

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

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

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THE EUROPEAN FLUID FACELIFT

THE ART OF SUBTLE
TRANSFORMATION

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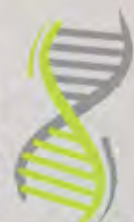
A FUNCTIONAL DOCTOR'S APPROACH TO ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE

TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH WITH PREVENTIVE CARE

DIABETIC WOUND HEALING

WHY IS IT SO
CHALLENGING
TO TREAT?

FEEL AMAZING SPINE & JOINT INSTITUTE



Richard Hiler, DC, DABCN
Board-Certified Chiropractic Neurologist

THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM

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A Smile to Last a Lifetime:

Ruthie Bergmann's Dental Implant Journey with Dr. Eshra

When it comes to her smile, Ruthie Bergmann lights up any room she enters—and she gives full credit to Dr. Eshra and the team at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry (PFCDD) in Naples, Florida.

"I love him," Ruthie says with a laugh. "He's so sweet and so professional—but I used to play jokes on him! One time I came in with fake Dracula fangs and told him my temporary plates weren't fitting right. The whole team laughed."

Ruthie's sense of humor and warmth made her a favorite among the PFCDD team. "I used to bake for the whole team," she recalls. "I love them all. They're like family to me."

A Lifetime of Dental Challenges

Ruthie has dealt with dental issues for as long as she can remember. "My first memory as a human being is sitting on my mother's lap at the dentist," she says. "Genetically, I have soft teeth. Bad teeth just run in our family."

By age 16, Ruthie's teeth had already begun to fail. "The acid in my saliva caused holes in my teeth. My front teeth had to be replaced when I was just a teenager, and since then, I've had more replacements than I can count."

Despite diligent oral care, her teeth continued to deteriorate over the years. "My mother always made sure we brushed and took care of our teeth," she says, "but genetics are what they are—you can't change them."

Choosing Dental Implants

After decades of crowns, bridges, and other restorations, Ruthie was ready for a permanent solution. "Implants are the final act for me," she says. "There's no more crowns, bridges, or caps."

Ruthie began her implant journey with the bottom row first, followed by the upper arch. "It's not a quick fix," she emphasizes. "It's a long process—about five months of wearing a temporary while your gums and bones heal with a graft. Your jawbone must be ready to accept the implant. But it's worth every bit of patience."

Today, Ruthie can eat anything she wants. "I love a good spare rib," she says with a grin. "Chewing is never a problem with implants. They feel just like natural teeth."



Trusting Dr. Eshra's Expertise

Ruthie's admiration for Dr. Eshra goes beyond her results. "When you ask Dr. Eshra a question, you get the facts. He doesn't sugarcoat things or try to sell you a product. He doesn't take shortcuts," she explains. "He's there on Saturdays if a patient needs him. He gets the job done."

That level of dedication is something Ruthie deeply values. "You get what you pay for with dental work," she says. "I know that if I ever have a problem, I can go back and Dr. Eshra will fix it."

A Smile That Inspires Confidence

Ruthie's beautiful new smile has given her renewed confidence and joy. "My smile is the best part of my face," she says proudly. "Not a day goes by that someone doesn't compliment me on it."

Even in her work as a substitute teacher for elementary students, her smile makes a difference. "You can't smile at little ones with crooked or missing teeth," she says. Ruthie also enjoys giving cooking lessons and just retired from being the social director of her HOA.

Finding Her Dental Home

After Ruthie and her husband Ron moved from Long Island to Naples 15 years ago, Ruthie searched for a practice that combined expertise, compassion, and affordability. "I shopped around, and Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry made me the best deal," she explains. "Between the affordability and Dr. Eshra's professionalism, I'll never go anywhere else."

A Lifelong Learner and Advocate

Ruthie's enthusiasm for health education extends beyond her dental journey. "I've been reading *Health & Wellness Magazine* cover to cover for years," she says. "I love all the topics and learning about different providers. I'm honored to be featured this month—it means so much to me."

At 77 years young, Ruthie continues to substitute teach and share her positivity with everyone she meets. As a cancer survivor, her story is a testament to perseverance, trust, and the transformative power of a healthy, confident smile.

"Implants changed my life," Ruthie says. "If I spent my last penny on my smile, I'd say I spent my money well."

Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry is proud to have helped Ruthie—and countless others—achieve lasting, beautiful smiles through advanced dental implant care guided by the expertise of Dr. Eshra and his compassionate team.

About Tamer Eshra, DDS

Dr. Tamer Eshra combines advanced training with a gentle, patient-first approach. With decades of expertise in cosmetic, restorative, bone augmentation, sinus lift and implant dentistry, he creates healthy, natural-looking smiles through precision and artistry. Licensed and offering IV, oral and nitrous sedation, Dr. Eshra helps even the most anxious patients feel calm and comfortable. His compassionate care and clear communication make every visit a positive, stress-free experience.



Change Your Smile... Change Your Life!



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NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492.

It's hard to repeat that sentence without the melodic tune echoing in your head. In elementary school, we all learned about Christopher Columbus's famous expeditions in which he was given credit for "discovering" America. Columbus led four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. How did he know, or not know, where to sail? He used navigation. Navigation is defined as "the process or activity of accurately ascertaining one's position and planning and following a route". Prior to electronic navigation gadgets which currently fill our pockets men dedicated their lives to study and understand the land and water using paper maps and compasses.

Compared to breast cancer survivors, Columbus had it easy. Navigating the breast cancer journey is challenging. Behind every breast cancer survivor, you will likely find a strong support system that stood by her during some of the most difficult periods of her life. Friends and family members often join the navigation effort armed with internet searches, meals prepared with love, rides to appointments, and shoulders to cry on. These caregivers help survivors regain a sense of normalcy, provide emotional stability, and even improve the chances of a better outcome.

November is the month in which we recognize and honor family members and caregivers across the country. National Family Caregivers Month provides an opportunity to not only celebrate these treasured individuals, but to also educate communities, raise awareness of issues caregivers may face and increase support for the caregivers. The role of a supportive caregiver is one of the most important components for the emotional recovery of a breast cancer patient. Without these individuals, many cancer survivors would feel lost.

However, being a caregiver isn't without its own challenges. While being a caregiver can be incredibly fulfilling, it can also be stressful and cause fatigue and feelings of guilt. It can be overwhelming to work to find a balance between your own needs and the needs of a loved one with cancer. Often the individual's role is redefined when becoming a caregiver. It is important for the caregiver to remember to also care for themselves.



If you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to take care of others. It is ok to ask for help!

In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared a "war on cancer" by signing the Cancer Act. Almost 20 years later, Dr. Harold Freeman started a navigation program that identified barriers to timely care. Through navigation, Freeman was able to identify potential barriers that might delay or prevent a woman from accessing proper care. Recognizing the importance of navigation, President George H. Bush signed into law the "Patient Navigator and Chronic Disease Prevention Act". This public law allowed federal grants to be used to develop and provide navigation programs.

During Columbus' journeys, he likely encountered some dangerous conditions. Bad weather, disease, and financial constraints threatened his success. In order to complete his journey, he had to overcome these barriers. Breast cancer survivors face barriers and nurse navigators are trained to understand, identify, and eliminate these barriers. Nurse navigators coordinate timely movement through the multiple steps in the survivorship journey. If you or a loved one are navigating through cancer, reach out to find a nurse navigator to join your team. Remember that it is ok to receive assistance from others that are willing to help.

Find resources within the community and become informed. Feeling informed can help alleviate uncertainties and worry.

We want to say thank you to all the unsung heroes that can be found behind every breast cancer survivor for the selfless support that you provide. Your willingness to put others' needs before your own is an irreplaceable gift.

Magnolia Breast Center – The Trusted Choice for Breast Cancer Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment in Southwest Florida

Breast cancer is a serious, life-threatening disease that must be detected and treated as soon as possible. Whether you want to know your risk of developing cancer, get yourself checked for cancer, or get treated for cancer, the experts at Magnolia Breast Center can help you.

We have extensive experience in treating breast cancer patients – including highly complicated cases and patients with an advanced stage of cancer. We can determine the severity of your condition, take your unique needs and preferences into account, and devise a customized treatment plan to achieve a positive outcome.

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



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



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Taking Charge of Your Health with Preventive Care

By Paul Hemrick, DO, Family Medicine at Millennium Physician Group

It's easy to put off seeing your doctor until something feels wrong. Life is busy, schedules are full, and sometimes it feels simpler to scroll through advice online or wait it out. But your health is worth more than that.

Proactive healthcare – also known as preventive care – is one of the best ways to stay healthy and maintain a good quality of life. At Millennium Physician Group, we believe in giving you the tools, guidance, and support to make confident decisions about your wellbeing, without judgment or confusion.

Preventive Care is Your First Line of Defense

Preventive care isn't just about catching problems early; it's about helping you stay healthy so you can enjoy the life you want. Many serious conditions, like high blood pressure, diabetes, or certain cancers, can develop quietly without noticeable symptoms. That's why routine screenings, vaccinations, and wellness visits are so important.

Your healthcare team considers your age, lifestyle, and personal and family health history to recommend the right preventive care at the right time for you. This might include:

- Annual wellness visits
- Blood tests and lab screenings
- Cancer screenings
- Vaccinations
- Eye, dental, and hearing care

These preventive care services help you stay ahead of health concerns and reduce the risk of complications. The goal is simple: to keep you healthy and help catch any issues early when treatment is most effective to support your overall wellbeing.

A Personalized Approach to Care

Your health needs change throughout your life, and preventive care is designed to meet you where you are:

- For children and teens, regular pediatric visits ensure immunizations are up to date, help monitor growth and development, and build positive habits that promote lifelong health.
- For adults, preventive care focuses on routine screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, along with personalized recommendations for lifestyle choices and cancer prevention based on your history and risk factors.



- For seniors, care emphasizes maintaining independence and quality of life, managing chronic conditions, and screening for age-related concerns like osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, and memory changes.

No matter your stage of life, your healthcare team at Millennium Physician Group is here to listen, to answer your questions, and create a care plan that is tailored to your needs and goals.

Care That Listens

We understand that healthcare decisions can feel overwhelming, and that you have your own unique priorities and concerns. You may want to learn more about recommended medications, vaccines, or screenings, and that's completely normal. At Millennium Physician Group, we take the time to listen to your concerns and provide you with the most current, evidence-based guidance to help you make your health decisions.

If you choose to do more research or explore alternative approaches, we respect your choice. What matters most to our healthcare team is that you understand your risks, benefits, and options. This collaborative approach ensures you are an active participant in your care.

Uncomplicating Preventive Care

Maintaining your health does not have to be complicated. A few strategies can help you stay on track:

- Schedule appointments in advance. Plan to book your next appointment with your provider before leaving their office after your current appointment.

- Set reminders. Maybe you set reminders to pay your bills? Use the same calendar or app for reminders for screenings, lab work, and vaccinations.
- Track your health. Keep your own personal record of all your medications, lab results, and past procedures to gain a better understanding of your health and to share information with your care team.
- Ask questions. Your healthcare team can explain the "why" behind every recommendation. The more informed you are, the more confident you are about your health and your choices.

Whole-Person Care at Millennium Physician Group

Preventive care is an investment in your future, your family, and your quality of life. At Millennium Physician Group, we believe in caring for the whole person. Our value-based approach means your care is coordinated, personalized, and designed to support you – physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Every member of our team is committed to supporting your health and answering your questions so you feel empowered every step of the way. With the right care team by your side, you can take charge of your health and connect to a healthier, more confident you.

At Millennium Physician Group, your health and well-being are our priority, and every visit is an opportunity to optimize your health and to ensure you have the resources to live the life you want to live.

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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THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Peripheral neuropathy is a complex condition. Finding the root cause and the extent of damage and to what types of nerves or blood vessels is how a comprehensive plan is customized to regenerate a patient's nerves cells and tissues. Conventional medicine has no answers. It's either live with it or take addicting medications for the pain, most commonly gabapentin.

Very few physicians are trained to treat the condition. Success ideally involves collaboration of medical personnel, chiropractic and or physical therapy personnel, and functional neurology. At Feel Amazing Institute this is what we offer.

What is the Ultimate Neuropathy Program?

There are several clinics in SWFL that propose a treatment for peripheral neuropathy. There are dozens of treatments that have shown to be beneficial for the diagnosis. Many clinics do one or two of these treatment options but very few can combine and offer dozens of these options.

At Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute, we were the original clinic to create a comprehensive Neuropathy program back in 2006. There was a learning curve and results varied at first. After 16 years of experience, becoming board-certified in functional neurology, and becoming medically integrated, my clinic now has it down to a science. In 2017 my office was one of the first in the country, and I believe still the only in southwest Florida, to offer regenerative medicine and natural biologics as options for peripheral neuropathy. To date this has been the most significant endeavor to enhance results for our clients.

All neuropathies are not the same and require different programs.

Because what works well for one person may not necessarily work well for another, it's never a good idea to depend on just one or two treatments. It is just as easy to combine many types of treatments to improve the chances and the amount of success. Also the treatment must be individualized and specific.

The Ultimate Neuropathy Program should include advanced technologies to be done at a physician's office as well as treatments for self-care at home. It may include vitamin and wellness infusions to



enhance the body's internal environment for healing. It may include light therapies, electrical therapies, sound and pressure wave therapies, Pulsed electro-magnetic field therapies, regenerative medicine options, as well as lifestyle and nutritional recommendations.

Many clinics do a Toronto Clinical Neuropathy assessment and score. Some will do an infrared heat map of the feet. However, without an extensive neurological training, the interpretation of the score and image is what is key.

What to do and what not to do, and when?

Is the neuropathy peripheral or central? Big nerves or small nerves? Motor, sensory, autonomic, or all the above? One nerve or many nerves? How will the treatment differ if it's both feet, both hands, equal damage bilaterally, or worse on one side? How will the treatment differ if there is burning pain, numbness, loss of balance, weakness, or complicated by back pain or stenosis? What if the neuropathy affects the entire body? Is there a treatment for that? Yes, there are several.

Our clinic has a very sophisticated computer analysis that measures peripheral nerve function, peripheral vascular function, and central nerve function with a score for each, and an extensive report breaking down the many physiological and metabolic components. The test can be repeated after a treatment regimen and the improvement measured and quantified.



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What modalities are used for improvement?

These are prescribed on an individual basis after a thorough assessment:

- Five different electrical therapies
- Four possible light therapies
- Four types of vibration therapy
- Class 4 high powered lasers
- Pulsed electromagnetic fields (PEMF)
- Soundwave/Shockwave/pressure waves
- Spinal decompression therapy (often not needed)
- Natural supplementation and/or vitamin-wellness infusions
- Injections or infusions of Stem Cell Natural Biologics including Wharton's Jelly allografts, growth factors, and platelet rich plasma.

What kind of results can be achieved through the ultimate neuropathy treatment program at Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute?

Our patients report that better than 90% have excellent results. Most who undergo the treatment experience the following: reduced pain, reduced tingling and numbness, ability to experience normal touch without pain, reduce cold or burning sensations, improved balance and coordination, lowered dependency on medication, improved sleep, relief of restless legs, reduced swelling and inflammation, improved muscle function.

An important side benefit of 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 is equipped to diagnose and help a wide range of conditions that include:

- ✓ Peripheral neuropathy
- ✓ Severe neck and back pain
- ✓ Shoulder, elbow, or wrist pain
- ✓ Hip, knee, ankle, or foot pain
- ✓ Headache, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- ✓ Disc bulge, herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- ✓ Auto accident, whiplash injuries

If you need a highly experienced, chiropractic neurologist in Naples, Florida, look no further than Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute. For more information, to schedule a free telephone consultation, or for free informational seminar or webinar, call today!

UNDERSTANDING BREAST REDUCTION AND MASTOPEXY:

Expert Insights from Dr. Kiran Gill

For many women, the size and shape of their breasts can significantly impact both physical comfort and emotional well-being. At Naples Aesthetic Institute, Dr. Kiran Gill specializes in two transformative procedures that address these concerns: breast reduction and mastopexy (breast lift). Understanding the differences and benefits of each procedure can help you make an informed decision about which option is right for you.

Breast Reduction: Relief and Restoration

Breast reduction surgery, medically known as reduction mammoplasty, is designed to remove excess breast tissue, fat, and skin to achieve a breast size more proportionate to your body. This procedure goes beyond cosmetic enhancement—it often provides substantial relief from physical discomfort.

Women with overly large breasts frequently experience chronic neck, shoulder, and back pain. The weight of excessive breast tissue can cause posture problems, deep grooves in the shoulders from bra straps, and even skin irritation beneath the breasts. Some patients also report difficulty exercising or finding clothes that fit properly.

Dr. Gill approaches breast reduction with both functional and aesthetic goals in mind. The procedure typically involves making incisions around the areola and down the breast, removing excess tissue, and reshaping the remaining breast tissue to create a more lifted, youthful contour. The nipple and areola are repositioned to a more natural height, and the incisions are carefully closed to minimize visible scarring.

Recovery from breast reduction generally takes several weeks, with most patients returning to work within one week and resuming full activities within four to six weeks. The results are often life-changing, with patients reporting immediate relief from physical symptoms and a dramatic improvement in quality of life.

Mastopexy: Lifting and Rejuvenating

Mastopexy, commonly called a breast lift, addresses sagging or drooping breasts without necessarily changing their size. Over time, factors such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, weight fluctuations, gravity, and natural aging can cause breasts to lose their youthful firmness and position.



During a mastopexy, Dr. Gill removes excess skin and tightens the surrounding tissue to reshape and support the new breast contour. The nipple and areola are elevated to a more youthful position, creating a firmer, more aesthetically pleasing profile. Unlike breast reduction, mastopexy focuses primarily on repositioning existing tissue rather than removing significant amounts of it.

The procedure is ideal for women who are generally satisfied with their breast size but wish to restore a more youthful appearance. The incision pattern varies depending on the degree of sagging, ranging from minimal incisions around the areola to more extensive patterns that extend vertically down the breast and along the crease.

Recovery from mastopexy is similar to breast reduction, with most patients experiencing swelling and discomfort for the first few weeks. Final results become apparent once swelling subsides, typically within a few months, revealing breasts with improved shape, position, and firmness.

Making the Right Choice

Choosing between breast reduction and mastopexy—or a combination of both—depends on your individual anatomy, concerns, and aesthetic goals. During your consultation at Naples Aesthetic Institute, Dr. Gill conducts a thorough evaluation and discusses your expectations to create a personalized surgical plan.

Both procedures offer transformative results that extend beyond physical appearance. Patients often report increased confidence, improved self-image, and enhanced ability to participate in activities they previously avoided. With Dr. Gill's expertise and the advanced care available at Naples Aesthetic Institute, you can look forward to results that enhance both your comfort and confidence for years to come.

Call 239-596-8000 Today!



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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.

Call to schedule your BodyView today and save \$500.

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GUARDING YOUR VISION: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO DIABETIC EYE CARE

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide. While managing blood sugar levels is a top priority, it's crucial to recognize that diabetes can also have a significant impact on your eye health. Diabetic eye care is a vital aspect of overall diabetes management, and in this article, we will explore the key aspects of safeguarding your vision.

Diabetic Retinopathy: A Growing Concern

Diabetic retinopathy is a common eye condition among people with diabetes. Over time, high blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels in the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. This can lead to vision problems and even blindness if left untreated. Regular eye examinations are the first line of defense against diabetic retinopathy. The American Diabetes Association recommends annual eye check-ups for people with diabetes to catch any signs of retinopathy early.

