapy, and other brain-based treatments, patients often report more clarity, calmer moods, and an ability to stay on task for longer periods of time.

Daily Life Applications

You don’t need a clinic to start using movement as a brain tool. Here are simple activities that support attention and focus:

- **Dance or martial arts** — rhythm and coordination challenge multiple brain systems at once.
- **Yoga or balance training** — helps with body awareness and calming the nervous system.
- **Short aerobic activity breaks** — walking, jumping, or rebounding can reset focus when the brain feels stuck.

For adults with ADHD, these aren’t just “extra exercise.” They’re ways to teach the brain how to sequence, focus, and regulate itself.

Rethinking ADHD

Too often, ADHD in adults is reduced to willpower or attention span. The truth is more hopeful: the brain has the ability to change. By addressing ADHD as a brain-body coordination challenge, we unlock new treatment pathways that go beyond medication or coping strategies. Movement becomes medicine.

Conclusion

ADHD is not simply about scattered thoughts — it’s about how the brain organizes both movement and ideas. By improving coordination in the body, we give the brain tools to better manage attention, memory, and self-control. Whether through clinical therapies or simple lifestyle practices, movement offers a powerful way to support adults living with ADHD.

At *Heal Thyself Institute*, this is the foundation of our brain-based care: strengthening the nervous system through safe, targeted, and empowering strategies that bring lasting change.



MEET THE DOCTOR

Dr. Waldo Amadeo was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Puerto Rico, earning a Bachelor of Science with a major in Human Biology. During his undergraduate years, he focused on Physiology of Addiction and Proteomics, earning a publication in the journal *Hormones and Behavior*. Dr. Amadeo continued his education at Life University College of Chiropractic, where he earned his Doctor of Chiropractic degree.

While at Life University, Dr. Amadeo was recognized at graduation for his expertise in the learning theory of critical thinking. He also earned certification in the Philosophy, Art, and Science of Sacro Occipital Technique™ (SOT) and served as President of the Sacro Occipital Technic™ Club.

Dr. Amadeo’s approach to treatment is multidisciplinary, and he works with patients of all ages, with a special passion for helping children, teens, and families. He aims to address the root causes of symptoms, supporting the body’s natural ability to return to a balanced, harmonious state. His holistic approach acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and their innate capacity for self-healing.

Dr. Waldo is currently taking classes in Functional Neurology to be eligible to sit for the accreditation exam. He is also in the final series of classes for Advanced Functional Medicine Clinician Certification through the Kharrazian Institute.



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MEIBOMIAN GLAND DYSFUNCTION (MGD) AND DRY EYE DISEASE

By: Alina Stanciu, MD, FACS, FAAO, FASRS

Board Certified Ophthalmologist, American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery

Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD) is one of the leading causes of dry eye disease worldwide, affecting millions of patients across all age groups and demographics. The meibomian glands, strategically located within the tarsal plates of both upper and lower eyelids, play a vital role in maintaining optimal tear film stability by secreting essential lipids that form the outermost layer of the tear film. These specialized oils create a protective barrier that significantly slows down tear evaporation and prevents rapid desiccation of the ocular surface. When these critical glands become blocked, inflamed, or produce poor-quality oils, patients inevitably develop evaporative dry eye syndrome, resulting in persistent discomfort, visual disturbances, and compromised ocular health that can significantly impact daily activities.

Clinical Presentation

Patients with MGD typically present with a constellation of uncomfortable symptoms including persistent burning sensations, sharp stinging, bothersome gritty feelings as if sand particles are trapped beneath the eyelids, noticeable redness, and pronounced light sensitivity that can interfere with routine tasks. A hallmark characteristic is fluctuating vision quality that temporarily improves immediately after blinking, only to deteriorate again within seconds as the tear film destabilizes. The condition follows a chronic and progressive course, significantly impacting overall quality of life and daily functioning. Contact lens wearers often experience particular difficulty with lens tolerance and comfort, while individuals with extensive screen exposure find their symptoms markedly exacerbated during prolonged digital device use, particularly in air-conditioned environments.

Risk Factors

Multiple risk factors contribute to MGD development, with age-related physiological changes being among the most significant predictors. Post-menopausal hormonal fluctuations, particularly decreased androgen levels, substantially increase susceptibility. Inflammatory skin conditions including rosacea and seborrheic dermatitis create a predisposing environment for gland dysfunction. Modern lifestyle factors such as prolonged digital device use lead to decreased blink frequency and incomplete blinks, compromising natural gland expression. Certain systemic medications including

isotretinoin, antihistamines, and antidepressants can alter gland function and oil composition, while environmental factors like low humidity and air conditioning further exacerbate symptoms.

Diagnostic Approaches

Comprehensive evaluation involves detailed slit-lamp examination of the eyelids and meibomian gland orifices to assess structural changes and inflammatory signs. Manual expression of the glands helps evaluate secretion quality, consistency, and flow characteristics, while tear breakup time (TBUT) measurements objectively assess tear film stability. Modern meibography imaging technology provides detailed visualization of gland architecture and morphology, enabling early detection of structural changes before significant functional impairment occurs, allowing for proactive intervention strategies.

Management Strategies

Treatment approaches are carefully tailored to individual disease severity and patient needs. Conservative first-line measures include warm compresses, gentle lid massage, and consistent lid hygiene protocols. Adjunctive therapies encompass lipid-based artificial tears, omega-3 fatty acid supplementation, and prescription anti-inflammatory drops such as cyclosporine or lifitegrast. Low-dose oral doxycycline provides anti-inflammatory benefits beyond antimicrobial effects. Advanced in-office procedures include thermal pulsation therapy (LipiFlow), intense pulsed light treatment (IPL), and BlephEx for thorough lid margin cleansing. Essential lifestyle modifications encompass adequate hydration, conscious blinking exercises, humidifier use, and strategic screen time reduction with regular breaks.

Specialized Treatment at Naples Eye & Aesthetics Institute

At our office, we offer comprehensive, personalized approaches to MGD and dry eye disease. We proudly introduce Bella Piel MD, our proprietary eyelid cream developed to stimulate meibomian gland function and restore healthy tear film stability. This innovative treatment provides patients with a targeted, non-invasive option that effectively complements traditional therapies. For detailed evaluation by our Dry Eye Expert Team and Dr. Alina Stanciu, MD, FACS, FAAO, FASRS, please contact our office at 239-949-2020.



Alina K. Stanciu, MD, FACS, FAAO, FASRS

Dr. Stanciu is a Board Certified Eye Physician and Surgeon who is a diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology, American Society of Retinal Surgery, and Fellow Member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery. She is the Founder and Medical Director of Naples Eye & Aesthetics Institute and MediFace Spa.



Specializations & Expertise: Dr. Stanciu specializes in Advanced Cataract Surgery, Retinal Diseases, Comprehensive Eye Care, Dry Eye Expert, and Oculo-Facial Surgical Procedures. As a Medical Retina Specialist and Cataract Surgeon, she treats patients with Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Glaucoma. She is also a skilled Cosmetic Surgeon with expertise in minimally invasive facial rejuvenation and eyelid surgery.

Innovative Treatments: Dr. Stanciu developed The European Liquid Face Lift, which serves as the best alternative to surgical face lift procedures. Her areas of interest include minimally invasive facial rejuvenation and Blepharoplasty for drooping eyelids.

Experience & Training: With 20 years of experience and New York training, Dr. Stanciu has been practicing in Naples and Bonita for two decades. She operates the only boutique private practice in Naples, recently relocating to a new location at 6610 Willow Park Dr, Suite 104, Naples, FL.

Leadership & Innovation: As Founder and President of Naples Eye & Aesthetics Institute and MediFace Spa, Dr. Stanciu has also developed Bella Piel MD, a cosmetic line specializing in anti-aging and dry eye treatment with amazing results.

Philosophy of Care: Her personal approach to patient care is to treat each individual as you would a loved one, ensuring personalized attention and the highest standard of care for every patient.



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DON'T WAIT UNTIL SEASON:

Why Now Is the Perfect Time to Check Your Hearing

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

If you've lived in Naples for more than one winter, you know how quickly the quiet days of summer turn into the hustle and bustle of "season." Suddenly, restaurant reservations vanish, traffic on U.S. 41 feels like downtown Manhattan, and your dance card is full of concerts, fundraisers, golf tournaments, and family visits.

As a local audiologist, I love the excitement of season just as much as anyone—but I also know how overwhelming it can be for people who struggle with untreated hearing loss. That's why I encourage our year-round and seasonal residents alike to get their hearing tested now, before the calendar fills and life gets noisy.

Hearing Health Is Whole-Body Health

Let's start with something many people don't realize: hearing isn't just about your ears. It's about your brain, your balance, and your overall well-being. Studies show that untreated hearing loss is linked to higher risks of cognitive decline, dementia, depression, falls, and even cardiovascular issues. That's a pretty serious list for something many people write off as "just getting older."

The truth is, hearing loss is common, but it's not trivial. Think of a hearing screening like a blood pressure check or cholesterol test—it's simply part of maintaining your health. And just like catching high blood pressure early can save you from a heart attack, catching hearing changes early can help preserve your brain function and quality of life.

Naples Season = Social Season

Now let's talk about what season really means here in Naples. The Philharmonic, art shows, golf leagues, holiday parties, dinners with friends on Fifth Avenue or Third Street South... our community comes alive with opportunities to connect. But here's the catch: all that fun usually happens in restaurants and event spaces that are anything but quiet.

Background music, clinking dishes, multiple conversations bouncing around the table—it's no wonder people with even mild hearing loss often feel left out or frustrated. I can't tell you how many patients have said things like, *"I just nodded and smiled because I couldn't follow the conversation,"* or *"I stopped going to dinner with my group because I was embarrassed."*



That isolation doesn't just take the fun out of season—it can affect your health, too. Social engagement is one of the best predictors of healthy aging. When hearing loss makes socializing stressful, it's more than an inconvenience; it's a risk factor.

Beat the Rush

Another reason to get your hearing tested now is purely practical. Just like you wouldn't wait until flu season is in full swing to try to book a last-minute doctor's appointment, you don't want to wait until January to schedule a hearing evaluation. Naples gets busy—really busy. Clinics fill up fast, and you'll want time to schedule your screening, review your results, and, if needed, explore solutions before your social calendar explodes.

Hearing Solutions That Fit Your Lifestyle

One of the most common myths I hear is that hearing aids are big, ugly, squealing contraptions that make people look "old." I promise you, that image is outdated. Today's hearing technology is sleek, discreet, and smarter than ever. We're talking devices smaller than a coffee bean that can connect to your phone, adjust automatically in restaurants, and even stream music or podcasts.

At Decibels Audiology, we have solutions to fit every lifestyle and budget, from the golf enthusiast who wants wind-noise reduction to the concert lover who needs crisp, clear sound in auditoriums.

A Fun Naples Analogy

Think of hearing care like booking your favorite Naples restaurant. If you wait until season, you might be stuck eating dinner at 4:00 p.m. or 9:30 p.m. (and let's be honest, neither sounds appealing). But if you plan ahead, you get the perfect table at the perfect time, and you enjoy the evening without stress.

Your hearing health is the same way. Waiting until January means you'll be competing with half of the Midwest and Northeast for appointment slots. Coming in now means peace of mind and a smooth season ahead.

What to Expect at Your Hearing Screening

If you've never had a hearing screening, don't worry—it's quick, easy, and even a little fun. We'll start by chatting about your health and lifestyle, then do a simple test that measures how well you hear different tones and speech. The whole appointment usually takes under an hour.

And the best part? At Decibels Audiology, screenings are complimentary. There's no cost and no obligation—just information you can use to make the best choices for your health.

Don't Let Season Pass You By

Naples is too vibrant, too social, and too beautiful to sit on the sidelines because you can't hear well. Whether it's laughing at your friend's joke at the Naples Winter Wine Festival, hearing your golf partner call "nice shot," or catching every note at the Philharmonic, good hearing helps you savor it all.

So, before season is in full swing, make a simple resolution: schedule your complimentary hearing screening. Do it for your health, your happiness, and your seat at the table this winter.

Call Decibels Audiology today, and let's make sure you're ready to hear—and enjoy—every moment Naples has to offer.

Decibels
Audiology & Hearing Center

Call today and schedule your complimentary hearing test and consultation.

Helping Southwest Florida hear better for over 15 years!

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napleshearingaids.com

PHYSICAL THERAPY MONTH

How Proper Arch Support Enhances Physical Therapy Outcomes

Every October, Physical Therapy Month reminds us to celebrate the power of movement and the professionals who help us heal, recover, and live more active lives. Whether you're recovering from an injury, managing chronic pain, or working to improve mobility and balance, physical therapy often serves as a lifeline. But here's something many people overlook: the health of your feet—the foundation of your body—plays an essential role in how effective physical therapy can be. And one of the simplest yet most transformative tools in the process? Proper arch support.

Why Feet Matter More Than We Think

It's easy to forget just how much our feet do for us. They carry the weight of our entire body, absorb shock, and keep us balanced as we walk, run, or even just stand still. Each foot contains 26 bones, 33 joints, and more than 100 muscles, tendons, and ligaments—an intricate system working tirelessly every single day.

But when your arches aren't properly supported, this delicate system can quickly become unbalanced. Flat feet, high arches, or even slight misalignments in the way your feet hit the ground can ripple up through the body, leading to pain in the ankles, knees, hips, and lower back. That's where arch support comes in. By restoring proper alignment and distributing pressure evenly, supportive inserts or orthotics give your body a stable foundation to heal and thrive—especially during physical therapy.

The Missing Piece of the Puzzle

Many patients begin physical therapy because they're dealing with pain: maybe a knee that's been sore for years, a stubborn case of plantar fasciitis, or a back that flares up after long days of sitting. Physical therapists do an incredible job helping people strengthen muscles, improve flexibility, and retrain movement patterns. But when poor foot mechanics are part of the problem, exercises alone may not fully resolve the issue.

Arch support addresses the root cause, complementing the therapist's work. For example, if you're doing strengthening exercises for your quads and hips to relieve knee pain, but your arches collapse every time you take a step, that knee is still under extra stress. By adding arch support, you're reinforcing the foundation so the therapy work "sticks." It's a one-two punch: support plus movement training.

Better Alignment, Better Results

One of the key benefits of arch support is improved alignment. Think of it like building a house: if the



foundation is crooked, no matter how much work you do on the walls or roof, the structure won't be stable. Your body is the same way. Proper arch support helps your ankles stay in a neutral position, which in turn keeps your knees, hips, and spine aligned.

This alignment doesn't just reduce pain—it also allows the muscles you're strengthening in physical therapy to function as they're supposed to. For instance, if your glutes are weak, your therapist might give you targeted exercises. But if your feet roll inward with every step, those glutes will keep over-compensating. Supportive arches remove the extra strain, letting your therapy progress more smoothly and effectively.

Relief That Encourages Consistency

Let's be honest: physical therapy requires commitment. The exercises work, but only if you stick with them. Pain can make it tempting to skip sessions or put off doing your at-home program. Proper arch support can provide relief that makes it easier to stay consistent. When every step feels more comfortable, motivation to keep moving naturally increases.

