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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

March 2026

Collier Edition - Monthly

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THE HIDDEN HEALTH RISK WITHOUT SYMPTOMS

HOW FULL BODY MRI IS CHANGING
EARLY CANCER DETECTION

See Page 9

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CONTENTS MARCH 2026

6 Q&A with Dr. Campbell
A Thoughtful Approach to Cosmetic
Dentistry-and the People Behind
the Smiles

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

8 March: Your Lucky Month for
Preserving Eye Health

9 Beyond the Face: How Ultherapy
Prime Tightens and Lifts the Arms
and Abdomen Without Surgery

10 The Ultimate Peripheral
Neuropathy Relief Program

11 Timeless Results, Thoughtfully
Done: Transform Your Look with
Cutting-Edge Regenerative Treatments
for Beautiful, Natural Results

12 Discover the Power of Nutrition:
Fueling Body, Mind and Purpose

13 Why Consider Endolift® Before
a Facelift or Facial Liposuction

14 The Life-Saving Power of
Regular Skin Cancer Screenings:
Why Early Detection Matters

15 When Macular Degeneration
Blurs Your World - There May Still
be Options

16 How Functional Medicine is
Changing the Game for Treating
Chronic Disease

17 Say Goodbye to Heel Pain:
How Embolization Is Changing the
Treatment of Plantar Fasciitis

18 PRP and Stem Cell Therapy
for Arthritis: A Powerful Combination
for Lasting Relief

19 BAH1 Therapy: A Holistic
Protocol for Post-Stroke Brain
Recovery

20 Achilles Tendon Ruptures and
Getting You Back in the Game

21 Shopping for the Best
Incontinence Underwear?

22 Nutritional and Neuromodulatory
Strategies in Brain Injury Recovery:
A Systems-Based Approach

23 No More Last-Minute
Cancellation: How Continuum Surgery
Center of Naples Handles GLP-1
Medications the Right Way

24 Seeing and Hearing:
The Dynamic Duo of Your Senses

25 Discover Your Fountain of Youth
with the European Liquid Facelift
Through the Art and Science of
Facial Rejuvenation

26 The Life-Changing Benefits of
NAD+ IV Therapy at TheDRIPBaR

27 Protecting Your Mind:
A Neurologist's Guide to Memory
Care and Healthy Aging

28 Supporting Safety & Specialized
Lymphedema Care Across SWFL

29 Pain Should Never Control
Your Life

30 Supporting Your Back:
The Benefits of Lumbar Braces
for Spine Health

31 Your Best Summer Begins
with the Right Support

36 Understanding Pneumonia:
A Critical Guide to Prevention,
Detection, and Treatment

38 Finding Relief: Allergy Sufferers
Turn to Specialized Care

40 Understanding Business
Acquisition Agreements in Florida:
MIPAS, SPAS, and APAS

42 Taurine and its Potential
Benefits in the Treatment of Long
COVID

44 Understanding Polycystic
Kidney Disease

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

48 Avoid Fads and Quick Fixes:
Align Dietary Strategy with Individual
Physiology for Optimal Nutrition

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

51 Concierge-Level Mobile Wound
Care: Remy Cares Brings Advanced
Stage 2 Treatment to Your Door

52 Transitioning from Hospital to
Home Care: The Role of In-Home
Care Professionals

53 Unlocking Your Nutritional
Journey: How Food Sensitivity
Testing Can Transform National
Nutrition Month

54 Can Melatonin Help Treat
Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

55 Pain Awareness in Senior Pets:
Understanding and Managing Your
Pet's Discomfort

56 Are You Practicing Mindful
Wealth?

57 Transcranial Magnetic
Stimulation: A Breakthrough in
Treatment-Resistant Depression
and Anxiety

58 Father Time Is Undefeated.
Why Senior Housing Brings Peace of
Mind at Every Stage of Aging

59 Shockwave Therapy:
A Breakthrough Treatment Giving New
Hope to Plantar Fasciitis Sufferers

60 2026 Open Enrollment is Here!

61 Spring Cleaning Mental Prep

62 Memory Matters

63 Spiritual Wellness:
Daring Greatly

CONTACT US

OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Cristan Gensing
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
sonnygensing@yahoo.com



Publishing • Advertising • Web Design • Graphic Design

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Cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

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

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Q&A with Dr. Campbell

A Thoughtful Approach to Cosmetic Dentistry—and the People Behind the Smiles

Cosmetic dentistry today is about far more than appearance. It's about confidence, comfort, function, and long-term health. Dr. Campbell believes the best dentistry starts with listening, education, and trust, principles that guide his professional philosophy.

Q: Dentistry is truly a family affair for you—your wife is a dental hygienist. How has sharing the same profession influenced your perspective on patient care?

Dr. Campbell:

Sharing this profession with my wife has given me a unique appreciation for the full spectrum of oral health care. Hygienists are often the first to notice subtle changes, and they build long-standing relationships with patients through regular visits. That preventative, patient-centered mindset has had a huge influence on how I practice dentistry.

It has reinforced my belief that great dentistry is proactive, personalized, and rooted in education. Patients deserve to understand *why* something is recommended, not just what we can do.

Q: Many people assume cosmetic dentistry is purely aesthetic. How do you help patients understand its connection to overall oral health?

Dr. Campbell:

Cosmetic dentistry and oral health are deeply connected. When teeth are properly aligned, balanced, and restored, they function better, wear more evenly, and are often easier to keep clean. This can reduce the risk of decay, gum disease, and even issues like jaw discomfort or headaches.

My approach is always function first, aesthetics second, though the two usually go hand in hand. A smile that looks beautiful but doesn't function properly won't stand the test of time. The goal is to create results that are not only visually pleasing, but also strong, comfortable, and long-lasting.

Q: What's one of the most common misconceptions you hear from patients who are considering cosmetic dentistry?

Dr. Campbell:

The biggest misconception is that cosmetic dentistry will look artificial or overdone. That may have been

more common years ago, but today's materials, techniques, and planning tools allow us to create extremely natural results.

When cosmetic dentistry is done thoughtfully, it enhances what's already there. Most patients don't want a completely different smile, they want their smile; just healthier, brighter, or more balanced. The best compliment is when someone says, "You look fantastic, did you do something different?" rather than just immediately noticing dental work.

Q: For patients who feel hesitant or nervous about cosmetic treatment, what reassurance do you offer during the consultation process?

Dr. Campbell:

First, there's no pressure. A consultation should feel like a conversation, not a commitment. Many patients come in with questions or concerns they've been carrying for years, and they simply want clarity.

I take time to listen and to understand what a patient likes, what bothers them, and what their goals are. Education is key. When patients understand their options, timelines, and outcomes, fear tends to fade. My job is to provide guidance and expertise so patients can make informed decisions that feel right for them.

Q: Cosmetic dentistry isn't one-size-fits-all. How do you personalize treatment so each smile still feels authentic?

Dr. Campbell:

Every smile has its own personality and honoring that individuality is essential. I look at facial structure, lip movement, tooth shape, and how someone speaks and smiles naturally. These details matter.

Cosmetic dentistry should enhance a person's natural features not mask them. When patients see their reflection and recognize themselves, just more confident, that's when we know the treatment was successful. The goal is subtlety, balance, and harmony.

Q: What role does trust play in successful cosmetic outcomes?

Dr. Campbell:

Trust is everything. Cosmetic dentistry is a partnership. Patients are trusting me with something deeply personal, their smile. That means being transparent, setting realistic expectations, and always prioritizing the patient's well-being.

When trust is present, patients feel comfortable asking questions, expressing concerns, and participating in the decision-making process. That collaboration leads to better experiences and better outcomes.

Q: After a patient's first visit—before any treatment even begins—what do you hope they walk away feeling?

Dr. Campbell:

I hope they feel heard, respected, and at ease. Dentistry can be intimidating for many people and changing that perception is important to me.

If a patient leaves thinking, "*This doctor truly understands me and my goals,*" then we've already laid the foundation for success. Great dentistry isn't just about teeth, it's about people, trust, and long-term relationships.

About Dr. William Campbell

Dr. William Campbell believes exceptional dentistry begins with listening. By understanding each patient's goals, he designs personalized treatment plans that enhance both health and aesthetics. Known for his gentle touch and meticulous attention to detail, he is passionate about creating confident, natural-looking smiles. Dr. Campbell also provides advanced cosmetic and restorative care, including the minimally invasive Chao Pinhole® Surgical Technique to correct gum recession without traditional grafting. His commitment to precision and comfort ensures a stress-free experience with beautiful, lasting results.



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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.

**1 in 2 Men.
1 in 3 Women.
Will Develop Cancer**

Most don't know until it's too late.

Don't wait for symptoms.

BodyView

The Power of Early Detection

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

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

Safety and Convenience Combined

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

In less than an hour, patients receive a comprehensive health screening followed by a virtual consultation with a physician to review the results in detail, which would traditionally require multiple appointments, various specialists, and extensive testing. This efficiency makes preventive screening accessible to busy professionals and anyone who values their time while prioritizing their health.

Investing in Your Future Self

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

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

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

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MARCH: YOUR LUCKY MONTH FOR PRESERVING EYE HEALTH

As March ushers in the promise of spring and the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, it's the perfect time to focus on both good fortune and something equally valuable – your vision health. While finding a four-leaf clover might bring luck, taking proactive steps to maintain healthy eyes is a more reliable path to long-term visual wellness.

The eyes are our windows to the world, yet many of us take them for granted until problems arise. According to vision health experts, many sight-threatening conditions are preventable through proper care and regular maintenance. This March, let's explore how you can create your own luck by adopting habits that protect and enhance your vision.

Nutrition: Your First Line of Defense

Just as leprechauns guard their pot of gold, you should treasure the nutrients that support eye health. Leafy greens like spinach and kale contain lutein and zeaxanthin, powerful antioxidants that protect against macular degeneration. Orange vegetables such as carrots and sweet potatoes provide beta-carotene, while fatty fish offer essential omega-3 fatty acids. Consider these foods your lucky charms for maintaining crystal-clear vision.

Digital Wellness in the Modern Age

In our screen-dominated world, digital eye strain has become increasingly common. Practice the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This simple habit can be as valuable as finding gold at the rainbow's end when it comes to reducing eye fatigue and preventing long-term damage.

Regular Eye Examinations: Your Vision Insurance

Don't rely on luck to maintain healthy eyes – schedule regular comprehensive eye exams. These checkups can detect early signs of conditions like glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy before they become serious problems. Many eye diseases develop slowly and painlessly, making professional monitoring essential.



Environmental Protection

Like a shamrock shields itself from harsh weather, protect your eyes from environmental hazards. Wear UV-blocking sunglasses year-round, use appropriate protective eyewear during sports or hazardous activities, and maintain proper lighting while reading or working. These precautions are your shield against potential eye damage.

Lifestyle Choices for Lasting Vision

Your daily habits significantly impact eye health. Maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood pressure, and avoiding smoking can prevent various eye conditions. Regular exercise improves blood circulation, including to the eyes, while adequate sleep allows your eyes to repair and refresh themselves.

Hydration and Eye Comfort

Keep your eyes as fresh as morning dew by staying well-hydrated. Proper hydration helps maintain the natural moisture in your eyes, preventing dryness and irritation. Consider using artificial tears if you experience persistent dry eyes, especially in air-conditioned environments or while using digital devices.

Creating Your Vision Legacy

Just as Irish folklore passes down through generations, good vision care habits can influence your family's eye health awareness. Share these practices with loved ones, especially children, who can benefit from early adoption of eye-healthy habits.

This March, while others chase leprechauns and search for four-leaf clovers, focus on creating your own luck through proactive vision care. Remember, good fortune in health often comes to those who make wise choices and maintain consistent healthy habits. By following these guidelines, you're not leaving your vision to chance but taking control of your eye health destiny. Now that's something worth celebrating more than a pot of gold at the rainbow's end.



Penny Orr, O.D.
Optometric Physician

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

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

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



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Beyond the Face: How Ultherapy Prime Tightens and Lifts the Arms and Abdomen Without Surgery

When most people think of Ultherapy, they picture a non-surgical facelift—a way to lift sagging brows, tighten the jawline, or smooth the neck without going under the knife. But the newest generation of this FDA-approved ultrasound technology, Ultherapy Prime, is expanding the possibilities well beyond the face. At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we are excited to offer Ultherapy Prime for the upper arms and abdomen, giving patients a non-invasive option to address skin laxity in two of the most commonly requested body areas.

Why the Arms and Abdomen?

Loose, crepey skin on the upper arms and a lax abdominal area are among the top aesthetic concerns patients bring to our practice, especially as we enjoy the active, outdoor lifestyle here in Southwest Florida. Weight fluctuations, pregnancy, aging, and even genetics can leave behind skin that no longer snaps back the way it once did. For many patients, the idea of surgical intervention—such as a brachioplasty (arm lift) or abdominoplasty (tummy tuck)—feels like too big a step. They want improvement, but they also want to avoid incisions, anesthesia, and weeks of downtime. That is exactly where Ultherapy Prime fits in.

How Ultherapy Prime Works on the Body

Ultherapy Prime uses micro-focused ultrasound energy to reach the deep foundational layers of tissue beneath the skin—the same layers a surgeon would address during a surgical lift. The system's advanced DeepSEE imaging technology allows the provider to visualize tissue in real time, ensuring that energy is delivered precisely where it will have the greatest impact. When the focused ultrasound reaches the targeted depth, it creates controlled thermal coagulation points that trigger the body's own healing response. Over the following weeks and months, the treated area produces fresh collagen and elastin, resulting in gradual tightening and lifting of the skin.