Lifestyle Choices and Blood Sugar Control

Maintaining stable blood sugar levels is essential in preventing and managing diabetic eye complications. Healthy lifestyle choices play a crucial role in this aspect. A balanced diet, regular exercise, and proper medication management are all essential in controlling diabetes. By adhering to your healthcare provider's recommendations, you can significantly reduce the risk of eye complications.

The Importance of Regular Eye Exams

Regular eye examinations are the cornerstone of diabetic eye care. These exams can detect diabetic retinopathy and other eye conditions early, allowing for prompt treatment. If you have diabetes, don't skip your annual eye check-ups, even if your vision seems perfectly fine. Early detection and intervention can prevent further vision loss.

Medication and Treatment Options

If diabetic retinopathy is detected, there are various treatment options available, depending on the severity of the condition. These may include laser therapy, anti-VEGF injections, or surgery. Your ophthalmologist will determine the most suitable treatment based on your specific situation. It's crucial to follow through with the recommended treatment plan and attend all follow-up appointments.

Blood Pressure Management

High blood pressure is often a companion to diabetes and can exacerbate diabetic eye complications. Controlling your blood pressure through medication and lifestyle changes is crucial in preserving your vision. Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider can help you manage both your blood sugar and blood pressure effectively.

Protecting Your Eyes Daily

Aside from medical interventions, there are everyday steps you can take to protect your eyes. Wear sunglasses with UV protection to shield your eyes from harmful sun exposure. Manage your blood sugar levels consistently to reduce the risk of diabetic eye issues. Additionally, it's essential to quit smoking if you're a smoker, as smoking can worsen eye problems associated with diabetes.

Dietary Choices for Eye Health

A diet rich in certain nutrients can benefit your eye health. Antioxidants, such as vitamin C and E, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids, can support your retinal health. Incorporate foods like leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, and fish into your diet to promote healthier eyes. Always consult with a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian for personalized dietary advice.

Technology and Advancements

The field of diabetic eye care has seen significant advancements in recent years. Digital retinal imaging is making it easier for individuals to receive eye care. Technology and available pharmaceuticals are improving every year for these patients.

The Bottom Line

Diabetic eye care is a crucial aspect of managing diabetes and preserving your vision. By maintaining stable blood sugar levels, attending regular eye exams, and following your healthcare provider's recommendations, you can reduce the risk of diabetic retinopathy and other eye complications. Remember that your eyes are precious, and with the right approach, you can protect your vision and enjoy a higher quality of life, even while managing diabetes.



Albert Smolyar M.D.
LASIK, Cataract & Lens
Replacement Surgeon

Dr. Smolyar is a board-certified cataract and refractive surgeon with over 25 years of experience. He received his medical degree from Kursk State Medical University in the former Soviet Union. He completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Louisville and a fellowship in Neuro-Ophthalmology at Michigan State University. He completed another ophthalmology residency at Ben Gurion University in Israel prior to coming to the United States.

Dr. Smolyar specializes in premium cataract and lens replacement surgery, as well as laser vision correction with LASIK, photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), and phototherapeutic keratectomy (PTK). He also has significant expertise in cosmetic and reconstructive eyelid surgery. Dr. Smolyar is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. He was in private practice in Louisville, Kentucky, for many years, where he also served as a clinical Associate Professor at the University of Louisville Department of Ophthalmology.

He has been living in Fort Myers since 2018 with his wife and dogs; they have raised three children together. In his spare time, Dr. Smolyar enjoys swimming, scuba diving, kayaking, and fishing. He has dedicated time to providing free surgical eye care in underserved countries and considers that to be one of his passions.



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TIMELESS RESULTS, THOUGHTFULLY DONE

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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When Glasses Aren't Enough – There's Still Hope

How Low Vision Care Helps People with Vision Loss Stay Independent and Live Well

By Dr. Dennis Denick, OD, Dipl ABO, FIALVS
Low Vision of Southwest Florida

WHEN VISION LOSS CHANGES LIFE

If you've been told "there's nothing more that can be done," you're not alone—and it's not true.

Millions of Americans living with macular degeneration, geographic atrophy, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and other eye diseases struggle with everyday tasks such as reading, recognizing faces, or driving.

The loss of independence and confidence can feel overwhelming. But vision loss doesn't have to mean giving up the activities you love. With specialized Low Vision Care, many people regain function, freedom, and hope.

WHEN GLASSES AND SURGERY AREN'T ENOUGH

There comes a time when traditional glasses, contacts, or surgery can no longer provide the clarity needed for daily life. That's where Low Vision rehabilitation makes the difference.

Low Vision Care focuses on enhancing the vision you still have—your *residual vision*—using advanced optical devices and personalized strategies to help you achieve what matters most on your "wish list."

Every Low Vision evaluation begins with one powerful question: "What would you like to be able to do again that you've stopped doing because of your vision?"

Whether that's reading, watching TV, seeing loved ones' faces, or returning to work, your Low Vision specialist designs a custom plan to make those goals possible.

A LOCAL SUCCESS STORY: SEEING CLEARLY AT WORK AGAIN

A 58 year old Fort Myers man who works for a local plumbing company faced losing his job after macular degeneration made it difficult to navigate the warehouse safely.

After a comprehensive Low Vision evaluation, Dr. Dennis Denick fit him with spectacle-mounted bioptic lenses—specialized glasses that enhance central vision and improve depth awareness. He was

also prescribed a spectacle-mounted telemicroscope for computer and reading."With these glasses I can not only see my computer, but read again and resume working on projects that require seeing fine detail."

Now, he confidently moves through the warehouse, performing his job safely and effectively.

"These glasses gave me my confidence back," he said. "I can see what's in front of me again and do my job without fear. My life has improved 100%. My company *AND* my boss thank Dr Denick. Having these glasses has increased and extended my value to my company for years to come."

A TEAM APPROACH TO BETTER VISION

Low Vision Care bridges the gap between preserving sight and restoring independence.

Dr. Denick works closely with ophthalmologists and optometrists—who focus on preventing further vision loss—to help patients make functional use of the vision they still have through advanced technology, training, and individualized care.

Modern Tools for Better Vision

Today's Low Vision solutions go far beyond standard magnifiers or off-the-shelf glasses.

Specialized tools such as bioptic telescopic lenses, telemicroscopes, reading microscopes, and contrast-enhancing filters can dramatically improve visual performance.

Patients with side-vision loss from stroke or glaucoma may benefit from Side-Vision Awareness Glasses, which use built-in prisms to expand the field of view. Others with albinism or retinitis pigmentosa may find success with custom tinted filters that reduce glare and enhance contrast.

Even E-Scoop® glasses, which use proprietary lens curves and tints, can sometimes raise vision levels enough to meet Florida's driving requirements.

SEEING BETTER, LIVING BETTER

Research shows that vision loss worse than 20/40 can increase the risk of cognitive decline and depression.

Addressing functional vision loss early helps preserve independence, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life.

Low Vision care combines technology, training, and compassion—tailored to each person's lifestyle and goals. It's not about what's lost; it's about making the most of what remains.

WHY TRUST LOW VISION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA?

Exclusively Focused on Low Vision Rehabilitation

We dedicate our practice solely to helping people with vision loss.

Innovative Technology and Vision Aids

From bioptic telescopic glasses to electronic magnifiers and digital systems, we use the latest technology to maximize remaining sight.

Patient-First Approach

We take time to listen, understand your goals, and provide realistic, compassionate solutions that restore confidence and independence.

DEDICATED TO HELPING YOU SEE WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Dr. Dennis Denick, OD, Dipl ABO, FIALVS
Fellow, International Academy of Low Vision Specialists



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HONORING VETERANS WITH ADVANCED STEM CELL THERAPY A NEW HOPE FOR ARTHRITIS RELIEF

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

As we observe Veteran's Health Month, Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics recognizes the unique healthcare challenges faced by those who have served our nation. Veterans often carry the physical toll of their service well into civilian life, with arthritis and joint degeneration ranking among the most common and debilitating conditions affecting this population. Today, regenerative medicine offers new possibilities for relief through stem cell therapy.

The Veteran Arthritis Challenge

Military service demands extraordinary physical resilience. Years of carrying heavy gear, repetitive training exercises, combat injuries, and the natural wear-and-tear of active duty take a significant toll on joints. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, arthritis affects nearly one in three veterans, substantially higher than the general population. For many veterans, chronic joint pain becomes a constant companion long after their service ends, limiting mobility, reducing quality of life, and restricting participation in activities they once enjoyed.

Traditional treatments—including pain medications, cortisone injections, and physical therapy—provide temporary relief for some veterans but often fall short of addressing the underlying joint degradation. Many veterans face the prospect of joint replacement surgery, a major procedure with lengthy recovery times that may not be suitable for everyone.

How Stem Cell Therapy Works

Stem cell therapy represents a paradigm shift in treating arthritis and degenerative joint conditions. Unlike conventional treatments that merely mask symptoms, regenerative medicine aims to repair and restore damaged tissue at the cellular level.

Stem cells are the body's master cells, possessing the remarkable ability to develop into many different cell types. In orthopedic applications, these cells can differentiate into cartilage, bone, and connective tissue. When introduced into damaged joints, stem cells work in multiple ways: they reduce inflammation, modulate the immune response, promote tissue regeneration, and release growth factors that enhance healing.



Derek Wimmer, PA-C utilizes mesenchymal stem cells, which have demonstrated particular promise in treating osteoarthritis, degenerative disc disease, tendon injuries, and other musculoskeletal conditions common among veterans. The procedure is minimally invasive, typically performed on an outpatient basis, and requires significantly less recovery time than traditional surgery.

Benefits for Veterans

For veterans living with chronic joint pain, stem cell therapy offers several compelling advantages. The treatment harnesses the body's natural healing mechanisms, potentially reducing or eliminating the need for long-term pain medication use—a particularly important consideration given concerns about opioid dependency. Many patients experience improved joint function, increased mobility, and enhanced quality of life within weeks to months following treatment.

The minimally invasive nature of stem cell procedures means veterans can avoid the risks associated with major surgery, including lengthy rehabilitation periods that might interfere with work or family responsibilities. Additionally, because the therapy addresses underlying joint degeneration rather than simply managing symptoms, many patients enjoy longer-lasting relief compared to conventional interventions.

A Commitment to Those Who Served

At Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics, we understand that veterans deserve access to the most advanced medical treatments available. Our commitment extends beyond providing cutting-edge regenerative therapies to ensuring each veteran receives personalized care tailored to their unique circumstances and health history.

During Veteran's Health Month and throughout the year, we dedicate ourselves to helping veterans reclaim their mobility and reduce their pain. We work closely with veterans to determine if stem cell therapy is appropriate for their specific condition, considering factors such as the severity of joint damage, overall health status, and treatment goals.

Looking Forward

Regenerative medicine continues to evolve, and ongoing research expands our understanding of how stem cell therapy can benefit patients with arthritis and related conditions. For veterans who have given so much in service to our country, these advances offer genuine hope for a more active, pain-free future.

If you're a veteran struggling with chronic joint pain, we invite you to explore whether stem cell therapy might be right for you. Contact Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics today at 239-829-4300 to schedule a consultation and learn how regenerative medicine could help you move forward with confidence and comfort.

"Concierge treatment without the concierge price."

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A FUNCTIONAL DOCTOR'S APPROACH TO ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

The result? Hypertension reversed.

Another thing that recently got functional doctors' attention is how our inappropriately triggered immunity can lead to hypertension and vascular disease, Covid 19 being the best example. When they started looking into how exactly vascular disease develops, they noticed that it starts with the disturbance of the innermost layer called endothelium. One of the major disturbances is the decreased production of the vasodilating substance called Nitric Oxide, an increase in the production of its antagonist ADMA, and another is the excess of the endogenously produced substance called Homocysteine. We can measure all these markers with simple blood tests, to confirm that these issues are present in a particular patient. You must be thinking: but what can you do if you discover these early precursors of hypertension and vascular disease? The good news is that thanks to cutting-edge research, functional doctors work to address these disturbances with professional grade supplements, botanicals, nutritional interventions, and lifestyle modifications. Here is a real-life example from my own private practice: a new patient who had signed up with my practice, was discovered during her intake examination to have newly elevated blood pressures. While going through her medications list, I discovered that she

has been taking over the counter Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs). These were recommended to her by her doctor years ago to help with her gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD), and she was reflexively buying these pills over the counter for years.

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

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



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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THE CRITICAL CONNECTION: PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE AND DIABETIC FOOT ULCERS

By Russell Becker, DO

Living with diabetes requires vigilant attention to many aspects of health, but one of the most serious complications involves the feet. At Vascular Center of Naples, we understand that peripheral arterial disease (PAD) combined with diabetes creates a dangerous situation that can lead to diabetic foot ulcers—wounds that refuse to heal and can threaten limb preservation if left untreated.

Understanding Peripheral Arterial Disease

Peripheral arterial disease occurs when plaque builds up in the arteries that carry blood to your limbs, particularly the legs and feet. This buildup narrows the arteries, reducing blood flow to these extremities. For individuals with diabetes, PAD is especially common and particularly problematic. High blood sugar levels accelerate the development of arterial plaque, making diabetic patients up to four times more likely to develop PAD than non-diabetics.

The reduced blood flow from PAD means that tissues in the feet and legs receive less oxygen and fewer nutrients. This compromised circulation makes it extremely difficult for any wounds or injuries to heal properly, setting the stage for serious complications. Many patients don't realize they have PAD until a minor injury fails to heal, highlighting the importance of regular vascular screenings for anyone living with diabetes.

The Diabetic Foot Ulcer Crisis

Diabetic foot ulcers are open sores or wounds that develop on the feet of people with diabetes. These ulcers typically form on pressure points such as the bottom of the foot or on areas subjected to friction. What makes them particularly dangerous is the combination of three factors: poor circulation from PAD, nerve damage (neuropathy) that prevents people from feeling pain or injury, and the body's impaired healing response due to diabetes.

When PAD is present alongside diabetes, even a minor blister, cut, or callus can evolve into a serious ulcer. Without adequate blood flow, the body cannot deliver the white blood cells and nutrients necessary to fight infection and repair tissue. The ulcer may deepen, become infected, and in severe cases, lead to gangrene—tissue death that can necessitate amputation.



Statistics paint a sobering picture: approximately fifteen percent of people with diabetes will develop a foot ulcer during their lifetime, and those with PAD face significantly higher risks. Even more concerning, diabetic foot complications account for more hospitalizations than any other diabetic complication, and they remain a leading cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations in the United States.

Warning Signs to Watch

At Vascular Center of Naples, we emphasize the importance of recognizing early warning signs. PAD symptoms include leg pain or cramping when walking that improves with rest, coldness in the lower leg or foot, slow-growing toenails, shiny skin on the legs, and wounds on the feet or legs that heal slowly or not at all. Any change in skin color, development of sores, or unusual sensations should prompt immediate medical attention.

For diabetic foot ulcers specifically, watch for drainage on your socks, unusual swelling, redness, or warmth around a wound, and any opening on the foot regardless of size. The absence of pain doesn't mean absence of danger—neuropathy can mask serious problems. Some patients discover ulcers only during routine foot checks, underscoring why daily self-examinations are so crucial.

Prevention and Treatment

Prevention remains the most effective strategy. Daily foot inspections, proper footwear, controlled blood sugar levels, and regular vascular screenings can prevent many complications. Professional foot care, including regular examinations by healthcare providers experienced in diabetic foot care, is essential. Never walk barefoot, even indoors, and always check shoes for foreign objects before wearing them.

When PAD is detected, treatment options range from lifestyle modifications and medications to advanced interventions. These may include angioplasty to open blocked arteries, stent placement to keep vessels open, or bypass surgery for severe cases. Restoring adequate blood flow is crucial for healing existing ulcers and preventing new ones.

For established diabetic foot ulcers, treatment requires a comprehensive approach: pressure off-loading through specialized footwear or casts, aggressive infection control with appropriate antibiotics, meticulous wound care with advanced dressings, and most importantly, addressing the underlying vascular disease. Our team at Vascular Center of Naples specializes in advanced vascular interventions that restore blood flow, giving ulcers the best chance to heal and helping patients avoid amputation.

Take Action Today

If you have diabetes, don't wait for problems to develop. Regular vascular screenings can detect PAD before it leads to serious complications. At Vascular Center of Naples, we're committed to preserving limb health through early detection, expert treatment, and compassionate care. Your feet carry you through life—let us help you protect them.

Call us today at 239-431-5884.

It's no stretch to say that Russell Becker, DO, a fellow-trained vascular surgeon practicing at Vascular Center of Naples in Naples, Florida, gets into things for the long run. Dr. Becker, who runs marathons in his free time, has experience and interest in all areas of vascular and endovascular surgery, including treatment of conditions like carotid artery disease, hemodialysis access creation and maintenance, and diseases of the veins.



Vascular Center
of Naples

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STRUGGLING WITH KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS? PAIN AND LIMITED MOBILITY?



Personalized Regenerative Medicine Comes Home with InHome Regen LLC – Bringing the Future of Wellness to Southwest Florida

By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

In a world where medical innovation is rapidly evolving, personalized regenerative medicine is redefining how people approach vitality, recovery, and longevity. Southwest Florida residents now have convenient access to these cutting-edge advancements.

At InHome Regen LLC, the focus is on truly individualized care—every person has unique health goals and needs. Each protocol is thoughtfully designed to align with those goals, ensuring there's no "cookie-cutter" approach to care.

The practice provides a tailored suite of advanced biologic and wellness applications to support cellular repair, mobility, vitality, and graceful aging. These include regenerative procedures incorporating Wharton's Jelly, Exosomes and MSC-rich tissue biologics, each selected and customized according to the client's condition and desired outcomes.

While many advertisements make broad or exaggerated medical claims, InHome Regen LLC emphasizes integrity, education, and professionalism. The practice never makes disease-specific promises. Instead, it helps clients understand how regenerative biologics may complement their wellness goals under professional medical oversight.

Across the United States, more than a thousand biologic products are currently available—many with inconsistent data or limited peer-reviewed



research. InHome Regen distinguishes itself by offering transparency, expert guidance, and science-based protocols grounded in the latest validated research in cellular and peptide medicine.

From neuro-supportive, rheumatologic, immunologic, and aesthetic applications to mobility restoration and longevity enhancement, InHome Regen LLC delivers the benefits of advanced regenerative care directly to clients in Naples, Bonita Springs, and Fort Myers.

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. Practices in Naples, Fort Myers and Lehigh Acres, FL. His commitment to ongoing learning and patient-centered treatment makes him an invaluable partner in your health journey.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please call (855) 734-3620.



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2026 Annual Enrollment is Here!

By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dae) 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?

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the insurance carriers in your area, we are happy to help you through the maze. We offer Free Medicare Seminars, Personal Appointments & Virtual appointments. Please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

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HOW VOLUNTEERING FUELS HEALTHY AGING FOR VETERANS:

Carlisle Naples Residents Find Purpose After Service

By Greg Pascucci

After years of discipline, teamwork and sacrifice, many veterans find that life after military service can feel quieter than expected. The structure and sense of mission that once defined their days may fade, but their desire to serve often remains. For many, that lifelong instinct to be part of something larger becomes a cornerstone of healthy aging.

Research has shown that older adults who volunteer regularly experience a range of health benefits, from reduced stress and depression to improved cognition and physical fitness. For veterans, the impact can be even more profound. Engaging in meaningful service rekindles a sense of purpose and camaraderie.

"Veterans sometimes miss the connection that came with service," says Marcia Aldana, Zest Director at The Carlisle Naples, a luxury senior rental community. "When they find new ways to contribute, especially alongside peers who understand their experiences, it not only helps others but also strengthens their own well-being."