Patients often report that when their feet are supported, they're able to walk farther, exercise longer, and engage more confidently in their therapy routines. This kind of momentum is exactly what makes recovery possible.

Beyond Recovery: Preventing Future Problems

Physical therapy isn't just about fixing what hurts—it's also about preventing future injuries. Arch support plays a role here too. By correcting imbalances before they lead to wear and tear, supportive orthotics reduce the likelihood of recurring issues. For athletes, that could mean fewer shin splints or stress fractures. For older adults, it could mean improved balance and a reduced risk of falls. For anyone, it simply means moving through life with less pain and more ease.

Finding the Right Support

Not all arch supports are created equal. The best results usually come from supports that are personally fitted to your feet, ensuring that they match your unique arches and activity level. Your physical therapist can often guide you toward the right type of support, whether that's a custom orthotic, an over-the-counter insole, or a specialized shoe.

What matters most is making sure your feet get the attention they deserve. Just like you wouldn't ignore your core strength or posture, foot health should be part of your overall wellness strategy.

The Takeaway

Physical therapy gives people their lives back—helping them move with less pain, more confidence, and greater freedom. But like any powerful tool, it works best when paired with the right support system. Proper arch support provides the stable foundation your body needs to get the most out of every stretch, every exercise, and every step toward recovery.

This Physical Therapy Month, take a moment to honor the professionals guiding us on the path to healing. And while you're at it, don't forget to look down: your feet just might be the key to unlocking even better outcomes in your journey to health and mobility.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Improving the alignment, positioning, and functionality of the feet can be achieved through Good Feet's 3-Step Arch Support System. Combined, these three "steps" of arch support, strengthen and massage the feet toward a more ideal position, helping them achieve the ultimate shape for proper distribution of energy while walking, running, and standing. Each of Good Feet's arch supports are designed to function as a specific component of the overall 3-Step System design.

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

Experience Personalized Care at Our State-of-the-Art Ambulatory Surgery Center

By Basia Koser, RN, BSN, MBA - Clinical Director

When you choose our Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) for your surgical procedure, you're choosing more than just a medical facility—you're choosing a healthcare experience designed entirely around you. Unlike busy hospitals where patients often feel like numbers in a crowded system, our ASC provides the personalized attention, streamlined efficiency, and exceptional care you deserve.

Your Journey Begins with Genuine Personal Attention

From the moment you contact our center, you'll notice the difference. Our dedicated scheduling team works directly with you to find appointment times that fit your life, not the other way around. We understand that your time is valuable, which is why we guarantee punctual appointments and minimal wait times. When you arrive for your consultation, our physicians are readily available to answer every question, address your concerns, and walk you through your procedure with the patience and clarity you need to feel completely confident.

Our doctors aren't rushing between multiple hospital floors or dealing with emergency interruptions. Instead, they're focused entirely on you and your surgical needs. This means thorough consultations, detailed explanations of your procedure, and the time necessary to ensure you feel informed and comfortable every step of the way.

Surgical Excellence with Precision Scheduling

When it's time for your procedure, you can count on us to honor our commitment to you. Surgeries at our ASC start on time—every time. We've eliminated the unpredictable delays that plague hospital operating rooms, where emergency cases and complex scheduling conflicts can push your procedure hours behind schedule. Our streamlined approach means your surgery begins when scheduled, allowing you to plan your day with confidence.

Our state-of-the-art facility is equipped with the latest minimally invasive surgical technologies, including high-definition imaging systems, advanced laser technology, and precision robotic-assisted surgical tools. These cutting-edge innovations allow our surgeons to perform procedures through smaller incisions, reducing your time under anesthesia and accelerating your recovery process significantly.



Modern Surgical Techniques for Faster Recovery

The evolution of surgical care has transformed many complex procedures into same-day operations. Our surgeons specialize in minimally invasive techniques such as laparoscopic and robotic-assisted surgeries, which offer tremendous advantages over traditional open procedures. You'll experience less post-operative pain, minimal scarring, and remarkably faster healing times, allowing you to return to your normal activities sooner than you might expect.

A Healing Environment Designed for Your Comfort

Step into our ASC and immediately feel the difference. Our welcoming, spa-like environment is designed to reduce anxiety and promote healing. Unlike the institutional feel of large hospitals, our facility offers private, comfortable spaces where you can relax before and after your procedure. Our nursing staff provides individualized attention, taking time to address your specific concerns and ensure your comfort throughout your entire visit.

Our specially trained surgical teams work exclusively in our facility, developing expertise tailored to our specific procedures and patient population. This specialization translates to more efficient care, better outcomes, and a team that truly understands your needs.

Exceptional Value Without Compromise

Choosing our ASC doesn't mean sacrificing quality for cost savings—it means receiving superior care at a fraction of hospital prices. According to the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association, patients typically save thousands of dollars on eligible procedures performed at ASCs compared to hospitals. These savings extend to your insurance co-pays and deductibles, making quality surgical care more accessible for you and your family.

Our lower operational costs stem from our efficient, purpose-built design and streamlined operations, not from cutting corners on quality or safety. Every dollar saved on overhead expenses means more resources dedicated to patient care, advanced equipment, and staff training.

Your Recovery, Our Priority

Recovery begins the moment you arrive at our center. Our comprehensive pre-operative education ensures you know exactly what to expect, while our detailed post-operative care plans are customized to your specific procedure and lifestyle needs. Our nurses provide thorough discharge instructions and remain available for questions throughout your recovery period.

Most importantly, you'll recover in the comfort of your own home rather than in a busy hospital room. Same-day discharge means you can begin healing in familiar surroundings, surrounded by your loved ones, which studies consistently show improves recovery outcomes and patient satisfaction.

The Future of Surgical Care is Here

Since the first ASC opened in Phoenix in 1970, these specialized facilities have revolutionized surgical care by putting patients first. Today, our ASC represents the pinnacle of this evolution, combining decades of innovation with modern technology and a genuine commitment to personalized patient care.

When you need surgery, you have choices. Choose the facility that treats you as an individual, respects your time, and delivers exceptional results in a comfortable, caring environment. Choose our Ambulatory Surgery Center, where you're never just a number—you're our priority.

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LEARN HOW YOU CAN FIND RELIEF FROM THE DEBILITATING PAIN OF PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY WITHOUT ADDICTIVE DRUGS

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Over 116 million people suffer from various types of chronic pain disorders, and 20 million of those individuals have peripheral neuropathy; that number is speculated to be much higher due to patients not getting a proper diagnosis. Peripheral nerves run from the spinal cord to the arms, hands, legs and feet.

UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Peripheral Neuropathy is a complex condition, but nerve damage and signaling are the issue, finding the root cause is how a comprehensive plan is customized to regenerate a patients nerves, cells and tissues. Having high blood sugar levels, along with low blood oxygen supply, nutrient deficiency, high toxicity and inflammation damages the nerves throughout the body. This damage generally affects the long peripheral nerves that feed sensations to the legs, feet, and toes from the spinal cord, through communication with the brain. If your condition has progressed, you may feel nerve damage sensations in your upper extremities as well.

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY SYMPTOMS

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Burning sensations
- Painful aching
- Joint inflammation
- Joint damage
- Balance issues
- Skin discoloration & texture changes
- Muscle cramps
- Feelings of stiffness
- Non-healing foot & ankle ulcers

STOP MASKING SYMPTOMS AND PAIN

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

There are better alternatives to Peripheral Neuropathy that do not include addictive drugs.



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

FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE'S ALTERNATIVE CARE

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

WHAT KINDS OF EFFECTS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE NEUROPATHY TREATMENT AT FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE?

Clinical studies show that 88% of the people who undergo the treatment experience excellent results with one or more of the following: Reduced pain and cramps, reduced tingling and numbness, ability to experience normal touch without pain, reduced cold or burning sensations, improved balance and coordination, lowered dependency on medications, improved sleep, reduced sensation of restlessness in

the legs. Several people also experience reduced local swelling and inflammation, increased range of motion, increased blood flow to the extremities, decreased tension, and decreased muscle spasm.

An important side benefit to the treatment is that it reduces the risk of falls significantly by improving balance and position awareness of the feet.

FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE

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

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

WHEN YOU WORK WITH US, YOU CAN BE SURE THAT WE ARE EQUIPPED TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT A WIDE RANGE OF CONDITIONS THAT INCLUDE:

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

If you are in need of a highly experienced chiropractic neurologist in Naples, FL, look no further than Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute. For more information, to schedule a free telephone consultation, Call us at 239-330-1000 or visit: feelamazing.com.



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Robotic Spine Surgery for Spinal Stenosis: A New Era of Precision and Safety

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

Spinal stenosis is one of the most common and debilitating conditions affecting the aging population in the United States. Characterized by a narrowing of the spinal canal that compresses the spinal cord and nerves, it can lead to chronic back pain, numbness, weakness, and difficulty walking. For many patients, when conservative treatments such as physical therapy, injections, and medications fail, surgery becomes the most effective option to restore mobility and quality of life.

Traditionally, spinal stenosis surgery—often in the form of laminectomy, decompression, or spinal fusion—has been performed using open surgical techniques or with the aid of fluoroscopic guidance. While effective, these methods carry risks such as blood loss, longer recovery times, and potential inaccuracies in implant placement. Today, robotic spine surgery is revolutionizing how spinal stenosis is treated, offering patients safer, more precise, and less invasive procedures.

Understanding the Role of Robotics in Spinal Stenosis Surgery

Robotic spine surgery integrates advanced imaging, navigation systems, and robotic technology to enhance a surgeon's ability to operate with unmatched accuracy. Before surgery, high-resolution imaging such as CT scans is used to create a three-dimensional map of the patient's spine. Surgeons then plan every detail of the procedure, including the exact placement of screws, rods, and decompression pathways.

During the operation, a robotic arm guides instruments along these preplanned trajectories. Unlike autonomous machines, the robot does not act independently; the surgeon remains in full control. The robotic system simply ensures that every movement is executed with submillimeter precision. This guidance is particularly critical in spinal stenosis cases, where the spinal canal is already narrowed and the margin for error is extremely small.

Benefits of Robotic Spine Surgery for Spinal Stenosis

1. Improved Accuracy and Safety

Spinal stenosis surgery often involves decompression of the nerves combined with stabilization of the spine using screws and rods. Incorrect placement of implants can risk nerve damage or instability, which may worsen symptoms rather than improve them.



Robotic assistance significantly increases the accuracy of screw and implant placement, reducing the risk of complications and improving long-term stability.

2. Minimally Invasive Approach

Many patients with spinal stenosis are older and may have other medical conditions that increase surgical risk. Robotic systems make it easier for surgeons to perform minimally invasive procedures, which require smaller incisions and cause less disruption to muscles and soft tissue. For patients, this translates into reduced blood loss, shorter hospital stays, less postoperative pain, and faster recovery.

3. Reduced Radiation Exposure

Traditional spinal stenosis surgeries often rely heavily on fluoroscopy, exposing both the patient and the surgical team to significant amounts of radiation. With robotic guidance, the need for continuous fluoroscopy is dramatically reduced. This is particularly beneficial in multi-level stenosis cases, which otherwise require prolonged imaging.

4. Consistent, Reproducible Results

Robotic technology helps eliminate some of the variability that naturally occurs in traditional surgery. Every spinal stenosis case is unique, with differences in anatomy, severity of stenosis, and presence of instability. Robotics allows surgeons to consistently execute the surgical plan, regardless of these variations, leading to more predictable and reliable outcomes.

Patient Outcomes and Quality of Life

For patients suffering from spinal stenosis, the goal of surgery is straightforward: relieve pressure on the nerves, reduce pain, and restore mobility. Robotic-assisted spine surgery is delivering on these goals more effectively than ever before.

Patients undergoing robotic-assisted decompression and fusion procedures for stenosis often report quicker improvements in leg pain and walking tolerance

compared to traditional surgery. Shorter hospital stays and faster return to daily activities are especially valuable to older patients, who may otherwise face prolonged recovery periods. Moreover, by improving surgical accuracy and reducing complications, robotic systems help lower the likelihood of revision surgeries, sparing patients from additional procedures and recovery time.

Growing Adoption Across the United States

Robotic spine surgery was once limited to a handful of specialized centers, but it is now spreading rapidly across the United States. Systems such as the Globus ExcelsiusGPS are increasingly available in both academic hospitals and community medical centers. As more surgeons become trained and proficient in robotic techniques, the option of robotic-assisted treatment for spinal stenosis is becoming more widely accessible to patients. Last year, Physician's Regional Collier Boulevard Hospital became the first hospital in the county to have a robotic neurosurgery program with the acquisition of the Globus ExcelsiusGPS system.

The Future of Spinal Stenosis Treatment

Looking ahead, the role of robotics in treating spinal stenosis will only expand. Advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning may allow robotic systems to adjust surgical plans in real-time, further personalizing procedures for each patient's anatomy. Integration with augmented reality could enhance surgeon visualization during decompression, while improvements in robotic hardware will make systems more compact and efficient.

Most importantly, patients are increasingly aware of robotic options and are seeking out surgeons and centers that offer this technology. As awareness and demand grow, robotic spine surgery will continue to shape the future of spinal stenosis care in the United States.



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NEUROPLASTICITY-DRIVEN PHYSICAL THERAPY: Advanced Neurology's Approach to Stroke Recovery

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

As we age, maintaining cognitive health becomes increasingly important for preserving independence, quality of life, and stroke recovery represents one of the most complex challenges in rehabilitation medicine, requiring sophisticated understanding of brain function and targeted therapeutic interventions. Advanced neurology specialists are revolutionizing stroke recovery through evidence-based physical therapy protocols that harness the brain's remarkable capacity for neuroplasticity—the ability to reorganize and form new neural connections throughout life.

THE NEUROLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF RECOVERY

When stroke occurs, whether ischemic or hemorrhagic, brain tissue damage can result in devastating motor, sensory, and cognitive impairments. However, advanced neurological research has revealed that the brain possesses extraordinary adaptive capabilities. Neuroplasticity allows undamaged brain regions to assume functions previously controlled by damaged areas, but this process requires precise, intensive stimulation through specialized physical therapy techniques.

Advanced neurology specialists understand that effective stroke recovery depends on activating specific neural pathways through repetitive, task-oriented movements. This approach differs significantly from traditional rehabilitation methods, focusing instead on evidence-based protocols that maximize neuroplastic potential during critical recovery windows.

CUTTING-EDGE PHYSICAL THERAPY INTERVENTIONS

Modern stroke recovery incorporates several advanced physical therapy modalities. **Constraint-induced movement therapy (CIMT)** forces patients to use affected limbs by restraining unaffected ones, promoting neural reorganization in motor cortex areas. Research demonstrates that CIMT can significantly improve upper extremity function when implemented within optimal timeframes.