What makes the Prime platform particularly well-suited for body treatments is its enhanced precision and improved efficiency. Treatment times have been reduced by approximately twenty percent compared to the previous generation, and the advanced transducers allow for highly customized protocols tailored to the unique tissue characteristics of the arms and abdomen. These areas have different



Actual patient. Individual results may vary. Abdomen treated.

skin thickness and tissue composition than the face, so the ability to adjust treatment parameters is critical for achieving optimal results.

What to Expect During and After Treatment

An Ultherapy Prime session for the arms or abdomen typically lasts between sixty and ninety minutes, depending on the size of the treatment area. Patients may feel brief sensations of warmth or tingling as the ultrasound energy is delivered, but most tolerate the procedure comfortably. There is no need for general anesthesia, and the vast majority of patients return to their normal activities immediately afterward. Temporary redness, mild swelling, or tenderness in the treated area may occur but typically resolves within a day or two.

Results develop gradually as new collagen forms. Some patients notice initial tightening shortly after their session, but the most noticeable improvements typically appear over the course of two to three months. Results can last twelve to eighteen months or longer, and many patients choose to schedule annual maintenance treatments to sustain their progress.

Is Ultherapy Prime Right for You?

The best candidates for Ultherapy Prime on the arms and abdomen are individuals with mild to moderate skin laxity who are looking for meaningful improvement without surgery. It is an excellent option for patients who have experienced skin loosening after weight loss, pregnancy, or simply the natural aging process but who are not yet ready—or do not want—a surgical procedure. It is important to have realistic expectations; Ultherapy Prime delivers a natural-looking, gradual improvement rather than the dramatic transformation of a surgical lift. For patients with severe skin laxity, a surgical approach

may still be the most effective path, and we are happy to discuss all available options during a consultation.

A Comprehensive Approach to Body Rejuvenation At Naples Aesthetic Institute, we often recommend combining Ultherapy Prime with complementary treatments for a more comprehensive result. Pairing it with microneedling can enhance overall skin quality, while injectables like Sculptra can address volume loss in adjacent areas. Every treatment plan is customized to the individual patient's anatomy, goals, and lifestyle.

If you have been bothered by loose skin on your arms or abdomen and want to explore a non-surgical solution, we invite you to schedule a consultation with our team. Contact Naples Aesthetic Institute at (239) 596-8000 or visit kirangillmd.com to learn more about Ultherapy Prime and discover whether it is the right fit for your goals.



DR. KIRAN GILL



Naples Aesthetic Institute

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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
- Ozone therapy and/or peptide therapy
- Spinal decompression therapy (often not needed)
- Natural supplementation and/or vitamin-wellness infusions
- Injections or infusions of 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 are in need of a highly experienced Chiropractic Neurologist in Naples, FL, look no further than **Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute**. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, call us today!

TIMELESS RESULTS, THOUGHTFULLY DONE

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

By Dr. Kenzie

February is Heart Health Month—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 Heart Health with 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 Heart Health 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.

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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.

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DISCOVER THE POWER OF NUTRITION: FUELING BODY, MIND AND PURPOSE

By Greg Pascucci

March is National Nutrition Month, and this year's theme, "Discover the Power of Nutrition," serves as an important reminder that what we eat influences far more than our waistline. For older adults especially, nutrition powers strength, cognitive clarity, emotional wellness and even our sense of purpose.

As we age, our bodies process nutrients differently. Metabolism slows, muscle mass naturally declines and hydration needs increase. Yet the need for essential nutrients remains high. A balanced diet rich in lean protein, fiber, healthy fats and antioxidants can support mobility, protect bone density, strengthen immunity and promote brain health.

Protein plays a critical role in maintaining muscle strength and reducing fall risk. Fiber supports digestion and heart health. Healthy fats, such as those found in avocados, nuts and olive oil, contribute to cognitive function. Hydration, often overlooked, helps prevent fatigue and confusion. Even small adjustments, such as choosing whole grains over refined options or adding an extra serving of vegetables, can have meaningful long-term benefits.

Beyond nutrients themselves, the environment in which we eat also matters. Studies consistently show that older adults who dine with others tend to consume more balanced meals than those who eat alone. Shared meals encourage variety, improve appetite and foster social connection, an important component of overall wellness.

At The Carlisle Naples, an active retirement community, thoughtful dining plays a central role in daily life. The community's FreshZest® program, which complements an already extensive selection of dishes, reflects research around Blue Zones – geographic regions known for remarkable longevity and emphasizes plant-forward dishes, whole foods and ingredients that support cardiovascular, brain and immune health.

But nutrition is only part of wellness. Purpose and engagement are equally powerful contributors to healthy aging. Research shows that older adults who



remain socially and intellectually active often experience lower stress levels and improved mental well-being.

In communities like The Carlisle, residents are encouraged to stay involved in meaningful ways. Some volunteer in the library, others lead interest groups, and many participate in service initiatives that benefit the broader Naples community. These efforts illustrate how giving back nourishes emotional health just as wholesome meals nourish the body.

It's important to take a holistic approach to wellness. Proper nutrition fuels the energy needed to stay active and engaged. Purpose reduces stress and supports emotional resilience. Social connection enhances both appetite and outlook.

You don't have to overhaul your lifestyle to discover the power of nutrition. Start small: add more color to your plate, prioritize hydration, choose lean proteins and enjoy meals in good company whenever possible. Pair nourishing foods with meaningful activity, whether volunteering, mentoring or exploring a new hobby.

Healthy aging isn't about restriction. It's about fueling the body, engaging the mind and nurturing purpose. When these elements work together, the result is not just longevity, but vitality.

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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Why Consider Endolift® Before a Facelift or Facial Liposuction

By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

For patients seeking facial rejuvenation, the traditional pathway has often led directly to surgical facelift or facial liposuction. While these procedures remain appropriate in select cases, advances in minimally invasive technology now allow many individuals to achieve meaningful improvement without immediately committing to surgery. One such option is Endolift®, a laser-assisted, minimally invasive procedure that addresses skin laxity and localized fat with substantially less downtime.

This article explains why Endolift® is often worth considering first, particularly for patients with mild to moderate facial aging changes.

UNDERSTANDING THE CORE DIFFERENCES

Facelift and facial liposuction are surgical procedures designed to remove excess skin and fat and reposition deeper tissues. They can deliver dramatic results but require incisions, anesthesia, longer recovery periods, and carry higher procedural risks.

Endolift®, by contrast, is a minimally invasive procedure that uses a fine optical fiber to deliver controlled laser energy beneath the skin. The goal is to support subdermal tissue tightening, collagen remodeling, and selective reduction of small fat pockets without excisional surgery.

WHY MANY PATIENTS ARE NOT SURGICAL-READY

Many individuals seeking facial rejuvenation experience early jowling, jawline softening, or mild neck laxity without significant excess skin. These patients often want improvement but are not prepared for surgery or prolonged downtime. For this group, a surgical facelift may be more aggressive than necessary at their current stage.

KEY ADVANTAGES OF ENDOLIFT® AS A FIRST-LINE OPTION

Endolift® is less invasive and does not require surgical incisions or tissue removal. It allows for gradual, natural-looking improvement through collagen remodeling over time rather than abrupt



post-surgical changes. Downtime is significantly shorter, and most patients resume normal activities within days.

Importantly, Endolift® does not preclude future facelift or liposuction procedures. In some cases, it may improve tissue quality and reduce the extent of future surgery if it becomes necessary.

WHEN FACIAL LIPOSUCTION MAY BE PREMATURE

Facial liposuction removes fat but does not tighten skin. In patients with skin laxity, this can lead to contour irregularities or a hollowed appearance. Endolift® addresses both fat remodeling and skin tightening simultaneously, making it a more balanced option for mild submental or jowl fullness.

APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS

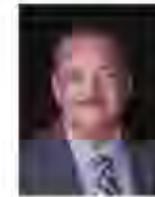
Endolift® is not a replacement for surgical facelift in patients with significant skin excess, advanced jowling, or severe neck laxity. However, in properly selected patients, it may delay the need for surgery or reduce the invasiveness of future procedures.

A STEPWISE APPROACH TO FACIAL REJUVENATION

Modern aesthetic care increasingly favors a stepwise strategy that begins with the least invasive option capable of addressing the concern. Endolift® fits well into this approach, allowing patients to achieve meaningful improvement while preserving future options.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Facial rejuvenation does not have to begin with surgery. For many patients, Endolift® represents a prudent first step, offering skin tightening and contour refinement with lower risk and recovery. A thorough consultation with a qualified provider can determine whether Endolift® is an appropriate initial strategy or whether surgical intervention is indicated.



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.

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

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

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

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

The Power of Early Detection

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

Recognizing the Warning Signs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Screening Process

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

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

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

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

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

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

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

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

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

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

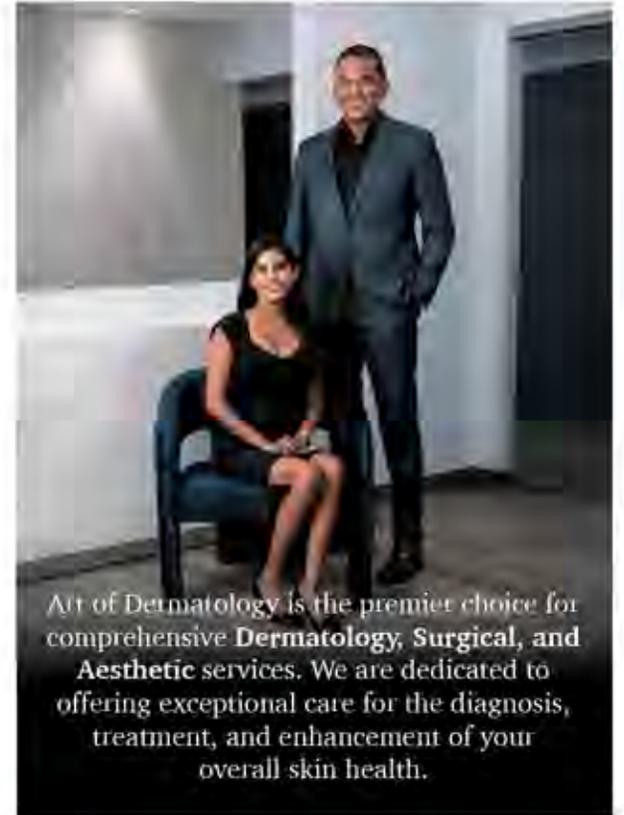
The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

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

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



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WHEN MACULAR DEGENERATION BLURS YOUR WORLD – THERE MAY STILL BE OPTIONS

Specialized Low Vision Rehabilitation in Fort Myers & Naples

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

Have You Been Told “There’s Nothing More That Can Be Done”?

If you have **macular degeneration**, geographic atrophy, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, or retinal disease — and traditional glasses or surgery are no longer providing the clarity you need — you may feel discouraged.

Low Vision Rehabilitation focuses on helping patients make the most of their remaining vision using specialized optical devices and individualized training.

In Southwest Florida, where macular degeneration is common, Low Vision care can help many patients improve daily function and maintain independence.

Vision Loss Affects More Than Sight

For many patients, reading becomes slow and frustrating.

You may still see the words — but they are harder to process smoothly. Crossword puzzles become challenging. Television becomes more difficult to follow.

Over time, reduced visual function can contribute to:

- Loss of independence
- Social withdrawal
- Increased frustration
- Symptoms of depression

Research suggests that maintaining visual engagement may support cognitive and emotional well-being.

Addressing functional vision loss early can help patients remain active and independent longer.

A Fort Myers Success Story

Mary L., an 89-year-old Fort Myers resident, noticed increasing difficulty from macular degeneration.

She was no longer able to:

- Complete her daily crossword puzzles
- Read the newspaper comfortably
- Watch television with ease

“As my vision declined, I felt myself becoming more discouraged,” she shared. “I was losing the simple things that made my day meaningful.”



After a comprehensive Low Vision evaluation, Mary was prescribed:

- A custom low vision telemicroscope for reading and crossword puzzles
- A full-diameter low vision telescope to assist with distance viewing for television

With proper fitting and training, she was able to return to activities she enjoys.

“I got MY life back.

I can now get back to doing the things I enjoy in life.”

Today, Mary reads again, completes her puzzles, and watches her favorite programs with improved comfort and clarity.

Individual results vary based on diagnosis and remaining vision.

What Is Low Vision Care?

When standard glasses or surgery no longer meet visual needs, Low Vision care focuses on enhancing usable vision.

Each evaluation begins with an important question: **“What would you like to be able to do again?”**

- Read comfortably?
- Watch television with greater detail?
- Improve distance spotting?
- Drive with a bioptic telescope (when appropriate and permitted)?

Treatment plans are individualized based on diagnosis, visual potential, and personal goals.

Advanced Low Vision Technology Available in Southwest Florida

Modern options may include:

- Bioptic telescopic glasses
- Reading microscopes
- Telemicroscopes
- Full-diameter telescopes
- Electronic magnification systems
- Prism side-vision awareness lenses
- Contrast-enhancing filters

Some patients experience meaningful improvement in functional acuity with specialized optics.