At The Carlisle Naples, many residents who served in the armed forces have discovered that same sense of belonging through the community's American Veterans Association (AVA). The group meets weekly to share stories, provide mutual support and organize service initiatives that benefit the wider community.

The AVA was founded by veteran Christopher Dietz, Clinical Therapy Director for EmpowerMe Wellness, The Carlisle Naples' onsite therapy provider. Dietz saw firsthand how reconnecting veterans could enhance emotional and physical health. The group's activities range from assembling care packages for hospice residents to coordinating clothing drives and collecting donations for local organizations.

The group offers a powerful way to channel their experiences into action and continue serving others.



Even small acts of kindness, such as mentoring younger generations or supporting fellow veterans, can make a measurable difference. The simple act of helping others restores the sense of mission that is so integral to military life.

Experts recommend:

- **Start locally:** Volunteer with hospitals, schools or nonprofit organizations.
- **Join a group:** Many communities offer veteran clubs, mentorship programs or intergenerational volunteer opportunities.
- **Honor service:** Participate in projects that support veterans, such as sending care packages, writing letters or helping organize events on Veterans Day.

Finding purpose through service can be one of the most rewarding parts of aging. As the veterans at The Carlisle Naples demonstrate, the call to serve never truly ends. It simply finds new expression in acts of compassion, connection and community.

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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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.

Call Pinnacle Health Specialists today at 239-649-3333 to schedule your consultation and take the first step toward understanding and resolving your cough.



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THE EUROPEAN FLUID FACELIFT

The Art of Subtle Transformation

By: Alina Stanciu, MD, FACS, FAAO, FASRS - Founder & Medical Director, Naples Eye & Aesthetics Institute and MediFace Spa

In the world of facial rejuvenation, surgical facelifts once stood as the only path to reversing time. But for many patients, surgery felt too invasive, the downtime too long, and the results too dramatic. Dr. Alina Stanciu, a Board-Certified Eye Physician, Surgeon, and Cosmetic Specialist, recognized the need for a gentler, more refined approach to facial restoration—one that enhances natural beauty rather than altering it.

This insight led to the creation of **The European Fluid Facelift**, an innovative, non-surgical procedure developed exclusively by Dr. Stanciu to lift, contour, and rejuvenate the face with precision and artistry.

A NEW ERA IN FACIAL REJUVENATION

Unlike traditional facelifts, which rely on incisions and skin tightening, the European Fluid Facelift uses **strategic injections of advanced dermal fillers** to restore lost volume, redefine facial structure, and smooth fine lines. The treatment is designed to **lift the midface, contour the jawline, and refresh the eyes**—without surgery, anesthesia, or extended recovery time.

What makes this technique uniquely European lies in its **balance of anatomy, aesthetics, and restraint**. Drawing from her medical training and decades of surgical experience, Dr. Stanciu approaches each face as a unique canvas. "My goal is to restore the natural harmony of the face, not to change it," she explains. "Patients should look rested, youthful, and refreshed—not 'done.'"

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE TECHNIQUE

Dr. Stanciu's method combines **multi-layered filler placement** with advanced cannula techniques to achieve natural lift and contour while minimizing bruising and swelling. The procedure typically takes less than an hour, with visible results immediately after treatment and continued improvement over the following weeks.

The European Fluid Facelift is often enhanced with **platelet-rich plasma (PRP)** or bio-stimulatory fillers, promoting collagen production for longer-lasting rejuvenation. Each treatment plan



is personalized, targeting areas where aging has caused volume loss or skin laxity. The result is a youthful, sculpted appearance—no surgery required.

A SURGEON'S PRECISION MEETS AN ARTIST'S EYE

Dr. Stanciu's expertise in **oculo-facial surgery** provides her with unparalleled knowledge of facial anatomy, muscle structure, and tissue behavior. This background allows her to perform cosmetic procedures with the same precision she applies in delicate eye surgeries. With over 20 years of experience, she has earned a reputation for delivering results that are both **scientifically advanced and aesthetically refined**.

Patients often describe their results as transformative yet completely natural. "Friends tell me I look refreshed, but they can't tell what I've done," one patient shares. "That's how I know it's perfect."

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Practicing in Naples and Bonita Springs for two decades, Dr. Stanciu leads the **Naples Eye & Aesthetics Institute and MediFace Spa**, where she and her team specialize in advanced aesthetic and ophthalmologic care. Her boutique-style practice allows for individualized attention and continuity of care—every patient receives treatment directly from Dr. Stanciu herself.



She also developed **Bella Piel MD**, a medical-grade skincare line formulated to support anti-aging, dry eye therapy, and post-procedure healing, reflecting her holistic commitment to patient wellness and confidence.

WHERE MEDICINE MEETS ART

At its core, the European Fluid Facelift embodies Dr. Stanciu's philosophy: to treat every patient as she would a loved one—with precision, compassion, and artistry.

MediFace Spa

To schedule a consultation or learn more about the European Fluid Facelift, visit www.MediFaceSpa.com or stop by her new location at:
6610 Willow Park Drive, Suite 104, Naples, FL



239-949-2020 | www.MediFaceSpa.com



REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LIFE WITH Emsella Chair

A Solution to Incontinence

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Incontinence is a silent struggle faced by a third of the US population. This common condition, often stemming from causes like childbirth, weakened muscles, or the effects of aging, can disrupt daily life and self-confidence. Many of us have heard about kegel exercises as a solution, but how many actually commit to them? The Emsella Chair is here to change the game, offering the equivalent of 11,000 kegel exercises in a single session and a total of 66,000 exercises in a full 6-session treatment. If you've experienced the toll of childbirth or are starting to have those "close calls" when nature calls, it might be time to give your pelvic floor the workout it deserves.

Incontinence is not an issue to be taken lightly, as it can have a profound impact on one's quality of life. However, there is hope for those who have been struggling with this condition. The Emsella Chair is a revolutionary solution that is making waves in the world of pelvic health.

Understanding the Causes

Childbirth, weakened muscles, and the natural aging process are some of the primary factors contributing to incontinence. Childbirth can weaken the pelvic floor muscles, making it challenging to maintain control over the bladder and causing leakage. Additionally, as we age, our muscles tend to lose their strength, including those in the pelvic region. This muscle weakening, combined with the impact of hormonal changes, can lead to incontinence issues. It's a common problem that many are hesitant to discuss, but it's essential to address it for a better quality of life.

Kegel Exercises: Easier Said Than Done

Kegel exercises are often recommended as a way to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. However, despite their potential benefits, how many of us actually follow through with these exercises consistently? Life gets busy, and it's easy to forget or lose motivation. This is where the Emsella Chair comes in as a game-changer.

Emsella Chair: The Ultimate Pelvic Workout

The Emsella Chair is a non-surgical, non-invasive treatment that can greatly improve incontinence.



Each 28-minute session is the equivalent of 11,200 pelvic floor exercises. The Emsella™ chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder sometimes as quickly as the first treatment.

The full treatment, consisting of about six sessions, delivers an incredible 66,000 kegel exercises to your pelvic floor. This innovative technology is designed to strengthen your muscles, increase bladder control, and ultimately improve your quality of life.

Who Can Benefit from Emsella?

Whether you've recently given birth and are experiencing postpartum incontinence, or you've started having those "close calls" when heading to the restroom, the Emsella Chair can be a game-changer for you. It's not just for women; men dealing with incontinence issues can also benefit from this non-invasive, FDA-approved treatment.

The Future of Pelvic Health

Incontinence can be an isolating and embarrassing condition, but it's crucial to remember that you're not alone. The Emsella Chair is reshaping the way we address pelvic health issues, offering a more efficient and convenient solution than traditional exercises. You don't have to accept incontinence as an inevitable part of aging or motherhood. With the Emsella Chair, you can regain control, confidence, and, most importantly, your life.

In conclusion, the Emsella Chair is a groundbreaking solution that promises to change the lives of many who have been silently suffering from incontinence. Don't let this condition hold you back any longer;

longer; take charge of your pelvic health and experience the benefits of this innovative treatment. You'll thank yourself for making the choice to improve your quality of life and regain control over your bladder.



Some comments from local users:

- I don't have to worry about peeing when I sneeze anymore
- My husband definitely notices the difference
- I just feel lighter down there.

To learn more about this technology please go to our website at www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com. **Call 239-449-7979 to schedule your Emsella consultation today.**



Tabitha Lane, PA-C



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C

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Diabetic Wound Healing: Why is it so Challenging to Treat?

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

Podiatrists focus on the feet and everything associated with the foot and ankle, such as the tendons, muscles, ligaments, and bones. Podiatric specialists regularly treat anything that makes up the structure, function, and health of the entire foot. In the state of Florida, a podiatrist is not only able to medically treat the foot, but they also treat the lower extremity. Because the knee is in such close relation to the effects of the foot and ankle, podiatrists regularly treat bone and soft tissue disorders from the knee down. With Diabetes, the leg, foot and ankle are often affected by wounds that do not heal!

Diabetic Wound Issues:

Diabetes is a complicated condition to gain control of, but one of the most painful parts of this disease is the development of diabetic wounds. Often these wounds become “non-healing” due to the adverse effects of the systemic disorder.

Millions of people with diabetes will suffer from diabetic foot ulcers more than once in their lifetimes. Diabetes is a progressive disease that is many times, not taken seriously enough by people predisposed to the disorder.

High blood sugar damages various organs within the body, but also has a severely adverse effect on nerves. This nerve damage happens when the blood supply is limited. The small blood vessels, which supply blood and nutrients to the nerves becomes impaired. When the nerves are no longer fed nutrients, they either die, or their signals to the brain are ineffective. The lack of brain signaling from the nerve endings makes it difficult for a person to feel pain in their foot, so often injuries and these disorders are overlooked. This syndrome is called peripheral diabetic neuropathy.

Because of this nerve damage, people with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing foot ulcers. A foot wound may not sound overly alarming to most people, but foot ulcers can be life-threatening.



These small sores go undetected due to the lack of feeling. If a patient delays treatment, foot ulcers can lead to amputation, strokes, heart attacks and severe infections that can spread throughout the entire body.

At Collier Podiatry, make it a priority to provide advanced diabetic wound services. Collier Podiatry, P.A., is the practice of Dr. Petrocelli, a board-certified podiatrist who has been practicing since 1994. With over 33 years of experience, Dr. Petrocelli provides next-level care for diabetic patients with wounds and ulcers. He is board certified in wound healing and can treat any wound below the knee.

Diabetic Wounds & Vascularization

If you have ulcers and lacerations that never fully heal, you might have a chronic wound. These are most often caused by diabetes mellitus, which causes blood vessels in the feet and hands to grow smaller. The restriction of blood flow damages nerve areas and reduces sensation.

Chronic wounds can also be caused by venous stasis, a condition of the veins in the lower legs, which also deprives your feet of adequate blood flow. With both conditions, when you bump or cut your foot or when you develop an ulcer, the lack of blood flow makes it difficult for the wound to heal.

In the endothelial layer of the dermis, vascularization must take place in order to heal the wound. The neovascularization or also known as angiogenesis is when new microvessels, fibroblast, and collagen begin to proliferate and form along with an increase in oxygen uptake and micronutrients to help grow new tissue, and to build a strong vascular blood flow to supply the proper nutrients to the dermal layers.

Along with Collier Podiatry’s advanced wound healing protocols, Dr. Petrocelli often works directly with vascular surgeons to find ways to restore blood flow to the affected area so that the wound can finally heal.

Collier Podiatry maps out your treatment plan by taking a meticulous culture of your chronic wound, which assists them in deciphering and implementing the best strategy for your diabetic wound care and prescribing the correct medications for your particular case. Collier Podiatry does all of this with the goal of ridding you of your painful chronic wounds once and for all.

Collier Podiatry’s Wound Care Treatment:

- Antibiotics
- Grafts
- Hyperbaric oxygen treatments
- Saline debridement
- Surgery
- Therapeutic footwear
- Wound care
- Vascular Treatment

People with diabetes are encouraged to do self-checks on their feet daily. As soon as you notice any redness or wounds, it is imperative to see your podiatrist.



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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

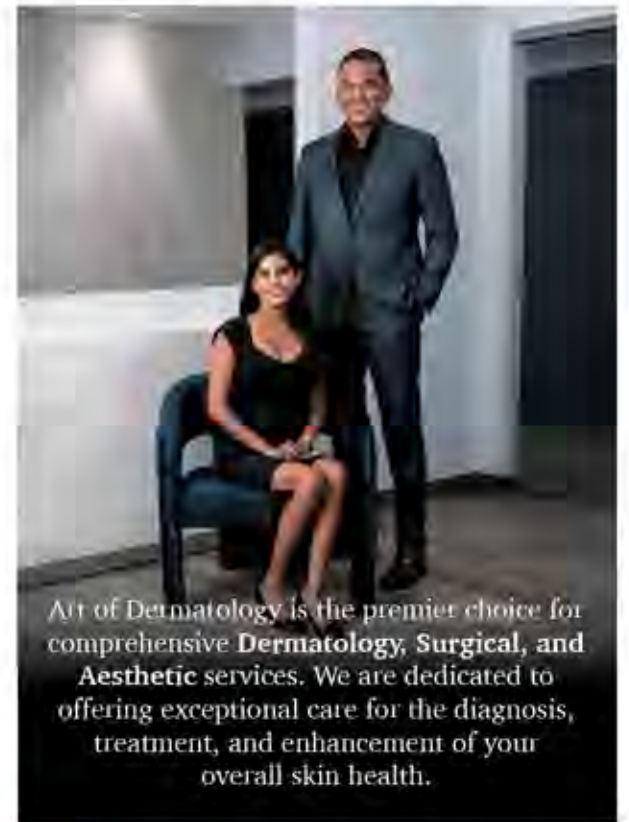
The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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.



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

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WHEN HOLIDAY TRAVEL MEETS CHRONIC PAIN:

How to Make the Journey Easier

The holidays are meant to be the season of togetherness—of family, tradition, and joy. But for many of us, before the cozy gatherings and festive meals, there's the gauntlet of holiday travel to endure.

Highways clog with bumper-to-bumper traffic. Airports swell with long lines and hurried travelers. Parking lots become battlefields. Add in last-minute errands, weather delays, and the general stress of rushing from place to place, and even the calmest person can find themselves frazzled.

Now, imagine facing all of this while also carrying the weight of chronic pain in your feet, knees, hips, or back. Suddenly, holiday travel doesn't just feel stressful—it feels almost impossible.

Why Pain Feels Worse During Travel

Travel puts the body through the wringer. Hours of sitting in a cramped car or airplane seat can stiffen joints and strain the back. Standing in long security lines puts pressure on the feet and knees. Even short sprints between airport gates can trigger pain flare-ups that make you want to call the whole trip off.

For those already living with chronic discomfort, the holidays magnify the problem. Pain turns ordinary inconveniences—like waiting in line or carrying a suitcase—into daunting hurdles. Instead of focusing on family and friends, you're left calculating how much longer you can endure standing, walking, or even sitting.

And because holiday travel often comes with rushing, the body rarely gets the breaks it needs. There's no time to stretch, no room to rest, and no way to avoid the endless on-your-feet moments. That's why so many people who struggle with chronic pain dread holiday travel, even when their hearts are full of excitement about the destination.

The Role of Foot Health in Whole-Body Pain

What many people don't realize is how central the feet are to the rest of the body. When your feet lack proper support, it can throw off your entire alignment. Over time, that imbalance can lead to discomfort in the knees, hips, and lower back.



Think of it this way: if the foundation of a house isn't stable, the entire structure feels the strain. Your body works in much the same way. Poor foot alignment can cause a ripple effect of pain that follows you everywhere—including on holiday journeys.

A Solution Designed for Real Life

Your story isn't meant to be one of pain; rather, it's meant to be one of movement, freedom, and joy. The Good Feet Store can help you write that next chapter.

How Arch Supports Can Change Your Holiday Travel

Picture this: instead of wincing every time you stand in line, you feel steady and balanced on your feet. Instead of dreading the trek through a crowded terminal, you walk with more comfort and less strain. Instead of shuffling stiffly off a long flight, you step out with greater ease.

That's the promise of proper support. By improving alignment, The Good Feet Store's arch supports can help reduce the physical toll of holiday travel. You may still face traffic, crowds, and flight delays—but your body won't be screaming at you every step of the way.

And when your body feels better, your mood often follows. Instead of arriving exhausted and sore, you can arrive energized and present, ready to enjoy the holiday moments that matter most.

The Gift of Comfort

It's easy to think of arch supports as something small, but for anyone living with chronic pain, the impact can be life-changing. The holidays are stressful enough without battling through each mile or minute in discomfort.

By supporting your feet—and, in turn, your whole body—The Good Feet Store's 3-Step Arch Support System offers more than just relief. It offers the freedom to travel with greater ease, to move through the holiday rush with less resistance, and to show up fully for the people and experiences you cherish.

Taking the First Step

Holiday travel may never be seamless. Delays will happen, crowds will gather, and the season will always come with a touch of chaos. But when you don't have chronic pain slowing you down, the stress becomes easier to manage.

If you've been living with foot, knee, hip, or back pain, now may be the perfect time to see what proper arch support can do for you. At The Good Feet Store, you can get a free fitting and test walk to experience the difference for yourself.

Because the holidays should be about joy, not about how much your body can endure. And with the right support under your feet, you might just find that travel feels lighter, easier, and a whole lot brighter.

The Good Feet Store®

America's Arch Support Experts®

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



NOVEMBER IS AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH: What Your Ears Can Tell You About Your Health

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

November is American Diabetes Month—a time when healthcare professionals across the country come together to raise awareness about diabetes and its impact on health. Most people know diabetes can affect the eyes, kidneys, heart, and nerves. But there's one connection that often flies under the radar: diabetes and hearing loss.

As an audiologist, I see firsthand how these two conditions overlap, and November is the perfect opportunity to spread the word. If you or someone you love is living with diabetes, getting your hearing checked is more important than you might think.

The Surprising Link Between Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Research shows that people with diabetes are twice as likely to experience hearing loss compared to those without the condition. Even people with prediabetes—when blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes—have a 30% higher rate of hearing loss.

Why does this happen? High blood sugar can damage the tiny blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear, the very structures responsible for translating sound into signals your brain understands. Over time, this damage makes it harder to pick up on certain sounds, especially high-pitched voices or conversations in noisy places.

Just as diabetes silently affects the eyes or kidneys before symptoms appear, hearing loss often develops gradually. Many people don't realize it's happening until family and friends start noticing first.

Hearing Loss: More Than an Inconvenience

Some might shrug off hearing changes as “just part of getting older.” But hearing health is whole-body health. Untreated hearing loss is linked to social isolation, depression, balance issues, and even cognitive decline and dementia. For people with diabetes—who already face higher risks in these areas—ignoring hearing loss can make life even more challenging.

Think about it this way: If diabetes already asks you to pay close attention to your body—monitoring blood sugar, watching your diet, exercising regularly—shouldn't hearing health also be part of the checklist?

After all, communication is at the heart of every healthy relationship, whether it's with your doctor, your spouse, or your friends.

Signs You Shouldn't Ignore

If you're living with diabetes or prediabetes, pay attention to these common early signs of hearing loss:

- Frequently asking people to repeat themselves.
- Struggling to hear in restaurants or group settings.
- Turning up the TV or radio louder than others prefer.
- Feeling like people are mumbling when they speak.
- Avoiding social activities because conversations are frustrating.

If any of this sounds familiar, it's time for a hearing test.

A Naples Perspective

Here in Naples, life is full of opportunities to connect—whether it's volunteering, attending concerts, enjoying dinner on Fifth Avenue, or playing golf with friends. But background noise is everywhere, and hearing changes can make these joyful activities feel exhausting.