Robotic-assisted gait training represents another breakthrough intervention. Devices like the Lokomat provide precise, repetitive leg movements that stimulate spinal cord circuits and cortical motor areas. This technology allows patients with severe mobility impairments to practice walking patterns safely while their nervous systems relearn complex movement coordination.



Functional electrical stimulation (FES) combines physical therapy with targeted electrical impulses that activate paralyzed muscles. This dual approach not only prevents muscle atrophy but also provides sensory feedback that facilitates motor learning and neural pathway reconstruction.

TASK-SPECIFIC TRAINING PROTOCOLS

Advanced neurology specialists emphasize task-specific training that mirrors real-world activities. Rather than focusing solely on isolated muscle strengthening, modern protocols integrate complex movement patterns that challenge multiple neural systems simultaneously. Patients practice reaching, grasping, walking, and balance activities that directly translate to improved daily functioning.

Mirror therapy utilizes visual feedback to trick the brain into believing both limbs are moving normally. This technique has shown remarkable success in reducing phantom limb sensations and improving motor function in stroke survivors with hemiplegia.

TIMING AND INTENSITY CONSIDERATIONS

Neurological research indicates that recovery potential varies significantly based on timing post-stroke. The acute phase (first three months) represents a critical window when neuroplasticity is heightened. Advanced specialists design intensive therapy protocols during this period, often requiring 3-5 hours daily of structured intervention.

However, recovery continues well beyond acute phases. Chronic stroke survivors can still achieve meaningful improvements through appropriately designed programs that account for individual neurological profiles and remaining neural capacity.

PERSONALIZED RECOVERY STRATEGIES

Advanced neurology specialists employ sophisticated assessment tools including functional MRI, diffusion tensor imaging, and electroencephalography to map individual brain damage patterns and remaining neural resources. This information guides personalized physical therapy protocols that maximize each patient's unique recovery potential.

Treatment plans integrate motor learning principles with neural stimulation techniques, creating comprehensive programs that address not only physical impairments but also cognitive and perceptual deficits that commonly accompany stroke.

THE FUTURE OF STROKE RECOVERY

Emerging technologies including virtual reality environments, brain-computer interfaces, and targeted pharmacological interventions promise to further enhance physical therapy outcomes. Advanced neurology specialists continue pushing boundaries, combining cutting-edge technology with deep understanding of neural mechanisms to help stroke survivors reclaim independence and quality of life.

The integration of advanced neurological expertise with innovative physical therapy techniques offers unprecedented hope for stroke recovery, transforming what was once considered permanent disability into opportunities for meaningful rehabilitation and renewed function.

If you or a loved one is navigating stroke recovery, don't wait to access the specialized care that can make all the difference. Take the first step toward reclaiming independence and improved quality of life. Call 239-667-5878 today to schedule your comprehensive stroke recovery consultation and discover how cutting-edge neuroplasticity-driven therapy can accelerate your healing journey.



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HOLISTIC NATUROPATHIC APPROACH TO ADHD & ANXIETY

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From a **naturopathic perspective**, ADHD and anxiety are not just brain-based disorders, but **multifactorial imbalances** involving the entire body-mind system. These conditions often arise from a combination of:

- Nervous system dysregulation
- Oxidative stress and neuroinflammation
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Hormonal imbalances
- Poor sleep and circadian rhythm issues
- Environmental toxins
- Gut-brain axis dysfunction
- Chronic stress or unresolved emotional trauma

Rather than suppressing symptoms, naturopathic care focuses on **identifying and treating root causes** using individualized, natural, and non-invasive methods.

Tailored Lifestyle Assessment

A thorough lifestyle assessment helps identify key factors contributing to symptoms. Areas evaluated include:

- Diet and nutrient intake
- Sleep quality and rhythm
- Stress response and coping skills
- Physical activity levels
- Screen time and sensory overload
- Digestive/gut health
- Toxic exposure
- Genetics and family history

This process allows practitioners to design targeted lifestyle changes. For example:

Imbalance	Suggested Adjustment
Inflammatory diet	Shift to anti-inflammatory foods rich in omega-3s & antioxidants
High cortisol	Incorporate breathwork, adaptogens, and mindfulness
Poor sleep	Improve sleep hygiene; reduce blue light; use magnesium
Sedentary lifestyle	Add movement: walking, yoga, or neuro-motor exercises



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- **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT):** Increases oxygen delivery and aids cognition
- **Hydrogen Inhalation:** Reduces oxidative stress and inflammation
- **Vibration Therapy:** Enhances circulation and calms the nervous system

These therapies are enhanced by the **WAvi brain scan**, an EEG-based device that tracks brainwave patterns, attention, and reaction time. It helps identify neuro-logical imbalances common in ADHD and anxiety (e.g., elevated theta/beta ratio) and measures progress over time.

Conclusion

A **personalized lifestyle plan**, informed by assessment and supported with **BAHI therapy and WAvi scans**, can significantly improve focus, emotional regulation, and resilience. This integrative strategy empowers the body to heal naturally—offering a promising path for those struggling with ADHD and anxiety.

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

FGCU'S 'LIVED EXPERIENCE' PROJECT GIVES A VOICE TO THOSE WITH IDD

By RICK WEBER

As director of the Golisano Intellectual and Developmental Disability Initiative (GIDDI), Ellen Kroog Donald, PT PhD, has been on a passionate mission to work alongside Florida Gulf Coast University faculty and staff to increase awareness and education related to the unique qualities and needs of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) of all ages.

Over the years, she has led the charge to create opportunities for students to learn through additions to their curriculum, informal conversations, employment and volunteerism.

And now she is taking it to the next level.

Donald, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy in FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services, has worked with Joseph Buhain, Director of Interprofessional Simulation and Emerging Technology for Marieb College, to develop a project called "Lived Experience."

The underlying philosophy: Capture individuals' life experiences in their own words.

"Often, children and adults with IDD do not get to tell their own story," Donald says. "Well-meaning parents, teachers, health professionals and other caregivers often tell the story. This project allows people to express themselves using their unique communication style and state their answers to questions in a way that is meaningful to them."

"I believe this project is innovative and demonstrates the philosophy that we have at GIDDI where each individual is valued for their unique strengths and experiences."

Donald and Buhain, along with colleagues from seven other health disciplines, developed a series of questions related to a person's experience with family, friendships, healthcare, school, interests, employment (or future employment) and life goals/dreams. These questions form the framework for the interviews that they will conduct with individuals from the community. If individuals are unable to speak for themselves, family members will speak from their perspective.

Donald and Buhain are in the process of identifying individuals in the community and conducting pre-interviews to see if they will be comfortable in front of a camera. They will interview a wide variety of individuals based on life stage, gender, diagnoses, level of independence, preferred communication style, cultural background, etc.

Those participants are invited to campus for a 90-minute time block and interviewed in a specialized studio set up to capture unique images using Dr. Hologram technology, which provides holographic projections to create immersive and interactive learning experiences. Innovative technology creates a three-dimensional image of the person, making a standard video come alive.

These recordings will then be used in the classroom, where interprofessional discussion groups will listen, make observations and bring in different perspectives to a discussion related to these individuals' "lived experience."

With further development, these will become more interactive and allow for opportunities for simulations of the interactions that students will have in practice.

"By creating these recordings, more students can have access to hearing from a variety of individuals without time and place restrictions," Donald says. "They can take the learning that they have had through their individual course materials and apply it within these interprofessional discussions."

"The follow-up to these interprofessional discussions will be to have immersive experiences in the community to provide the opportunity to interact with individuals with IDD in their natural environments such as recreational activities, supportive employment programs and social groups."

Donald says this project will help satisfy the strong need for an increased focus on this population, for interprofessional learning and to promote the importance of hearing the needs of individuals directly from the person and the family/caregiver.

"It is a push to increase the focus on training our future workforce on meeting the needs of those with IDD and learning in the context of an interprofessional experience—not just learning with others who have come from the same training, but learning across professions," she says. "The focus is on the person, not a diagnosis or disability, and hearing the perspective of the person with IDD in their own words. It goes beyond hearing something in a lecture or reading it in a textbook, but demonstrating value in observing and listening to the real experiences of people."

"We welcome interest from the community for participating in one of these interviews. We believe that there are many members of the community who are living with an intellectual or developmental disability themselves, or in their family, who have so much to offer to others. We would love to expand this project and will be looking for other opportunities for funding future growth."

GIDDI was established in FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services through funding by the Golisano Foundation. The foundation's other philanthropy in the region includes Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida and Golisano Children's Museum of Naples.

Intellectual and developmental disabilities are usually present at birth or early in life and can affect an individual's physical, intellectual and/or emotional development. Many of these conditions affect multiple body systems, such as the nervous system, skeletal system, the senses and metabolism.

Developmental disabilities include diagnoses that result in impairments in physical, learning, language or behavior areas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recent estimates show that 1 in 6, or about 17%, of American children 3 to 17 years old have one or more developmental disabilities, such as autism, genetic disorders or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. The CDC reports the incidence of children with IDD rose from 7.4% to 8.5% in recent years.

In Southwest Florida, it is estimated that 24,000 to 27,000 individuals live with IDD, based on 2023 census data, according to Donald. The need is most likely greater than these numbers reflect, reinforcing the importance of effective training for our future workforce.

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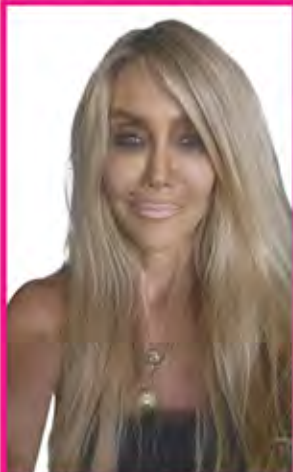
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Hormonal Imbalance and Its Effect on Skin Health

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

The skin is no unsubstantial organ. In fact, it's the body's largest and a significant defender from outside contagions. Beyond the protection it offers your body, the skin also offers a unique ability for you to gauge your internal health purely by looking at it.

However, with an organ so large, many things can affect it, one of which is your hormones or, more accurately, an imbalance in them.

Hormonal Imbalance

Much as the name suggests, a hormonal imbalance occurs when your hormones are no longer balanced, either because a hormone is secreted too much or too little.

Hormonal imbalance can be disastrous for your well-being because your hormones regulate many different processes in the body, including your development, metabolism, and reproduction. So, if you're producing too much or too little hormones, it can also affect these processes.

Some of the impacts of hormonal imbalance include primary ovarian insufficiency, early menopause, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in women, and prostate cancer in men.

Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance

While the symptoms of hormonal imbalance can vary based on the hormone out of balance, some of the general symptoms of hormonal imbalance include:

- increased stomach issues
- sudden weight loss/gain
- weakness
- skin dryness
- fatigue
- body aches
- increased urination
- persistent thirst
- anxiety
- mood swings
- changes in appetite
- hair loss
- infertility

If you notice any of these symptoms, it's best to visit a doctor specializing in hormones to pinpoint the cause of the imbalance and correct it. Often, hormonal imbalance can be an indicator of an even bigger issue, and choosing to ignore the symptoms may cause life-threatening risks, which is why it is always recommended to address hormonal imbalances as soon as you notice them.

Luckily, hormonal imbalance can often manifest on your skin, helping you see if something is unbalanced internally. If you're aware of what to look for, and what skin conditions may be due to hormonal imbalances, you have the advantage of knowing when there is a need to look more closely into your hormone levels.

How Hormonal Imbalance Affects Your Skin

As we know, the skin is the largest organ in your body, so its health relies on many things. However, one of the most important components of your skin comes from the sebaceous glands under your skin that produce sebum, a natural oil secreted through the pores of your skin.

Sebum helps protect the skin from UV radiation, locks in moisture, and transports fat-soluble antioxidants to the surface of the skin, which can then help prevent oxidative skin damage.

However, as with all things, too much can be a problem. In fact, too much sebum production is often the cause of various skin issues like inflammation and acne. One reason for excess sebum production? An imbalance of androgen, or male sex hormones that are present in those of both genders.

Sebum is not the only important part of the skin, either. Your skin is composed of the protein collagen, which is a building block of your skin. It is collagen that helps to give your skin a youthful appearance, and when your collagen production is down, your skin may start to sag.

Estrogen, a female sex hormone, is crucial in producing collagen and helps keep your skin thick and hydrated. If your estrogen levels are low, such as the case with older women entering menopause, skin can become thinner and more sensitive.



It's not just those entering menopause who see these results of low estrogen, though. A survey found that 2 out of 5 women still getting a period each month report unusually sensitive skin before and during their menstruation, which is generally the time when estrogen levels drop. Many women also notice an increase in sebum production before and during their menstrual cycle, which can contribute to acne.

When we look at the effects of hormonal changes on the body, it's clear that hormonal imbalance can manifest in changes to your skin.

Hormonal Imbalance as Skin Manifestations

Let's take a look at the different skin imperfections that can result from hormonal imbalances.

Under Eye Dark Circles

The constant companion for college students staying up all night to study, under eye dark circles are a skin problem resulting most often from adrenal fatigue.

When you experience more stress, your body produces more of the stress hormone cortisol. However, excess cortisol production can cause poor sleep at night because it tends to make people feel restless. If you continually suffer from poor sleep, dark circles can appear around your eyes.

Furthermore, if you're suffering from low estrogen levels, the skin under your eyes can become thinner, which can make the darkness even more prominent.

Dry Skin

While common during the dry and cold winter months, dry skin can also occur to those with hormonal imbalances, specifically if hormones such as estrogen decline. This is because a reduction in estrogen can cause a decrease in sebum production. Sebum is essential for retaining moisture in your skin, so if your body is not producing enough sebum, it will not stay hydrated enough and can experience dryness, roughness, and flakiness.

In addition to estrogen, thyroid hormones also stimulate the oil glands, but instead of increasing sebum production, they reduce it. So, if you suffer from hyperthyroidism, or an overproduction of thyroid hormones, you may experience dry skin.

Acne

It can be frustrating to experience acne in your 20s and 30s, with most people assuming it is an affliction only for teenagers. However, hormones can significantly influence your body's sebum production, leading to acne, regardless of age.

For women, estrogen and progesterone, which are key players in your menstrual cycle, can increase the amount of sebum produced, clogging your skin's pores and leading to acne. As for men, an excessive amount of testosterone can also produce excess sebum.

For those experiencing acne due to hormonal imbalance, they most often appear on the chin, forehead, and nose.

Skin Tags

Skin tags are small skin-colored growths on the skin of your neck or eyelids, resulting from a compromise in your insulin and glucose hormonal balance. When these hormones start changing, estrogen can dramatically reduce, which affects your skin's elasticity and can cause overlapping in your skin layers. When these skin layers experience constant friction, skin tags can occur.

In general, skin tags are most often associated with metabolic syndrome, PCOS, and diabetes.

Pale or Yellow Skin

Hormonal imbalance can affect your blood vessels, making your skin appear pale and waxy. However, hormonal imbalance is not the only cause of this appearance, with liver failure also lending itself to pale or yellow skin. If you notice that your skin or eyes appear yellow, check in with a doctor to determine the cause.