Why Patients Choose Low Vision of Southwest Florida

- Practice devoted exclusively to Low Vision Rehabilitation
- Fellow, International Academy of Low Vision Specialists
- Collaborative care with local ophthalmologists
- Individualized, goal-oriented evaluations
- Serving Fort Myers, Naples, Cape Coral & Southwest Florida

Seeing Better. Living Better.

Macular degeneration and other retinal diseases may change vision — but many patients can still improve daily function with the right evaluation and tools.

Low Vision rehabilitation combines technology, training, and individualized care to help patients maintain independence and quality of life.

Schedule Your Comprehensive Low Vision Evaluation:
Dr. Dennis Denick, OD, Dipl ABO, FIALVS



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www.lowvisionofswfl.com

(Located inside Eye Centers of Florida)
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If you have been told “nothing more can be done,” a Low Vision evaluation may help you explore additional options.

Appointments are limited.



IALVS
International Academy
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How Functional Medicine is Changing the Game for Treating Chronic Disease

By Svetlana Kogan, MD, IFMCP

Managing chronic conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease, for example, can feel like a never-ending battle. While medications and treatments are important, there is a rising trend in healthcare that focuses not just on treating the symptoms, but on fixing the root causes of these problems. Enter Functional Medicine. It is getting a lot of attention because it is all about treating the whole person. Functional medicine is not just about popping a pill to fix what is wrong. It is a holistic approach that digs into the underlying reasons why you're dealing with a certain health issue in the first place. Whether it is your diet, sleep habits, stress levels, or environmental factors, functional medicine takes all this into account. The goal is not just to treat the disease, but to get to the root cause and find ways to restore balance in your body.

Let us look at high blood pressure (hypertension) for example. It can lead to strokes, heart attacks, and kidney failure if left unchecked. While blood pressure medications are commonly prescribed, functional medicine goes beyond just treating the numbers on a monitor. It looks at what might be contributing to high blood pressure and helps you make changes to address those issues. For example, it is quite common for me to “prescribe” certain BP lowering foods. Additionally, for overweight patients, I put together customized meal plans, complete with recipes and shopping list, based on a person’s lab results, lifestyle, and personal preferences.

But that is not all. We also look at things like stress level measuring and management, sleep quality, food sensitivities, and impaired heart rate variability – all of which can contribute to high blood pressure. My patients get their customized holistic recommendations to address all these driving forces of hypertension. I even laminate my recommendations, so that patients will be less likely to lose them.

Or take Diabetes for example, particularly type 2. Traditional treatment for diabetes often focuses on oral medications or injections, but functional medicine takes a different approach. It focuses on insulin resistance, the root cause of type 2 diabetes.



By improving your body’s response to insulin, you can lower blood sugar levels and, in some cases, even reverse diabetes altogether.

One of the coolest things about functional medicine for diabetes is the use of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs). These devices track your blood sugar levels in real-time, providing valuable insight into how different foods, exercise, and even stress impact your glucose levels. With this information, you can adjust your diet and lifestyle to keep your blood sugar stable throughout the day. The use of CGMs helps me to validate my recommendations and thus improve patient compliance.

For example, let us say I recommended a patient with Insulin resistance to walk after dinner to optimize their glucose metabolism. If they use a CGM, they will see in real time on the screen - that such walk helps to keep their sugar levels in check. This real-time data serves as a visual illustration and helps to develop healthy habits.

I also often find myself “prescribing” exercise to my hypertensive or pre/diabetic patients. But it is not just any kind of exercise. It is personalized based on your body’s needs and fitness level. This could include aerobic exercises (like walking or cycling) to improve circulation, strength training to boost heart health, and even yoga or Pilates to manage stress.

The beauty of functional medicine is that it does not just put a Band-Aid on your condition but rather takes a deeper look at what is going on with your

body and offers sustainable solutions. Whether it is food for lowering blood pressure, CGMs to help manage diabetes, or an exercise program for improving heart health, functional medicine gives you the tools to make lasting changes. I like to meet with my patients regularly to go over their progress and collaborate with them on making this wellness journey more productive by sticking with what works and letting go of what doesn’t.

By focusing on prevention, balanced nutrition, stress management, and exercise, functional medicine is not only helping people manage chronic diseases but also improving their overall quality of life and offering a path to long-term wellness.



Svetlana Kogan, MD, IFMCP

The author of ‘Diet Slave No More!’, Svetlana Kogan, MD, IFMCP 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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Say Goodbye to Heel Pain:

How Embolization Is Changing the Treatment of Plantar Fasciitis

By Russell Becker, DO

If you've been living with the stabbing heel pain of plantar fasciitis, you know how relentless it can be. That first step out of bed in the morning, the ache after a long day on your feet, the way it keeps you from doing the things you love — it adds up. At Vascular Center of Naples, we understand how much chronic heel pain affects your quality of life, and we're proud to offer a cutting-edge solution that many patients haven't heard of: embolization for plantar fasciitis.

What Is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common causes of heel pain, affecting millions of Americans every year. It occurs when the plantar fascia — the thick band of tissue connecting your heel bone to your toes — becomes inflamed. This inflammation is often triggered by overuse, improper footwear, obesity, or structural issues in the foot. Traditional treatments like rest, physical therapy, orthotics, steroid injections, and anti-inflammatory medications help many patients, but for others, the pain persists for months or even years.

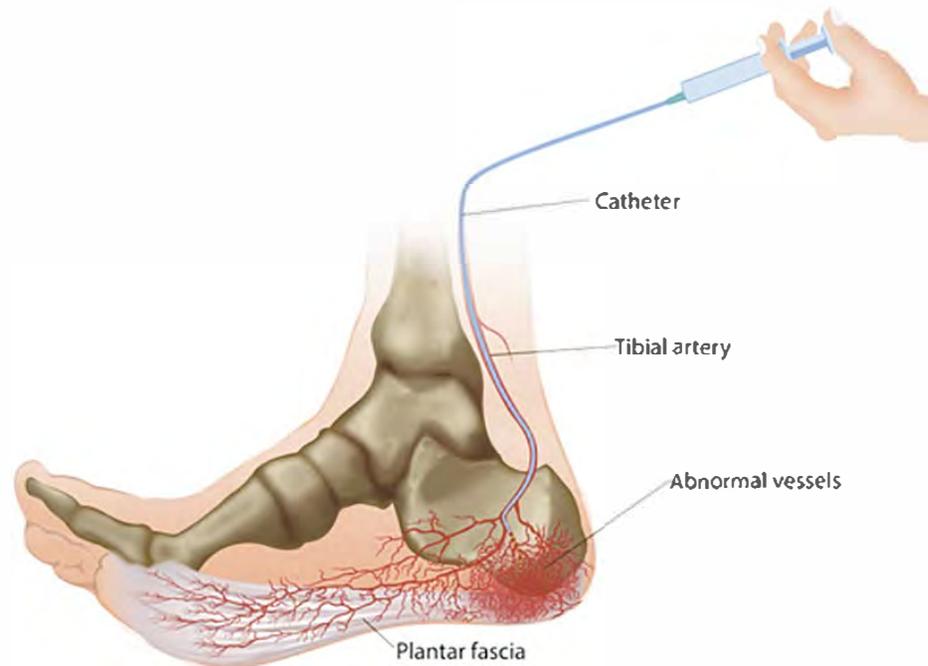
What Is Embolization, and How Does It Work?

Embolization is a minimally invasive procedure performed by interventional vascular specialist. While it has long been used to treat conditions involving abnormal blood vessels throughout the body, it is now being applied with remarkable success to chronic musculoskeletal pain, including plantar fasciitis.

In cases of chronic plantar fasciitis, abnormal blood vessel growth (a process called neovascularization) occurs alongside the inflamed tissue. These new, abnormal vessels bring with them nerve fibers that amplify pain signals. During the embolization procedure, a physician uses image guidance to thread a tiny catheter through a small nick in the skin and into the arteries feeding these abnormal vessels. Microscopic particles are then delivered through the catheter to block blood flow to these problematic vessels, reducing inflammation and, critically, decreasing the pain signals they generate.

What to Expect During the Procedure

The embolization procedure is performed on an outpatient basis, meaning most patients go home the same day. It typically takes under an hour and is



performed under local anesthesia with light sedation. There are no large incisions, no general anesthesia, and no lengthy hospital stays. Recovery is generally much faster than surgical alternatives. Most patients experience only mild soreness at the catheter insertion site and are back on their feet within a few days.

Who Is a Good Candidate?

Embolization may be an excellent option for patients who have suffered from plantar fasciitis for six months or more and have not found adequate relief through conservative treatments. It is particularly well-suited for those who want to avoid surgery or who have medical conditions that make surgery risky. During a consultation at Vascular Center of Naples, our specialists will review your imaging, medical history, and symptoms to determine whether embolization is the right path forward for you.

Why Choose Vascular Center of Naples?

At Vascular Center of Naples, our team of board-certified vascular and interventional specialists brings advanced expertise and compassionate care to every patient. We stay at the forefront of minimally invasive treatments so that our patients in Naples and the surrounding communities have access to the latest, most effective options available. We believe that chronic pain doesn't have to be a life

sentence — and embolization for plantar fasciitis is one more powerful tool we use to help our patients reclaim their comfort and mobility.

Take the Next Step Toward Pain-Free Living

If chronic heel pain has been holding you back, it may be time to explore what embolization can do for you. Contact Vascular Center of Naples today to schedule a consultation with our experienced team. Relief may be closer than you think.

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.



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of Naples

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PRP and Stem Cell Therapy for Arthritis: A Powerful Combination for Lasting Relief

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

Arthritis affects millions of Americans, causing chronic joint pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility that can significantly diminish quality of life. While conventional treatments such as anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroid injections, and surgery have long been the standard of care, they often provide only temporary relief without addressing the underlying damage to cartilage and joint tissue. At Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics, we take a fundamentally different approach — one that harnesses the body's own healing capabilities through advanced regenerative medicine, combining Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy with cutting-edge stem cell treatments.

Understanding PRP Therapy

Platelet-Rich Plasma therapy is a regenerative treatment derived from a patient's own blood. During the process, a small blood sample is drawn and placed in a centrifuge, which separates and concentrates the platelets — tiny cells packed with powerful growth factors. When injected into an arthritic joint, these growth factors stimulate tissue repair, reduce inflammation, and encourage the regeneration of damaged cartilage. PRP has gained significant recognition in the medical community for its ability to promote healing in a targeted, natural way with minimal risk of adverse reactions.

The Role of Stem Cell Therapy in Arthritis Treatment

Stem cells are the body's master repair cells — uniquely capable of transforming into specialized cell types and regenerating damaged tissue. In the context of arthritis, stem cell therapy offers the remarkable potential to rebuild deteriorating cartilage, reduce chronic inflammation, and restore joint function. At Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics, we utilize advanced stem cell treatments sourced from highly concentrated, carefully processed biologics to deliver maximum therapeutic benefit directly to the affected joints.

Why We Combine PRP with Every Stem Cell Treatment

At Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics, we believe in delivering the most comprehensive regenerative therapy possible. That is why we combine PRP with all of our stem cell treatments. This pairing is not accidental — it is a deliberate and scientifically informed strategy. PRP acts as a powerful activator



for stem cells, creating an optimal biological environment that enhances stem cell viability, engraftment, and function within the joint. The growth factors in PRP essentially "wake up" the stem cells and signal the body to begin aggressive repair and regeneration.

This synergistic relationship means patients receive the benefits of both therapies simultaneously: the immediate anti-inflammatory and growth-factor-rich environment provided by PRP, and the longer-term regenerative power of stem cells working to restore damaged tissue. Together, they address arthritis from multiple biological angles — reducing pain faster and promoting deeper, more durable healing.

Our Proprietary Protocols: Precision-Engineered for Better Outcomes

What truly sets Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics apart is our commitment to precision and personalization. We have developed our own proprietary protocols for combining PRP with stem cell therapies — protocols refined through clinical experience, ongoing research, and a deep understanding of regenerative biology. These customized treatment plans are designed to accelerate the healing process, maximize stem cell activation, and optimize outcomes for each individual patient.

Our protocols consider factors such as the severity of joint degeneration, the specific joints involved, and each patient's overall health profile. By tailoring the concentration, timing, and delivery method of both PRP and stem cell components, we are able to create a treatment experience that is not only more effective but also more responsive to the body's unique healing rhythm. The result is a regenerative treatment strategy that goes far beyond standard injections — it is a carefully orchestrated biological intervention.

Who Can Benefit?

Our combined PRP and stem cell therapy is a compelling option for patients suffering from osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other degenerative joint conditions affecting the knees, hips, shoulders, and spine. It is particularly well-suited for individuals who have not found adequate relief through conventional treatments or who wish to delay or avoid joint replacement surgery. Many of our patients report meaningful reductions in pain, improved range of motion, and a renewed ability to enjoy daily activities and an active lifestyle.

Take the Next Step Toward Healing

If arthritis has been limiting your life, regenerative medicine may offer the breakthrough you have been looking for. Contact Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics today at 239-829-4300 to schedule your consultation and discover how our advanced PRP and stem cell protocols can transform your path to health. A life with less pain and greater mobility is within reach — and we are here to help you get there.

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BAHI THERAPY: A HOLISTIC PROTOCOL FOR POST-STROKE BRAIN RECOVERY

Brain Rejuvenation Clinic of Naples

Recovering from a stroke is a complex and deeply personal journey—one that often demands more than conventional rehabilitation. That's where BAHI Therapy steps in. This emerging integrative health protocol combines cutting-edge science with holistic healing philosophies to support whole-brain recovery and functional restoration.