I've met patients who avoided book clubs because they couldn't keep up with the discussion, or who stopped going out to dinner because restaurant chatter drowned out their companions. The good news is, with proper hearing care, these challenges don't have to limit you.

Why November Is the Perfect Time

American Diabetes Month is about taking stock of your health. It's the time when doctors, educators, and communities remind us that proactive steps make all the difference. Adding a hearing test to your November health checklist is simple, painless, and can make a meaningful impact.

Decibels

Audiology & Hearing Center

Call today and schedule your complimentary hearing test and consultation.

Helping Southwest Florida hear better for over 15 years!

239-325-0596

napleshearingaids.com

At Decibels Audiology, we offer complimentary hearing tests that take less than an hour. For patients with diabetes, this is a valuable opportunity to catch small changes early—before they interfere with your lifestyle or relationships.

Today's Solutions Are Better Than Ever

If hearing changes are discovered, today's hearing technology is worlds away from what many people imagine. Modern devices are discreet, comfortable, and designed to adapt automatically to different environments. Some even connect directly to your phone or TV, stream music, or track your activity levels.

For someone already managing diabetes, the goal is to make life simpler—not more complicated. That's why we tailor solutions to fit your routine, your budget, and your health needs.

Prevention and Protection

While diabetes increases the risk of hearing loss, there are steps you can take to protect your hearing health:

- Keep your blood sugar levels within your target range.
- Stay physically active to promote good circulation.
- Avoid smoking, which compounds blood vessel damage.
- Limit exposure to loud noises, such as concerts or power tools.
- Get your hearing checked annually, just like your eyes and teeth.

These small steps can make a big difference in protecting your hearing for years to come.

Diabetes affects millions of Americans, and here in Naples, many of our friends and neighbors are living with it. But while people are quick to get their eyes checked or their feet examined, hearing is often left out of the conversation. This November, let's change that.

At Decibels Audiology, we're here to help you hear—and live—your best. Call us today to schedule your complimentary hearing test, and make hearing health part of your diabetes care plan.



UNDERSTANDING EPILEPSY: What Everyone Should Know

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

Epilepsy affects approximately 3.4 million Americans, making it one of the most common neurological conditions in the United States. Despite its prevalence, many misconceptions about epilepsy persist. At Advanced Neurology Specialists, we believe that education and awareness are crucial for supporting those living with this condition and fostering a more understanding community.

What Is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by recurrent, unprovoked seizures. These seizures occur when there is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain, temporarily affecting how the brain works. While anyone can develop epilepsy at any age, it most commonly begins in childhood or after age 60.

It's important to understand that having a single seizure doesn't necessarily mean someone has epilepsy. The condition is typically diagnosed after a person has experienced two or more unprovoked seizures occurring more than 24 hours apart. This distinction is important because isolated seizures can result from various temporary conditions such as high fever, low blood sugar, or alcohol withdrawal.

Types of Seizures

Seizures manifest differently depending on which part of the brain is affected. Generalized seizures affect both sides of the brain and include tonic-clonic seizures, which many people recognize as convulsions involving stiffening and jerking movements. Absence seizures cause brief lapses in awareness and are often mistaken for daydreaming, particularly in children. Focal seizures begin in one area of the brain and may cause altered awareness, unusual sensations, or involuntary movements.

Not all seizures involve convulsions or loss of consciousness. Some people experience seizures that look like staring spells, confusion, repetitive movements, or sudden emotional changes. Recognizing these diverse presentations helps ensure people receive appropriate medical attention and proper diagnosis.

Causes and Triggers

Epilepsy can result from various factors including genetic predisposition, head trauma, brain infections, stroke, tumors, or developmental disorders.



However, in nearly half of all cases, the cause remains unknown despite thorough medical investigation. While we cannot always identify why epilepsy develops, we can often identify triggers that may provoke seizures in susceptible individuals, such as lack of sleep, stress, flashing lights, missed medications, alcohol consumption, or hormonal changes.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Diagnosing epilepsy requires a comprehensive evaluation including detailed medical history, neurological examination, and diagnostic tests such as electroencephalogram (EEG) and brain imaging. These tools help our specialists determine the type of epilepsy and develop an effective treatment plan tailored to each patient's needs.

Modern treatment options allow most people with epilepsy to live full, active lives. Anti-seizure medications effectively control seizures in approximately 70 percent of patients. For those who don't respond to medication, other treatments including surgery, vagus nerve stimulation, responsive neurostimulation, or dietary therapy such as the ketogenic diet may be viable options.

Living with Epilepsy

Beyond medical treatment, lifestyle management plays a vital role in seizure control. Maintaining regular sleep schedules, managing stress effectively, taking medications as prescribed, and avoiding known triggers all contribute to better outcomes. Many people with well-controlled epilepsy can drive, work, exercise, and participate in most activities with appropriate precautions.

How to Help During a Seizure

Knowing how to respond when someone has a seizure can be lifesaving. Stay calm and protect the person from injury by moving nearby objects away. Cushion their head with something soft and time the seizure. Never restrain the person or put anything in their mouth, as this can cause injury.

Turn them gently on their side to keep the airway clear and allow saliva to drain. Call emergency services if the seizure lasts longer than five minutes, if another seizure follows immediately, if the person is injured, has difficulty breathing, or is pregnant.

Breaking Down Stigma

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing people with epilepsy isn't medical but social. Stigma and misunderstanding can affect employment opportunities, relationships, and overall quality of life. Education helps break down these barriers and creates supportive environments.

At Advanced Neurology Specialists, we are committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate care while advancing epilepsy awareness in our community. If you or someone you love experiences seizures, we encourage you to seek evaluation. With proper diagnosis and treatment, most people with epilepsy can achieve excellent seizure control and live without limitations.

Cory Lamar, MD, is a triple-board certified neurologist at Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, in Naples, Florida. His mission is to provide high-quality neurological care to individuals living in and around Collier County.

Dr. Lamar is a native Floridian and became fascinated with the complexity of the brain during a neuroscience course at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. After completing his medical degree with high honors, Dr. Lamar completed a neurology residency and fellowship at Wake Forest Baptist Health in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

Dr. Lamar is triple board-certified in neurology, clinical neurophysiology, and epilepsy. At Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, he treats a wide variety of neurological conditions, including Parkinson's disease, dementia, multiple sclerosis, headaches, and seizure disorders. He also provides stroke screening, prevention, and rehabilitation.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Lamar and the team at Advanced Neurology Specialists, LLC, call the office or request an appointment online today.



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INTERVIEW WITH DR. MICHAEL SHAFFER: THE M7 MLS THERAPY LASER

Health and Wellness Magazine: Dr. Shaffer, thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. You've been in practice for over 44 years, helping patients with chronic and difficult cases. Can you tell us a bit about the latest addition to your treatment options, the M7 MLS Therapy Laser?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: It's my pleasure! Yes, the M7 MLS Therapy Laser is the newest technology we've brought into our practice, and I'm very excited about it. We're the first in the area to have the M7 model, and it's been a real game changer for pain management. It allows us to treat a wide range of conditions using robotic light therapy, which is both safe and effective.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That sounds fascinating. How does this laser therapy work, and what makes it different from other treatments?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The M7 MLS Therapy Laser uses specific wavelengths of light to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and promote healing at the cellular level. What sets the M7 apart from other modalities is its advanced robotic system that delivers precise, consistent treatments with 50 watts of peak power. This allows for deeper penetration of the laser, meaning we can address more severe cases or reach deeper tissues without compromising patient safety.

Health and Wellness Magazine: That's impressive. What kinds of conditions can the M7 laser treat?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The M7 can be used to treat a wide variety of conditions, especially those involving musculoskeletal pain. This includes arthritis, tendonitis, sprains, strains, sports injuries, and even post-surgical recovery. The laser therapy works well for both acute injuries and chronic pain. Because it helps reduce inflammation and speeds up tissue regeneration, we've seen excellent results in patients with long-term issues like joint pain and neuropathy.

Health and Wellness Magazine: You mentioned this laser has a robotic feature. Can you explain how that benefits patient care?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: Absolutely. The robotic arm on the M7 ensures that the treatment is delivered in a uniform and precise manner. The system is programmed with four different treatment modalities,



allowing us to customize therapy based on the patient's specific condition. This means we can tailor the treatment to provide optimal results, reducing the variability that can come with manual application.

Health and Wellness Magazine: How has incorporating the M7 laser into your practice enhanced patient outcomes?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: The feedback from patients has been overwhelmingly positive. They're experiencing faster recovery times, and for many, the pain relief has been more significant than with other treatments. We're seeing improvements in patients who have struggled with chronic pain for years, sometimes within just a few sessions. What's especially beneficial is that this laser therapy is non-invasive, so patients don't have to worry about downtime or recovery after treatment.

Health and Wellness Magazine: Safety is always a big concern with new technologies. Can you talk about the safety features of the M7?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: Safety is a top priority, and the M7 has been designed with this in mind. The laser's software includes enhanced safety protocols, such as adjusting the intensity automatically to ensure it's never too high for the treatment area. There are also built-in safety features that prevent overheating and protect sensitive areas of the body. Patients can feel confident knowing that the therapy is both effective and safe.

Health and Wellness Magazine: With over four decades of experience in patient care, what led you to incorporate cutting-edge technologies like the M7 MLS Therapy Laser?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: I've always believed in offering my patients the best care possible. Throughout my career, I've continuously looked for new ways to enhance treatment outcomes, especially for chronic and complex cases. The M7 laser is part of that commitment. It allows us to stay at the forefront of pain management and non-surgical treatment, non-pharmaceutical, non-invasive options, giving our patients access to the most advanced therapy available.

Health and Wellness Magazine: It's clear that you're dedicated to evolving the care you provide. How does this fit with your overall philosophy as a healthcare provider?

Dr. Michael Shaffer: My approach has always been to treat the whole patient, not just the symptoms. That means using a combination of proven methods such as non-surgical spinal decompression and innovative treatments to address the root cause of pain or dysfunction. The M7 laser helps us do that more effectively by promoting true healing at the cellular level, not just masking the pain. It's a tool that fits perfectly into our mission of helping patients achieve long-term health and wellness.

Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, non-surgical spinal decompression, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation.

For a more information, please call (239)793-3200.



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How Blood Sugar Shapes Your Brain: The Overlooked Side of Diabetes Prevention

By Dr. Waldo Amadeo

Every November, American Diabetes Month reminds us to look at blood sugar through the lens of glucose monitors and dietary choices. Yet the conversation rarely extends to the organ most dependent on that sugar: the brain. At Heal Thyself Institute, we see daily how blood-sugar dysregulation can masquerade as anxiety, brain fog, and poor focus long before a lab test labels it “diabetes.”

THE BRAIN'S FUEL AND FRAGILITY

The brain consumes roughly 20 percent of the body's glucose at any given moment. Unlike muscle tissue, neurons cannot store sugar for later use — they depend on a steady stream from the blood. When levels swing too high or too low, the brain feels it first.

- **Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)** triggers adrenaline release: heart racing, sweaty palms, irritability, and sudden panic.
- **High blood sugar (hyperglycemia)** promotes inflammation and oxidative stress that damage neuronal connections over time.

In functional neurology we see how this instability disrupts neurotransmitters like serotonin and GABA — chemicals responsible for calm mood and clear thinking.

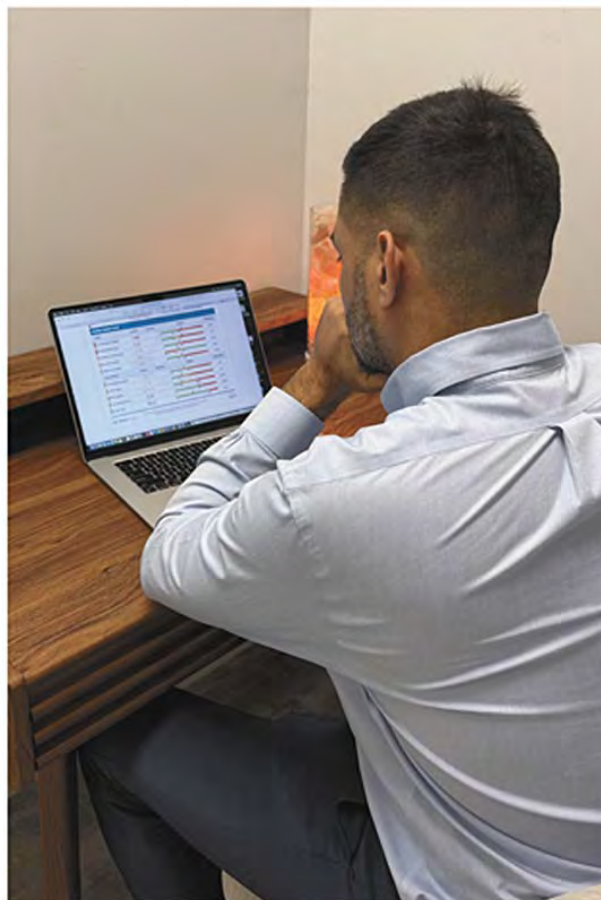
THE INFLAMMATION LOOP

Chronically elevated insulin can impair the blood-brain barrier, allowing inflammatory molecules to enter the central nervous system. Microglial cells — the brain's immune defenders — switch on and stay on. The result is a smoldering neuro-inflammation that correlates with depression, fatigue, and neurodegenerative disease. Researchers now refer to Alzheimer's as “Type 3 diabetes” for a reason.

HIDDEN SIGNS OF GLYCEMIC IMBALANCE

Many patients never suspect their blood sugar is to blame for their symptoms. Common neuro-metabolic clues include:

- Needing caffeine or sugar to “get going.”
- Feeling shaky, angry, or foggy when meals are missed.
- Crashing mid-afternoon or after carb-heavy meals.



- Waking at 2–3 a.m. with anxious thoughts and racing heart.
- Forgetfulness or poor word recall despite a healthy diet.

Functional testing can quantify the imbalance long before fasting glucose or A1C rise. Markers like fasting insulin, C-peptide, and organic-acid profiles reveal how cells are actually handling glucose and mitochondrial energy.

STABILIZING THE BRAIN THROUGH THE BODY

1. **Eat consistently and build balanced plates.** Combine a high-quality protein and healthy fat with each meal to slow glucose absorption.
2. **Move often.** Even a 10-minute walk after eating improves insulin sensitivity and cerebral blood flow.
3. **Sleep and stress management.** Cortisol spikes raise blood sugar; poor sleep makes the brain resistant to insulin the next day.

4. **Support mitochondria.** B-vitamins, magnesium, and CoQ10 aid neuronal energy production.

5. **Nervous-system regulation.** Vagal stimulation, PEMF, and neurofeedback help the brain shift from “fight or flight” to “rest and digest,” stabilizing glucose control through the autonomic pathways.

A Brain-First Perspective on Prevention

The future of diabetes care must extend beyond diet and exercise to include neuro-metabolic health. When patients learn to balance their blood sugar, they often report improved focus, memory, and emotional stability — proof that healing the body and the brain are inseparable goals.



MEET THE DOCTOR

Dr. Waldo Amadeo, DC
Dr. Waldo Amadeo is a chiropractor and functional neurology practitioner who explores the vital link between metabolic health and brain function. He focuses on how blood-sugar regulation influences mood, focus, and long-term neurological resilience.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Dr. Amadeo earned his Bachelor of Science in Human Biology from the University of Puerto Rico and his Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Life University, where he was recognized for his expertise in critical thinking and served as President of the Sacro Occipital Technique™ Club.

At Heal Thyself Institute in Naples, FL, Dr. Amadeo combines chiropractic care, neuroplastic therapies, and functional medicine testing to identify the root causes of imbalance and support optimal brain performance.



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Benefits of Cervical Disk Replacement for Radiating Arm Pain

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

If you've ever experienced a sharp, shooting pain that travels from your neck down into your arm, you know how debilitating it can be. This condition, often called radiating arm pain or cervical radiculopathy, typically stems from issues in the cervical spine. Between each vertebra in your spine sits a disk that acts like a cushion, absorbing shock and allowing flexibility. Over time, these disks can wear out, herniate (bulge out), or degenerate, pressing on nearby nerves. When that happens, the pain can radiate along the nerve path into your shoulder, arm, or even fingers, accompanied by numbness, tingling, or weakness.

For many patients, conservative treatments like physical therapy, medications, or injections provide relief. But when these aren't enough, surgery might be recommended. One increasingly popular option is cervical disk replacement (CDR), also known as cervical arthroplasty. Unlike traditional spinal fusion, which permanently joins two vertebrae together, CDR involves removing the damaged disk and inserting an artificial one that mimics the natural disk's function. This procedure is performed through a small incision in the front of the neck, under general anesthesia, and aims to relieve nerve pressure while maintaining mobility.

So, what makes CDR a compelling choice specifically for radiating arm pain? Let's explore the key benefits, drawing from medical insights and patient experiences.

Effective Pain Relief

The primary goal of CDR is to decompress the pinched nerves causing your arm pain. By removing the problematic disk and replacing it with an artificial implant, surgeons can alleviate the pressure on nerve roots. Studies and patient reports show that this leads to significant improvement in radiating symptoms. For instance, many people experience a reduction in arm pain, tingling, and numbness shortly after surgery. One study found that CDR provides comparable or better relief for patients with arm pain dominant over neck pain, with lasting results.

Unlike fusion, which can sometimes leave residual discomfort due to altered biomechanics, CDR allows for more natural movement, potentially leading to complete elimination of pain. Patients often report



less surgery-related discomfort post-CDR, including reduced trouble swallowing and throat irritation, thanks to its less invasive nature. Research indicates that the majority of patients see improved neck function and decreased pain levels overall. In fact, artificial disks can offer long-term relief, with some studies suggesting durability over many years.

Preservation of Natural Motion

One of the standout advantages of CDR is that it preserves your neck's natural range of motion. In spinal fusion, the fused segment becomes rigid, which can limit how you turn your head or look up and down. This stiffness might not only feel unnatural but could also contribute to ongoing discomfort. CDR, on the other hand, uses a prosthetic disk designed to flex and rotate like your original one, allowing you to maintain everyday activities without restriction.

For those with radiating arm pain, this motion preservation is crucial because it helps avoid compensatory strain on other parts of the spine. Patients often report feeling more "normal" after recovery, with the ability to drive, work, or exercise without the limitations imposed by fusion. This freedom enhances quality of life, enabling you to engage in hobbies, sports, or simple tasks like reaching overhead without pain.

Reduced Risk of Future Problems

Another major benefit is the lower risk of adjacent segment degeneration—a common issue after fusion where nearby disks wear out faster due to increased stress. Since CDR keeps the spine moving naturally, it distributes forces more evenly, potentially preventing the need for additional surgeries

down the line. This is especially appealing for younger, active patients who want a long-term solution without repeated interventions. By maintaining spinal alignment, CDR also supports better posture, reducing strain on muscles and ligaments.

Faster Recovery and Return to Life

Recovery from CDR is often quicker than from fusion. The procedure is minimally invasive, with smaller incisions and less disruption to surrounding tissues. Many patients go home the same day or after a short hospital stay, and they can resume light activities within weeks. Physical therapy focuses on gentle strengthening, and full recovery typically takes 4-6 weeks, compared to longer timelines for fusion.

Post-op instructions emphasize wound care, avoiding heavy lifting, and gradual mobility increases. This faster return to normalcy means less time off work and quicker relief from the arm pain that's been holding you back. Patients often feel empowered to reclaim their active lifestyles sooner.

Who Might Benefit?

CDR is ideal for patients with single-level disk issues causing radiating arm pain, without severe arthritis or instability. It's not for everyone—your surgeon will assess factors like age, overall health, and imaging results. While risks exist, such as infection or implant issues, success rates are high, with many patients enjoying pain-free lives.