Balancing Hormones and Regulating Skin Health

If your skin is suffering from imbalanced hormones in the form of dry, thin, sensitive, or pale skin, correcting the hormonal imbalance is the best way to address the root of the problem and see improvements in your skin as a result.

The following are some of the possibilities for correcting a hormonal imbalance:

Oral Contraceptives

Oral contraceptives can help correct hormonal imbalance in women and, in some cases, are prescribed to treat acne. Oral contraceptives help to target the hormones that peak at ovulation, which is generally when those experiencing hormonal acne may see an increase in breakouts. Oral contraceptives keep hormone levels more even, lessening breakouts.

However, oral contraceptives are not for everyone, with those with a history of breast cancer, high blood pressure, or blood clots potentially unfit for this treatment. Talk to your doctor to determine if this is an adequate treatment for your skin and hormonal needs.

Anti-Androgen Drugs

As discussed, high levels of androgens, such as testosterone, can increase sebum production in some people, increasing the odds of clogged pores and acne breakouts. Anti-androgen drugs help to keep androgens from rising too high, which can help manage skin issues.

Testosterone Replacement

On the opposite end of the spectrum are medications that help address low testosterone, including testosterone gels and patches. These therapies help to fight the decline in testosterone production seen in some in men.

Check Your Lifestyle

While medications and therapies can help with hormonal imbalance, it is also best to ensure your lifestyle reflects healthy habits aimed at keeping your hormones balanced. Some of these habits include:

- exercising regularly
- getting enough sleep each day
- having a balanced diet
- drinking enough water
- managing stress levels
- reducing alcohol consumption
- avoiding smoking

These habits help keep your hormone levels regular while also supporting healthy skin.

The Influence of Hormones on Your Skin

Hormones are chemical messengers used throughout your body, and one area they can impact is your skin. Stress hormones such as cortisol and sex hormones like estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone can all cause unwanted skin reactions if unbalanced, such as acne, dry skin, sagging skin, or increased sensitivity.

If you're noticing skin problems and can't determine their cause, it might be something more internal. Reach out to a hormone specialist to get a reading on your hormone levels, see if there is an imbalance, and devise a treatment plan to help restore the equilibrium that your entire body, including your skin, will benefit from.

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Safeguarding Your Sight: Essential Tips for Eye Injury Prevention

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

Our eyes are truly remarkable organs, allowing us to navigate the world and experience its beauty. However, they are also vulnerable to various types of injuries that can compromise our vision and, in some cases, lead to permanent damage. Recognizing the importance of eye safety is crucial, as prevention is the best defense against these preventable occurrences.

One of the most common causes of eye injuries is exposure to hazardous materials or objects. This can include chemicals, debris, or even small particles that become airborne during certain activities. To mitigate these risks, it's essential to wear appropriate protective eyewear, such as safety glasses or goggles, whenever engaging in tasks that may pose a threat to your eyes. This applies not only in the workplace but also in the home, where household chores like yard work or DIY projects can present similar dangers.

Another significant threat to eye health is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can come from various sources, including the sun, tanning beds, and certain types of welding equipment. Prolonged or intense exposure to UV rays can lead to conditions like photokeratitis (also known as "welder's flash" or "arc eye"), which can cause painful inflammation of the cornea. To safeguard your eyes, always wear high-quality, UV-blocking sunglasses or specialized protective lenses when working in environments with elevated UV exposure.

Sports and recreational activities can also pose a risk of eye injuries, particularly in contact sports or those involving fast-moving objects like balls or projectiles. Protective eyewear designed for specific sports can significantly reduce the likelihood of sustaining an injury, so it's crucial to invest in appropriate gear and wear it consistently.

In addition to physical threats, eye health can also be compromised by certain medical conditions or treatments. For example, individuals with diabetes are at an increased risk of developing diabetic retinopathy, a condition that can lead to vision loss if left untreated. Regular eye exams and prompt medical intervention are essential for managing such conditions and preventing further complications.



Ultimately, safeguarding your eye health requires a multifaceted approach that combines awareness, preventive measures, and proactive healthcare. By incorporating the following tips into your daily routine, you can significantly reduce the risk of eye injuries and protect your precious sense of sight:

1. Always wear appropriate protective eyewear for tasks that may pose a risk to your eyes.
2. Limit your exposure to UV radiation by wearing sunglasses or other UV-blocking lenses.
3. Use caution and wear protective gear when participating in sports or recreational activities.
4. Maintain a healthy lifestyle and schedule regular eye exams to address any underlying medical conditions.
5. Be vigilant about eye safety and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

By prioritizing eye injury prevention, you can not only safeguard your own vision but also inspire those around you to take proactive steps toward preserving the health and well-being of their most valuable sense – sight.



Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes, and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times.

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

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

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

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Understanding COPD and Sleep Apnea Overlap Syndrome

By Dr. Ernesto Eusebio

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) are two distinct but often overlapping respiratory conditions that impact millions of Americans. COPD is a progressive condition, characterized by difficulty in breathing due to long-term exposure to lung irritants, while OSA is a sleep disorder marked by repeated episodes of blocked airflow during sleep. When these conditions co-occur, they form what is known as "COPD and Sleep Apnea Overlap Syndrome." This complex syndrome presents unique challenges in diagnosis, treatment, and management. Dr. Ernesto Eusebio, Board Certified in Sleep Medicine at the Sleep and Apnea Institute of FL, explores the critical aspects of this condition and highlights the importance of early intervention and specialized care.

The Mechanisms of COPD and OSA

COPD is primarily caused by chronic exposure to harmful irritants, most notably tobacco smoke, which leads to irreversible damage to the lungs. Individuals with COPD often experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, frequent coughing, and chest tightness, which can worsen over time. OSA, on the other hand, is commonly linked to physical obstruction in the upper airway, resulting in intermittent oxygen deprivation during sleep. The repetitive airway blockage often disrupts sleep and can lead to systemic complications, such as hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

In individuals with COPD, the presence of OSA can exacerbate breathing difficulties, particularly during sleep, when respiratory muscle tone naturally decreases. As detailed in a publication on the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), the interaction between COPD and OSA may intensify hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels), leading to further declines in respiratory function and overall health impact of Overlap Syndrome.

The combination of COPD and OSA presents distinct challenges. While each condition independently increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and decreased quality of life, together, they amplify these risks. Overlap Syndrome, as a combined condition, is associated with more severe nocturnal hypoxemia and an increased risk of mortality compared to those with COPD or OSA alone.

Studies show that individuals with Overlap Syndrome are more likely to experience:

- **Higher levels of hypoxemia:** The co-occurrence of COPD and OSA worsens oxygen deprivation, especially during sleep, which can significantly stress the cardiovascular system.
- **Increased risk of acute exacerbations:** Overlap Syndrome is associated with more frequent exacerbations of COPD symptoms, which may lead to increased hospitalizations.
- **Higher likelihood of pulmonary hypertension:** Persistent low oxygen levels can lead to pulmonary hypertension, where the blood vessels in the lungs experience high blood pressure, leading to increased strain on the heart.

The NCBI review underscores the elevated mortality rate in Overlap Syndrome patients and the need for specialized interventions to mitigate these compounded health risks.

Sd Diagnosis

The symptoms of Overlap Syndrome may overlap with those of COPD and OSA, making it crucial to recognize the distinct clinical indicators. Common symptoms include:

- **Chronic shortness of breath**, especially during sleep
- **Daytime fatigue and sleepiness**, often due to sleep disruptions from OSA
- **Loud snoring** and episodes of gasping for air during sleep
- **Morning headaches** and dry mouth, often linked to sleep apnea

Diagnosing Overlap Syndrome requires a comprehensive evaluation that includes both pulmonary and sleep assessments. Polysomnography (sleep study) is typically used to confirm OSA, while spirometry is essential for evaluating COPD severity. Dr. Eusebio emphasizes the importance of coordinated diagnostic efforts, as a combined assessment can provide a more accurate picture of a patient's respiratory health.

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Treatment Approaches

Treatment for Overlap Syndrome often involves a combination of therapies aimed at addressing both COPD and OSA. Dr. Eusebio advocates for an individualized treatment approach, recognizing that no two patients with Overlap Syndrome are alike. Core elements of Overlap Syndrome management include:

1. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Therapy: CPAP is the primary treatment for OSA and is beneficial for individuals with Overlap Syndrome. It helps maintain airway openness during sleep, reducing episodes of apnea and hypopnea. This therapy also improves oxygen saturation, thereby mitigating the hypoxemic effects of both OSA and COPD.

2. Supplemental Oxygen: For those with significant nocturnal hypoxemia, supplemental oxygen may be prescribed alongside CPAP therapy to improve oxygen levels during sleep.

3. Medications: Individuals with COPD often use bronchodilators and inhaled corticosteroids to manage symptoms and prevent exacerbations. These medications can also help manage Overlap Syndrome by improving airflow and reducing inflammation.

4. Lifestyle Modifications: Smoking cessation, regular exercise, and a healthy diet are foundational in managing both COPD and OSA. Weight management is also essential, as excess weight can exacerbate both conditions by increasing respiratory demand and airway obstruction.

5. Pulmonary Rehabilitation: This supervised program combines exercise training, nutritional advice, and counseling to improve lung function and overall quality of life in patients with COPD and Overlap Syndrome.

Importance of Specialized Care

Managing Overlap Syndrome requires a multi-disciplinary approach to address the various facets of both COPD and OSA. Dr. Eusebio encourages patients with COPD who experience symptoms of sleep apnea, such as snoring, daytime fatigue, and morning headaches, to schedule an appointment soon.

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Understanding Otolaryngologists: The Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialists

When health issues arise involving your ears, nose, or throat, you may be referred to a medical specialist known as an otolaryngologist. Often simply called an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) doctor, these physicians possess specialized training to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions affecting some of our most vital sensory organs and communication pathways.

What is an Otolaryngologist?

An otolaryngologist is a physician who specializes in diagnosing and treating disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The term "otolaryngology" combines three Greek words: "oto" (ear), "laryngo" (larynx or throat), and "logy" (study). These specialists complete four years of medical school followed by at least five years of specialized residency training, making them highly qualified to handle complex conditions affecting these interconnected areas of the body. Many further specialize in areas like pediatric ENT, neurotology, or facial plastic surgery.

Areas of Expertise

Otolaryngologists provide comprehensive care for various body systems that affect our ability to communicate, breathe, taste, and hear. Their expertise spans several key areas:

Ear Conditions: ENT doctors diagnose and treat hearing loss, ear infections, balance disorders, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), ear pain, and congenital disorders. They perform surgical procedures such as cochlear implants for severe hearing loss, tympanoplasty to repair damaged eardrums, and procedures to address chronic ear infections or Ménière's disease.

Nasal and Sinus Conditions: They manage allergies, sinusitis, nasal obstruction, smell disorders, polyps, and deviated septums. Procedures like endoscopic sinus surgery, septoplasty, and turbinate reduction help patients breathe more freely and reduce chronic inflammation. They also address issues related to the sense of smell and taste that originate in the nasal cavity.

Throat Disorders: Otolaryngologists treat voice and swallowing problems, throat cancer, tonsillitis, and sleep-related breathing disorders like sleep apnea.



They might perform tonsillectomies, vocal cord surgeries, or other procedures to restore proper function. Voice rehabilitation is another important aspect of their practice.

Head and Neck Issues: They handle thyroid disorders, facial trauma reconstruction, cancers of the head and neck, and facial plastic surgery needs. This may include removing tumors, performing reconstructive surgery, addressing cosmetic concerns, or managing salivary gland diseases.

When to See an Otolaryngologist

Patients are typically referred to an ENT specialist when primary care physicians identify concerns requiring specialized attention. Common reasons for referral include persistent sinusitis, chronic ear infections, hearing difficulties, voice changes lasting more than two weeks, difficulty swallowing, unexplained lumps in the neck, or recurrent dizziness and balance problems.

The Collaborative Approach

Many otolaryngologists work collaboratively with other specialists like audiologists, speech pathologists, allergists, neurologists, and oncologists to provide comprehensive care. This multidisciplinary approach ensures patients receive treatment addressing all aspects of their condition, from diagnosis through rehabilitation. For complex cases, ENT specialists often participate in tumor boards where various experts discuss treatment options.

Otolaryngologists blend medical knowledge with surgical expertise to address conditions affecting some of our most essential functions—hearing, breathing, speaking, and swallowing. Their specialized training makes them invaluable healthcare providers for conditions affecting quality of life and vital sensory experiences throughout all stages of life, from newborns to elderly patients.

Expert Care You Can Trust

If you're experiencing symptoms related to your ears, nose, throat, or head and neck region, seeking specialized care is essential for proper diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Price Sonkarley and his dedicated team provide comprehensive otolaryngology services with a patient-centered approach. Their expertise spans the full spectrum of ENT conditions, ensuring you receive the highest standard of care for your specific needs. Don't let persistent symptoms affect your quality of life—schedule a consultation with Dr. Sonkarley's office today by calling 239-495-6200.



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

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



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

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By Robert Swift, D.O. - Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

Many people believe that physical therapy is only needed when recovering from an injury. Makes sense, right?

However, that's not always the case. As we get older, physical therapy can play just as much of a role in preventing injuries as it does in helping us successfully through our recovery. That's why it's important as we age to be proactive about high-risk injuries such as those that result from falling.

Falls are a worldwide public health concern, especially for seniors. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 37.3 million falls that are severe enough to require medical attention occur each year. Additionally, the WHO noted that falls are also the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide. Strategies to prevent these falls from occurring should include additional education, training, and safer environments according to the WHO.

So, what proactive measures can you take to prevent these potentially life-threatening falls? This is when physical therapy can come into play. A physical therapist evaluates and assess the patient for risk of falls, and develops fall prevention strategies and interventions for seniors based on select tests and measures that are designed to gauge the patient's strength, agility, and balance. For example, physical therapists conduct tests such as the Functional Reach Test and the Timed Up & Go Test (TUG) as ways to better understand a patient's fall risk and recovery potential. Physical therapists can then assign and assist in exercises with senior patients to properly counteract these risks.

The Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago, Illinois explains the Functional Reach Test as an exercise that is administered while a patient is standing next to, but not touching a wall. The patient is then instructed to, with the arm that is closer the wall, "reach as far as you can forward without taking a step." Three trials are done, and the final score of the test comes out to the average score of the second two trials.

The other test, the TUG Test, begins with a patient sitting in a chair with their back against the chair's backrest and arms on the chair's arm rests. From



that position, the patient is then timed while standing up, walking three meters, turning around, and returning to their original resting position in the chair. Test results from these quick and easy evaluations help provide a reliable foundation for physical therapists to measure a patient's fall risk and conduct the necessary preventative training.

As a patient, or to perhaps avoid becoming one, taking care of your body through the proper preventative measures before an injury happens is just as important as the recovery process after an injury has already occurred. That's why we often see professionals in fields that require a lot physically constantly training in attempts to get ahead of potential injuries. But you don't have to be a professional athlete, bodybuilder, or manual laborer to take the important steps necessary to take care of your body. That's why when working with a patient, injured or not, it's vital for physical therapists to understand the full scope of their patients' strengths and limitations to assign the correct interventions to prevent any injuries in the future. Workouts and testing exercises such as these are a significant part of a physical therapist's training and responsibilities in the field.