BAHI stands for:

- **B**iomodulation (Photobiomodulation or PBM)
- **A**ir (Hydrogen Inhalation Therapy or HIT)
- **H**yperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)
- **I**ntegration of Vibration Therapy

Together, these four non-invasive, research-supported therapies work synergistically to address some of the most critical challenges in post-stroke recovery, such as:

- **Oxidative stress**
- **Neuroinflammation**
- **Hypoxia (low oxygen in brain tissues)**
- **Impaired circulation**
- **Neuromuscular dysfunction**

Let's break down how each component supports recovery in a way that both patients and healthcare professionals can appreciate.

1. Hydrogen Inhalation Therapy (HIT)

After a stroke, the brain undergoes a cascade of cellular damage triggered by oxidative stress—an over-production of unstable molecules called free radicals. Hydrogen gas (H₂) is a selective antioxidant, meaning it only targets the most harmful radicals like hydroxyl and peroxynitrite, without interfering with the body's normal healing signals.

How it helps:

- In animal models, hydrogen inhalation reduced the size of brain infarcts (areas of dead tissue) and preserved neurological function.
- In human trials, particularly for cardiac arrest patients with similar oxidative brain stress, HIT improved neurological recovery and survival outcomes.

Why it matters:

Hydrogen therapy is safe, fast-acting, and supports neuroprotection during the brain's critical window of healing—potentially preserving brain function before irreversible damage sets in.

2. Photobiomodulation (PBM)

PBM, also known as low-level laser therapy, uses specific wavelengths of red or near-infrared light to stimulate cellular repair.

What it does:

- Energizes the mitochondria (the "powerhouses" of cells) to increase ATP production, which is crucial for brain cell survival and repair.
- Triggers neurogenesis (formation of new brain cells).
- Reduces neuroinflammation by regulating overactive immune cells in the brain (microglia).
- Enhances blood flow and oxygen delivery.

What the research says:

Clinical and pre-clinical studies support PBM's ability to restore neurological function, especially in brain injury and stroke models. It has even shown potential in conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, where mitochondrial dysfunction and neuroinflammation play key roles.

3. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)

In HBOT, patients breathe inside a pressurized chamber. This therapy dramatically increases oxygen levels in the bloodstream by pushing the hydrogen molecules inhaled during BAHI Therapy deeper into the brain and muscle tissues. This delivers oxygen to brain areas that are often starved of it after a stroke.

Why this matters:

- Oxygen is vital for cellular repair, but stroke often disrupts normal blood flow.
- HBOT promotes angiogenesis (growth of new blood vessels) and enhances brain metabolism.
- It can reactivate dormant neurons in the brain's penumbra—the area surrounding stroke-damaged tissue that is still salvageable.

Proven benefits:

- Clinical studies have shown HBOT can improve cognition, language, memory, motor skills, and overall quality of life—even months or years after the initial stroke.
- A protocol of 40–60 sessions has been linked to statistically significant improvements in long-term stroke outcomes.

4. Vibration Therapy

Vibration therapy uses mechanical oscillations to stimulate the nervous system and muscles. While often used in sports recovery and physical rehab, it's increasingly being recognized for its role in neurological conditions.

Benefits for stroke patients:

- Enhances circulation and nutrient delivery to tissues.
- Stimulates proprioception (body awareness) and sensory feedback pathways.
- Supports neuromuscular reeducation, helping retrain the body to move with greater coordination and strength.



When used alongside PBM, HBOT, and HIT, vibration therapy may help "wake up" dormant pathways, reinforce motor learning, and accelerate physical recovery.

Why BAHI Therapy Works: A Synergistic Healing Model

While each of these therapies provides its own benefits, their combined application amplifies healing potential. BAHI Therapy addresses multiple aspects of stroke pathology—something that few single treatments can achieve.

The BAHI Therapy Advantage:		
Target	Mechanism	BAHI Component
Oxidative Stress	Neutralizes damaging free radicals	Hydrogen Inhalation, PBM
Neuroinflammation	Modulates immune response	PBM, Hydrogen
Hypoxia	Reoxygenates ischemic tissue	HBOT
Cellular Energy Deficit	Boosts ATP & mitochondria	PBM
Circulatory Issues	Enhances blood flow	HBOT, Vibration
Motor Dysfunction	Promotes neuromuscular recovery	Vibration, PBM

A New Era in Stroke Recovery

BAHI Therapy offers a non-invasive, drug-free, and personalized approach to stroke rehabilitation—grounded in both clinical research and the body's natural regenerative capacity.

For patients, this means more control over your healing journey—and hope for recovery, even if traditional methods haven't worked.

For clinicians, BAHI Therapy represents a next-generation neurorehabilitation strategy, one that leverages technology, metabolic science, and functional healing principles in a coordinated, evidence-based manner.

At Brain Rejuvenation Clinic of Naples, we are here to help you and your loved ones dealing with the physical repercussions of stroke. We are located at 1729 Heritage Trail, Unit # 901. Call us at (239) 877- 2900 to schedule a consultation or to learn how our holistic approach can benefit you. We look forward to hearing from you!



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Achilles Tendon Ruptures and Getting You Back in the Game

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

Achilles Ruptures are more common in men than women and the typical age group that is affected is between the ages of 30-50. Some other risk factors include race, genetics, medical conditions, musculoskeletal disease, ankle and foot alignment (pronation/hyper-pronation), obesity, sports, exercise, medication and smoking.

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body. It is connected to both the calf muscle and the heel bone and is a fibrous tissue that somewhat resembles twine. It is used when you walk, run, stand, jump and is especially stressed when you move quickly from side to side.

Although the Achilles tendon can withstand great stresses from running, twisting and jumping, it is extremely vulnerable to injury. A rupture of the tendon is a tearing and separation of the tendon fibers, so that the tendon can no longer perform its normal function.

People that are athletic and play sports or do extreme workouts are often times more frequently affected by Achilles tendon injuries. This is because they have jarring, ballistic movements. Sports like tennis, basketball and football all create these airborne movements. Also, exercises or workouts like jumping rope, or other high intensity movements can rupture the Achilles tendon. Corticosteroids and some other pain deterring injectables have been studied for their negative effect on the tendons, due to the medications actually breaking down the tissues and weakening the Achilles tendon.

When the tendon is ruptured, most notably, people remark of the popping sound they hear at the onset. It causes a tremendous amount of pain and unfortunately takes a very long time to heal.

There are several types of treatment options, both surgical and nonsurgical. The nonsurgical approach is to cast the foot in a pointed toe position and then gradually recasting to stretch the tendon back into



Achilles Tendon Rupture

place very slowly. The nonoperative repair has a much greater re-rupture rate than with surgery. We also use laser therapy in conjunction with stem cells as to repair the Achilles tendon.

The surgical repair of the Achilles rupture involves several different options. All of the options will reconnect the two ends of the tear back together by suturing them back into place. Sometimes this is done with a flap drawn down from the gastrocnemius (calf muscle), while other times its achieved with a donated graft, or simply sewn back together with a specific suturing method that ties both sides down and reconnects the sutures in the midline of the tear.

Whichever of the treatment options that your physician may choose, expect the rehabilitation to be quite long. There is no weight bearing activity allowed for several weeks, and then from there

their will be many weeks of therapy. The length of healing for the average person is usually around 4 to 6 months.

At week 8 after your treatment, your Achilles tendon will be primarily healed, but not strong enough to put undue stress on it. It must be over-protected for several months to insure that it is not reinjured. For competitive and exercise, or sports enthusiast, they can expect a good 6-9 months before being back to their normal extreme routines

At Collier Podiatry, Dr. Petrocelli is highly experienced in treating Achilles tendon ruptures both surgically and non-surgically, depending on your unique circumstances. And they offer great options and routines for the most beneficial rehabilitation and healing.

The caring supportive staff at Collier Podiatry is available to answer your questions and make your appointment. Please visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com, or call them direct at (239) 775-0019.

Dr. Petrocelli is Board Certified in Surgical and Wound Care by the American Board of Wound Management. He is also the staff Podiatrist at Naples Community Hospital Wound Healing Center.



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

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www.collierpodiatry.com

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Naples, FL 34112
Phone: (239) 775-0019
Fax: (239) 775-0219

Shopping for the Best Incontinence Underwear?

There Might be a Better Solution

Do you experience accidental bladder leaks before making it to the restroom? Are you on the search for the best incontinence underwear?

Although incontinence underwear may help conceal leaks you experience or prevent leaking to your clothes, it does not treat your underlying symptoms. If you struggle with bladder control or leaks, this may be a sign that you have overactive bladder.

What is Overactive Bladder?

Overactive bladder is an umbrella term that includes the frequent and urgent need to empty your bladder. One of the most common symptoms of overactive bladder is a sudden urge to urinate, resulting in unintentional urine loss which is referred to as incontinence.

Overactive bladder can affect 1 in 3 people in the United States over the age of 40.^{1,2} Though this bladder control issue may occur more often as people get older, it is not a normal part of aging.

You may be suffering from overactive bladder if:

- **Urgency** - You experience a sudden or compelling need to urinate with inability to hold urine or control it
- **Urgency Incontinence** - You experience an urgent need to urinate and have urinary leakage accidents or trouble holding urine before making it to the restroom
- **Frequency** - You go to the restroom to urinate so often that it disrupts your life—typically 8 or more times a day
- **Nocturia** - You wake up more than 1 time per night because you need to urinate

The good news, there are treatment options available to help regain control of your bladder. The Florida

Bladder Institute is now offering Axonics® Therapy, a long-lasting solution that is clinically proven to help regain bladder control and deliver clinically meaningful improvements in quality of life*.

What is Axonics Therapy?

Axonics Therapy is an advanced treatment option that works by providing gentle stimulation to the nerves that control the bladder and bowel, which can help restore normal control and result in symptom improvement.

If you and your doctor believe you are a candidate for Axonics Therapy, you will first try the therapy for a brief test period that allows you and your doctor to see if the therapy provides satisfactory reduction of your symptoms. If it is determined that the therapy is right for you, you will have an outpatient procedure where a miniaturized Axonics implant is placed just beneath the skin in the upper part of your buttock.

What are the benefits of Axonics Therapy?

Axonics Therapy provides the possibility of saying goodbye to bladder leaks!

Long-lasting symptom relief: Designed to provide therapy for at least 15 years, providing a long-term solution for your symptoms

Clinically proven results:

- **93%** of treated patients achieved clinically significant improvements* at 2-years³
- **94%** of patients were satisfied with their therapy³

Important Safety Information: Implantation and use of the Axonics System incurs risk beyond those normally associated with surgery, some of which may necessitate surgical intervention. Results and experiences may vary and are unique to each patient. No promise or guarantee is made about specific results or experiences. For more information about safety and potential risks, go to: www.axonics.com/fsi. Caution: Federal law (USA) restricts this device to sale and use by, or on the order of, a physician.
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It's time to regain control!

Take the first step towards symptom relief. Call us at 239-449-7979 to schedule your Axonics Therapy consultation today.

“ ”

Brilliant. Amazing staff. Incredible results. Totally life changing. I am going to retire and work on my bucket list instead of settling for 'I have issues'.

— Tricia M., Patient —



Joseph Gauta, MD



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*50% or greater reduction in symptoms

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Nutritional and Neuromodulatory Strategies in Brain Injury Recovery: A Systems-Based Approach

By Dr. Waldo Amadeo

March is both National Nutrition Month and Brain Injury Awareness Month — a meaningful overlap that invites us to look at how what we eat affects how the brain heals.

When most people think about recovering from a traumatic brain injury (TBI), concussion, or acquired brain injury, they picture physical therapy, rest, and time. What often gets overlooked is the biochemical environment in which healing either thrives or stalls. Emerging research suggests that inflammation, mitochondrial function, gut health, and autonomic nervous system regulation are just as central to recovery as the structural injury itself.

Brain injury isn't just a mechanical event. It sets off a cascade — and that cascade can be influenced.

What Happens Inside the Brain After Injury

In the hours and days following a brain injury, a predictable sequence of secondary damage unfolds: brain cells become overexcited, oxidative stress increases, mitochondria begin to malfunction, the blood-brain barrier weakens, and widespread inflammation sets in.

One of the most significant consequences is a disruption in how the brain uses energy. Cerebral glucose metabolism can remain impaired for weeks or months after injury. This creates a frustrating paradox: the brain needs more energy to repair itself, but becomes less efficient at using its primary fuel source.

When mitochondria aren't functioning well, cells shift to less efficient energy pathways, generating more damaging byproducts and feeding the inflammatory cycle. Clinically, this shows up as fatigue, slowed thinking, mood swings, sleep problems, and difficulty with focus — symptoms that can persist long after the initial injury.

Why Nutrition Matters More Than You Think

Therapeutic nutrition for brain injury recovery isn't about counting calories. It's about providing the right molecular inputs to support cellular repair, reduce inflammation, and restore metabolic balance.

Several nutritional factors are particularly relevant:

- **Protein serves as the raw material for neurotransmitter production.** Amino acids like tryptophan (a precursor to serotonin) and tyrosine (a precursor to



dopamine) are essential for mood stability and cognitive function. Low protein intake can quietly undermine recovery.