In summary, cervical disk replacement offers a modern, motion-preserving alternative that effectively targets radiating arm pain by relieving nerve pressure, reducing future risks, and promoting quicker recovery. If you're struggling with this condition, contact the spine specialists at Apex Brain & Spine for a consultation to see if cervical disk replacement is an option for you.



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Why Diabetic Eye Disease Often Goes Undiagnosed – and How to Catch It Early

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

Many people assume they'd notice if something were wrong with their eyes. But retinal conditions like diabetic retinopathy often develop silently, without obvious symptoms in the early stages. By the time vision changes are noticeable, irreversible damage may have already occurred. That's why regular diabetic eye exams are so important — even if your vision seems perfectly fine.

Why You May Not Know You Have Diabetic Eye Disease

Diabetic retinopathy, the most common form of diabetic eye disease, usually doesn't cause pain or noticeable vision loss early on. When symptoms do appear, they can be subtle — like slightly blurry vision or occasional floaters — that are easy to dismiss or mistake for normal changes.

Additionally, many people with Type 2 diabetes don't know they have it, which means they may not realize they're even at risk for diabetic eye disease until an eye exam reveals underlying damage.

Diabetic Eye Screening vs. Regular Eye Test

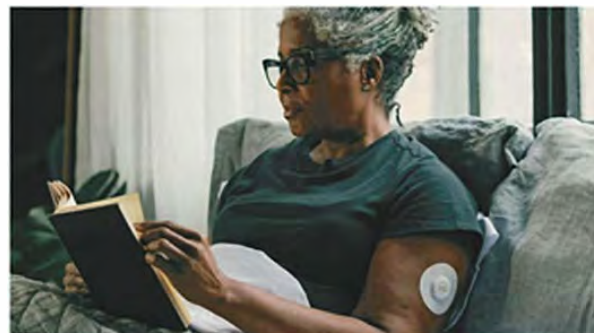
A standard eye exam is designed to check your vision and screen for common eye issues. A diabetic eye exam goes deeper — it's specifically focused on identifying early signs of diabetic eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, macular edema, and more.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA):

- **Type 1 diabetes:** Have a dilated eye exam within five years of diagnosis, then annually.
- **Type 2 diabetes:** Have a dilated exam shortly after diagnosis. Depending on the results, your doctor may recommend exams every one to two years.
- **Pregnancy and diabetes:** Pregnant individuals with diabetes should be examined in the first trimester and again in the last trimester.

A diabetic eye exam typically includes:

- **Pupil dilation:** Drops are used to widen the pupils, giving your eye doctor a better view of the retina.
- **Ophthalmoscopy/Fundus photography:** Ophthalmoscopy (funduscopy) is a physical



examination of the eye's interior using an ophthalmoscope, while fundus photography is a diagnostic imaging technique that uses a special camera to capture detailed images of the retina.

- **Optical coherence tomography (OCT):** This non-invasive medical imaging technique provides detailed, high-resolution images of the retina and other eye structures.

- **Additional tests:** Retina specialists may check visual acuity and measure eye pressure to assess for cataracts and signs of glaucoma.

The Importance of Early Detection

Diabetic eye disease is one of the leading causes of blindness in U.S. adults, but it doesn't have to be. According to the CDC, 90% of diabetes-related blindness is preventable with early detection and treatment. Yet in 2023, only two-thirds of adults with diagnosed diabetes received an annual eye exam.

That gap puts millions of people at risk for avoidable vision loss. The problem? Diabetic eye disease often progresses silently, without noticeable symptoms, until the damage is done. The only reliable way to detect it early is through a comprehensive, dilated eye exam before symptoms appear, not after.

Schedule a Diabetic Eye Disease Screening

If you have diabetes, seeing a retina specialist regularly can help protect your vision long-term. The earlier we detect diabetic eye disease, the more treatment options are available — and the better your outcomes.

At Retina Group of Florida, our experienced retina specialists provide expert care for patients across the state. Contact us today to schedule your exam at one of our retina centers in Charlotte, Sarasota, Cape Coral, Naples, and Fort Myers.



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

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

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

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

Retina Group of Florida

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

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



Retina Group
of Florida™

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

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VAGUS NERVE DYSFUNCTION IN LONG COVID & POTS: A NATUROPATHIC OVERVIEW

Brain Rejuvenation Clinic of Naples

The **autonomic nervous system (ANS)** controls involuntary body functions like heart rate, digestion, blood pressure, and breathing. It is made up of the **sympathetic** ("fight or flight") and **parasympathetic** ("rest and digest") branches. The **vagus nerve**, a key part of the parasympathetic system, helps regulate inflammation, cardiovascular function, digestion, and mood.

In conditions such as **Long COVID** and **POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome)**, the vagus nerve may become damaged or **dysregulated**. This dysfunction, known as **dysautonomia**, can result from:

- Viral or immune injury to vagus nerve tissue
- Chronic neuroinflammation or cytokine overactivation
- Disrupted vagal signaling to the brainstem
- Impaired nerve blood flow (e.g., due to microclots)
- Reduced vagal tone triggering sympathetic overdrive

Common symptoms include rapid heart rate when standing (orthostatic intolerance), brain fog, fatigue, GI issues, and breathlessness.

Testing the ANS

Accurate diagnosis is essential for treatment. Key **ANS tests** include:

- **Tilt table test** - identifies POTS by assessing heart rate and blood pressure responses
- **Heart rate variability (HRV)** - measures vagal tone and autonomic balance
- **Valsalva maneuver** - tests baroreflex sensitivity
- **QSART and sweat tests** - assess small nerve fiber function

These tests help track vagus nerve function and autonomic balance over time.

Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS) & Acupuncture

Non-invasive VNS is an emerging therapy using gentle electrical or mechanical stimulation to activate the vagus nerve. **Transcutaneous VNS (tVNS)**, especially via ear-based (auricular) points, has shown promise in improving fatigue, cognitive issues, and mood in Long COVID.

Electrical acupuncture pens can be used on vagus-innervated points (e.g., ear or neck) to mimic tVNS effects. These tools, along with **traditional auricular acupuncture**, have been shown to improve HRV and support nervous system balance—aligning with naturopathic principles of restoring whole-body regulation.

PEMF & BAHl Therapy: Natural Support for Vagal Tone

Natural energy-based modalities like **PEMF** and **BAHl therapy** are gaining traction for autonomic recovery:

1. PEMF (Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy)

PEMF uses low-frequency electromagnetic waves to boost microcirculation, reduce inflammation, and enhance mitochondrial function. It has been shown to improve HRV and support parasympathetic activity—key for healing the ANS.

2. BAHl Therapy

BAHl combines several supportive modalities:

- **Sonic Vibration Therapy** - stimulates circulation and nerve pathways, potentially enhancing vagal reflexes
- **Photobiomodulation (PBM)** - red/infrared light boosts mitochondrial energy and reduces oxidative stress; when applied near vagal regions, it may directly stimulate vagus function

- **Molecular Hydrogen Inhalation** - provides antioxidant and anti-inflammatory support, potentially protecting and healing nerve tissue

- **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)** - increases oxygen delivery to tissues, reduces inflammation, and supports neural repair. HBOT has shown benefits in improving HRV and vagal tone in autonomic dysfunction

Synergistic Healing

Together, these therapies may:

- Improve **blood flow and oxygenation** to nerves
- Reduce **oxidative stress and neuroinflammation**
- Boost **mitochondrial and neural function**
- Enhance **parasympathetic tone** and vagus nerve activity

For individuals with **Long COVID**, **POTS**, or other forms of **dysautonomia**, these therapies may offer integrative, non-invasive support for restoring balance and improving resilience.

Call us at (239) 877-2900 to schedule a consultation or a treatment.



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The DRIPBaR Naples Introduces Revolutionary PlaqueX Therapy

A NATURAL ALTERNATIVE TO STATINS

The DRIPBaR Naples is proud to announce the addition of PlaqueX IV therapy to our comprehensive menu of wellness treatments. This groundbreaking therapy offers patients a scientifically-backed approach to addressing cardiovascular health, specifically targeting soft arterial plaque that contributes to atherosclerosis and related conditions.

Understanding the PlaqueX Difference

PlaqueX represents a paradigm shift in how we approach cardiovascular wellness. Unlike traditional statin medications that focus solely on lowering cholesterol numbers, PlaqueX IV infusions work at the cellular level to address the root cause of arterial plaque accumulation. The therapy utilizes polyenylphosphatidylcholine (PPC), a naturally occurring phospholipid that plays a crucial role in cell membrane health and repair.

As we age, our body's natural ability to produce PPC declines, particularly after age 50. This decline leaves our cells unable to adequately repair the constant damage to cell membranes, including those lining our arterial walls. PlaqueX therapy replenishes these essential phospholipids, allowing the body to restore normal cellular function and health naturally.

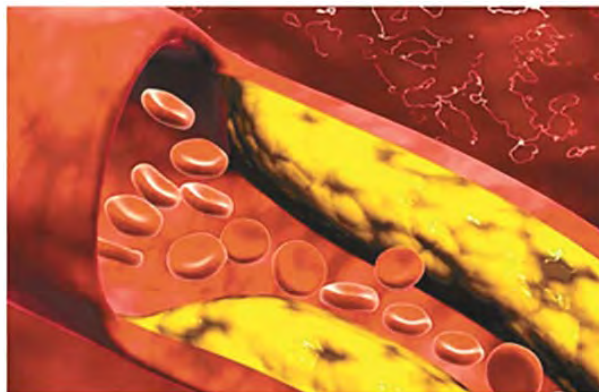
How PlaqueX Works

The science behind PlaqueX is both elegant and powerful. The therapy works by increasing LCAT, an enzyme responsible for cholesterol uptake by HDL (the "good" cholesterol) from vascular walls. Rather than breaking off pieces of plaque that could cause dangerous blockages, PlaqueX operates on a metabolic and biochemical level, gently facilitating the body's natural healing processes.

Each treatment involves an intravenous infusion administered over approximately 90 minutes. The IV delivery method is essential, as it achieves plasma levels of 100 percent, compared to only 10 to 30 percent with oral administration. This superior bio-availability makes IV therapy significantly more effective for treating atherosclerosis and related cardiovascular conditions.

Breaking Free from Statins

One of the most exciting aspects of PlaqueX therapy is its potential to help patients reduce or eliminate their dependence on statin medications. Many patients have taken statins for years, experiencing



side effects such as muscle pain, fatigue, and cognitive issues, while watching their cardiovascular health continue to decline.

PlaqueX offers a different path. By addressing soft plaque accumulation and improving overall vascular health, patients may find their cholesterol levels naturally improving. Healthcare providers monitor cholesterol levels throughout treatment and can work with patients to gradually reduce statin dosages as improvements occur. It's important to note that PlaqueX will never lower cholesterol below normal levels, unlike statins, which can drive cholesterol dangerously low and actually increase mortality rates.

Wide-Ranging Health Benefits

While cardiovascular health is the primary focus, PlaqueX therapy has demonstrated benefits across multiple health conditions. The therapy has shown promise in supporting liver health, kidney function, and certain inflammatory conditions. Recent studies have even suggested improvements in cognitive function and macular degeneration.

The treatment has also gained attention for helping patients experiencing concerning blood health issues following certain medical interventions. Patients often see improvements after just two to three treatments, which can be verified through specialized testing.

A Comprehensive Treatment Protocol

At The DRIPBaR Naples, we understand that optimal results require a comprehensive approach. PlaqueX therapy can be combined with other treatments, including chelation therapy and ozone therapy, following specific protocols to maximize benefits. Our experienced team works with each patient to develop a customized treatment plan based on their individual health status and goals.

The typical treatment protocol involves a series of infusions, with the exact number determined by the severity of plaque accumulation and individual patient factors. Follow-up testing helps track progress and adjust treatment as needed. Many patients choose to continue with maintenance therapy to preserve the improvements achieved.

The DRIPBaR Naples Commitment

By introducing PlaqueX therapy, The DRIPBaR Naples continues our mission to provide cutting-edge wellness solutions that empower our clients to take control of their health naturally. We believe in therapies that work with the body's innate healing mechanisms rather than simply masking symptoms with pharmaceutical interventions.

If you're struggling with cardiovascular concerns, taking statins with unpleasant side effects, or simply want to proactively protect your heart health, PlaqueX therapy at The DRIPBaR Naples may offer the solution you've been seeking. Contact us today to learn more about how this revolutionary therapy can transform your cardiovascular wellness journey.

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Understanding Sleep - Orthosomnia: A Technological Sleep Disorder

Demystifying Sleep and the Rise of Orthosomnia

By Dr. Ernesto Eusebio

As a sleep specialist, I often work to clarify misconceptions about sleep. Many patients, especially those struggling with insomnia, find that their issues stem from misunderstandings about their own sleep patterns. Sleep is an essential aspect of a healthy lifestyle, providing our bodies and brains with the opportunity for vital maintenance. During sleep, the brain remains active, with its activity peaking during REM sleep. However, this heightened activity serves a different purpose than during wakefulness: it prepares the brain for the coming day.

Sleep disturbances can arise from various sources, but a particularly unique disruption is caused by our own preoccupation with obtaining sufficient sleep. The advent of sleep trackers, unfiltered information from the internet, and sometimes well-meaning but misleading advice from social media have fueled a growing obsession with achieving perfect sleep. This phenomenon has given rise to a newly recognized condition known as Orthosomnia.

What Is Orthosomnia?

Orthosomnia describes an excessive concern with achieving ideal sleep, often driven by data from wearable sleep tracking devices. Ironically, this pursuit can worsen sleep quality and exacerbate insomnia symptoms. As individuals become fixated on perfect sleep numbers, anxiety increases, maladaptive behaviors develop, and a frustrating cycle ensues—ultimately impairing sleep further. These patterns closely resemble the cognitive and behavioral traits seen in insomnia.

With these concerns in mind, I have written this article to demystify sleep and highlight some often overlooked but important aspects of healthy sleep.

Common Sleep Myths Debunked

Myth #1: More Sleep Is Always Better

Although sleep is restorative, more is not always better. Research indicates that each person has a "sweet spot" for sleep duration—falling below this threshold increases overall mortality, but so does exceeding it. For most individuals, the ideal amount of sleep is just over seven hours per night.

Myth #2: Everyone Should Sleep 7-8 Hours a Day

The common belief that everyone needs seven to eight hours of sleep is not entirely accurate. Most people need to spend that amount of time in bed to ensure adequate rest, but individual sleep needs vary. Genetics play a significant role, and some people function well with just five hours, while others—especially teenagers and young adults—may require nine to ten hours for optimal health.

Myth #3: You Can't Recover Lost Sleep

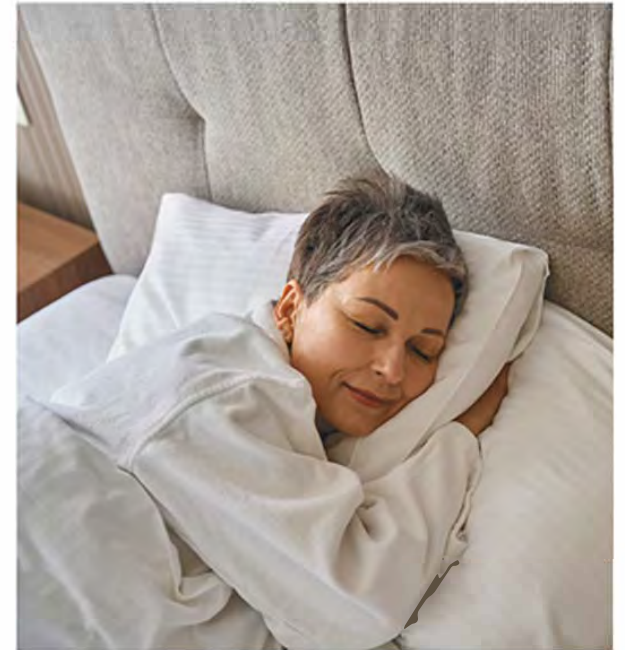
Humans are remarkably adaptable, and while missing a night of sleep is unfortunate, it is not irreversible. A longer night after a poor one can be more restorative, but true recovery typically requires several consecutive nights of sufficient sleep—often seven to ten. Rather than viewing sleep debt as a loan that must be repaid all at once, think of it as a lease, requiring consistent payments over time to fully recover.

Myth #4: Sleeping with a Sleep Aid Is Better Than Poor Sleep

While medications like Zolpidem and common hypnotics may improve sleep metrics, studies have not shown significant reductions in disease or mortality from their use. In fact, most have demonstrated an increase in overall mortality. Some over-the-counter sleep aids are associated with dementia, while others can cause memory impairment, constipation, or urinary retention. For these reasons, sleep providers generally aim to manage insomnia and sleep disturbances without relying on sleep aids.

Myth #5: My Bad Day Is a Result of My Bad Night

Though sleep is important, attributing every difficult day to poor sleep can worsen both orthosomnia and insomnia. While insufficient sleep can make the day more challenging, most people operate with some sleep deprivation and still manage to function well. Attempting to force sleep often backfires, so it is best not to blame every bad day on a bad night. One certainty is that worrying about tomorrow at bedtime will lead to less sleep tonight.



Myth #6: I Can Always Tell When I Didn't Sleep Enough

Sleep perception is often misleading. Some of the worst sleepers, such as those with severe sleep apnea, may feel they sleep well, while excellent sleepers sometimes report insomnia and poor sleep quality. This confusion is normal because sleep involves a temporary loss of consciousness—making it impossible to pinpoint when you actually fell asleep. Upon waking, assumptions are made about sleep quality, which may not reflect reality. This is why it's advised not to check the clock repeatedly at night, as it can create false impressions about sleep duration.

Conclusion: Practical Steps for Healthy Sleep

If you are uncertain about your sleep, begin by ensuring you spend seven to eight hours in bed—up to one hour more if you are under 35. Sleep trackers can help monitor the time spent in bed. However, if you continue to experience sleepiness or feel that your sleep is not restorative, consult a sleep specialist. Early intervention is key to optimizing sleep health, just as with other medical conditions.

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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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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.

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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.

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WEATHERING THE STORM: SAFEGUARDING YOUR ESTATE PLAN IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Practical Steps to Protect Your Legacy from Hurricanes and Unexpected Events

By Ryan G. Welker, Attorney, Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A.

Preparing for Life's Storms

Living in Southwest Florida, we know that storm season is more than just a range of dates on the calendar—it's a reality that shapes our routines and our sense of security. When a hurricane approaches, we board up windows, stock up on supplies, and check on our neighbors. But how many of us think to safeguard something just as crucial as our homes—our estate plans? Just as a sturdy roof keeps the rain out, a well-prepared estate plan can protect your loved ones and your legacy from life's unexpected "weather events."

Estate Planning and Unexpected Events: Don't Wait for the Clouds

Hurricanes remind us that some things are out of our control. Estate planning is about taking charge of what you can. Imagine your will, trusts, and powers of attorney as your family's emergency kit—they're the tools that help your loved ones navigate the aftermath of any crisis, whether it's a sudden storm, a health emergency, or an unexpected loss. Without these legal "umbrellas," your family could face confusion, delays, and unnecessary expenses just when they need clarity and support the most.

Protecting Your Documents: What Happens If Disaster Strikes?

Physical estate planning documents are vulnerable—think of them like your insurance papers or property deeds. Hurricanes, floods, and fires can destroy safes and filing cabinets, leaving your wishes adrift. If your original will or other key documents are lost or damaged, Florida law has specific procedures for what happens next.