About Dr. Robert D. Swift, D.O.

Robert D. Swift, D.O. is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and a Fellow of the American Osteopathic Association of Orthopedics. He has advanced training in minimally invasive surgery of the shoulder, knee, ankle, hip, and orthopedic trauma training.

Dr. Swift attended medical school at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed a general surgery internship with the US Army at Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center. While stationed in Europe as an army physician, he supported missions and troops throughout Bosnia and Kosovo.

Dr. Swift completed his orthopedic residency training at the University of Medicine Dentistry of New Jersey, also known as UMDNJ-SOM/Copper Medical Center. After residency, he rejoined the military and was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY. He was deployed as Chief of Orthopedics in Bagram, Afghanistan. His services are decorated by the Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Dr. Swift is accomplished in his field. He has been a course instructor, presenter, and author on fracture care and on the minimally invasive shoulder and knee surgery.

Dr. Robert D. Swift, D.O., Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon, is a national leader in sports medicine and orthopedic joint care with over 20 years of experience in:

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SMART ESTATE PLANNING FOR YOUR BLENDED FAMILY'S FUTURE

By Ross E. Schulman, Esquire - Master of Laws (LL.M.), Estate Planning

I should be fair and forthcoming right from the start. I am an attorney who has practiced family law for over a decade and I have a master's degree in Estate Planning. I write this article totally biased. But pause—biased—but knowledgeable because between those two practices I have seen entirely too many family issues that could be entirely avoided in most cases, certainly in the scenario of probate fights resulting from second or third marriages.

Divorce and remarriage don't just rewrite your love story—they can unravel your legacy if your estate plan isn't updated. Second marriages often bring blended families, with kids from prior relationships and new spouses, creating a minefield for inheritance disputes. Without a clear plan, your assets—like the family home or your retirement savings—could end up with the wrong people, leaving your children from a first marriage empty-handed or sparking bitter courtroom battles. I've seen how outdated wills or forgotten beneficiary designations can pit stepkids against new spouses, turning family gatherings into war zones. Don't let that chaos define your legacy.

Consider this: greater than half of second marriages end in divorce, and even happy ones face challenges when assets aren't clearly allocated. Never assume that your new husband or wife will "do the right thing" for your other children from a prior relationship. Consider this...without a tailored estate plan, life insurance could go entirely to the new spouse, leaving your kids with nothing. A simple fix? Updating your estate planning documents and naming specific beneficiaries for each policy. Tools like revocable trusts can also ensure your kids from a prior marriage inherit what's theirs, while still providing for your new spouse—think a trust that pays income to your spouse during their lifetime, then passes the principal to your kids.

Blended families may need more than just a will to avoid conflict. Prenuptial or postnuptial agreements, paired with estate plans, can clarify who gets what—like keeping your business out of your new spouse's hands while ensuring they're cared for. Designating transfer-on-death deeds for property can bypass probate, reducing the chance of stepchildren and spouses fighting over who gets the lake

house. And don't overlook retirement accounts or life insurance—update those beneficiary forms, because they trump your will every time. Failing to do so could mean your ex or their new partner accidentally inherits your 401(k).

Tax issues, even with generous federal estate tax exemptions (The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed into law on July 4, 2025, permanently increases the federal estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer (GST) tax exemption to \$15 million per individual (\$30 million for married couples), effective January 1, 2026, and indexed for inflation thereafter), can still sting. Remarriage might trigger gift tax complications if you're transferring assets to a new spouse, or it could disrupt how your estate is taxed after you're gone. Setting up an irrevocable trust can shield assets from taxes and creditors, ensuring your kids from a prior marriage aren't shortchanged. For example, one client used a trust to protect her savings for her daughter, preventing her second husband's business debts from touching it. This isn't just about money—it's about fairness and clarity for everyone you love.

The stakes are high in blended families, where emotions and money collide. Without a plan, your kids could lose their inheritance to a stepparent's whims or a messy probate fight. I've helped families avoid this by crafting plans that balance everyone's needs—your new spouse gets security, your kids from prior marriages get their share, and no one ends up in court. Think about a family where the parents' home was preserved for the kids from marriage one, while the new spouse received a separate fund for living expenses. It's practical, it's fair, and it works.

Don't assume your family will "figure it out." Assumptions lead to disputes, and disputes lead to lost legacies. A well-drafted estate plan is like a roadmap for your blended family—it keeps everyone on the same path. Whether it's a trust to protect your kids' inheritance, a marital agreement to define boundaries, or updated beneficiary forms to avoid surprises, these tools stop fights before they start. Take control now and ensure your assets go exactly where you want them.



Ready to protect your blended family's future? Contact an estate planning attorney who understands divorce and remarriage. Let's craft a plan that honors your kids, respects your new spouse, and keeps your legacy intact. One meeting could save your family from years of conflict—and give you peace of mind today.



About the Author

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

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



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Revitalizing Your Golden Years:

THE ROLE OF IV THERAPIES IN HEALTHY AGING

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

NAD+/Niagen Plus (NR) Therapy: Energizing Cellular Function

Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD+) is a coenzyme present in every cell that plays a crucial role in energy production and cellular health. As we age, NAD+ levels naturally decline, potentially contributing to decreased energy, cognitive function, and cellular repair capacity. To address this decline, we offer both traditional NAD+ therapy and Niagen Plus, an advanced pharmaceutical-grade treatment using nicotinamide riboside (NR) that provides a more natural approach to boosting NAD+ levels with potentially fewer side effects and faster infusion times.

The key distinction between these therapies lies in their composition and delivery. While traditional NAD+ treatments deliver the coenzyme directly into the bloodstream, Niagen Plus utilizes nicotinamide riboside (NR), a NAD+ precursor that research suggests may offer superior benefits for healthy aging and energy enhancement. Both treatments are available as IV or IM injections, with Niagen Plus offering the advantage of reduced infusion time and milder potential side effects while maintaining the therapeutic benefits of enhanced cellular energy production.

Many recipients of both NAD+ and Niagen Plus therapies describe feeling a renewed sense of vitality, with improved energy levels, enhanced mental clarity, and better sleep quality. The effects typically build over multiple treatment sessions, and some research suggests these approaches may help support DNA repair mechanisms, potentially addressing fundamental aspects of aging at the cellular level. While more clinical studies are needed, preliminary research shows promise for both direct NAD+ therapy and NR precursor treatments as part of a comprehensive approach to healthy aging.

Ozone Therapy: Oxygenating and Detoxifying

Ozone therapy utilizes medical-grade ozone (O₃), a form of oxygen with three atoms instead of the usual two. When administered intravenously in carefully

controlled amounts, ozone can stimulate oxygen metabolism, activate the immune system, and promote detoxification pathways.

For aging individuals, increased oxygenation may improve circulation and cellular metabolism. The mild oxidative stress paradoxically stimulates antioxidant defenses through a hormetic effect, helping the body handle age-related oxidative stress.

Practitioners report patients experience improved energy, reduced chronic inflammation, and enhanced well-being. Personal responses vary, with optimal results achieved through holistic health integration.

Ultraviolet Blood Irradiation (UBI) combines ozone therapy with UV light exposure to patient blood before reinfusion. This synergistic treatment targets pathogens through enhanced antimicrobial effects, stimulates immune function via photobiological mechanisms, and optimizes circulation. The dual approach creates comprehensive pathogen elimination while supporting white blood cell activity and immune factor production.

Specialized IV Formulations for Age Management

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

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

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

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

Embracing IV Therapies Wisely

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

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

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

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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

Most kidney cancer appears first in the tubules of the kidneys. When the malignant cells form a tumor(s) the growth rate is typically slow, so the

likelihood of an early diagnosis is increased, and the treatment can usually be performed before the tumor has metastasized into any other organs.

Treatment

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

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

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Source:

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM7OKwmG3j43bZni6h175MIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

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

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LEE HEALTH CANCER INSTITUTE BRINGS GROUND-BREAKING LIVER CANCER TREATMENT TO SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Lee Health's HealthyNews Blog

This month, Lee Health became the first health system in Southwest Florida to offer a non-invasive technology that destroys liver tumors without the need for incisions. The Edison System gives hope to patients with liver tumors who previously had few treatment options. The non-surgical, non-invasive treatment represents a major advancement in cancer care.

"This innovative technology is truly a game changer for many liver cancer patients," says Dr. Mark Bloomston, a board-certified surgical oncologist with the Lee Health Cancer Institute. "The Edison System offers a powerful complement to chemotherapy, with the ability to precisely target tumors while preserving healthy blood vessels."

Addressing the challenge of liver cancer detection

Early liver cancer symptoms are often vague and can cause delayed detection, making treatment more challenging by the time diagnosis occurs. Standard treatment protocols after confirming a tumor with imaging and biopsy typically involve chemotherapy and/or surgery, when possible. However, many patients face limitations with these traditional approaches due to underlying health conditions, tumor location, or treatment tolerance issues, Dr. Bloomston says.

What makes the Edison System different

The Edison System uses histotripsy, which delivers concentrated ultrasound pulses to create microscopic vapor bubbles within the targeted tumor. The sound waves are strong but directed only to the tumor to be treated, sparing surrounding healthy tissue and blood vessels.

The sound waves create tiny bubbles within the cells of the tumor. The bubbles then expand and collapse quickly, releasing energy that breaks down the cells of the tumor tissue. Essentially, the tumor is liquefied at a cellular level.

What sets the Edison System apart is its remarkable precision and real-time visualization capabilities. The platform allows surgeons to control the entire procedure using advanced imaging and robotics under continuous real-time control.

The procedure is performed under general anesthesia, but patients typically experience minimal discomfort during and after treatment. Most patients can complete the treatment in a single session, but it can be repeated if necessary.

Because the Edison System is non-invasive, many patients can return home the same day, experiencing shorter recovery times compared to traditional treatments. The procedure can be performed in an outpatient setting.

"As a surgeon, it's rewarding to be able to offer a procedure where we can precisely destroy liver tumors without using a scalpel or needles, hopefully enabling the patient's quick recovery while avoiding certain complications like surgical site infections or liver injury common with other modalities," Dr. Bloomston says.

Who can benefit from histotripsy

The Edison System is specifically designed for patients with primary or metastatic liver tumors who are not candidates for surgery. This includes patients with underlying health conditions that make surgery too risky, tumors located in difficult-to-reach areas, or complex tumor presentations that traditional surgery can't address safely. Histotripsy is particularly valuable for patients with hepatocellular carcinoma (primary liver cancer) who also have cirrhosis.

"Most patients with cirrhosis typically can't have a surgical procedure because of the risk of liver failure afterwards," Dr. Bloomston says. "But now we're talking about doing something for the liver without having to operate on it, greatly lowering that risk."

Candidates must have tumors confined to the liver and undergo a comprehensive evaluation by their oncology team to determine suitability for this non-invasive method.

However, not every tumor is suitable for histotripsy treatment. The ultrasound waves can only penetrate to certain depths in tissue; therefore, careful patient and tumor selection is essential to ensure the best outcomes, Dr. Bloomston notes.

Is histotripsy safe?

Studies have shown that histotripsy is a safe and effective addition to treatments currently available for cancer and liver tumors. Early clinical trials demonstrate impressive results, with a histotripsy success rate of 95.5 percent.

Breakthrough immune system benefits

Histotripsy's most compelling feature may be its promise of empowering the body's cancer-fighting capabilities. When a liver tumor is liquefied, the proteins that were on the tumor's surface remain displayed to the immune system, allowing it to develop specificity for that type of tumor and seek out other cancer cells throughout the body. This phenomenon, known as the abscopal effect, has shown promising results. In over 2,000 patients treated, many have experienced shrinkage of untreated tumors after having one tumor treated in the liver.

Over time, the body's immune system removes the debris from the broken-down tumor tissue, and the treated cavity gradually shrinks as the immune system processes the liquefied tumor material.

Looking toward the future

While currently FDA-cleared only for liver tumors, histotripsy's potential applications extend far beyond. Clinical trials are underway for pancreatic and kidney cancers, which Dr. Bloomston calls "the holy grail" due to the complexity and risks associated with traditional surgical approaches for these conditions.

The trial for kidney tumors is expected to be completed around the time Lee Health's system becomes operational, potentially expanding treatment options by next year.



Mark Bloomston, MD
Cancer Institute – Surgical Oncology



ACUPUNCTURE AND BREAST CANCER CARE

October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time when communities worldwide unite to educate, support, and advocate for those affected by this disease. While medical advances continue to improve treatment outcomes, many patients and survivors are exploring complementary therapies to enhance their quality of life. Among these approaches, acupuncture has emerged as a valuable supportive treatment that addresses many challenges associated with breast cancer and its conventional treatments.

Understanding Acupuncture's Role

Acupuncture, a cornerstone of Traditional Chinese Medicine practiced for over 3,000 years, involves the insertion of thin needles at specific points on the body. For breast cancer patients, this ancient practice offers a gentle, non-pharmaceutical approach to managing treatment-related side effects and supporting overall well-being.

Research has validated acupuncture's effectiveness in cancer care. The National Cancer Institute and major cancer centers recognize acupuncture as a beneficial complementary therapy, with studies demonstrating its ability to alleviate common treatment complications without interfering with primary medical care.

Managing Treatment Side Effects

Chemotherapy and radiation therapy often bring challenging side effects that significantly impact daily life. Acupuncture has shown success in addressing

chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, peripheral neuropathy causing tingling and numbness, cancer-related fatigue, and hormonal hot flashes. Treatment sessions provide relief when conventional medications fall short, helping restore nerve function, improve energy levels, and reduce symptom severity.

Beyond physical symptoms, breast cancer affects emotional health. Acupuncture promotes relaxation and emotional balance, with patients reporting improved mood and better stress management capabilities.



Expert Care from Qualified Practitioners

Dr. Leila Motta, D.O.M., AP, Dipl. O.M., ADS., exemplifies the expertise needed for cancer supportive care. As a Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and board-certified licensed acupuncture physician, Dr. Motta graduated from Maryland University of Integrative Health with both Masters and Doctoral degrees in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Dr. Motta holds Diplomate Certification from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM), maintains a Florida state license, and is a Nationally Board-Certified Acupuncturist. Her specialization in Neuro Acupuncture through the Neuro Acupuncture Institute adds advanced expertise. She is also a certified Acupuncture Detoxification Specialist.

With over 15 years in healthcare, Dr. Motta specializes in pain management and primary care. Her diverse skillset effectively treats chronic and acute pain, stress including PTSD, headaches, anxiety, digestive issues, and other health concerns. She integrates therapeutic techniques including acupuncture, herbal medicine, cupping therapy, and light therapy.



Integrative Healthcare Approach

Dr. Larry Wallen brings a holistic chiropractic perspective to comprehensive cancer support. A Midwest native from Illinois, Dr. Wallen's passion for helping people developed after witnessing his father's unsuccessful surgeries for chronic neck and back pain. His own positive experience with chiropractic care revealed a natural approach to addressing root causes rather than masking symptoms.