- **Omega-3 fatty acids**, particularly DHA, are structural components of neuronal membranes. Research suggests omega-3 supplementation may reduce neuroinflammation and support the brain's ability to rewire itself — a process called synaptic plasticity.

- **Micronutrients including zinc, magnesium, B-vitamins, and vitamin D** all play roles in mitochondrial function and immune regulation. Subclinical deficiencies — ones that don't show up as obvious symptoms — can quietly slow the recovery trajectory.

- **Blood sugar stability** is often underestimated. Spikes and crashes in blood glucose drive neuroinflammation and stimulate the stress response. Consistent, protein-anchored meals help keep cortisol in check and support nervous system balance.

- **Gut health rounds out the picture.** Brain injury has been linked to changes in gut permeability and microbiome shifts. When the gut lining becomes compromised, systemic inflammation increases — and that inflammation feeds back into the brain through the gut-brain axis.

The Autonomic Nervous System: A Hidden Variable

Many people recovering from brain injuries live in a state of chronic sympathetic activation — a nervous system stuck in "fight or flight." This shows up as elevated heart rate, anxiety, irritability, poor sleep, and a low threshold for stress.

This happens partly because the vagus nerve, the body's primary parasympathetic pathway, becomes dysregulated after injury. The vagus nerve also helps

dampen inflammation. When vagal tone is low, that protective effect is diminished. Breathing techniques, sensorimotor rehabilitation, and neuromodulation are increasingly used to help restore it.

Neuromodulation and Putting It All Together

The prefrontal cortex — which governs decision-making, emotional regulation, and executive function — is particularly vulnerable in brain injury. Non-invasive neuromodulation technologies targeting this region show promise in restoring balance between the brain's emotional and regulatory networks. Evidence suggests these tools work best alongside metabolic support, improved sleep, and rehabilitation, not as a standalone fix.

Recovery from brain injury rarely follows a straight line. A systems-based approach addresses multiple layers at once: reducing inflammation through nutrition, supporting mitochondrial function, stabilizing the autonomic nervous system, and enhancing neuroplasticity through targeted therapies.

As we mark both National Nutrition Month and Brain Injury Awareness Month, the message is this: food is molecular information. The brain is a metabolic organ. When we treat recovery as a systems challenge rather than a purely structural one, we give the brain a genuine chance to heal.

About the Author

Dr. Waldo Amadeo is a chiropractic physician with advanced training in functional neurology and integrative brain-based care. In his practice, Heal Thyself Institute in Naples, Florida, he specializes in complex neurological conditions, brain injury recovery, and nervous system regulation. His approach integrates structural rehabilitation, neuromodulation, and metabolic strategies to support long-term neurological resilience.



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NO MORE LAST-MINUTE CANCELLATIONS: HOW CONTINUUM SURGERY CENTER OF NAPLES HANDLES GLP-1 MEDICATIONS THE RIGHT WAY

You have an elective surgery. You made plans to take PTO and have a friend or family member travel into town to assist with your recovery.

On the day of surgery, you present to the Surgery Center wide-eyed and bushy tail. You go through the discomfort of an intravenous access and then you are told "Sorry, we can't proceed with your surgery." Because you didn't stop your GLP-1 for a week.

If you have surgery at Continuum Surgery Center Of Naples, you won't ever need to worry about this happening.

This decade began with two major events to shake up humanity - COVID-19 & GLP-1 - both of which are here to stay.

Research into Glucagon-like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonists (GLP-1) began in the 1980s. The FDA approved Byetta in 2005 for Type-2 diabetes. In 2010 Victoza was approved for weight loss. In 2017 Semaglutide was approved for Type-2 Diabetes and weight loss in 2021. With celebrities and Social Media popularizing the weight loss effects, GLP1s became a household name. With fame came detractors. There were reports that many patients taking the GLP1s suffered from delayed stomach emptying (gastroparesis) which increased their risk of aspiration during surgical procedures.

With great fanfare, in 2023, an alphabet soup of Medical/Surgical societies, without high-level evidence made a blanket statement that patients on GLP1s should halt their treatment for at least a week. Which subsequently led to the scenario at the beginning of the essay.

GLP1s has benefits for:

- Diabetes
- Weight loss
- Cardiovascular disease
- Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome
- Infertility
- Osteoarthritis
- Alcohol consumption



A known side effect of diabetes is gastroparesis. A biomechanic effect of diabetic medications such as Metformin, Lyraglutide, Ozempic, Wegovy etc. is gastroparesis. Knowing this, our Anesthesiologists have treated all diabetics and patients on GLP1s as if they are at high risk for gastroparesis. Based on your medical/surgical history, we may have you adjust your meal intake from our usual **6 hours and 2 hours for drinking**. We may administer antacids, prokinetics, antisecretalogues and do a bedside stomach ultrasound scan.

What the Medical Societies guidance didn't mention is the timing to reverse gastroparesis; the level of patient compliance with stopping the medications preop; aspiration increase v risk of aspiration in those who halted the meds v status quo.

In November 2024, without fanfare, five Societies, including the American Society of Anesthesiology, released a new guidance on GLP1 use and surgery. That guidance agreed with our practice. However, the majority of ASCs and Hospitals are slow to adjust.

We look forward to seeing you, where we practice Humanism in Medicine.



G-A Lawson-Bouch r, MD DABA
Medical Director

Moonlight Anesthesia Services
Continuum Surgery Center Of Naples

Dr. Gary-Anthony Lawson-Boucher, MD is an anesthesiology specialist in southwest Florida and has over 22 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from New Jersey Medical School in 1999.

Dr. Lawson has lived in Naples for 2 decades, where he practices Ambulatory Surgery Anesthesia. He has practiced on 3 continents, during 2 wars with the U.S. Navy 7th Fleet and Marine Expeditionary Forces. He is an early proponent of enhanced recovery and the use of multimodal analgesia to effect painless surgery. He relies on his family's multicultural background to drive his principle of Humanism in Medicine.

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Seeing and Hearing: The Dynamic Duo of Your Senses

By Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D

March is Save Your Vision Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of eye health. While most people recognize how crucial vision is to daily life, fewer realize how closely our ability to see and hear are connected. As a Doctor of Audiology, I often remind patients that their ears and eyes work as a team to help them navigate the world, maintain balance, and communicate effectively.

If one sense begins to decline, the other has to compensate. When people experience hearing loss, they unknowingly start relying more on their vision—watching lip movements, facial expressions, and body language to fill in the gaps. Similarly, those with vision impairment lean on their hearing to identify their surroundings. But what happens when both begin to fade?

The Eyes and Ears: A Perfect Team

Your brain is constantly integrating information from both hearing and vision, making sense of your environment in real-time. Think about the last time you had a conversation in a noisy restaurant—your ears were processing speech while your eyes helped you focus on the speaker’s lips and expressions to piece together the words.

This connection is so strong that research shows vision can even alter what we hear. The **McGurk Effect**, for example, is a fascinating auditory illusion where your brain changes what you hear based on what your eyes see. If a person says “ba” but their lips form the shape of “fa,” you might hear “fa” instead of “ba” (McGurk & MacDonald, 1976).

But when either hearing or vision is impaired, this natural teamwork is disrupted—making everyday activities like conversation, walking, and driving more challenging.

The Brain’s Role: Why Dual Sensory Loss Matters

Hearing and vision aren’t just passive senses; they’re deeply linked to cognition and brain function. When one declines, the brain has to work harder to compensate, leading to:

- **Cognitive Overload** – Straining to hear or see pulls mental energy away from memory and focus.
- **Increased Fall Risk** – The inner ear plays a crucial role in balance, and vision is essential for spatial awareness. Older adults with hearing and vision loss are at a significantly higher risk of falls (Lin et al., 2012).
- **Greater Dementia Risk** – Studies show that untreated hearing loss is linked to an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia, and when combined with vision impairment, the impact on brain health is even greater (Gurgel et al., 2014).

The takeaway? **Hearing and vision should never be treated in isolation.** They work together, and when one is neglected, it puts more strain on the other.

Why People Prioritize Vision Over Hearing

When vision changes, most people rush to the eye doctor to get glasses or contacts. But when hearing starts to fade, many ignore the signs—even though hearing loss is just as impactful on quality of life.

Some common reasons people delay hearing care include:

- **They assume hearing loss is normal with age.** (So is vision loss, but that doesn’t stop anyone from getting glasses!)
- **They don’t realize how much they’re missing.** Hearing loss happens gradually, so people adapt without noticing the slow decline.
- **They think hearing aids won’t help.** Today’s hearing technology is more advanced and discreet than ever, dramatically improving communication and cognitive health.

How to Protect Both Your Vision and Hearing

Since your eyes and ears work together, maintaining both is crucial for overall well-being. Here’s how you can protect these vital senses:

1. **Schedule Regular Eye Exams** – Vision changes can be gradual, so regular checkups ensure early detection of conditions like cataracts or macular degeneration.

2. **Get Your Hearing Checked** – A simple baseline hearing test can help identify early signs of hearing loss before it impacts your daily life.

3. **Protect Your Ears from Noise** – Long-term exposure to loud sounds is a leading cause of hearing loss. Wear hearing protection in noisy environments and keep headphone volumes at safe levels.

4. **Exercise Regularly** – Physical activity supports healthy circulation, which benefits both your eyes and ears.

5. **Limit Screen Time** – Digital eye strain is real! Follow the **20-20-20 rule**: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds to reduce eye fatigue.

The Bottom Line: Prioritize Your Hearing Health
This Save Your Vision Month, let’s take a more comprehensive approach to wellness. Seeing clearly is essential—but so is hearing clearly. Vision and hearing work together, and when we neglect one, we may be unknowingly putting extra strain on our brain and body.

At AudioNova/Decibels Audiology, we believe that hearing health is a crucial part of overall well-being. That’s why we offer complimentary hearing evaluations to help you stay proactive about your health.

If you’ve noticed any changes in your hearing—or even if you haven’t—it’s time to establish a baseline. **Call us today to schedule your free hearing test and keep your brain, balance, and communication at their best!**

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Discover Your *Fountain of Youth* with the *European Liquid Facelift* through the Art and Science of Facial Rejuvenation

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 reverse aging. But for many patients, surgery feels too invasive, the downtime is too long, and the results are not only dramatic but can be less than the patient's expectations. Dr. Alina Stanciu, a Board-Certified Eye Physician, Surgeon, and Cosmetic Surgeon recognized the need for a gentler, more refined approach to facial rejuvenation – one that enhances your natural beauty rather than altering it with no downtime and better results.

This insight led to the creation of **The European Liquid 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 Liquid Facelift uses strategic injections of advanced dermal fillers such as Sculptra, diluted Radiesse and other dermal fillers integrated into her procedures. The specialized treatments restore lost volume, redefine facial structure, and smooth fine lines while increasing collagen stimulation. This sculpting technique is Dr. Stanciu's own development and performed by her only. Her advanced techniques are designed to lift the mid face, contour the jawline, and refresh the eyes – without surgery, anesthesia, or extended recovery time. The main goal is a natural, youthful result.

What creates this unique youthful look lies in Dr. Stanciu's study of balancing your own anatomy, with carefully applied aesthetics, and artful restraint. Drawing from her medical training and decades of surgical experience, Dr. Stanciu approaches each patient's face as a unique canvas in which she masterfully and artfully improves your youthful look. *"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, puffy, pulled or tightened."*



Before

After

The Science Behind the Technique

Dr. Stanciu's method combines multi-layered filler placement with advanced 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 Liquid Facelift is often enhanced with the anti-aging face and eye cream, Bella Piel MD, exclusively developed by Dr. Stanciu. The Bella Piel MD cream promotes post-procedure healing, reflecting her holistic commitment to patient's overall wellness. Significant results have been experienced by patients using her proprietary medical grade skincare line.

This along with bio-stimulatory fillers promote collagen production for longer-lasting rejuvenation. Each treatment plan is personalized, targeting areas where aging has caused volume loss or skin & muscles laxity. The result is a youthful, sculpted appearance with no surgery required. You can stay forever young with slight touch-ups designed to enhance your natural youthful 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.

Where Medicine Meets Art

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

To learn more about The European Liquid Facelift and how to maintain your youthful appearance, schedule your consultation today!

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What Is NAD+?

NAD+ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) is a coenzyme found in every living cell in your body. It plays a critical role in hundreds of metabolic processes, including energy production, DNA repair, and cell signaling. Think of it as the spark plug that keeps your cellular engine running. Without adequate levels of NAD+, your cells simply cannot function at their best.

The problem? NAD+ levels naturally decline with age. By middle age, most people have roughly half the NAD+ they had in their youth — and this drop is closely linked to fatigue, brain fog, slower recovery, and increased vulnerability to disease. That's where TheDRIPBaR comes in.

Why IV Delivery Makes the Difference

TheDRIPBaR administers NAD+ directly into your bloodstream via intravenous infusion, bypassing the digestive system entirely. This means near 100% bio-availability — your body gets the full therapeutic dose without any loss from digestion or absorption barriers. Oral supplements simply can't compete with the efficiency and potency of IV delivery.

Key Benefits of NAD+ Therapy at TheDRIPBaR

• Increased Energy and Reduced Fatigue

One of the most immediate and widely reported benefits of NAD+ infusion is a surge in energy. NAD+ is a direct participant in the production of ATP — the molecule your body uses as fuel. By replenishing NAD+ levels, TheDRIPBaR helps restore the cellular energy your mitochondria need to power everything from basic bodily functions to high-intensity workouts. Many clients report feeling more alert, energized, and motivated within hours of their session.