In Florida, if the original will cannot be found after someone passes away, the court assumes it was intentionally revoked—unless there's clear evidence to the contrary. While it is possible to admit a copy of a lost will to probate, the process is more complicated and requires testimony from people familiar with the will's contents or with how it was stored. The same goes for trusts and other estate planning documents. In short, losing your original paperwork can create a legal storm for your loved ones at the worst possible time.

Pro Tips for Safeguarding Your Plans

- **Waterproof Storage:** Keep your estate planning documents in a waterproof and fireproof safe. Choose a location above flood level if possible.
- **Multiple Copies:** Store copies in different places—one at home, one with your attorney, and perhaps one with a trusted family member or in a secure digital vault.
- **Attorney Safes:** Many estate planning attorneys in Southwest Florida offer to keep your original signed documents in their safes or vaults. This helps ensure your paperwork is protected and easily accessible when needed.
- **Digital Backups:** Scan your documents and store them securely online. While digital copies may not always be legally sufficient, they can help reconstruct your wishes if originals are destroyed.
- **Communication:** Tell your family or personal representatives where your important documents are kept and how to access them in an emergency.

Not Just About Asset Distribution: The Full Value of Estate Planning

Estate planning isn't just about passing on property—it's about making life easier for those you care about and you probably care a little bit about yourself while you are alive and well! In your plan, you can appoint powers of attorney to manage your finances if you become incapacitated, designate healthcare surrogates to make medical choices, and spell out your wishes for end-of-life care. These steps can help your family avoid lengthy court battles over guardianship or probate, providing comfort and clarity when it matters most.

Charitable Giving and Community Impact: Leaving a Legacy that Lasts

Southwest Florida's beauty is one of its greatest treasures—and many residents choose to make a lasting impact through charitable giving as part of their estate plans. Including a favorite local charity, environmental organization, or community group in your estate plan (i.e. a Will or Trust) is a powerful way to ensure the region you love continues to thrive

long after you're gone. Your generosity can help preserve beaches, support disaster relief, or fund scholarships for local students, making your legacy a force for good that could last for generations!

Preparedness and Peace of Mind: Your Family's Best Defense

The best time to prepare is before the winds pick up. Review your estate plan regularly—especially after major life events or changes in Florida law. Update documents as needed and make sure your loved ones are informed. A few hours spent now can mean the difference between calm and chaos down the road. Something tells me that achieving the peace of mind that I'm talking about is not as labor or time intensive as preparing for an actual storm that may be brewing somewhere over the horizon!

Think of estate planning like weatherproofing your home: it's an investment in peace of mind. When the next storm looms on the horizon—literal or figurative—you'll rest easier knowing you've done everything you can to protect your family, your community, and the legacy you leave behind.

So, as you check your hurricane kit this season, take a moment to check on your estate plan, too. It's one more way to ensure that, come what may, your wishes will weather any storm.



About the Author

Ryan G. Welker is an estate planning attorney at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A., working out of the Marco Island office. He is admitted to practice in both Florida and Ohio. Woodward, Pires & Lombardo has offices in Naples and on Marco Island.



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What is Rhinitis?

An In-Depth Look at This Common Nasal Condition

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

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

The Hallmark Symptoms

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

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

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

Two Main Types

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

Allergic Rhinitis: The Usual Culprit

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

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

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

The Diagnostic Process

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

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

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

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

Treating the Nuisance

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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Managing Diabetes: Strategies for Treatment and Prevention

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

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of people worldwide. While it can be a challenging condition to manage, there are various effective strategies for both treatment and prevention. In this article, we will explore these approaches and provide insights into how individuals can take control of their health.

UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

Before diving into treatment and prevention, it's essential to understand the different types of diabetes. The two most common types are Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 is an autoimmune condition where the body doesn't produce insulin, while Type 2 is characterized by insulin resistance.

DIABETES TREATMENT

1. Medication: For individuals with Type 2 diabetes, medication might be prescribed to help lower blood sugar levels. Metformin, insulin, and other oral medications can be effective.

2. Insulin Therapy: People with Type 1 diabetes require insulin therapy to manage their condition. There are different types of insulin, including fast-acting and long-acting, which can be tailored to an individual's needs.

3. Healthy Eating: A balanced diet is crucial for diabetes management. Focus on whole grains, lean proteins, and plenty of vegetables. Monitoring carbohydrate intake can also help regulate blood sugar levels.

4. Regular Exercise: Physical activity helps lower blood sugar and improve insulin sensitivity. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.

5. Blood Sugar Monitoring: Regularly checking blood sugar levels is vital for adjusting treatment plans and making informed decisions about food and activity.

DIABETES PREVENTION

1. Healthy Lifestyle: Maintaining a healthy weight and eating a balanced diet can reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Reducing sugar and processed food intake is key.



2. Regular Physical Activity: Exercise can help prevent Type 2 diabetes by improving insulin sensitivity and reducing the risk of obesity.

3. Stress Management: Chronic stress can affect blood sugar levels. Practices like mindfulness, yoga, and meditation can help manage stress.

4. Screening and Early Detection: Regular check-ups can detect prediabetes, a condition that often precedes Type 2 diabetes. Early intervention can prevent the progression of the disease.

5. Avoid Smoking and Excessive Alcohol: Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption increase the risk of diabetes. Quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake are vital for prevention.

PROMISING RESEARCH

There's ongoing research into diabetes treatment and prevention. This includes advancements in insulin delivery systems, the development of new medications, and a growing understanding of the genetic factors contributing to diabetes risk.

Diabetes is a complex condition, but with the right strategies, it can be effectively managed and, in many cases, prevented. Whether you have diabetes or want to reduce your risk, a combination of medication, healthy lifestyle choices, and ongoing medical care can make a significant difference. Stay informed, consult with healthcare professionals, and take proactive steps to manage and prevent diabetes for a healthier, happier life.

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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PICKLEBALL

By Robert Swift, D.O.

Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine



Pickleball is a recreational sport that is gaining in popularity and has become one of the fastest growing sports in America. The sport is easy to learn, promotes competitiveness and socialization, and is a great form of low impact exercise.

The game was developed in 1965 by a former Washington state congressman, Joel Pritchard. He and a friend were looking to play badminton, but unable to find a full set of rackets they improvised, playing with wooden ping-pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball. With this collection of equipment, they played on an asphalt surface using a badminton net adjusted to a height like that of tennis. The friends eventually developed a permanent set of rules. Their intention was to develop a sport the entire family could enjoy together. Within two years, the first permanent court was constructed next door to Joel Pritchard's home. Within a few more years, a corporation was developed to protect the sport. Since its inception, the game has continued to grow, and is now played in all 50 states.

The game was named after the Pritchards' dog, Pickles. In the early development of the game, there no official name assigned to it. As the game progressed, an official name was needed, and "Pickleball" was it.

Pickleball is currently the fastest growing sport in the US. The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) estimated that in 2017 there were over 2.8 million Pickleball players in the U.S., which was an increase of 12.3% from the previous year. Further details from the 2016 SFIA report included that over 1.5 million people were 'casual' participants (play one to seven times per year), and that 930,000 were 'core' participants (play eight or more times per year). Further breakdown of participation rates by age showed that 'core' participants tend to be older, with 75% of core participants being age 55 or older, and 42% of all players over 65 considered to be core participants. Along with fitness benefits of the sport, many older adults enjoy playing Pickleball because it promotes competitiveness and socialization.

Associated Injuries

A recent literature search did not reveal any published research describing specific injuries related to Pickleball. However, there is published research on injuries associated with other racket sports. In tennis, a similar style racket sport played on a similar surface, the most common injuries are sprains/strains of the lower extremity, followed by sprains/strains of the upper extremity and injuries of the trunk and low back. Given the underhand nature of the game play of Pickleball, one would expect a lower occurrence of shoulder

injuries than in tennis where overhand serving is a major component of the sport. However, there is still a risk for a variety of other upper extremity injuries in Pickleball.

Acute Injuries

Acute traumatic injuries in Pickleball can result from falls, secondary to a sudden turning or pivoting movement. Sprains of the ankle joint, particularly with inversion, are very common in tennis and the mechanism for this injury would be similar for Pickleball. Depending on the severity of the sprain, this injury could result in significantly impaired movement or inability to bear weight. If weight bearing is painful, initial treatment may initially include crutches (if needed), or immobilization with an ankle brace. Further treatment consisting of relative rest, icing, compression, and elevation (RICE) are generally useful in the treatment of sprains of the ankle and other joints. Depending on severity, ankle sprains can take several weeks to resolve, but patients can generally resume their previous level of play if proper steps are taken during the healing process. Return to sport participation for this and other injuries is often expedited by physical therapy.

Other injuries that can arise near the ankle can involve the Achilles tendon. These can include an Achilles strain, which can present as pain anywhere along the tendon, from the musculotendinous component at the lower calf muscle, to the body of the tendon, to its insertion at the calcaneus. Treatment of Achilles tendon strains typically consists of relative rest, focused stretching of the tendon, and eccentric loading exercises. This injury can take weeks to fully heal. A much less common but more severe injury, Achilles tendon rupture, can occur with forceful movement of the ankle, usually an abrupt plantarflexion. This injury usually results in severe pain in the posterior ankle and an inability to bear weight or actively plantarflex the foot. This type of injury will often require surgical repair and should be evaluated promptly for optimal long term outcome.

Knee injuries are also common in racket sports such as tennis, and likely to affect Pickleball players as well. These can range from acute sprains of the knee to meniscal and ligamentous injuries. A sprain of the knee can affect the collateral ligaments, caused by rapid starting/stopping and sudden turning or pivoting movements. A sprain will often result in pain with weight bearing, usually worse with lateral movement. Acute injuries of the meniscus can include tears, which can present with the same mechanism as a ligament sprain, but often will result in the inability to

bear weight, decreased range of motion, and significant swelling. Treatment of these injuries can range from initial non-weight bearing, to bracing, to physical therapy, or even potential surgical repair. Any knee injury that results in pain with weight bearing, decreased range of motion, or significant swelling should prompt immediate evaluation by a physician.

Muscle groups in the lower extremity that can be acutely strained include the hamstring muscles, quadriceps, hip flexors and adductors, and calf. Many strains can involve partial tearing of the muscle body or tendon. These injuries can present as pain in the muscle with stretching or muscle contraction. Mild sprains usually respond to RICE treatment, and participants can usually return to their activity in a matter of a few weeks. More severe muscle strains or tears may have more severe pain, associated swelling or bruising of the muscle, and tend to take longer to recover. As stated above, many of these injuries will respond well to physical therapy, and this can often help to assist players to return to their previous level of competing and can often address other potential biomechanical inefficiencies that can be future injury risks.

For the upper extremity, the wrist is a common site of tennis injury, and Pickleball players are at risk as well. Falls onto an outstretched hand are a common mechanism for wrist sprains and can also result in a fracture. The elbow and shoulder can also be injured by falls. Minor bruising to the upper extremity may be initially treated with RICE, but an injury to the upper extremity that causes significant swelling, bruising, or limited range of motion should prompt a player to be evaluated.

Pickle ball can be a great way to enjoy the beautiful weather and there are many courts in the SWFL area. The benefits of exercise, and socialization out way the risks of injury. Even when we are at our most competitive, it is important to remember to play it safe, give up the point. That way you can always come back to the court to play again.

Always stretch and warm up gently before competitive play. Make sure you are getting your physical once a year to understand and appreciate your health. Drink plenty of water and the occasional sports drink. Wear appropriate gear, and footwear.

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Stress Management

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

Have you ever felt overwhelmed? Are you feeling stressed out? The holidays can sometimes be quite stressful, whether it be making the house ready, making sure you have gotten all the presents for your loved ones/friends, but you might want to take some time for yourself too. In fact, the holidays are known to bring out all sorts of ailments and health problems, more than any time of year. The stress of the holidays is real and not something to be ignored and brushed under the rug. Stress Management is truly something we all have to deal with at one point or another. Not all stress is bad, but when you start to feel overwhelmed and feel a loss of control, that's when stress can wreak havoc in your life.

The first part in managing your stress is to identify the stressor, for example-whether it be certain negative people, going through a divorce, being told of a new diagnosis or fear of losing your job. Whatever that stressor is, it's important to identify it, talk it over with a close friend/relative or perhaps write it in a stress journal. It is crucial to not keep the feelings/emotions bottled up because that in itself is truly, I believe the heart of many health problems. Stress has been linked to heart disease, depression/mental illnesses, inflammatory conditions (ie arthritis, autoimmune illnesses, etc) and even some forms of cancer.

The second part of stress management is coming up with a plan or solution to dealing with the problem that is creating the stress/turmoil in your life. This is where taking a step back for a moment can often help. Sometimes, taking a deep breath and talking out loud is all that may be needed. I also believe it is extremely important to have outlets or hobbies in your life. Some people find getting up early and meditating is a way to relax and recharge your mind. Others may find playing an instrument, listening to a Ted talk, gardening or reading a book keeps them relaxed and content. The point is, you have to find some activity that makes you happy and feel relaxed. This in itself, helps you think of the solution as a third party and coming up with a new perspective on the problem/situation creating the stress in your life.



I think it is important to have general lifestyle principles and routines embedded in your life such as the 5 steps below:

1. It is important to stay positive and surround yourself with people that will bring positivity in your life as well.
2. Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet also helps with keeping the stress levels manageable.
3. Staying well hydrated and avoiding excessive consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages also help you manage your stress.
4. Learn also how to say "no" to unnecessary requests. You need to know your limits and stick to them. It is important to know the difference between the "shoulds" and the "musts" and when needed to say "no" to taking on too much, whether

it be in your personal or professional life. Taking on too much is indeed a recipe for disaster and the root of stress for most people.

5. Lastly, getting enough sleep is also vital to stress management. Most of us are not getting the recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night.

In the end, it is always important to ask oneself, "Is this going to make a difference in the grand scheme of things?" "Is it really worth getting upset over?"

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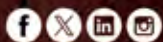
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Hormones and Depression

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

Your hormones play an essential role in regulating many bodily functions, such as development, metabolism, and reproduction, but their influence can also extend to your mood. However, since hormones help to keep your mood regulated, an imbalance in hormones can negatively impact your mood, potentially causing symptoms of depression.

If hormones are the cause of your depression, finding the underlying cause of your hormonal imbalance, addressing it, and returning your hormone levels to their ideal range may help relieve your depressive symptoms.

Symptoms of Depression

Depression is a mental illness that affects the way you think, how you feel, and how you act. It is most commonly associated with feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in the activities that once brought you joy. If left untreated, depression can affect your work and personal life while also leading to physical and emotional problems.

Depression can present differently in everyone, and what one person may experience often differs from what another does. That being said, the following are some possible symptoms of depression:

- irritability
- persistent feelings of anxiousness or sadness
- difficulty sleeping
- frustration or restlessness
- loss of interest in hobbies or usual activities
- feeling pessimistic or hopeless
- appetite changes
- difficulty focusing
- fatigue or lack of energy
- physical aches and pains
- suicidal thoughts

As you can see, depression is not an entirely mental dilemma; it can manifest with physical concerns.

There are many potential causes of depression, including medical conditions (e.g., a brain tumor, vitamin deficiency, thyroid problems) or personal circumstances (e.g., a death in the family). In some cases, depression may even result from imbalanced hormones.

Imbalanced Hormones

If there is one thing that your body prioritizes, it is balance. It requires balance in order to function correctly, and if there is a problem in your body, it can often be tied back to imbalance, such as an imbalance in your bacterial microbiomes, immune cells, or even hormone levels.

Some factors that commonly affect hormone levels include birth control, menopause, or pregnancy. When these conditions alter your hormone levels, they can also affect certain neurotransmitters responsible for your mood.

Not just women have to worry about hormonal imbalance, though. A drop in testosterone, which is present and used by those of both genders, although notably more prominent in males, can affect your mood and cause symptoms such as:

- increased anxiety
- depression
- low sex drive
- increased irritability
- reduced energy levels

In short, both genders can be susceptible to hormone troubles and changes in mood.

Causes of Hormonal Depression

Aptly named, depression that results from hormonal imbalances is called hormonal depression. Let's explore some hormonal imbalances, their causes, and how they can lead to depression.

Low Testosterone

While both males and females use testosterone, the effects of low testosterone can be more dramatic in males since their body requires significantly more testosterone.

Those with low testosterone may experience erectile dysfunction, reduced lean muscle mass, low sex drive, fatigue, irritability, and loss of body or facial hair. In some individuals, depression may develop, although researchers are less sure if it is because of low testosterone or because of the symptoms of low testosterone. Nevertheless, those of both genders show connections between low testosterone levels and depression.

Some potential causes of low testosterone include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, injury to or removal of testicles, diseases affecting the pituitary gland, certain infections, obesity, autoimmune diseases, and metabolic syndrome.

Coincidentally, certain medications, such as antidepressants, can also cause low testosterone, which can then cause depressive symptoms. In this case, the individual would end up in a cycle of low testosterone and depression.

In addition to the above potential causes, yet another common cause of low testosterone is aging, with testosterone production declining as we get older.

While women produce less testosterone than males, they can still experience the effect of its imbalance, with possible symptoms such as lack of motivation, lowered mood, tiredness, and loss of sex drive.

Unfortunately, since women produce lower testosterone levels, it can be harder to diagnose low testosterone. However, a doctor may look into it if you have had ovaries removed, lost your menstrual period, experience adrenal insufficiency, or are on oral estrogen therapy.

For those of both genders, reaching out to your doctor if you experience any symptoms of low testosterone is a crucial first step for determining its cause and restoring balance to this essential hormone.

Menopause

Menopause is a time in a woman's life characterized by a dramatic drop in the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. This decline can trigger mood changes and may cause some women transitioning into menopause to experience episodes of depression.

Other symptoms of menopause include:

- hot flashes
- sleep problems
- irregular periods
- vaginal dryness
- weight gain

Of note, menopause can cause sleep problems, and a difficulty with sleeping can also increase the risk of someone experiencing depression by ten times.

Those with a history of depression may also be more likely to experience depression during menopause.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

PMDD is a more severe version of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) with symptoms that include:

- severe anxiety or depression
- tension
- severe anger or irritability
- difficulty focusing
- mood changes
- panic attacks
- difficulty sleeping
- fatigue
- binge eating or food cravings

Those with PMDD may notice these symptoms appear 1 to 2 weeks before their period starts, which is around the time that hormone levels drop.

Those with PMDD are often more sensitive to hormonal changes that occur throughout the menstrual cycle, including a change in serotonin levels, which can contribute to episodes of depression. Those with depression due to PMDD often notice an improvement in their symptoms once their cycle progresses and hormone levels even out again.

Postpartum Depression

Throughout pregnancy, the body increases its production of allopregnanolone, which is a steroid produced by the brain when progesterone is broken down. Up to the third trimester, allopregnanolone levels steadily increase, but after childbirth, these levels quickly decline. Research suggests that this quick change in allopregnanolone levels can significantly contribute to postpartum depression, or depression that develops after giving birth.

Allopregnanolone levels usually increase a few days after giving birth, but for those experiencing postpartum depression, these levels do not rise.

Yet another link between hormones and depression has to do with GABA receptors in the brain, which play a role in many mental health conditions. When hormone and allopregnanolone levels change during pregnancy, they may affect the functionality of the GABA receptors, potentially contributing to depression.



Hormonal Contraceptives

In some people, hormonal contraceptives may cause depressive episodes or contribute to their severity, according to a 2022 research article, but the influence of the contraceptive depends upon the amount and type of progesterone contained within.

Both estrogen and progesterone are hormones that affect the nervous system, brain function, and certain neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin. These two neurotransmitters influence your mood, and when they are low, depression can occur.