Dr. Wallen graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign with a Bachelor's Degree in Integrative Biology before attending Palmer College of Chiropractic. He graduated in 2010 with highest honors including Pi Tau Delta Chiropractic Honor Society membership, Presidential Scholar status, and Summa Cum Laude honors.

Communication between all healthcare providers ensures treatments complement rather than complicate conventional care. Most oncologists welcome discussions about complementary therapies, recognizing their potential to improve patient outcomes and quality of life throughout the cancer journey.

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METHYLENE BLUE AND ADHD: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

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

October is ADHD Awareness Month, a time to share reliable information about new and emerging treatment approaches. One substance that has recently gained attention is methylene blue. While methylene blue has been used safely for over a century in medicine, its potential role in improving focus and attention is still being studied.

What is Methylene Blue?

Methylene blue (also called methylthioninium chloride) is a medication most commonly used to treat a rare blood condition called methemoglobinemia. In recent years, scientists have been exploring how it affects the brain. Research suggests methylene blue may help brain cells produce energy more efficiently, protect against oxidative stress, and improve communication between brain regions involved in memory and attention.

Why Consider It for ADHD?

Because ADHD affects focus, attention, and working memory, researchers have wondered whether methylene blue might improve some of these functions. In one small study, healthy adults who took a low dose of methylene blue showed stronger brain activity in attention-related areas and a slight improvement in short-term memory. This is promising, but it's important to note that this study did not include people with ADHD and only measured short-term effects after a single dose.

At this time, there are no large, well-controlled studies showing methylene blue as an effective treatment for ADHD. Traditional, FDA-approved therapies such as stimulant and non-stimulant medications, along with behavioral strategies, remain the standard of care.

Safety Concerns and Risks

Methylene blue is not a simple supplement. It is an active drug with important safety concerns:

- **Drug interactions:** Methylene blue can interact with many common antidepressants and anxiety medications (such as SSRIs, SNRIs, and some migraine medications). Taking them together can cause serotonin syndrome, a potentially life-threatening condition.



- **Genetic conditions:** People with G6PD deficiency can develop serious blood problems if they take methylene blue.
- **Side effects:** Even at low doses, methylene blue can cause stomach upset, headache, dizziness, or changes in urine and skin color. Higher doses can lead to more serious problems.

Because of these risks, methylene blue should only be considered under the supervision of a knowledgeable healthcare provider.

The Role of Compounding Pharmacies

When methylene blue is prescribed, compounding pharmacies like Creative Scripts can prepare capsules in customized low doses. This helps patients avoid the unpleasant taste and staining that comes with liquid solutions, and allows providers to choose the right dose for each individual. Compounding also ensures the product is pharmaceutical-grade and handled with the same quality standards as any prescription medication.

What Patients and Families Should Know

- **Evidence is limited:** Right now, there is not enough research to recommend methylene blue as a routine treatment for ADHD.
- **Do not self-medicate:** Over-the-counter or "wellness clinic" versions of methylene blue may not be safe or pure. Intravenous infusions, in particular, should not be used outside of a monitored medical setting.
- **Talk to your provider:** If you or your child have ADHD and are interested in methylene blue, bring it up with your physician. They can review your medications, health history, and determine if it's safe to consider.
- **Stay with proven treatments:** Stimulant and non-stimulant medications, behavioral therapy, and school or workplace accommodations remain the most effective and safest ways to manage ADHD symptoms today.

The Bottom Line

Methylene blue is an old drug with new areas of research, including attention and memory. Early results are interesting, but much more research is needed before it could be recommended as a treatment for ADHD. Patients should never try it on their own, especially because of the risk of drug interactions. Compounding pharmacies like **Creative Scripts** can provide high-quality, customized formulations when methylene blue is prescribed, but this should only happen under close medical supervision.

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EBOO THERAPY NOW AVAILABLE AT ORCHIDIA MEDICAL GROUP:

Transforming Cardiovascular Health Through Advanced Blood Oxygenation

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

Orchidia Medical Group is proud to introduce Extracorporeal Blood Oxygenation and Ozonation (EBOO), a cutting-edge therapeutic approach that represents a significant advancement in cardiovascular medicine. This innovative treatment method offers patients a novel way to enhance their cardiovascular health through the powerful combination of blood oxygenation and ozonation therapy.

What is EBOO?

Extracorporeal Blood Oxygenation and Ozonation is an advanced medical procedure that involves removing blood from the patient's body, treating it with medical-grade ozone and oxygen, and then returning the enhanced blood to circulation. This process occurs outside the body in a controlled, sterile environment, allowing for precise treatment optimization while ensuring patient safety.

TRANSFORMATIVE BENEFITS FOR CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

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EBOO therapy dramatically improves blood circulation throughout the cardiovascular system. The ozonation process enhances the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity, ensuring that vital organs and tissues receive optimal oxygen levels. This improved oxygenation supports better cellular metabolism and energy production, leading to enhanced overall cardiovascular function and improved exercise tolerance.



Powerful Anti-Inflammatory Effects

Chronic inflammation is a primary contributor to cardiovascular disease progression. EBOO therapy demonstrates remarkable anti-inflammatory properties by modulating the immune system's response and reducing inflammatory markers in the bloodstream. This reduction in systemic inflammation helps protect blood vessels from damage and supports the body's natural healing processes, potentially slowing or reversing cardiovascular disease progression.

Reduction in Plaque and Cholesterol

One of the most significant benefits of EBOO therapy is its ability to address arterial plaque buildup and cholesterol management. The ozonation process helps break down lipid deposits and oxidized cholesterol that contribute to atherosclerosis. By reducing these harmful substances, EBOO therapy may help restore arterial flexibility and improve blood flow, potentially reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Endothelial Repair and Regeneration

The endothelium, the inner lining of blood vessels, plays a crucial role in cardiovascular health. EBOO therapy promotes endothelial repair by stimulating the production of nitric oxide, a vital molecule that helps blood vessels relax and function properly. This regenerative effect supports improved vascular health and may help reverse some of the damage caused by cardiovascular disease.

The Orchidia Medical Group Advantage

At Orchidia Medical Group, our experienced medical professionals utilize state-of-the-art EBOO technology in a comfortable, clinical setting. Our comprehensive approach includes thorough patient evaluation, personalized treatment protocols, and ongoing monitoring to ensure optimal results.

EBOO therapy represents a promising frontier in cardiovascular medicine, offering patients a non-invasive alternative to traditional treatments. Contact Orchidia Medical Group today to learn more about how EBOO therapy can support your cardiovascular health journey.



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Whitsyms In Home Care Private Duty: Specialized COPD Care at Home

Living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) presents unique challenges that extend far beyond breathing difficulties. For millions of patients and their families, managing this progressive condition while maintaining quality of life requires specialized care and support. Whitsyms In Home Care Private Duty understands the complex needs of COPD patients, offering comprehensive solutions that make managing this condition at home optimal for health outcomes.

Specialized COPD Home Care

Whitsyms In Home Care provides individualized attention specifically tailored to the respiratory and lifestyle needs of COPD patients. This specialized approach encompasses oxygen therapy management, breathing treatments, medication administration, and pulmonary rehabilitation support. Research published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine demonstrates that personalized COPD management plans delivered in the home setting significantly improve patient outcomes and reduce emergency interventions.

The company's specialized team includes Registered Nurses trained in respiratory care, Certified Nursing Assistants with pulmonary experience, and Home Health Aides skilled in COPD management techniques. Whether a patient needs post-exacerbation care, daily breathing treatment assistance, or help managing the anxiety often associated with COPD, Whitsyms matches the right caregiver to individual respiratory needs.

Safety and Infection Prevention

COPD home-based care offers significant infection prevention advantages. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that COPD patients face heightened risks during hospital stays, with respiratory infections contributing to frequent readmissions and disease progression. By receiving specialized respiratory care at home, COPD patients minimize exposure to airborne pathogens while maintaining familiar, controlled environments.

Studies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association confirm that COPD patients receiving home health care experience 30% lower hospital readmission rates compared to those



relying solely on institutional care. This reduction translates to better respiratory outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and decreased anxiety for patients and families.

Independence and Quality of Life

Managing COPD at home allows patients to maintain routines, energy conservation strategies, and autonomy while receiving expert respiratory support. The American Lung Association emphasizes that home-based COPD care positively impacts emotional wellbeing, reduces depression rates, and improves overall quality of life.

Whitsyms' comprehensive COPD services include oxygen therapy management, nebulizer treatments, breathing exercise instruction, and medication compliance support. Live-in and 24-hour care options provide peace of mind for families while ensuring COPD patients have immediate access to respiratory expertise when breathing difficulties arise.

Supporting Families

Whitsyms understands that COPD affects the entire family system, often creating stress around emergency situations and daily management challenges. Their respite care services provide essential breaks for family caregivers who may feel overwhelmed by constant vigilance COPD care requires. Client Care Liaisons serve as dedicated respiratory care coordinators throughout the treatment journey.

Professional home respiratory services provide education on disease management, emergency planning, and breathing techniques that enable family members to confidently support their loved ones. As respiratory diseases continue affecting millions of Americans, specialized home-based COPD care has become essential for optimal disease management.

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Recognizing the Signs:

Diagnosing Adult ADD and Exploring Treatment Options

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), now commonly referred to as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), predominantly inattentive type, is a neurodevelopmental disorder that can persist into adulthood. While often associated with childhood, many adults struggle with undiagnosed ADD, facing challenges in their personal and professional lives. Recognizing the signs and seeking proper diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve quality of life for those affected.

Diagnosing Adult ADD

Diagnosing ADD in adults can be complex, as symptoms may manifest differently than in children and can overlap with other conditions. Common signs of adult ADD include:

1. Difficulty concentrating and staying focused
2. Procrastination and trouble completing tasks
3. Forgetfulness in daily activities
4. Poor time management and organizational skills
5. Impulsivity in decision-making
6. Restlessness or feeling "on edge"
7. Mood swings and low frustration tolerance
8. Difficulty multitasking or prioritizing

To receive a diagnosis, adults should consult with a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist, who specializes in ADHD. The diagnostic process typically involves:

- A comprehensive clinical interview
- Review of medical and psychiatric history
- Standardized rating scales and assessments
- Gathering information from family members or close friends
- Ruling out other potential causes of symptoms

It's important to note that many adults with ADD have developed coping mechanisms over time, which may mask some symptoms. A thorough evaluation by a professional is crucial for an accurate diagnosis.

Treatment Options

Once diagnosed, there are several treatment options available for adult ADD. A comprehensive treatment plan often involves a combination of approaches:

1. Medication: Stimulant medications, such as methylphenidate or amphetamines, are often prescribed to improve focus and reduce impulsivity. Non-stimulant options, like atomoxetine, may also be considered.

2. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): This form of psychotherapy helps individuals develop coping strategies, improve time management skills, and address negative thought patterns associated with ADD.

3. Psychoeducation: Learning about ADD and how it affects daily life can empower individuals to better manage their symptoms and advocate for themselves.

4. Lifestyle modifications: Implementing structure, creating routines, and using organizational tools can significantly improve functioning for adults with ADD.

5. Mindfulness and meditation: These practices can help improve focus and reduce stress associated with ADD symptoms.

6. Coaching: ADD coaches can provide practical strategies for managing symptoms in personal and professional settings.

7. Support groups: Connecting with others who have ADD can offer emotional support and practical advice.

It's essential to work closely with healthcare providers to find the right combination of treatments, as what works best can vary from person to person. Regular follow-ups and adjustments to the treatment plan may be necessary to achieve optimal results.

While living with adult ADD can be challenging, proper diagnosis and treatment can lead to significant improvements in daily functioning, relationships, and overall quality of life. With increased awareness and understanding of how ADD manifests in adulthood, more individuals are seeking help and finding effective ways to manage their symptoms.

Dr. Richard J. Capiola is the Chief of Psychiatry for Physicians Regional Medical Center. He received his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years. Call Dr. Capiola today at 239-649-7494.

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Dr Capiola's mission is to focus on the strengths inherent in all of us to help overcome any problems and life stresses that make us feel stuck and limited.

He combines psychotherapy and medication management into all patient visits.

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics – Supporting Breast Cancer Survivors with Gold-Standard Lymphedema Care

For many breast cancer survivors, the journey doesn't end when treatment does. Surgery, lymph node removal, and radiation can lead to a lifelong condition known as lymphedema—a chronic buildup of lymphatic fluid that causes swelling, discomfort, and increased risk of infection.

At Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics, we specialize in helping breast cancer survivors manage and overcome these challenges. Our mobile outpatient clinic brings expert, evidence-based therapy directly to patients' homes across Southwest Florida, making high-quality care both accessible and convenient.

Specialized Lymphedema Therapy for Breast Cancer Survivors

Lymphedema after breast cancer treatment is a common yet often under-recognized condition. Swelling can occur in the arm, chest wall, breast, or hand, and without proper treatment, it can progress and significantly affect quality of life.

Our licensed occupational and physical therapists are Certified Lymphedema Therapists (CLWTs), trained in the internationally recognized Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) approach, the gold standard for lymphedema management.

CDT is a comprehensive, multi-step program that includes:

- **Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD):** A gentle hands-on technique that stimulates lymphatic flow, reducing swelling and discomfort.
- **Compression Wrapping & Garments:** Specialized bandages and garments provide consistent pressure to prevent fluid buildup.
- **Therapeutic Exercise:** Customized movement programs encourage natural lymphatic flow and restore function.
- **Skin Care Education:** Preventing infection and maintaining skin integrity are critical to long-term success.

This integrated approach not only helps reduce swelling but also improves comfort, mobility, and confidence for survivors navigating life after breast cancer.

Innovative Lymphedema Assessment – The LymphScanner™

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics is proud to use the LymphScanner™, a non-invasive tool that allows our therapists to assess tissue changes and detect lymphedema early—even before it becomes visibly noticeable. This cutting-edge device helps us:

- Identify lymphedema in its earliest stages.
- Track changes over time with precision.
- Tailor treatment plans based on real, measurable data.

By incorporating the LymphScanner into our mobile practice, we bring advanced technology directly to patients' doorsteps, ensuring accurate assessments without requiring hospital or clinic visits.

Garment Fitting Through Our In-House DME

Breast cancer survivors often need specialized compression garments as part of their long-term care. At Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics, we streamline this process by offering in-house Durable Medical Equipment (DME) services. Our therapists measure, fit, and order garments customized to each patient's needs, eliminating the stress of navigating this process alone. Medicare and many insurance plans provide coverage for these garments, and our team helps guide patients through their options.

More Than Therapy – A Mission of Support

While lymphedema management is highly clinical, our approach is also deeply personal. Many survivors feel isolated by the lasting effects of breast cancer treatment. We aim to change that by combining expert care with compassion and education, empowering patients to feel in control of their health again.