• Enhanced Cognitive Function

NAD+ is essential for the health and function of neurons. When NAD+ levels are optimized, the brain works more efficiently — improving focus, mental clarity, memory, and overall cognitive performance. For those struggling with brain fog, whether from aging, stress, or burnout, NAD+ IV therapy at TheDRIPBaR can feel like a mental reset button, helping you think sharper and move through your day with greater ease.

• Anti-Aging and Cellular Repair

NAD+ activates a group of proteins called sirtuins, which are closely associated with longevity and cellular repair. These proteins help regulate inflammation, repair damaged DNA, and protect cells from the wear and tear of aging. By boosting NAD+ levels, TheDRIPBaR's therapy supports your body's natural ability to maintain healthy cells — potentially slowing the visible and internal signs of aging.

• Athletic Performance and Recovery

Athletes and active individuals are turning to NAD+ therapy to gain a competitive edge. By fueling mitochondria more efficiently, NAD+ can enhance endurance, reduce muscle fatigue, and speed up post-workout recovery. Whether you're a weekend warrior or a seasoned competitor, TheDRIPBaR's NAD+ infusions can help you train harder, recover faster, and perform at your peak.

• Mood Support and Stress Resilience

NAD+ plays a role in the production of serotonin and other neurotransmitters that regulate mood, sleep, and stress response. Many clients at TheDRIPBaR

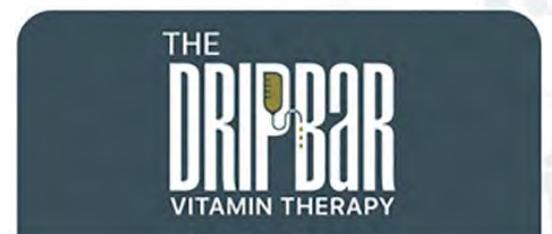
report improved emotional balance, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of overall well-being following their NAD+ sessions. In a world where stress is constant, giving your brain the biochemical tools it needs to stay resilient is more valuable than ever.

Experience TheDRIPBaR Difference

At TheDRIPBaR every NAD+ infusion is administered by trained wellness professionals in a comfortable, spa-like environment. Your session is personalized to your health goals, and our team is with you every step of the way to ensure a safe, effective, and relaxing experience. Whether you're new to IV therapy or a regular client, TheDRIPBaR makes cutting-edge cellular wellness accessible, approachable, and results-driven.

Don't wait for your energy, focus, or vitality to decline further. Schedule your NAD+ therapy session at TheDRIPBaR today and discover what it feels like to thrive from the inside out.

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PROTECTING YOUR MIND: A Neurologist's Guide to Memory Care and Healthy Aging

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

As we age, maintaining cognitive health becomes increasingly important for preserving independence, quality of life, and overall well-being. At Advanced Neurology Specialists, we understand that memory concerns are among the most common worries our patients face as they grow older. The good news is that proactive memory care and healthy aging strategies can significantly impact your cognitive trajectory.

Understanding Normal Aging vs. Concerning Changes

Not all memory changes are cause for alarm. Normal aging might involve occasionally forgetting where you placed your keys or struggling to recall someone's name immediately. However, concerning signs include getting lost in familiar places, difficulty completing routine tasks, confusion about time or place, or personality changes that affect daily functioning.

The key distinction lies in the impact on daily life. While normal age-related changes are mild and don't significantly interfere with independence, more serious cognitive decline affects your ability to work, socialize, or manage personal affairs safely.

The Foundation of Brain Health

Cardiovascular health serves as the cornerstone of cognitive wellness. What's good for your heart is excellent for your brain. Regular physical exercise increases blood flow to the brain, promotes the growth of new neural connections, and may reduce the risk of cognitive decline by up to 30%. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly, including both aerobic activities and strength training.

Sleep quality directly affects memory consolidation and brain detoxification. During deep sleep, your brain clears harmful proteins associated with neurodegenerative diseases. Adults should prioritize seven to nine hours of quality sleep nightly, maintaining consistent sleep schedules and creating optimal sleep environments.

Nutrition for Cognitive Longevity

The Mediterranean diet consistently demonstrates neuroprotective benefits in research studies. This eating pattern emphasizes omega-3 rich fish, antioxidant-packed berries, leafy greens, nuts, and olive oil while limiting processed foods and excessive sugar. These nutrients support brain structure, reduce inflammation, and may slow cognitive aging.



Staying hydrated is equally crucial, as even mild dehydration can impair concentration and memory. Limit alcohol consumption, as excessive drinking accelerates brain aging and increases dementia risk.

Mental Stimulation and Social Connection

Cognitive reserve—your brain's ability to adapt and compensate for age-related changes—can be built through lifelong learning and mental challenges. Engage in activities that are novel, complex, and meaningful to you. This might include learning new languages, playing strategic games, reading diverse materials, or pursuing creative hobbies.

Social engagement provides powerful protection against cognitive decline. Meaningful relationships and regular social interaction stimulate multiple brain regions simultaneously, promoting neural plasticity and emotional well-being. Isolation, conversely, significantly increases dementia risk.

Managing Risk Factors

Several modifiable risk factors accelerate cognitive aging. Chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol can damage brain blood vessels over time. Working closely with healthcare providers to manage these conditions through medication, lifestyle changes, and regular monitoring is essential.

Chronic stress elevates cortisol levels, which can damage memory-critical brain regions like the hippocampus. Incorporate stress-reduction techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga into your routine.

When to Seek Professional Evaluation

If you or family members notice persistent memory problems, difficulty with familiar tasks, poor judgment, mood changes, or withdrawal from activities, consult a neurologist specializing in memory disorders. Early evaluation allows for proper diagnosis, treatment of reversible causes, and development of comprehensive care plans.

At Advanced Neurology Specialists, we offer comprehensive cognitive assessments, advanced diagnostic tools, and personalized treatment strategies. Our multidisciplinary approach addresses not only medical aspects but also lifestyle factors that influence brain health.

Taking Action Today

Healthy aging begins with small, consistent steps. Start with one or two strategies that resonate with you, whether that's adding a daily walk, joining a book club, or improving your sleep routine. Remember, it's never too early or too late to invest in your cognitive health.

Your brain has remarkable capacity for adaptation throughout life. By embracing evidence-based memory care strategies today, you're taking powerful steps toward maintaining cognitive vitality and independence for years to come. To schedule a comprehensive cognitive evaluation or discuss your memory concerns with our specialists, call 239-667-5878.



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Supporting Safety and Specialized Lymphedema Care Across Southwest Florida

By James Ferrara, OTR/L, CLWT, and Lexie Lundquist, OTD, OTR/L, CLWT

As people experience changes in routines — whether due to travel, visitors, shifting home layouts, or fluctuations in daily activity — mobility and balance needs naturally shift as well. These transitions can impact confidence, safety, and independence within the home. Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics supports patients through these changes by delivering mobile outpatient occupational and physical therapy services directly where they live. This approach removes barriers to care, strengthens functional ability, and ensures therapy aligns with each patient's real environment and daily demands.

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics specializes in two primary areas: fall prevention with integrated neurological rehabilitation, and evidence-based lymphedema care through Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT). By combining accessibility with clinical expertise, the team helps patients maintain independence and improve their quality of life.

Fall Prevention & Neurological Rehabilitation: Promoting Safety in the Home

Small adjustments in daily life — hosting visitors, moving furniture, increased errands, or new patterns in activity — can all impact balance, endurance, and the way a person moves through their home. As a provider of mobile outpatient OT and PT services, Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics offers practical, personalized fall-prevention therapy designed to reduce risk and enhance confidence.

Our fall-prevention services include:

- Home safety and environmental assessments
- Balance and gait retraining
- Strengthening and functional mobility programs
- Transfer training for home and community mobility
- Footwear and assistive device recommendations
- Pacing and energy-conservation strategies for busy days

Because therapy is provided in the home, recommendations are specific to the patient's personal environment—not a simulated clinic layout. This allows therapists to address real fall risks and make immediate, applicable changes to support safety.

Neurological Rehabilitation Integrated Into Fall Prevention

Many individuals navigating changes in balance may also be managing neurological or sensory conditions. Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics incorporates evidence-based neurological rehabilitation into fall-prevention plans to strengthen underlying systems related to balance, coordination, and mobility.

Our occupational and physical therapists provide specialized treatment for individuals with:

- Stroke
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Neuropathy
- Vestibular and balance disorders

Intervention focuses on neuroplasticity-based exercise, proprioceptive training, postural control, dynamic and static balance activities, and task-specific mobility work. By combining neurological rehabilitation with fall-prevention strategies, patients receive a well-rounded, functional approach to safety that supports long-term independence.

Specialized Lymphedema Management Through Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT)

In addition to fall-prevention and neurological rehabilitation, Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics provides gold-standard lymphedema treatment through Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT). Variations in routine, travel, dietary patterns, or daily activity can all influence swelling, making consistent, structured care especially important.

CDT includes:

- Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD)
- Compression bandaging
- Therapeutic exercise designed to support lymphatic flow
- Skin care and infection prevention

Each therapy plan is individualized to the patient's medical background—whether swelling is related to oncology treatment, vascular issues, surgery, or hereditary causes. By offering mobile outpatient OT and PT directly in the home, therapists can tailor education and treatment to the patient's actual lifestyle, helping them maintain comfort and stability.

Compression Garment Support, Simplified Through our DME Services

Ongoing compression is essential for maintaining CDT results, and many patients need assistance navigating garment choices, sizing, and usage. Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics provides in-home garment measuring, ordering, and training, ensuring a seamless process and improving long-term adherence.

Patients receive hands-on support with:

- Selecting appropriate day and night garments
- Donning and doffing techniques
- Assessing garment comfort and effectiveness
- Understanding wear schedules and garment care

For many individuals, the period before Medicare deductibles reset at the start of the year is an ideal time to update their compression garments—a process our therapists are fully prepared to assist with.

Clinician-Led, Patient-Focused Therapy Across Southwest Florida

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics proudly provides mobile outpatient occupational and physical therapy to patients in Naples, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, and Cape Coral. Co-Owners James Ferrara, OTR/L, CLWT, and Lexie Lundquist, OTD, OTR/L, CLWT, bring advanced clinical expertise and a commitment to improving accessibility for individuals who benefit most from in-home care. Their approach emphasizes education, independence, and personalized treatment, allowing patients to move more confidently and comfortably through the spaces where they live.

Helping Patients Stay Safe, Supported, and Independent

Whether the focus is preventing falls, improving neurological function, managing swelling, or strengthening mobility, Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics provides skilled therapy at home—where it is most effective and meaningful.

By offering specialized fall prevention, neurological therapy, and lymphedema management through a mobile outpatient model, the practice continues to elevate the standard of care across Southwest Florida.

We're Growing!

Mobile Rehab & Lymphatics is seeking an additional Physical Therapist (PT) to join our expanding mobile outpatient team! Referrals and inquiries are welcome.



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Lexie Lundquist

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PAIN SHOULD NEVER CONTROL YOUR LIFE

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

When a physical condition or injury affects mobility and quality of life, there is one goal: A rapid return to everyday activities! According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 20% of U.S. adults live with chronic pain, and nearly 8% experience pain severe enough to limit daily activities. Many patients seek non-surgical, drug-free approaches to manage these conditions safely and effectively. Two conservative treatment options are non-surgical spinal decompression and robotic MLS laser therapy. These therapies are designed to address underlying causes of pain, reduce inflammation, and support the body's natural healing processes.

Non-surgical spinal decompression therapy focuses on relieving pressure within the spinal discs and surrounding nerve structures. The spine consists of vertebrae separated by intervertebral discs that act as shock absorbers and allow flexibility. Over time, injury, repetitive strain, or age-related degeneration can lead to disc compression, bulging, or herniation. These structural changes may contribute to conditions such as degenerative disc disease, spinal stenosis, and nerve root irritation, all of which are associated with chronic back or neck pain.

During spinal decompression therapy, a patient is positioned comfortably on a computerized decompression table. Gentle, controlled forces are applied to specific regions of the spine. This process creates negative pressure inside the disc, which may help retract displaced disc material and reduce mechanical compression on spinal nerves. Research suggests that decompression therapy may also enhance nutrient exchange within the disc by improving circulation and facilitating the movement of oxygen and fluids into damaged tissues. **Each session on the Hill DT table is considered a medical event with a defined clinical purpose.**

Advances in technology have introduced new methods for managing pain at the cellular level. One example is MLS (Multiwave Locked System) robotic laser therapy, a non-invasive treatment that uses two specific wavelengths of light energy simultaneously to stimulate tissue repair. This therapy is designed to penetrate deeply into tissues without generating excessive heat, making it suitable for a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions.



What are the benefits of MLS Laser Therapy?

- Rapid relief of pain
- Strong anti-inflammatory effects
- Timely healing of sprains & strains
- Immediate improvement of local blood circulation
- Rapid recovery of the structural integrity of injured region
- Avoid unnecessary and expensive drugs and/or surgeries

MLS laser therapy works through a process known as photobiomodulation. Light energy interacts with cells to increase mitochondrial activity, leading to enhanced ATP production, which is the primary energy source for cellular repair. Clinical research indicates that laser therapy can reduce inflammatory markers, improve microcirculation, and accelerate tissue regeneration. In musculoskeletal medicine, it has been used for conditions such as arthritis, tendonitis, ligament injuries, neuropathic pain, and post-surgical recovery.