Research has shown that estrogen may help to protect against mood disorders, but progesterone may have the opposite effect by lowering serotonin levels. Since oral contraceptives often contain progesterone, they may cause a decline in serotonin levels and lead to mood changes and depression.

Thyroid Problems

While thyroid disorders may not cause depression, research has shown that they may have symptoms that are similar to depression.

There is also a moderate link between overt hypothyroidism and clinical depression in females, likely due to the decline of thyroid hormones in the body and its more significant influence on the female body.

Treating Hormonal Depression

When it comes to treating hormonal depression, the best course of action is generally to treat the hormonal imbalance, with the best method depending on the underlying cause.

Your doctor will first need to check hormone levels through a blood test and match the results with your physical symptoms to help determine the cause of your depression. Once they know the reason for your imbalanced hormones, they can then work on treating it.

Some possible treatments for hormonal imbalance include:

- hormone replacement therapy
- antidepressants, if HRT is not suitable
- hormonal birth control for those with PMDD
- thyroid hormone replacement medications
- over-the-counter pain relievers for physical aches and pains
- testosterone therapy
- alternative contraceptive methods, such as nonhormonal contraception, lower dose progesterone options, or estrogen-based contraception
- lifestyle strategies (e.g., eating a balanced diet, exercising, practicing relaxation techniques)

Don't Ignore Hormonal Depression

If you ever experience moments of sadness, hopelessness, or a general loss of interest in the activities you used to enjoy, check in with your doctor about treatment for depression. Your doctor can help you work out the cause of your depression and offer treatment options that help address it.

Some cases of depression result from hormonal imbalances, and the optimal way to manage these instances is by regulating your hormones. The best way to do this is by reaching out to a hormone specialist who looks at all aspects of your hormone health and physical symptoms. With this information, they can help you better understand what is going on internally and devise a plan to help keep your mental health high.

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PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE? WHY AREN'T THEY A 'DEATH SENTENCE'?

By RICK WEBER

Palliative care and hospice are not exactly the same and are not a "death sentence," but rather a way of establishing hope and comfort in a difficult time—whether or not it is the last phases of a disease process.

"The 'death sentence' myth is one I have spent much of my career working alongside others to dispel," says Julie Furrow, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, CNE, ACHPN, an assistant professor in the Marieb College of Health & Human Services' School of Nursing at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"I am passionate about this because those who buy into the myth are at risk for declining services that may be extremely beneficial to them. One of the hardest truths to face in life is that no matter how far medical science and technology have come, there eventually comes a time when medicine can no longer prevent the end of life. In fact, technology and life-prolonging measures can cause discomfort that some patients prefer to avoid. Many illnesses ultimately lead to death, while some people reach that point simply through the natural aging process. One way or another, death is an inevitable part of the human experience."

Palliative care and hospice exist to support people as they face serious illness and, ultimately, the end of life.

Palliative care is a broader service that can start much earlier in a disease process as compared to hospice. Palliative care exists not only for alleviation of pain and symptoms, but also to begin conversations with patients with serious or potentially life-threatening illnesses. Palliative care providers spend time discussing disease trajectories, exploring treatment options and exploring the meaning of these things to the patient experiencing them.

"There is no such thing as a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to healthcare, especially when a serious illness is involved," Furrow says. "It is a privilege to meet patients and their families, learn what is most important to them and walk with them and support them as they make the complicated health care choices that make the most sense to them and best fit their goals, preferences and values."

"In addition to goals of care, palliative care providers assist in completion of advanced directives. One of the most important things an adult can do is leave their loved ones with instructions including who should become their decision maker(s) if/when the individual is unable to speak for themselves. This is important for all adults, but even more so for those diagnosed with progressive and life-limiting illnesses.

"Advanced directive documents can also include living wills, which guide health care providers and loved ones in what the individual would want in certain situations such as dependence on machines for breathing or dependence on artificial nutrition for living. Patients can receive palliative care concurrently with 'aggressive' disease-fighting care. For example, a patient receiving anti-cancer therapy, such as chemotherapy and radiation, can receive palliative care to discuss their goals and treatment options, and to receive pain and symptom management."

Hospice is a palliative service that provides care to patients specifically in the last months of life when life-extending treatment is either no longer an option—because it is not working or because the patient is not tolerating it—or no longer desired by the patient. Hospice care is most often provided in the home, wherever home may be. This can include a private residence, long-term care facility and even prison.

Hospice focuses fully on the patient's comfort, stopping diagnostic testing, treatments and medications that are no longer beneficial to the patient. Hospice providers are highly specialized and skilled in assessing and assisting with management of discomfort in all facets including the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of life.

These services focus on providing comfort, enhancing quality of life and easing the fear that often accompanies this stage. Hospice offers an option to step away from aggressive diagnostic testing and life-prolonging treatments when they no longer provide benefit or when a patient chooses a more comfort-focused approach to care.

"It's important to understand that neither palliative care nor hospice is meant to hasten death," Furrow says. "Equally important is the recognition that whatever path a patient chooses, whether pursuing continued life-prolonging treatment or focusing on comfort, should be fully honored and respected by those providing care."

Furrow's first research activity in this field was her master's thesis in 2003, when she was a hospice nurse interested in learning more about barriers to patients receiving hospice and palliative care. She collaborated with the West Virginia Center for End-of-Life Care to conduct research on health care providers' knowledge and attitudes about palliative care. Findings pointed to an ongoing need for healthcare provider education in end-of-life care in her region in West Virginia.

Then, doing her doctoral dissertation in 2016, she studied use of human standardized patients in the simulation lab as a method of teaching nursing students to provide patient education.

"I believe this could be modified to teach nursing students to converse with patients and families facing serious illness," she says. "I see potential to conduct future research in this area."

Furrow recently passed her national board exam as an advanced practice palliative provider—an important step in her relationship with her FGCU students.

"Educators teach nursing students that certification is an important way to deepen their competence within their chosen specialties and to ensure they're providing the highest quality of care," Furrow says. "I use my own experience as an example to show them what's possible in their future careers and to demonstrate that I don't just encourage certification—I actively pursue it myself. The studies and experience required to earn my certification as an Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse have given me the expertise to share this vital area of care with the next generation of nurses."

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



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

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



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

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

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Understanding the Connection

Headaches, anxiety, stress, and insomnia often form a vicious cycle. Chronic stress triggers tension headaches and anxiety, which in turn disrupts sleep patterns, leading to insomnia. Poor sleep quality then exacerbates stress levels, perpetuating the cycle. The practitioners at Estero Family Chiropractic recognize these connections and provide comprehensive treatment approaches that address multiple symptoms simultaneously.

Chiropractic Care for Holistic Healing

Chiropractic adjustments focus on correcting spinal misalignments that can contribute to various health issues. When vertebrae are misaligned, they can irritate nerves, restrict blood flow, and create muscle tension throughout the body. At Estero Family Chiropractic, skilled chiropractors perform precise spinal adjustments that help restore proper alignment and nervous system function.

For headache sufferers, particularly those experiencing tension or cervicogenic headaches, chiropractic care can provide remarkable relief. By addressing misalignments in the cervical spine and reducing muscle tension in the neck and shoulders, many patients experience significant reduction in headache frequency and intensity.

The nervous system plays a crucial role in stress response and sleep regulation. Chiropractic adjustments help optimize nervous system function, promoting the body's natural ability to manage stress and maintain healthy sleep-wake cycles. Many patients report feeling more relaxed and sleeping better after beginning regular chiropractic care.

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Acupuncture, an integral component of traditional Chinese medicine, involves inserting thin needles at specific points on the body to restore balance and



promote healing. Estero Family Chiropractic incorporates this time-tested therapy to complement chiropractic treatments.

Research supports acupuncture's effectiveness for treating headaches, with studies showing it can reduce both frequency and severity of tension-type and migraine headaches. The treatment works by releasing endorphins, improving blood circulation, and reducing inflammation.

For anxiety and stress, acupuncture helps regulate the body's stress response system. The treatment stimulates the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which naturally improve mood and promote relaxation. Many patients describe feeling notably calmer and more centered following acupuncture sessions.

Acupuncture has shown particular promise for insomnia sufferers. By addressing underlying imbalances and promoting relaxation, acupuncture helps regulate circadian rhythms and improve sleep quality without the side effects associated with sleep medications.

A Personalized Approach at Estero Family Chiropractic

What sets Estero Family Chiropractic apart is their commitment to individualized care. Understanding that each patient's experience with headaches, anxiety, and insomnia is unique, their practitioners develop customized treatment plans combining chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture based on specific needs and health goals.

Conclusion

If you're struggling with headaches, anxiety, stress, or insomnia, Estero Family Chiropractic offers natural, drug-free solutions that address the

underlying causes rather than simply masking symptoms. Through the powerful combination of chiropractic care and acupuncture, patients can break free from the cycle of pain, stress, and sleeplessness, reclaiming their health and vitality naturally.



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

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EBOO THERAPY OFFERS HOPE FOR LONG COVID SUFFERERS

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

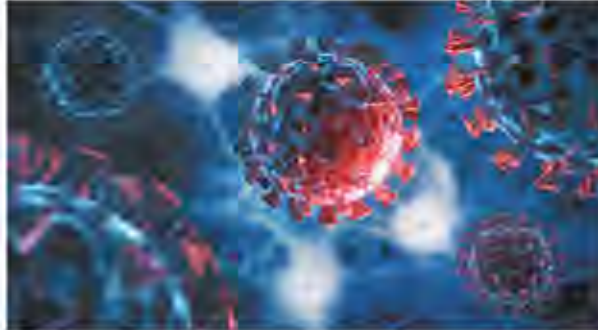
Long COVID continues to affect millions worldwide, leaving patients struggling with persistent fatigue, brain fog, shortness of breath, and chronic inflammation. At Orchidia Medical Group, we're pioneering advanced treatment options, including Extracorporeal Blood Oxygenation and Ozonation (EBOO), to help patients reclaim their health and vitality.

Understanding EBOO Therapy

EBOO represents a cutting-edge advancement in ozone therapy. During treatment, blood is drawn from the body, passed through a specialized filtration system where it's exposed to medical-grade ozone and oxygen, then returned to the patient's circulation. This process treats approximately 1.5 to 2 liters of blood per session, making it significantly more effective than traditional ozone therapies.

The Science Behind EBOO for Long COVID

Long COVID is characterized by persistent inflammation, immune dysfunction, and oxidative stress. EBOO addresses these underlying mechanisms through multiple pathways. The ozonation process stimulates the body's antioxidant systems, reduces systemic inflammation, and enhances oxygen delivery to tissues. This is particularly crucial for Long COVID patients whose cells often struggle with efficient oxygen utilization.



The therapy also supports immune system modulation, helping to calm overactive immune responses while strengthening natural defense mechanisms. Additionally, EBOO may improve mitochondrial function, addressing the cellular energy deficit that manifests as debilitating fatigue.

Benefits Experienced by Long COVID Patients

Patients undergoing EBOO therapy at Orchidia Medical Group have reported significant improvements across multiple symptoms. Many experience enhanced energy levels and reduced fatigue, often within the first few treatment sessions. Cognitive function improvements, including better mental clarity and reduced brain fog, are commonly observed, allowing patients to return to work and daily activities with renewed focus.

Respiratory symptoms, including shortness of breath and reduced exercise tolerance, often show marked improvement as blood oxygenation optimizes.

Patients also report decreased inflammatory markers, reduced joint and muscle pain, and improved sleep quality. The cardiovascular benefits are particularly noteworthy, as EBOO may help address the micro-clotting and vascular inflammation associated with Long COVID.

A Personalized Approach to Healing

At Orchidia Medical Group, we understand that Long COVID affects each patient differently. Our integrative approach combines EBOO therapy with comprehensive medical evaluation, nutritional support, and lifestyle modifications to create personalized treatment protocols.

Treatment typically involves a series of sessions, with many patients beginning to notice improvements within the first few weeks. Our medical team monitors progress closely, adjusting protocols as needed to optimize outcomes throughout the healing journey.

If you're struggling with persistent Long COVID symptoms, EBOO therapy may offer the breakthrough you've been seeking. Contact Orchidia Medical Group today to schedule a consultation and discover how this innovative treatment can help you return to the vibrant, healthy life you deserve.



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Transitioning Home Safely:

The Essential Role of Private Duty In-Home Care After Hospital Discharge

Leaving the hospital after a serious illness, surgery, or medical event should mark the beginning of recovery—not the start of new challenges. Yet for many patients and their families, the transition from hospital to home can feel overwhelming. This is where Whitsyms In Home Care Private Duty steps in, bridging the critical gap between hospital discharge and full recovery with personalized, professional care in the comfort of your own home.

The Vulnerable Post-Discharge Period

Hospital readmissions within 30 days of discharge remain a significant concern in healthcare. Many patients leave the hospital still requiring assistance with daily activities, medication management, wound care, or mobility support. Without proper care during this vulnerable period, complications can arise, leading to setbacks in recovery or even emergency room visits.

Family members often find themselves suddenly thrust into the role of caregiver, despite having little medical training or experience. The stress of managing complex care needs while juggling work, household responsibilities, and their own well-being can quickly become unsustainable.

What Private Duty In-Home Care Provides

Whitsyms In Home Care Private Duty offers a comprehensive solution tailored to each patient's unique needs. Our skilled caregivers provide one-on-one attention that simply isn't possible in facility-based settings. Services include assistance with personal care such as bathing, dressing, and grooming; medication reminders to ensure proper adherence to treatment plans; meal preparation designed around dietary restrictions; light house-keeping to maintain a safe, clean environment; and companionship that addresses the emotional aspects of recovery.

For patients with more complex medical needs, our trained professionals can provide wound care, monitor vital signs, assist with physical therapy exercises, and serve as an essential communication link with physicians and other healthcare providers.

The Whitsyms Difference

What sets Whitsyms apart is our commitment to personalized care planning. We begin with a thorough



assessment of each patient's medical condition, living situation, and personal preferences. This allows us to match patients with caregivers whose skills and personalities align perfectly with their needs.

Our flexible scheduling means care is available when you need it—whether that's a few hours daily, overnight supervision, or around-the-clock support. As recovery progresses, care plans can be adjusted seamlessly, scaling up or down based on evolving needs.

Peace of Mind for the Entire Family

Perhaps most importantly, private duty in-home care from Whitsyms provides peace of mind. Family members can return to work knowing their loved one is safe and well-cared for. Patients maintain independence and dignity while receiving the support necessary for optimal recovery. The familiar surroundings of home—complete with personal belongings, established routines, and beloved pets—create an ideal healing environment that no hospital or facility can replicate.

Recovery is a journey that shouldn't be traveled alone. With Whitsyms In Home Care Private Duty, patients discharged from the hospital receive expert care, compassionate support, and the best possible foundation for returning to full health and independence.

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Navigating the Fog of Memory Changes in Aging

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

As we journey through life, our memories evolve just as we do. Memory changes are a natural part of aging, but they can also raise concerns about more serious conditions like dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, depression in the elderly can manifest as memory problems, further complicating the landscape of cognitive health. This article explores the nuances of memory changes in aging and provides guidance on distinguishing between typical age-related memory changes, dementia, and depression-related memory issues.

Normal Memory Changes with Aging

It's normal to experience some memory changes as we grow older. These changes are often characterized by:

- **Slower Processing Speed:** As we age, the speed at which we process information may decline, leading to mild forgetfulness.
- **Difficulty with Multitasking:** Juggling multiple tasks becomes more challenging, which can affect our ability to remember things.
- **Recall Issues:** Temporary forgetfulness about names, words, or where you left your keys may occur.
- **Absent-Mindedness:** Occasionally forgetting appointments or details due to distractions is common.

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Dementia is not a normal part of aging. It is a group of cognitive disorders that significantly impair daily

functioning. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. Warning signs include:

- **Severe Memory Loss:** Profound memory deficits, particularly for recent events or familiar people.
- **Confusion:** Difficulty with orientation, time, and place.
- **Personality Changes:** Noticeable shifts in mood, behavior, and personality.
- **Decline in Problem-Solving Skills:** Struggles with managing finances, making decisions, or solving problems.

Depression-Related Memory Issues

Depression in the elderly can mimic dementia symptoms, creating a diagnostic challenge. Common signs include:

- **Memory Complaints:** Feeling forgetful, though memory tests may not show significant impairment.
- **Concentration Problems:** Difficulty focusing and making decisions.
- **Apathy:** Loss of interest in activities and social withdrawal.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Insomnia or excessive sleeping.

Differentiating Between the Three

Differentiating between normal aging, dementia, and depression-related memory issues can be challenging. Consult a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis. Medical assessments, cognitive tests, and brain imaging can help distinguish the causes.



Managing Memory Changes

To clarify and address memory changes, regardless of their origin, consider the following:

- **Lifestyle Modifications:** Maintain a healthy diet, stay physically active, and engage in mental stimulation through activities like puzzles or learning new skills.
- **Social Interaction:** Staying socially connected can improve cognitive health and prevent depression.
- **Seek Help:** If memory issues persist, consult a healthcare provider to rule out underlying conditions.

In conclusion, understanding memory changes in aging and distinguishing them from dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or depression-related issues is crucial. Recognizing the signs and seeking professional guidance can make all the difference in ensuring the best possible cognitive health and quality of life as we age.

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.

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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IF I DON'T SEE MOLD COULD I STILL BE AFFECTED?

By Scott Briggs - American Mold Experts of SWFL, LLC

Yes, because most people look for mold to be black, so folks think no black mold, my home must be good. Unfortunately, one of the most dangerous molds often looks like dust or white and produces one of the most dangerous mycotoxins causing health effects in many.

Yes, because mold can be hidden in the wall, behind the baseboard, on the carpet tac strip, in your HVAC or in plain sight but not black.

Yes, even after a mold remediation, we know now that traditional remediations do not take care of mycotoxins and these small, invisible molecules are poisons.

Living through the Florida rainy season and our high humidity some species of mold can grow with just high humidity, no direct water necessary. This makes mold especially dangerous in our environment.

Other times our HVAC is over worked during the summer high temperatures or gets low on freon, or the wrong fan speed allows humidity to accumulate. And in my personal case the HVAC lines get clogged causing water backup that can quickly grow mold.

Living in Florida we have so many avenues that can cause mold to thrive inside our homes. Over time mold releases particulates called mycotoxins, a chemical poison that can affect our health in many ways.

Unfortunately, we have been receiving calls this year with homes that have had previous remediations, sometimes multiple remediations but still feel

uncomfortable in their home or still feeling sick. What we have discovered is traditional remediation methods DO NOT remove mycotoxins. We are finding these homes will often have very high particulate counts in the smallest size .3-microns. Imagine having 500,000 per cubic meter in particulate you and your family are breathing in every day? The next question is what type of molecules are .3-micron size and below?

.... The answer: Zika or coronavirus, wildfire smoke and mycotoxins!

If you have concerns about mold or mycotoxins or just want to be certain, give reach to a licensed mold assessor who is very knowledgeable on mycotoxins.



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- It is well know that mold and **MYCOTOXINS** cause health issues.
- A water issue - even years earlier - could still be haunting your home.

The most common mold that affect our health can often appear as dust!



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**AS THE EPA STATES:
"No mold is good and
needs to be removed."**



IVERMECTIN'S POTENTIAL ANTIVIRAL ROLE: WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

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

Ivermectin, a medication originally approved for parasitic infections, has been studied for decades for its broad biological activity—including potential antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory properties. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists worldwide have investigated whether ivermectin might help reduce viral load, disease severity, and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other RNA viruses. While ivermectin is **not FDA-approved for any viral indication**, a growing body of laboratory and clinical data has explored its possible role in viral management.