By treating survivors in the comfort of their own homes, we reduce barriers like transportation challenges, fatigue, or the burden of juggling multiple medical appointments. Our mission is simple: to meet patients where they are and walk alongside them in their recovery journey.

Meet the Co-Owners

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics is co-owned by James Ferrara, OTR/L, CLWT, and Lexie Lundquist, OTR/L, CLWT.



James (Jim) Ferrara earned his Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy from Spalding University in 2006 and has been a certified lymphedema therapist for more than six years. With over five years as a business owner, Jim brings expertise in both patient care and leadership. He is also a wound care specialist, integrating wound management and lymphedema treatment to improve outcomes for 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. She is passionate about empowering patients through education, hands-on care, and individualized treatment plans, ensuring each survivor feels supported and encouraged throughout their journey.

Together, Jim and Lexie bring a balance of experience, innovation, and compassion, ensuring Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics continues to set the standard for mobile outpatient therapy in Southwest Florida.

Our Commitment This Breast Cancer Awareness Month

As we honor Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we recognize the resilience of survivors and the importance of specialized care. Lymphedema should never be a barrier to living fully after breast cancer. At Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics, we are committed to providing the tools, expertise, and support survivors need to thrive—today and for years to come.

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THE KEY TO A MOLD-SAFE HOME: BEGINS WITH YOU

By Scott Briggs - American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC

For most homeowners, the HVAC system is out of sight and out of mind—until something goes wrong. Yet, what many don't realize is that routine care of this hidden system plays a vital role not only in comfort but also in safeguarding your home against one of the most common indoor health threats: mold.

Why Your HVAC System Is the Frontline of Defense

Your HVAC system isn't just responsible for keeping your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It regulates air circulation, removes excess humidity, and filters out contaminants that could otherwise impact your health. Without consistent upkeep, however, the same system that should protect your family can become a source of problems—especially in climates prone to dampness and humidity.

Dust buildup, clogged condensate drains, or unnoticed leaks can all create conditions where mold flourishes. Once mold spores take hold inside ductwork or coils, they can be distributed throughout the home every time the system runs.

Routine Maintenance:

The Key to a Mold-Safe Home

While many people schedule HVAC service once or twice a year, quarterly maintenance is far more effective in keeping both your equipment and indoor air quality at their best.

Seasonal checkups allow professionals to:

- Inspect and clean coils, drains, and ductwork.
- Verify that humidity controls are functioning properly.
- Catch small issues like leaks before they develop into major mold hazards.
- Replace or clean filters more frequently, reducing dust and allergen buildup.

This proactive approach extends the lifespan of your HVAC equipment, improves energy efficiency, and—most importantly—keeps your indoor environment safe.

Keeping a Clean, Dry Home

A mold-safe home requires more than just attention to your HVAC system. Moisture control in daily living is equally important. Quickly repairing leaks, running bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans, and ensuring proper drainage around your foundation all prevent damp conditions that invite mold growth.

Even small habits, such as wiping down condensation on windows or using a dehumidifier in problem areas, reinforce your efforts. Also make sure your exhaust vents in your bathrooms are drawing out the moisture during and after showers.

We recommend running the exhaust fan during your shower and leaving it on for 20 minutes after your shower to remove all steam in the room.

Monitoring Humidity Levels Year-Round

Humidity is mold's best friend. The ideal indoor humidity range is between 40% and 55%. Anything above that creates conditions where mold can grow rapidly. Affordable digital hygrometers or smart home systems make it simple to monitor humidity in real time and take action if levels rise.

A Healthier Home Starts with Maintenance

Quarterly HVAC maintenance, combined with mindful home care and humidity monitoring, forms the foundation of a mold-safe living environment. For homeowners, this isn't just about protecting walls and ceilings—it's about safeguarding health, preserving belongings, and ensuring long-term comfort.

Routine care is more than a recommendation. It's the key to keeping your home healthy, your air clean, and mold out of the picture.



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Rebuilding Stronger Bones:

Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk's Revolutionary Approach to Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis, often called the "silent disease," affects millions worldwide as bones gradually become brittle and fragile.

This degenerative condition typically progresses without symptoms until a fracture occurs – commonly in the hip, spine, or wrist. While conventional medicine has long considered osteoporosis an inevitable part of aging, Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk is pioneering a different approach that not only halts bone loss but actively reverses it.

Dr. Shepetiuk's methodology stands apart from traditional treatments that primarily focus on medication alone. Her comprehensive program begins with advanced diagnostics that go beyond standard DEXA scans to assess bone quality and identify individual risk factors. This detailed analysis allows her to create truly personalized intervention plans tailored to each patient's unique biochemistry and lifestyle.

"Osteoporosis isn't simply a calcium deficiency," explains Dr. Shepetiuk. "It's a complex condition influenced by hormones, inflammation, gut health, and even stress levels. Effective treatment requires addressing all these factors simultaneously."

The science-backed solutions in Dr. Shepetiuk's protocol incorporate several key elements. Nutritional optimization forms the foundation, with customized dietary recommendations that balance bone-building minerals and reduce inflammatory foods that contribute to bone loss. Her approach often includes targeted supplementation, but always personalized to address specific deficiencies rather than following a one-size-fits-all formula.

Movement is another crucial component of Dr. Shepetiuk's program. She prescribes specific weight-bearing and resistance exercises designed to stimulate osteoblast activity – the cells responsible for building new bone tissue. These exercises are carefully selected based on the patient's current bone density, fitness level, and fracture risk.

What truly sets Dr. Shepetiuk apart is her integration of cutting-edge research on bone metabolism. Her protocol addresses often-overlooked factors like sleep quality, stress management, and gut microbiome health – all scientifically proven to impact bone remodeling processes.



Dr. Shepetiuk's approach also emphasizes hormone balance, particularly for postmenopausal women who face accelerated bone loss due to declining estrogen levels. Rather than automatically prescribing hormone replacement therapy, she first conducts comprehensive testing to identify specific imbalances. This allows for more targeted interventions, which might include bioidentical hormones, herbal support, or lifestyle modifications to naturally optimize hormone production.

Environmental factors play a role in her protocol as well. Dr. Shepetiuk educates patients about reducing exposure to toxins that can interfere with bone metabolism, while encouraging vitamin D synthesis through appropriate sun exposure and specific supplementation when necessary.

The results speak for themselves. Many of Dr. Shepetiuk's patients have experienced significant improvements in bone density scores, some achieving increases of 3-5% annually – outcomes rarely seen with conventional approaches.

"I was told I would need to accept progressive bone loss as part of aging," shares one patient. "After two years with Dr. Shepetiuk, my bone density has increased by 8%, and I feel stronger than I have in decades."

Another patient reports, "The comprehensive approach made all the difference. Previous doctors only offered medication without addressing my vitamin deficiencies or teaching me the right exercises. Dr. Shepetiuk's program gave me back my confidence and freedom."

For those struggling with osteoporosis or looking to prevent it, Dr. Shepetiuk's approach offers hope beyond medication management. By addressing the root causes of bone deterioration through personalized, science-backed solutions, she's helping patients rebuild stronger bones and regain confidence in their body's natural healing abilities.

Her work demonstrates that osteoporosis need not be an inevitable consequence of aging, but rather a condition that can be effectively managed and even reversed with the right comprehensive care.

Functional and Integrative Medicine with Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

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

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

Services Include:

- ✓ REMS Bone Health Diagnostics
- ✓ Personalized Functional Medicine Consultations
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- ✓ **Individualized Care:** Every client gets a fully customized plan to rebuild bone health naturally and sustainably.
- ✓ **Medication-Free Approach:** With cutting-edge osteogenesis techniques, bioDensity sessions, and functional medicine, we focus on natural healing and strength-building.

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Any Lab Test Now allows individuals to order their own lab tests without requiring a doctor's order. This puts patients in control of their own health monitoring and screening. The retail lab testing model provides an easy and affordable way to get lab work done for wellness, prevention, treatment, and management of existing conditions.

"We're excited to open our doors in Naples and provide this level of access to lab testing services," said the local owner. "Our goal is to empower people to be proactive about their health by making it simple and affordable to get the lab tests they need."

At Any Lab Test Now, patients can get tested for a wide range of health concerns from routine wellness panels to highly specialized biomarker tests. Some of the most popular tests offered include:

- **Annual Check-Up Panel:** A comprehensive array of tests that screen for a variety of potential health issues like diabetes, liver and kidney problems, anemia and more.

- **Paternity Informational (Non-Legal):** For those needing to determine biological relationships through DNA testing for personal knowledge.
- **STD Panel, Comprehensive:** Screens for all major sexually transmitted infections like HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B & C, herpes, chlamydia and more.
- **Cholesterol (Lipid) Panel:** Checks HDL, LDL, triglycerides and total cholesterol levels to assess heart disease risk.
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ADVANCE CHRONIC MOBILE WOUND CARE:

How Amniotic Membrane Therapy Is Saving Lives in Southwest Florida

For the millions of Americans suffering from chronic wounds that refuse to heal after 30 days, hope arrives through advanced regenerative medicine. Jean Remy, FNP-BC, brings cutting-edge amniotic membrane therapy directly to patients throughout Southwest Florida offering a life-saving solution for diabetic ulcers, chronic pressure ulcers, venous leg ulcers, and other non-healing chronic wounds unresponsive to traditional treatments.

The Critical Nature of Chronic Wound Care

Chronic wounds affect over 6.5 million patients annually in the United States, with approximately 5 million deaths resulting from complications including severe infections, sepsis, and gangrene. These non-healing wounds—defined as wounds that fail to progress through normal healing stages within 30 days—create devastating impacts on patients' quality of life while placing enormous strain on healthcare systems and families.

Common chronic wounds include diabetic foot ulcers, pressure ulcers (bedsores), venous stasis ulcers, arterial ulcers, surgical wounds with delayed healing, and traumatic wounds resistant to conventional therapy. Without proper treatment, these conditions can rapidly progress to life-threatening infections requiring amputation or resulting in death.

Advanced Amniotic Membrane Technology

Amniotic membrane allografts represent a revolutionary approach to chronic wound healing. These bioactive tissue grafts, derived from human placental tissue, contain powerful growth factors, cytokines, and structural proteins that stimulate cellular regeneration and reduce inflammation. Unlike traditional wound dressings that simply cover wounds, amniotic membranes actively promote healing at the cellular level.

The membranes provide a natural scaffold for new tissue growth while delivering essential nutrients directly to damaged areas. This advanced therapy has shown remarkable success rates in healing wounds that have remained open for months or even years, often preventing the need for amputation and dramatically improving patient outcomes.

Concierge-Level Chronic Wound Care

Jean Remy, FNP-BC, provides personalized, concierge-level mobile wound care services that extend far beyond traditional clinical visits. Understanding



that chronic wound patients often face mobility challenges, he offers comprehensive home visits throughout southwest Florida and in his downtown Naples location. He will also make visits to independent living facilities, assisted living communities.

His collaborative approach involves working directly with patients' primary physicians, caregivers, family members, and home health agencies to ensure seamless continuity of care. This coordinated treatment model ensures proper wound assessment, infection management, amniotic membrane application, and ongoing monitoring throughout the healing process.

Flexible Treatment Options

Recognizing that chronic wounds require urgent attention regardless of the day or time, Jean Remy maintains availability five days a week for wound treatments. His downtown Naples office provides a welcoming and safe clinical environment, while his mobile services bring advanced care directly to patients who cannot travel.

Services are available for Cigna and Medicare patients, making advanced amniotic membrane therapy accessible to those who need it most. This insurance coverage removes financial barriers that often prevent patients from accessing life-saving wound care treatments.

Comprehensive Wound Assessment and Treatment
Each patient receives thorough wound evaluation including assessment of underlying conditions contributing to delayed healing such as diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, or autoimmune disorders. Treatment protocols address infection control, proper wound preparation, precise amniotic membrane application, and detailed aftercare instructions.

The goal extends beyond simply healing wounds—it's about restoring patients' independence, keeping them in their preferred living situations, and preventing the devastating complications that can result from untreated chronic wounds.

For patients and families struggling with chronic wounds that won't heal, Jean Remy's advanced amniotic membrane therapy offers new hope for recovery and improved quality of life.



About Jean E. Remy, FNP-BC

Jean Evins Remy, FNP-BC is a dedicated healthcare provider with a diverse background in medicine and nursing. Originally from Haiti, Remy earned his medical degree from Faculté de Médecine et de Pharmacie, Université d'Etat d'Haïti, and practiced as a licensed doctor of medicine before relocating to the United States. Here, he pursued further education, graduating with honors from Florida International University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing.

With over a decade of experience, Remy has worked in various healthcare settings, including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and home health environments. His roles have spanned clinical technician, registered nurse, and family nurse practitioner, with notable positions at Naples Community Hospital, Millennium Physician Group, David Lawrence Center, CVS, Humana, and Korunda Pain Management Center.

Remy is a proud member of the Florida Nursing Association. Fluent in Creole, French, and English, he is committed to providing culturally competent care to his diverse patient population.

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National Pet Wellness Month

A Time to Celebrate Happy, Healthy Pets

Every October, pet lovers across the nation come together to celebrate National Pet Wellness Month, a time dedicated to the health and happiness of our beloved four-legged companions. This annual observance serves as a reminder of the importance of proactive pet care, promoting their overall well-being, and fostering a deeper bond between humans and animals.

Our pets hold a special place in our hearts, providing us with unwavering love and companionship. As responsible pet owners, it is our duty to ensure they lead long, fulfilling lives. National Pet Wellness Month offers a unique opportunity to focus on their health and wellness in various ways.

Nutrition: A Key Ingredient for Pet Wellness

One of the cornerstones of pet wellness is nutrition. The food we provide to our furry friends plays a pivotal role in their health. During National Pet Wellness Month, it's the perfect time to review your pet's diet. Consult with your veterinarian to ensure you are feeding them a balanced and appropriate diet tailored to their specific needs. Proper nutrition can prevent obesity, allergies, and other health issues.

Regular Exercise: Keeping Pets Fit and Happy

Exercise is equally vital for your pet's wellness. Dogs need daily walks and playtime, while cats enjoy interactive toys and climbing structures. Regular exercise not only helps them maintain a healthy weight but also keeps their minds active and their spirits high. Use this month to establish an exercise routine that suits both you and your pet.



Preventive Healthcare: A Priority

Preventive healthcare is the cornerstone of keeping your pet healthy. Regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, and dental care are essential. National Pet Wellness Month encourages pet owners to schedule these visits if they have not already done so. Early detection of illnesses can save both money and heartache down the road.

Mental Well-being: A Happy Mind, a Happy Pet

Mental well-being is just as important as physical health. Pets thrive on routine and social interaction. Ensure your pet is mentally stimulated through play, training, and spending quality time together. Mental enrichment toys and activities can keep their minds engaged.

Safety First: Pet-proofing Your Home

During this month, take some time to pet-proof your home. Ensure that toxic plants, chemicals,

and hazards are out of reach. Checking your fences and gates can also prevent your pets from wandering off or getting into dangerous situations.