The robotic delivery system used in advanced MLS devices provides consistent, precise treatment application. Automated programming allows protocols tailored to specific anatomical regions and conditions. This precision helps ensure uniform energy distribution and minimizes variability that may occur with manual application. Safety features built into the system automatically regulate intensity levels and prevent overheating, supporting a controlled and safe treatment environment.



Clinical studies evaluating MLS laser therapy have reported reductions in pain scores and improved functional outcomes in patients with chronic joint and soft-tissue conditions. For example, randomized trials have demonstrated significant decreases in pain severity among patients with osteoarthritis and tendon disorders following a series of laser therapy sessions. Because the therapy is non-invasive, patients experience no downtime and can resume normal activities immediately after treatment.

When used together, spinal decompression and MLS laser therapy provide complementary benefits. Decompression addresses mechanical pressure and structural contributors to pain, while laser therapy targets inflammation, reduces pain and aids in cellular repair. This combined approach reflects integrative musculoskeletal care, emphasizing both biomechanical correction and biological healing.

Dr. Michael Shaffer, has been caring for patients for 45 years. The motto for the clinic is:

Rely and Clinical Expertise and Experience.

Individuals experiencing ongoing pain, stiffness, or limited mobility are invited to schedule a consultation to discuss whether non-surgical spinal decompression and MLS laser therapy may be appropriate for their condition. A personalized treatment plan based on factors such as the duration of symptoms, underlying pathology, and overall health status influence therapy selection and expected outcomes. Every patient is monitored for functional improvement, pain reduction, and restoration of mobility over time. Start planning for less pain and a better quality of life today!

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

(239) 793-3200

www.drmmichaelshaffer.com

**671 Goodlette Rd., Unit 160
Naples, FL 34102**



Supporting Your Back: The Benefits of Lumbar Braces for Spine Health

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

Back pain is a common problem affecting millions of people worldwide. Whether caused by poor posture, injury, or chronic conditions, back pain can interfere with daily activities and significantly impact quality of life. One effective solution for managing back pain is using a back brace. Back braces provide support, promote proper alignment, and reduce strain on the spine, helping to alleviate discomfort and aid in recovery.

Benefits of Using a Back Brace

1. Provides Support and Stability

A primary benefit of using a back brace is the support and stability it offers. A brace helps limit excessive movement of the spine, which can prevent further injury and reduce stress on affected areas. This is especially beneficial for individuals recovering from injuries or surgeries, as it promotes proper healing by restricting harmful movements.

2. Reduces Pain and Discomfort

Back braces help relieve pain by alleviating pressure on the spine and surrounding muscles. They distribute weight evenly and reduce strain on injured or weakened areas, making daily movements more manageable. For individuals with chronic pain conditions, a brace can offer much-needed relief and allow them to perform routine tasks with greater ease.

3. Improves Posture

Poor posture is a common cause of back pain, especially for those who sit for long periods. A back brace encourages proper spinal alignment by keeping the shoulders back and the lower spine in a neutral position. This can prevent slouching and reduce strain on the muscles, ultimately helping to prevent future pain and discomfort.

4. Enhances Mobility

While some may think a back brace restricts movement, it can actually enhance mobility by providing the necessary support for pain-free movement. Individuals who suffer from back pain may find it difficult to move freely due to discomfort. A brace can alleviate some of this pain, allowing for improved mobility and increased activity levels.

5. Aids in Injury Recovery

For those recovering from a back injury, surgery, or a strain, a back brace can be an essential part of rehabilitation. By stabilizing the affected area, it allows the

body to heal while preventing further damage. Many healthcare professionals recommend back braces for post-operative support or for individuals recovering from fractures, herniated discs, or muscle strains.

6. Supports Weak Muscles

Weak back and core muscles can contribute to instability and pain. A back brace can help compensate for this weakness by providing external support. This is particularly useful for older adults or individuals with conditions that cause muscle weakness, such as osteoporosis or degenerative disc disease.

7. Prevents Further Injury

For individuals who perform heavy lifting or engage in activities that put stress on the back, a brace can help prevent injuries. By keeping the spine properly aligned and reducing strain, it can lower the risk of developing acute or chronic back problems.

Conditions That Can Benefit from a Back Brace

1. Herniated Discs

A herniated disc occurs when the soft cushion between vertebrae pushes out, causing pain and discomfort. A back brace can help by stabilizing the spine and reducing pressure on the affected disc, promoting healing and reducing pain.

2. Sciatica

Sciatica results from irritation of the sciatic nerve, often causing pain that radiates down the legs. A back brace can help by reducing compression on the lower back, alleviating nerve irritation, and minimizing discomfort.

3. Osteoporosis

Individuals with osteoporosis are prone to fractures, particularly in the spine. A back brace can provide additional support to reduce the risk of fractures and help manage pain associated with weakened bones.

4. Scoliosis

Scoliosis, a condition characterized by an abnormal curvature of the spine, can lead to pain and posture issues. Bracing is often used to slow the progression of the curvature, especially in younger individuals whose spines are still developing.

5. Post-Surgical Recovery

After spinal surgery, doctors often recommend wearing a brace to stabilize the spine and facilitate healing. It helps minimize movement that could disrupt the healing process, ensuring a smoother and faster recovery.

6. Muscle Strains and Sprains

Muscle strains and ligament sprains in the back can cause significant pain and stiffness. A brace can help by limiting movements that aggravate the injury and allowing the affected tissues to heal properly.

7. Degenerative Disc Disease

Degenerative disc disease occurs when the discs in the spine wear down over time, leading to pain and reduced flexibility. A back brace can provide extra support and help alleviate discomfort by reducing stress on the affected discs.

8. Chronic Lower Back Pain

For individuals who suffer from chronic lower back pain, a back brace can be a valuable tool for pain management. It helps by providing compression and support, making it easier to perform daily activities with reduced discomfort.

Choosing the Right Back Brace

Selecting the appropriate back brace depends on the condition being treated, level of support needed, and lifestyle. Some braces are designed for rigid support, while others provide flexible compression. The spine specialists at Apex Brain & Spine offer expert consultation on whether a back brace would be beneficial and what type would be best.

Conclusion

Using a back brace can be an effective way to manage back pain and support spinal health. Whether recovering from an injury, dealing with a chronic condition, or aiming to improve posture, a back brace offers numerous benefits. However, it is important to use a brace as part of a comprehensive treatment plan, which may include physical therapy, exercise, and lifestyle modifications. With proper use, a back brace can provide much-needed relief and help individuals maintain an active, pain-free life.



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Your Best Summer Begins with the Right Support

As the days grow longer and the temperatures rise, summer calls us outside. It invites us to move more, explore more, and say "yes" to adventure. From beach vacations and backyard barbecues to sightseeing in new cities and long-awaited family trips, summer is a season built on movement.

And movement begins with your feet.

Your feet are your foundation. They carry you through airport terminals, along sandy shorelines, up mountain trails, through amusement parks, across boardwalks, and down bustling city streets. When your feet feel strong and supported, your entire body feels aligned and energized. But when they hurt? Everything changes. Knee pain, hip tightness, lower back discomfort — it all has a way of showing up just when you're trying to enjoy yourself most.

Summer should feel light. It should feel free. It should not feel like pain with every step.

Summer Means More Steps

Think about how much more active the average person becomes in the summer months. You're walking through outdoor festivals, chasing kids around the yard, sightseeing on vacation, hiking scenic trails, or simply taking advantage of beautiful evenings with long neighborhood strolls.

Even if you don't consider yourself "active," summer naturally increases your daily step count. Open-toed shoes, flip-flops, and sandals often replace supportive footwear. Travel days mean standing in lines and navigating unfamiliar terrain. Weekends fill up with outings and social events that keep you on your feet for hours at a time.

Without proper support, all that extra activity places tremendous strain on your arches, ankles, knees, hips, and lower back. The truth is simple: if your foundation isn't supported, your body compensates. And compensation leads to discomfort.

Why Foot Health Matters More Than You Think

Your feet contain 26 bones, 33 joints, and over 100 muscles, tendons, and ligaments. They are a complex, powerful system designed to absorb shock, maintain balance, and propel you forward.

When your arches collapse or flatten — even slightly — it changes your alignment. The body is a chain. When the feet roll inward or lack proper support, the knees may track incorrectly, the hips may tilt, and the lower back may tighten to compensate.

That nagging ache after a day of sightseeing? It often starts at the ground.

Healthy arches help distribute weight evenly. They reduce stress on joints. They improve posture. They help

you move efficiently. Proper support doesn't just make your feet feel better — it can improve how your entire body feels.

Summer is not the time to discover that your foundation isn't strong enough for your plans.

Don't Let Foot Pain Steal Your Summer

Too many people accept foot pain as "normal." They assume soreness after walking all day is simply part of life. But discomfort is often a sign that your feet need better structural support.

When your feet are properly aligned and supported, you can:

- Walk longer without fatigue
- Explore new places without hesitation
- Stand comfortably at concerts and events
- Enjoy hikes and outdoor adventures
- Keep up with kids and grandkids
- Travel without dreading long airport terminals

Foot health is freedom. It's confidence in every step. It's the ability to say yes to plans without calculating how much it might hurt later.

And that's where the right support makes all the difference.

The Advantage of The Good Feet Store's 3-Step Arch Support System

Unlike over-the-counter insoles that simply add cushioning, The Good Feet Store focuses on structural support. Their 3-Step Arch Support System is designed to help realign and stabilize your feet, improving posture and reducing strain throughout the body.

Here's what makes it different:

1. Personalized Fitting

Every foot is unique. During a free fitting and test walk, trained specialists assess your foot structure, gait, and specific areas of discomfort. The goal is not just to sell an insert — it's to find the right level of support for your specific needs.

Summer activity levels vary from person to person. Whether you're planning theme parks, golf outings, beach walks, or long travel days, personalized fitting ensures your support matches your lifestyle.

2. A Three-Step Approach

The 3-Step System works progressively:

- **Strengtheners:** Provides firm support to help restore natural alignment and encourage proper posture.
- **Maintainers:** Offers ongoing structural support for everyday wear.
- **Relaxers:** Adds comfort and relief for longer days on your feet.

This layered approach allows your feet to adapt gradually while improving stability and comfort. It's not just about temporary relief — it's about long-term structural support.

3. Support That Goes Beyond Cushioning

Cushioning feels soft. But soft alone doesn't correct alignment.

The 3-Step Arch Support System is designed to support the arch at its proper height. When arches are supported correctly, many customers report improvements not only in foot discomfort but also in knee, hip, and lower back pain.

That's because when your foundation is stable, your body moves more efficiently.

4. Designed for Real Life

Summer footwear can be tricky. Many sandals and casual shoes offer minimal support. The Good Feet Store carries a variety of sizes and arch heights that can often be transferred between different shoes, allowing you to maintain support even as your footwear changes with the season.

That flexibility means you don't have to sacrifice style for comfort — or comfort for style.

Invest in Your Summer

Think of everything you look forward to in the summer months: the laughter, the travel, the spontaneous plans, the extra daylight. None of it is enjoyable when you're distracted by discomfort.

Taking care of your feet before summer activity ramps up can make the difference between powering through pain and genuinely enjoying every step.

Foot health isn't indulgent. It's foundational.

When your arches are supported, your posture improves. When your posture improves, your movement becomes smoother. When movement becomes smoother, fatigue decreases. And when fatigue decreases, you get more out of your day.

That's the kind of momentum you want heading into a season built on adventure.

Step Into Summer with Confidence

Summer is movement. It's exploration. It's memory-making.

Don't let foot discomfort limit how far you go or how long you stay. Prioritizing foot health now can help you embrace every invitation the season brings.

With personalized fitting and a structured, supportive approach, The Good Feet Store's 3-Step Arch Support System offers a proactive way to strengthen your foundation — so you can enjoy everything summer has to offer.

Because the best summer stories begin with one simple thing:

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UNDERSTANDING PNEUMONIA: A CRITICAL GUIDE TO PREVENTION, DETECTION, AND TREATMENT

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

Pneumonia is a serious respiratory infection that affects millions of people worldwide each year, making it one of the leading causes of death among both children and adults. Despite its prevalence and severity, many people remain unaware of its causes, symptoms, and preventive measures. This comprehensive guide aims to raise awareness about this potentially life-threatening condition.

Understanding Pneumonia

At its core, pneumonia is an infection that causes inflammation in the air sacs of one or both lungs. These air sacs, called alveoli, can fill with fluid or pus, leading to difficulty breathing, cough, and other symptoms. While pneumonia can affect anyone, certain groups face higher risks, including young children, elderly adults, people with weakened immune systems, and those with underlying health conditions.

Common Causes

Pneumonia can be caused by various pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Bacterial pneumonia, often caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, remains one of the most common types. Viral pneumonia has gained increased attention during recent years and can be caused by influenza viruses, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and coronaviruses. Understanding these causes is crucial for proper treatment and prevention strategies.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

Early detection of pneumonia can significantly improve outcomes. Key symptoms include persistent cough with phlegm or mucus, fever, chills, and sweating, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain that worsens when breathing or coughing, fatigue and weakness, loss of appetite, and confusion or mental changes, particularly in older adults. These symptoms may develop gradually or suddenly, and their severity can vary considerably among individuals.