Laboratory Evidence of Antiviral Activity

Research dating back to the early 2010s demonstrated that ivermectin exhibits antiviral effects in cell cultures against several viruses, including dengue, Zika, HIV-1, and influenza A. Studies suggest that ivermectin interferes with viral replication by **blocking the importin- α / β pathway**, which many viruses use to transport viral proteins into the host cell nucleus. This inhibition disrupts viral replication and may help limit infection spread at the cellular level.

A pivotal *in vitro* study published in *Antiviral Research* (2020) found that a single exposure to ivermectin led to a **"5000-fold reduction in SARS-CoV-2 RNA within 48 hours"** in cultured cells. Researchers proposed that ivermectin may suppress viral replication through the same importin- α / β inhibition mechanism seen with other viruses. These findings provided a biological rationale for clinical trials assessing ivermectin's potential in human COVID-19 cases.

Proposed Mechanisms Beyond Antiviral Effects

Beyond viral replication inhibition, ivermectin has demonstrated additional mechanisms that may be relevant to viral illness:

- **Anti-inflammatory action:** Ivermectin can reduce production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-6 and TNF- α , which are elevated in severe viral infections, including COVID-19.
- **Ionophore properties:** The drug may facilitate the movement of chloride ions across membranes, potentially stabilizing cells under stress.
- **Modulation of immune response:** By acting on the P2X4/P2X7 and nicotinic acetylcholine receptors, ivermectin may help regulate the body's immune balance during viral infections.

- **Potential zinc ionophore effect:** Some laboratory models suggest ivermectin might aid intracellular transport of zinc, a mineral known to inhibit viral RNA polymerase in coronaviruses.

Together, these mechanisms have driven continued investigation of ivermectin as a potential adjunctive therapy in viral disease.

Clinical Studies and Observations

Since 2020, more than 80 randomized or observational studies have explored ivermectin's role in COVID-19 treatment or prevention. While results vary in size, design, and quality, several trials report encouraging findings:

- **Reduced viral load and faster recovery:** Some small randomized trials observed shorter time to viral clearance and symptom resolution among ivermectin-treated patients compared with controls.
- **Lower hospitalization and mortality rates:** Meta-analyses incorporating multiple studies have reported reductions in hospitalization duration and, in certain data sets, lower mortality.
- **Prophylactic potential:** A few studies involving healthcare workers and household contacts found lower rates of infection among participants who received prophylactic ivermectin doses, though these findings require further confirmation.

For instance, a peer-reviewed meta-analysis published in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* (2021) analyzed over 20 controlled trials and concluded that ivermectin was associated with "statistically significant reductions in mortality, time to clinical recovery, and time to viral clearance." Another review indexed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) discussed the drug's broad antiviral mechanisms and supported further controlled studies to determine optimal dosing, timing, and population benefit.

Beyond COVID-19: Other Viral Research

Ivermectin's potential extends beyond coronaviruses. Studies have demonstrated antiviral effects against Zika virus, dengue, chikungunya, West Nile virus, and HIV-1 in laboratory settings. These findings suggest a shared mechanism that could make ivermectin a valuable lead compound for developing next-generation antiviral agents. Ongoing research continues to examine its potential synergy with other antivirals and anti-inflammatory drugs.

Clinical Perspective and Ongoing Trials

Although many early findings are promising, researchers emphasize that ivermectin's role in viral treatment is not yet definitively established. Dosing, timing, and patient selection remain critical variables. The NIH clinical trials database lists multiple ongoing studies investigating ivermectin's efficacy in COVID-19 and influenza, focusing on safety, viral load reduction, and symptom duration.

For patients and providers, these trials underscore the need for continued scientific evaluation rather than dismissal of a potentially valuable therapeutic pathway. The exploration of ivermectin reflects a broader movement in medicine: repurposing existing drugs with known safety profiles to meet emerging infectious disease challenges.

The Bottom Line

- Ivermectin has demonstrated **broad antiviral activity in laboratory studies** and **favorable signals in several clinical trials** investigating COVID-19 and other viral infections.
- Its proposed mechanisms include **inhibition of viral replication, immune modulation, and anti-inflammatory actions**.
- While the drug is not yet FDA-approved for viral illnesses, **ongoing NIH-registered clinical trials** continue to evaluate its potential benefits and optimal use.
- Patients interested in ivermectin should consult a qualified medical provider and rely on **pharmaceutical-grade human formulations** dispensed by licensed pharmacies.

Continued research will determine ivermectin's exact place in antiviral therapy—but the growing body of evidence highlights why it remains one of the most closely studied repurposed medications in modern medicine.

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Disclaimer: This article is for informational and educational purposes only. Ivermectin is not approved by the FDA for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 or other viral infections. Patients should discuss any off-label medication use with a licensed medical provider.

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Thanksgiving: How to Keep Your Pets Safe

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on what we are thankful for, such as the bounty of the season, time spent with loved ones our health, and not to forget, getting a head start on Christmas. But during the holiday season, we often don't think to make plans for our pets. If we are traveling, it's critical to pack the essentials necessary items for their needs and comfort, or if we expect company, planning ahead to keep our pets safe and comfortable is essential.

What you can do:

- Make sure your pets' vaccinations are up top date
- Have medications on hand that they take regularly
- Schedule any necessary appointments in a timely manner (our books can get filled up quickly in the fall and winter months).
- Have a pet sitter or dog walker on hand
- Plan for their safety and wellbeing during travel
- Address any anxiety and implement natural or prescription calming treats or drugs.
- Have plenty of food and water stocked up for them
- Always have a safe, comfortable place for them to rest
- Don't leave them alone for too long
- Keep decorations or candles away from pets
- Be cautious during cooking the Thanksgiving meal as pets tend to get under our feet when they smell food.



Specific to Thanksgiving, please keep your pets from eating anything that is hazardous or dangerous to them. Many human ingredients and foods should be avoided. Nuts are toxic, as is sugar, chocolate, avocado and grapes; bones are not to be given to dogs as they can shear off and cause lacerations internally. Check with Animal Oasis for a full list of toxic foods to avoid.

When it comes to your pets, safety, and health, Animal Oasis understands the importance of helping you make the right plans. Animal Oasis' goal is to keep your pets in peak form, vaccinated, and properly medicated this holiday season and beyond.

Animal Oasis Veterinary Hospital offers wellness visits, vaccinations, as well as urgent care and surgery depending on your pet's needs. With a full imaging center, highly experienced technicians and doctors, and a well-staffed office to serve you, your pet can be taken care of comprehensively in the

comfort of our office. If you need veterinary appointments, try to book them in advance if possible. Stock up on pet food, and medications, so you're not in a bind when unavailable.

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For out-of-towners, enjoy your stay in our beautiful town. For our local residents, enjoy time well spent with your family and friends—and pets. Animal Oasis is always here for you for all of your veterinary needs.

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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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ANY LAB TEST NOW!

Take Control of Your Health with Any Lab Test Now

Residents of Naples, Florida now have a convenient new option for getting affordable lab tests right in their neighborhood. **Any Lab Test Now** has opened a new location on Immokalee Road, bringing their extensive selection of professional lab tests to the Naples area.

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.
- **5 Panel Rapid Drug Screen (Urine):** Detects recent use of marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and PCP.
- **Weight Management Hormone Test Panel:** Looks at levels of hormones like cortisol, thyroid, testosterone and more that can affect weight.
- **Hemoglobin A1C:** Used to monitor average blood sugar levels over 2-3 months for diabetes management.
- **Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA):** Screens for prostate cancer and other prostate disorders in men.
- **Basic Thyroid Panel:** Checks TSH, T4 and T3 levels to identify thyroid disorders.
- **Testosterone, Free & Total:** Measures free and total testosterone levels in men and women.



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

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

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Understanding Alzheimer's: Separating Fact from Fiction

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

November marks National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about a disease that affects millions of people worldwide. By 2050 it is estimated that 153 million people will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. It is important for everyone to understand what Alzheimer's is and is not and the risk factors associated with the disease. We hope to promote understanding, compassion, and support for those living with Alzheimer's and their families; as well as critical information for you to reduce your risk of getting this horrible disease.

What Alzheimer's Is:

- **A Brain Disorder:** Alzheimer's is a disease of the brain, leading to the accumulation of abnormal protein deposits, which disrupt the communication between brain cells, resulting in cell death.
- **Progressive:** Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, meaning symptoms worsen over time. It advances through stages, starting with mild memory problems and eventually leading to severe cognitive impairment.
- **Not a Normal Part of Aging:** While memory changes are common with aging, Alzheimer's is not a typical part of growing older. It is a distinct disease, and not all elderly individuals will develop Alzheimer's.

What Alzheimer's Is Not:

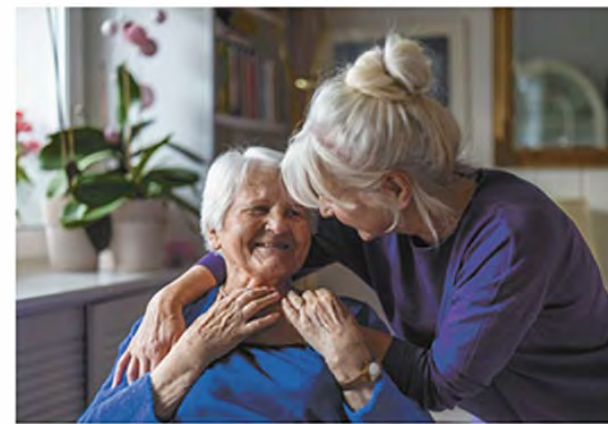
- **A Natural Part of Aging:** Age-related memory changes are normal. Forgetting the name of an acquaintance or where you left your keys occasionally does not necessarily indicate Alzheimer's. If you forget something and then later remember that you forgot, that is indication you do not have Alzheimer's.
- **A Transient Condition:** Alzheimer's is not a temporary condition that can be treated and cured. It is a chronic, long-term illness with no known cure. Prior to an Alzheimer's diagnosis, many patients are diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Several studies have reported that symptoms of MCI can be reversed through diet, exercise, proper sleep habits and social activities.

• **Solely About Memory Loss:** While memory loss is a hallmark symptom of Alzheimer's, it also affects cognitive abilities, behavior, and personality. Individuals may experience changes in mood, judgment, and reasoning, among other symptoms.

Risk Factors for Alzheimer's

Understanding the risk factors associated with Alzheimer's is essential, as it helps you make informed decisions to mitigate those risks. While some risk factors cannot be changed, others can be influenced through lifestyle choices.

- **Age:** The most significant risk factor for Alzheimer's is age. The risk increases substantially after the age of 65, and the prevalence continues to rise with advancing age.
- **Family History:** Individuals with a family history of Alzheimer's are at a slightly higher risk of developing the disease. While it may have a genetic component, it is not guaranteed that someone with a family history will develop Alzheimer's.
- **Genetics:** Certain gene mutations, such as those related to the APOE gene, are associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's. However, having these genes does not guarantee that an individual will develop the disease.
- **Down Syndrome:** People with Down syndrome are at a higher risk of developing Alzheimer's, often at an earlier age.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** Conditions like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol can increase the risk of Alzheimer's. Maintaining good heart health may lower this risk.
- **Lifestyle Factors:** Healthy lifestyle choices, such as regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and mental stimulation, may help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's. Additionally, avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to a healthier brain.



As we observe National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, it is essential to understand what Alzheimer's is and is not, recognize the risk factors, and be aware of the early warning signs. By increasing our knowledge and awareness of this debilitating disease, we can offer better support to those affected and work towards a future with improved treatments and, hopefully, a cure. Educating ourselves and others about Alzheimer's is the first step in making a difference in the lives of those living with this condition and their families.

If You Suspect a Loved One Has Alzheimer's

If your loved one is displaying signs of Alzheimer's, it is important to bring your concerns to a physician. Unfortunately, 97% of physicians admit to waiting for family members to raise the question of Alzheimer's or dementia according to the Alzheimer's Association. Do what you can do to let your doctor know in advance that you suspect your loved one is showing symptoms. It is important to have a physician check your loved one because there are many medical conditions which can mimic Alzheimer's. Often, these conditions are treatable. For example, urinary tract infections, depression, and grief can mimic Alzheimer's.

If your loved one's condition is such that you can no longer take care of them on your own or you are considering alternative ways to care for them, please call us at (239) 330-2133. We are trained to assess the situation and provide guidance on your next steps.



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Cleaning Tips to Keep the Flu Virus at Bay and Out of Your Home

Flu season is among us and with an increase in the number of people in the area for the winter, preventing the flu and other viruses can be difficult this time of year. The muscle aches, fever, chills and fatigue that accompany the virus affect five to 20 percent of the U.S. population each year and hospitalize hundreds of thousands, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Many of us are armed with an array of physical preventatives — from flu-shots to Emergency-C packets, neti-pots to home remedies — but what are we doing to stop the illness from spreading in our own homes, amongst our families and community members?

MaidPro expert cleaners, offer these tips to help you clean for health year-round and to stop the flu virus from invading your home:

1. **Wash your hands regularly in warm soapy water.** For quick clean-up, use antibacterial hand sanitizer. Make an effort not to touch your mouth or nose without first washing your hands.
2. **Wear rubber gloves when cleaning household items to protect yourself.** By wearing gloves, you will be less likely to touch your eyes, nose or mouth, which are havens for the flu virus.

3. **Spray disinfecting spray** on a cloth, wipe toys, door-knobs, appliance handles, keyboards, remote controls, light switches, phones and facial tissue box covers. Viruses can live up to 48 hours on hard surfaces.

4. **Wash items like towels and bedding in hot water** with soap if someone has been sick in the home. Be sure not to share these items until they are thoroughly cleaned.

5. **Change vacuum bags** monthly or more frequently.

6. **Boil toothbrushes** for one minute in water and vinegar, run through a dishwasher cycle or purchase new brushes.

7. **Use antibacterial wipes** on your keyboard, phone and pens to protect yourself from spreading germs at work.

8. **Wash telephones, cabinet handles, doorknobs, light switches and refrigerator door handles** using a slightly dampened cloth with a solution of mild detergent and warm water.

9. **Wash mop heads** in a solution of ¼ cup bleach and one gallon water, dry thoroughly, then store. Not only will mop heads pick up germs and dirt, but they also can also grow mold and mildew if they don't dry out completely.



10. **Disinfect the bathroom and kitchen, especially the faucet and toilet handles, daily.** The kitchen and bathroom are the most used rooms in the home and possibly the most contaminated.

MaidPro is a residential cleaning service that uses a tried and true approach to clean each home for health, combining environmentally preferable cleaning supplies and state-of-the-art equipment to maintain the healthiest living environment possible.

If you're worried about the flu virus showing up uninvited, give MaidPro a call to schedule a cleaning.



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Reversing Osteoporosis Naturally:

A Comprehensive Path to Bone Strength and Wellness

By Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

Osteoporosis is no longer a condition to be passively managed—it's a challenge that can be actively confronted and overcome through innovative, holistic approaches. At Strength Lab Plus, we've developed a groundbreaking strategy that empowers individuals to reclaim their bone health naturally, without relying solely on pharmaceutical interventions.

Understanding Bone Health Beyond Traditional Methods

Conventional approaches to osteoporosis have often been reactive, focusing on medications and minimal interventions. Our methodology represents a paradigm shift—a proactive, comprehensive strategy that addresses bone health from multiple angles. We believe that the human body has an extraordinary capacity for healing and regeneration when provided with the right tools, environment, and support.

Precision Diagnosis: The REMS Revolution

At the core of our approach is the cutting-edge REMS (Radiation-free Electromagnetic Scanning) technology. Unlike traditional bone density scans that expose patients to radiation, REMS provides precise, detailed assessments of bone health without any harmful side effects. This state-of-the-art diagnostic tool allows us to:

- Create highly personalized baseline measurements
- Track subtle changes in bone density with unprecedented accuracy
- Develop targeted interventions based on individual physiological characteristics
- Monitor progress with minimal patient discomfort

The bioDensity Protocol: Natural Muscle and Bone Strengthening

Central to our treatment philosophy is the bioDensity protocol, a revolutionary approach to bone and muscle strengthening that harnesses the body's natural adaptive mechanisms. This scientifically designed program focuses on:

- Targeted, progressive resistance exercises
- Stimulating bone formation through controlled, strategic loading
- Enhancing muscle strength as a critical support system for bone health
- Improving overall functional mobility and balance

The bioDensity method differs dramatically from traditional exercise regimens by creating precise, controlled stress points that trigger the body's natural bone-building responses. Clients experience gradual, sustainable improvements in bone density and muscular strength without the risks associated with high-impact activities.

Functional Medicine: A Comprehensive Support System

Beyond physical interventions, our functional medicine approach considers the complex interplay of factors influencing bone health:

- Comprehensive hormone panel testing
- Nutritional analysis and targeted supplementation
- Assessment of lifestyle factors like sleep, stress, and diet
- Identifying and addressing underlying inflammatory processes
- Personalized nutrition plans rich in bone-supporting nutrients

Each client receives a meticulously crafted care plan that takes into account their unique genetic makeup, lifestyle, and health history. This individualized approach ensures that interventions are not just effective but optimally tailored to each person's specific needs.

Continuous Monitoring and Refinement

Progress isn't a one-time achievement but an ongoing journey. Our commitment to our clients extends beyond initial assessments through:

- Regular REMS technology evaluations
- Adaptive treatment protocols
- Continuous performance tracking
- Collaborative client education and empowerment

The Strength Lab Plus Promise

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

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

Functional and Integrative Medicine with Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

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

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

Services include:

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

Why Choose Us?

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

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What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

Weight-watchers. Nutrisystem. Mediterranean diet. Paleo. Living healthy has become a craze, although obesity in our country, rather legitimizes it. For many people it is about looking and feeling better, living longer, stronger and disease-free. These are all important reasons for eating clean, exercising, and learning to rest our bodies sufficiently.

For Christians, however, trying to maintain healthy habits finds its motivation in more than adopting diet fads to longevity and better quality of life. Taking care of our bodies is stewardship. That is, it is a reflection of our recognition of having been created by God, and how our lives can be instruments in his hands to serve and honor him on earth. Of course, God can use both the healthy and the unfit for his purposes, including the sick, feeble, and dying. Human worth and value is not in question.

The reality is that our earthly lives are only a speck in the sands of eternity. However, Christ followers understand that life doesn't belong to them. It is a gift from a Good Father who entrusted them with a brief span of years that should be invested in loving others and making our world a better place. For those who have believed in Christ and experienced God's forgiveness of sin, the reason for taking care of their bodies goes beyond living longer and healthier. It's about honoring Jesus Christ with all of life, including the way they take care of their bodies.

In his book, *"The Unknown God: Searching for spiritual fulfillment,"* Oxford University professor, Alister McGrath, describes the parable of Plato's Cave, a story about people enslaved inside the cave oblivious to the reality that existed on the outside beyond the flickering shadows which they



knew. That is, until the day someone was able to find their way out and discover a world beyond description, a world of beauty and splendor. McGrath writes, "Our desires have become attached to things that are little more than shadows, when they are meant to be attached to something which cannot decay or disappoint" (32).

How does this relate to healthy living? Focusing on living healthier and longer, like any other pursuit we might obsess about, really reveals a spiritual longing in our souls for something more: *eternity*. Whether is it longing for a "perfect" relationship that often disenchant, earthly riches that can quickly vanish, or a healthy and strong body that is suddenly brought to a standstill due to an unexpected medical report, our hearts are longing for something beyond what this world can provide.

McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfillment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfillment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

May you achieve physical well-being and wholeness. But may you also discover the gift of eternal life which Jesus promises to all who believe and trust in him alone. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). I would enjoy exploring with you the meaning of life and God.



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