Community Involvement: Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership

National Pet Wellness Month is also an opportunity to get involved in your local community. Participate in pet adoption events, volunteer at animal shelters, or donate to organizations dedicated to animal welfare. Promoting responsible pet ownership benefits not only your own pet but also countless others in need.

Celebrate Pet Wellness Year-Round

As National Pet Wellness Month draws to a close, remember that pet wellness should be a year-round commitment. Our pets give us unconditional love, and it's our responsibility to reciprocate by providing them with the best care possible. By embracing a holistic approach to pet wellness, we can ensure that our furry family members lead happy, healthy lives filled with love and joy.

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Navigating Sexual Health in the Over-85 Population

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

The term sexual health is rarely considered in discussions focusing on older adults over the age of 85. However, engagement in sexual relations or being emotionally intimate may continue to be of great value to older age groups. In the present context, as people's lifespan increases and cultural norms change, it becomes essential to think about the sexual health concerns of this age group.

Understanding Sexuality Beyond 85

With regards to sexuality of older adults, it is not only about having sexual acts—it also involves emotional relationships, physically being close to someone, and caring about them. For many people over 85 years it may be important to help and sustain such intimate relationships as it contributes to positively beautiful enhancement of life satisfaction and mood. Sadly, negative social norms and beliefs regarding ageing often create a false impression that the older generation is devoid of any sexuality or does not wish for any such engages, which is not the case.

A considerable number of these adults still have sexual fantasies, indulge in sexually related actions, or even seek people in intimacy although they face problems of old age that hinder sexual health. These problems include, amongst others, medical illnesses, cognitive ageing, the adverse effects of treatment, and lack of other people's participation.

Common Sexual Health Concerns in the Over-85 Population

1. *Physical Changes and Sexual Function:*

Changes related to the normal aging process can affect sexual function. The most common sexual problem in older men is erectile dysfunction. For women, there may be insufficient lubrication, pain during intercourse, or decreased interest in sex due to lower levels of estrogen. Nonetheless none of these changes entail per se the cessation of orgasmic activity. All medications, lubricants and other interventions can address these problems.

2. *Chronic Illness and Sexual Health:* It is not unusual for some of the people over 85 to have chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, or arthritis among others that have bearing



on the sexual act. More so, the treatment of these conditions may require certain medications whose side effects may interfere with sexual drive or performance. Still, many elderly people adjust and manage to be intimate with others, be it through non-sexual skin contact, talking to someone or other ways of sexual expressions.

3. *Cognitive Decline:* Cognitive impairment, such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, can lead to difficulties in relationships, especially the physical aspects of such relationships. Furthermore, although this is uncommon, patients who experience cognitive decline may act out sexually inappropriately or exhibit states of confusion or other changes regarding their sexual interests. In all situations where sexual health needs are to be addressed, it is rather critical that family and caregivers understand these matters compassionately and ensure that dignity is preserved.

4. *Psychological Factors:* Factors such as social isolation, the death of a partner, geriatric depression, and anxiety are problems that can be noted in these older people and also have an adverse effect on sexual health. These emotional issues might trigger a drop in intimacy levels. It helps to combine support from practitioners with social activities.

5. *Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):* Older adults are likely to believe that they are not at risk of infections. Despite this myth, older population is also prone to STIs. Also, there has been a rise of STDs among older people due to lack of information and methods to prevent. With a doctor's recommendation, these lessons should not be contraindicated to people aged 85 years and above.

Promoting Sexual Health and Well-being

Those over 85 require an integrated response which addresses sexual health and includes health practitioners, family, care providers and patients.

1. *Open Communication:* Discussing sexual health issues is mostly forgotten when one advances in age. Society needs to blatantly create the need for these conversations. Healthcare workers are to include sexual health without being directed on how to include it in the routine visits as sexual health is central to one's wellbeing irrespective of their age.

2. *Education and Awareness:* Enlightening seniors on how to practice safe sex, how the body functions sexually, and how medications work can ensure their participation in relevant activities. Stereotypes that associate old age with certain characteristics can also be suppressed by campaigns that seek to raise awareness of the harm of old age.

3. *Tailored Healthcare:* Patients' treatment plans must integrate sexual wellness into the wider picture of healthcare. This might mean providing patients with means of addressing erectile disorders or prescribing post-menopausal hormone therapies or other forms of mental wellbeing support.

4. *Emotional and Social Support:* Older individuals are encouraged not to isolate themselves and look for activities that boost self-esteem, and even relationships, which can promote a healthy sexual atmosphere.

Conclusion

Sexual health cannot be ruled out even in elderly persons above 85 years of age. By taking care of the various spheres of a person on a particular age, we are able to achieve a better health and quality of life among a specific group of people. Societal misunderstandings should be disregarded and the notion that older persons are not entitled to any sexual care should be disbanded. This view enables better facilities and improvements in the quality of life for elderly people.



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How to Enjoy Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

Your house is a mess. You have no free time. You hate to clean. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Over 100 million people in the US and Canada feel the same way. As you plan to hire house cleaning services, here are some tips that will make your experience even better.

Remember that you're hiring human beings

If you plan on every speck of dust being gone after your clean, you're most likely setting yourself up for disappointment. You'll enjoy your service more if you are realistic about what you're getting. While professional house cleaners are exceptional at what they do, they are not super human. They can't clean your master bathroom in 5 minutes. Humans also make mistakes. If something isn't done well, relax, call the house cleaning service at the office, and let them know. Depending on the type of issue, most professional house cleaning companies will send someone out to re-clean the area and make sure to correct the situation.

Leave your home while it's being cleaned

Do you like when someone looks over your shoulder while you work? Neither do housecleaners. Relax. Professional house cleaning services screen their employees, conduct background checks, and are bonded and insured. Get the most out of your cleaning service by getting out of your house during the cleaning process. Not only will you enjoy the great feeling of walking into a clean

home, but the cleaning staff will be better able to focus on their job. While leaving isn't a requirement, you just might find out how great it feels to abandon all thoughts of cleaning!

Leave a tip

Tipping service professionals is nothing new. Everyone tips their server at a restaurant, the bellboy, the valet. Tipping your cleaning professional is a good thing. Think about this; a professional cleaner is in your home, touching virtually all of your possessions. Cleaning is a physically demanding job. House cleaners are constantly bending down, scrubbing, walking up and down stairs, reaching up high, and moving heavy things around. And if hard work isn't enough, remember that they're dealing with all your dirty stuff! It's well worth a few extra dollars to say thank you. And who doesn't love a tip? Remember, a happy cleaner is a great cleaner.

To clean or not to clean

It's a question most people grapple with. Should I clean my house before the cleaning person comes? This is really up to you and there is no right answer. If you have hired a cleaning person for a set amount of time, the cleaner will be able to provide a deeper clean if your home is very tidy before their arrival. But, some people don't like even tidying up. If that's you, then letting the house cleaner do that might be well worth it. In the end, you have to decide how you want the house cleaner spending their time.

I clean my home in 1 hour... they should too

People always think a professional house cleaner should be able to clean their home faster than they clean it themselves. This is a misconception. When most homeowners clean their homes, they clean very differently than someone they hire. Homeowners know what areas they can skip and usually don't clean all the areas that professionals do. For example, many homeowners may skip the toilet when cleaning the bathrooms, only wiping down the counter and mirror. And even if they do tackle the toilet, they usually don't get the floor behind it. Professional home cleaners must clean everything, which, in the end, usually takes longer.

If you're realistic about your house cleaning service, you'll be much happier. And if there is something you're not happy with, simply call the office. You'll be much better off working through a few small issues than constantly jumping from one cleaning service to the next. Once you and the professional company get it right, having your home professionally cleaned is on.



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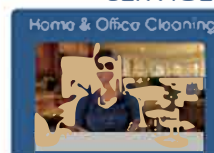
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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

If the past few months have given you more time for introspection, use it to improve your financial plan in a big-picture way. Even for the privileged among us who still have our jobs, are not on the front lines with the pandemic, and have not had anyone close to us felled by COVID-19, the current crisis has brought hardships big and small.

Parents have confronted the daily struggle of trying to do their jobs while also home-schooling. Adult children have not been able to visit their elderly parents. Graduations, weddings, and even funerals have been put on hold or “Zoomified.” Yet as difficult as it has been, there have been a few silver linings too, especially for those of us lucky enough to not be touched directly by the crisis. One of the most valuable is that pressing pause on our usual routines has given many of us the opportunity to take a step back, get out of our ruts, and take stock. What do we really value? What do we really miss? What can we not wait to do when this is all over? What “necessity” of our past lives, whether the daily purchased latte or frequent meals in restaurants, are we finding that we are quite happily doing without?

Travel may be someone’s greatest longing, while others miss cooking and entertaining big groups of family and friends. Talking about how the pandemic has changed our thinking on a topic, or made us want to do more of something else, can help us feel like we are using the present situation productively. The current sense of isolation will not be for naught, because it is shaping how we intend to use our lives in the future, when we once again have a full set of choices before us.

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

It can be argued that now is a good time to put a fresh set of eyes on your financial plan, taking a similarly expansive view of it that you might not have been able to do when you were busy and mired in your day-to-day activities. Too often, one expert opined, financial plans (and planners) move straight to the “solution” phase, without stopping to ask some basic questions about what someone is trying to achieve and what their real problems are.

“Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things.”

What will constitute “success” for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

Whether you are well into retirement or early in your career, it can be easy to backburner questions like these and move straight to logistics, determining your asset allocation and minimizing taxes, for example. Those are all worthy pursuits, but if you find yourself with a bit of extra time to think a bit more broadly and introspectively about your financial plan, here are some of the key questions to ask yourself.

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

As most investors know, the biggest determinant of whether you achieve financial success is how much you spend versus how much you save. But as important as it is to make sure your intake exceeds your outgo, budgeting can seem like sheer drudgery. Here is a different way to think about budgeting. Simply begin to take note of how various discretionary expenditures make you feel. It can be incredibly illuminating. Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things. Many would also argue that many of life’s most memorable experiences cost very little.

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

Investors should strive to make smart allocations of financial capital across opportunity sets, not just saving versus spending but also debt pay down versus investing in the market, how much to allocate to retirement savings versus college, and so on. These are crucial topics worthy of significant analysis and introspection. Ultimately, the right answers are a matter of math (expected return on “investment”) and personal preference.

Many of us pay much less attention to how we allocate an even more scarce resource, our time, even though that allocation will ultimately have an even greater impact on whether we feel like we have met our goals. Of course, some of our time expenditures are pre-ordained, the time we spend working or caring for children, for example. Even within those allocations it seems worthwhile to be more mindful, to help ensure that your allocation of time in a given day, week, or year aligns with your goals and vision for that period. An audit of how you are allocating your time currently is a good starting point. Technology tools can help you determine how much time you waste (uh, spend) on social media and other activities that could be detracting from your productivity and happiness.

What Is Your Definition of “Enough”?

Many of us are operating with an incredibly vague notion of how much we really need to save in order to achieve our financial goals and find security. Even financial planners might rely on rules of thumb when setting your retirement savings target. For example, they might assume that you will need 80% of your working income in retirement and extrapolate the rest of your plan from there.

As humans, we often have a natural tendency to reach for more more more, regardless of whether that “more” is actually bringing more happiness and security. Trying to keep up with the people around us, in terms of possessions and outward signs of success, can get exhausting and may not get us any closer to our life’s goals. That is why, in this period of limited activity, spending, and social contact, it is worthwhile to think through your own definition of enough, both now and for the future.

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

When taking a strictly financial and estate-planning perspective, leaving a “legacy” is one of those topics that can seem overly narrow. It is about leaving assets behind for children, grandchildren, and other loved ones, as well as charity if we so choose. It is about making sure we do not burden the people we care about. Those are crucial considerations and they are why everyone needs an estate plan that includes wills, powers of attorney, and beneficiary designations, among other key documents.

While you are at it, why not think big picture about your legacy, too? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? What life philosophy or pieces of wisdom do you hope that your loved ones will always associate with you? If you find yourself with a bit of extra time for introspection, write down a few ideas along these lines. And no, you are not too young to start thinking about this. You can find templates for creating a “personal legacy” online, but some good advice is not to overthink it. Balance more serious ideas with more lighthearted ones. We all have credos that we live by; make sure your loved ones know yours.

**Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments,
Wintrust Wealth Management.**

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HUNGRY HEART

By Alex Anderson

The songwriter and performer Bruce Springsteen was right when he wrote,

"Everybody's got a hungry heart..."

Inside of every human is this need or hunger. Sometimes we try to fill it with love for another person, but for some reason...another person is not the answer.

Sometimes the hungry heart destroys the very things we love and want.

Springsteen goes on to sing,

"We fell in love, I knew it had to end...we took what we had and we ripped it apart...everybody's got a hungry heart...don't make no difference what nobody says...ain't nobody like to be alone...everybody's got a hungry heart."

I do believe our hungry heart is about loneliness, not for another human...but for God himself. We were created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26) but when man left *God*...man missed, and still misses, God. They had a bond that filled man with joy and satisfied his heart like nothing else.

C.S. Lewis calls this the, "Numinous Awe." It seems to be built into mankind, this *ravenous hungry heart to know God*. And it's so strong nothing can fill it but God himself.

Psalms 34:8 says, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

And the truth is... If you don't get that deep ravenous hunger in your heart satisfied by Jesus you will starve to death spiritually, while eating everything else.

So how do you do that? How do you find the true satisfaction that calms your hungry heart?

If you are a Christ-follower, then you know how to do this. You...do again...something that you have already experienced when you asked God to be your Lord and Savior. You "make up" with God and you're back to stay.

You are so glad to be back together. Glad that God owns you and your life. So you decide to be happy because God owns you and is your life partner (Philippians 4:4).

Feel the pleasure, the joy and the delight again about Jesus being your master. Let this fact cause you happiness, pleasure and delight.

Be full of joy because Jesus paid a high price for your life. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Let the reality of what He has done sink over you.

Not only are you in His family now, but you can live the life of a victorious and joyful person of God; with all the rights and privileges of a child of rich royalty.

"You are my child says the Lord...my very rich child says the Lord...let the riches of your heart begin to overflow into all of your life." (3 John 2)

You can, should, and must rejoice always in the Lord...way before anything changes physically in your life.

The seed of hope and joy is there if you have become one with Jesus Christ. His seed is within you. If your hope is nonexistent then find the seed once planted deep in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Like a precious pearl search for it (Matthew 13:45).

When you find it (that small seed), clean it up. Polish it and put it in the center room of your heart, shine the brightest light you can find on it and let its magnificent beauty captivate you. Stare at it with intentional focus as though you are searching and waiting for hope itself.

Its magnificent light will light up your life.

For it will change everything about you as you clearly see and feel the love that God has shed in your heart...that is for you (Romans 5:5).

It is so worthy of your time my friend to mediate and think about Jesus, again.

Whether things in your life are going well or not...you have the power of a Christ-follower to focus on Jesus...the author and finisher of your faith and the centerpiece of your heart.

Meet Nina Azwoir: A Financial Advisor Who Truly Wants to Know You



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