Prevention Strategies

Preventing pneumonia involves multiple approaches that can significantly reduce the risk of infection. Vaccination plays a crucial role, with vaccines available for several common causes of pneumonia, including

pneumococcal pneumonia and influenza. Regular handwashing, maintaining good oral hygiene, and avoiding tobacco smoke are also essential preventive measures.

For healthcare settings and vulnerable populations, additional precautions may include regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, proper ventilation in indoor spaces, and use of personal protective equipment when appropriate. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle with proper nutrition and regular exercise can also help strengthen the immune system.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Healthcare providers diagnose pneumonia through physical examination, chest X-rays, blood tests, and sometimes sputum tests. The treatment approach depends on the cause and severity of the infection. Bacterial pneumonia typically requires antibiotics, while viral pneumonia may need antiviral medications or supportive care to manage symptoms.

Recovery and rehabilitation involve complete adherence to prescribed medications, adequate rest and hydration, breathing exercises to support lung function, and gradual return to normal activities. Regular follow-up with healthcare providers ensures proper healing and prevents complications.

Global Impact and Community Education

Pneumonia's impact varies significantly across different regions and socioeconomic groups. In developing countries, limited access to healthcare, vaccines, and proper nutrition contributes to higher mortality rates, particularly among children. Addressing these disparities requires coordinated efforts from healthcare systems, governments, and international organizations.

Healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations play vital roles in educating the public about risk factors, vulnerable populations, the importance of vaccination, early warning signs, and proper hygiene practices. Community awareness programs can help reduce the burden of pneumonia through improved prevention and early intervention.

Moving Forward

As we continue to face global health challenges, pneumonia awareness remains crucial for public health. Advances in medical research, improved vaccination programs, and better access to healthcare can help reduce the burden of this serious infection. However, success depends on continued education, prevention efforts, and prompt treatment when needed.

By understanding pneumonia's causes, symptoms, and prevention strategies, individuals can better protect themselves and their communities. Regular medical check-ups, maintaining up-to-date vaccinations, and practicing good hygiene habits contribute to reducing pneumonia's impact on public health.

Remember, pneumonia is preventable and treatable, but early intervention is key. Stay informed, practice prevention, and seek medical attention when necessary. Your awareness and action can make a difference in combating this significant health challenge that continues to affect millions worldwide.

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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FINDING RELIEF

Allergy Sufferers Turn to Specialized Care

Southwest Florida's beautiful landscape and year-round warmth create the perfect environment not just for residents and tourists, but unfortunately for allergens as well. For the thousands of allergy sufferers across Naples, Fort Myers, and surrounding areas, the region's abundant pollen, mold, and dust mites can transform paradise into a daily struggle of sneezing, watery eyes, and congestion.

Many locals have long relied on over-the-counter medications with limited success. However, a growing number of Southwest Florida residents are discovering that seeking specialized care from board-certified otolaryngologists like Dr. Price Sonkarley offers more comprehensive and effective treatment options.

"The humidity and vegetation in Southwest Florida create a unique challenge for allergy sufferers," explains Dr. Sonkarley, whose practice has become a destination for those seeking relief. "Many patients have self-medicated for years before realizing that an otolaryngologist can provide targeted treatments based on their specific allergen profile."

Dr. Sonkarley, with extensive training in both ear, nose, and throat conditions and allergy management, represents a new approach for many patients. As a board-certified otolaryngologist, he offers a level of specialized care that addresses both the symptoms and underlying causes of allergic reactions common to Southwest Florida residents.

One treatment gaining popularity among Dr. Sonkarley's patients is sublingual immunotherapy, commonly known as allergy drops. Unlike conventional allergy shots that require frequent clinic visits, these drops can be administered at home. The treatment works by gradually desensitizing patients to specific allergens, delivering antigen in liquid form under the tongue.

"What makes an otolaryngologist's approach different is our comprehensive understanding of the entire respiratory system," Dr. Sonkarley notes. "We don't just treat the allergy symptoms—we evaluate how those symptoms interact with sinus issues, ear problems, and throat conditions that are often interconnected."



For busy professionals and families throughout Southwest Florida's growing communities, this integrated approach saves time and frustration. Rather than visiting multiple specialists for related symptoms, patients receive comprehensive care in one location.

Local resident Meredith Carson shares her experience: "After seeing three different doctors for what I thought were separate issues—allergies, recurring sinus infections, and ear pressure—Dr. Sonkarley identified how they were all connected. The allergy drops he prescribed have improved all my symptoms, not just the sneezing."

Dr. Sonkarley emphasizes that board certification matters when seeking specialized allergic care. "Board certification in otolaryngology ensures that your physician has completed rigorous training and testing specifically in conditions affecting the ears, nose, throat, and related allergic reactions," he explains.

The treatment protocols Dr. Sonkarley develops are tailored to Southwest Florida's unique environmental challenges. "Our patients face different allergens than those in other parts of the country. Treatment must be regionalized to be effective," he adds.

For those with chronic sinusitis—a common complaint in Florida's humid environment—Dr. Sonkarley often recommends a combined approach of allergy drops and targeted sinus treatments. This comprehensive strategy has proven particularly effective for long-term Southwest Florida residents who have struggled with symptoms for years.

While most immunotherapy treatment plans require daily use for three to five years, Dr. Sonkarley works with patients to develop personalized schedules based on allergy severity and

Southwest Florida's seasonal variations. Regular follow-up appointments allow for adjustments as patients progress.

As Southwest Florida continues to grow, access to specialized care from board-certified otolaryngologists like Dr. Sonkarley becomes increasingly vital for maintaining quality of life. For many residents, this specialized approach represents not just symptom relief, but a renewed ability to fully enjoy the outdoor lifestyle that drew them to Florida in the first place.



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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UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS ACQUISITION AGREEMENTS IN FLORIDA: MIPAS, SPAS, AND APAS

By Trevor Allen, Esq

If you are considering buying a business in Florida, whether an LLC or a corporation, you likely already realize that agreeing on a purchase price is just the beginning. A successful business acquisition involves understanding the legal framework and nuances that come with different types of agreements. The three main types of agreements you may encounter are Membership Interest Purchase Agreements (MIPAs), Stock Purchase Agreements (SPAs), and Asset Purchase Agreements (APAs). Each has its own set of rules, risks, and rewards, making it essential to be informed.

Let's dive into each of these agreement types, explore their differences, and explain how they align with Florida business laws. The goal is to give you the insight to navigate your acquisition with confidence.

Membership Interest Purchase Agreement (MIPA)

A Membership Interest Purchase Agreement (MIPA) is the standard agreement when purchasing an ownership stake in a limited liability company (LLC). In Florida, LLCs are considered separate legal entities, where the owners are referred to as "members." When you enter into a MIPA, you are buying the seller's interest in the LLC, along with all rights, responsibilities, and obligations tied to that membership.

Key Considerations for MIPAs:

Operating Agreement: LLCs often have an operating agreement that dictates how membership interests can be transferred. This agreement might include restrictions such as a right of first refusal or approval from other members. It's critical to review this document to understand any conditions that could affect the acquisition process.

Liabilities: Purchasing a membership interest doesn't just involve acquiring assets, it can also mean assuming liabilities. As the old saying goes, "buyer beware," yet here, understanding the fine print is crucial.

Stock Purchase Agreement (SPA)

A Stock Purchase Agreement (SPA) is commonly used when buying shares in a corporation. Unlike an asset purchase, buying stock means acquiring both corporation assets and liabilities, including any outstanding debts, legal obligations, or pending lawsuits.

Key Points to Consider with SPAs:

Due Diligence: Conducting thorough due diligence is essential before completing the acquisition. You will want to examine the company's financial records, contracts, employee agreements, and any current or potential legal issues. Due diligence is crucial to understanding the full scope of what you are actually acquiring.

Assumption of Liabilities: In a stock purchase, you're typically assuming both the company assets and liabilities. This could include everything from debts to pending litigation, highlighting the importance of understanding what you are acquiring before finalizing the deal and putting ink to paper. Florida Corporate Law: Florida's corporate laws govern stock transfers. Further, a corporation's bylaws may have specific provisions on how shares may be transferred. It is essential to follow these protocols to ensure compliance and avoid any legal complications.

Asset Purchase Agreement (APA)

An Asset Purchase Agreement (APA) is often preferred when the buyer is focused on acquiring specific assets of a business, such as real estate, equipment, or intellectual property, rather than taking over the entire company. With an APA, you can select the assets you want while leaving unwanted liabilities behind.

Why APAs Are Attractive:

Asset Selection: One of the primary advantages of an APA is the ability to handpick the assets you wish to acquire, whether that's property, inventory, or even customer contracts, without inheriting the liabilities associated with the entire business.

Liability Protection: With an APA, you generally avoid assuming the seller's liabilities unless they are specifically tied to the assets you're purchasing. However, be cautious about hidden risks, such as unresolved legal issues or environmental liabilities that could surface after the deal is closed.

Uniform Commercial Code (UCC): Florida's Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) governs the sale of certain assets, including personal property. You may need to follow specific steps, such as identifying

and recording security interests, to complete the transaction properly. Understanding the UCC process is crucial for ensuring that your acquisition is legally sound.

Which Agreement is Right for You?

The best choice of agreement depends on the specific details of your acquisition. Here are some factors to help guide your decision:

LLC vs. Corporation: If you're acquiring an LLC, a MIPA is typically the most appropriate agreement, as it governs the transfer of membership interests. For a corporation, an SPA is usually the preferred option. However, if minimizing liabilities is a priority, an APA might be the best choice, as it allows you to select only the assets you want without inheriting debt or other risks.

Liability Concerns: If avoiding liabilities is your main concern, an APA offers the clearest path to protecting yourself. MIPAs and SPAs, on the other hand, usually involve some level of liability transfer, so it's important to weigh these risks carefully.

Tax Implications: Each type of agreement comes with its own tax considerations. For example, asset purchases may trigger sales tax on certain assets, while stock or membership interest transactions could be subject to capital gains tax.

It is always advisable to consult with a qualified tax attorney or CPA regarding your specific situation. This information is for general purposes only and should not be relied upon as legal or tax advice.

About the Author

Trevor Allen, Esq., is an associate attorney at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A., where he focuses on business and real estate law.



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TAURINE AND ITS POTENTIAL BENEFITS IN THE TREATMENT OF LONG COVID

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

With how long COVID-19 has been a part of our lives, you may be surprised to learn that your symptoms might not end with the initial infection. Some people are reporting lingering or new-onset symptoms that last weeks or even months after they had COVID-19, and the cause behind them remains unknown.

This phenomenon, termed long COVID, can differ from person to person and does not always occur. However, for those unfortunate enough to develop it, the relentless symptoms can severely decrease their quality of life, creating a need for long COVID treatment.

Possible Causes of Long COVID

Long COVID, also known as long-haul COVID or post-COVID conditions, can have the following symptoms:

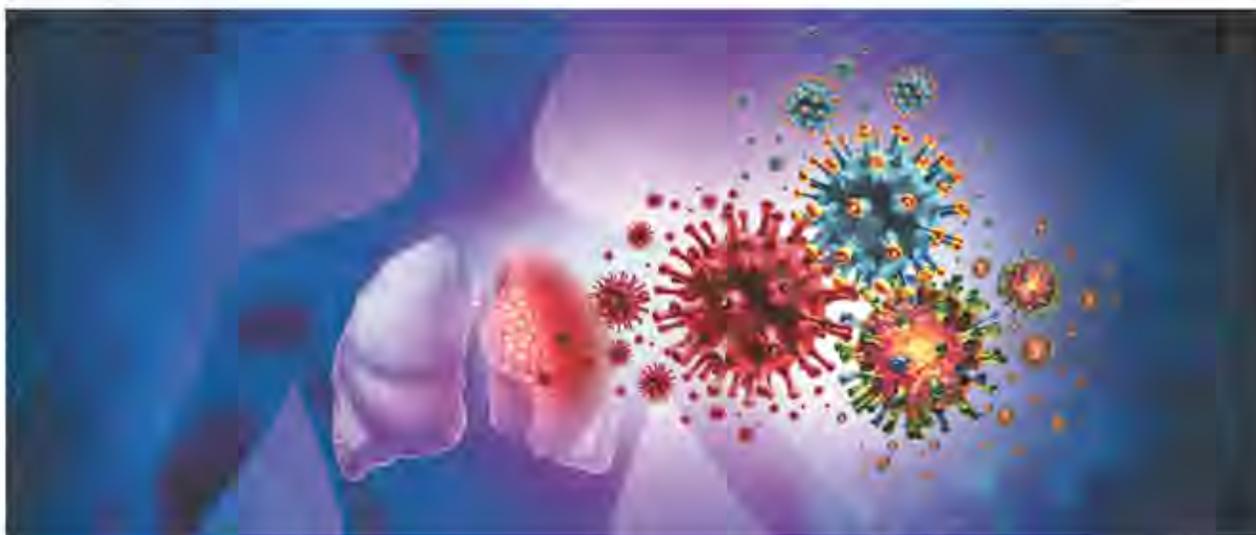
- fatigue
- brain fog
- insomnia
- changes in taste and smell
- anxiety
- depression
- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- dizziness

While many of these symptoms may seem minor, they can be a significant burden on your quality of life when they persist day after day. This is why treatment for long COVID is a new area of research. However, before getting into the potential treatments, it is first helpful to discuss the possible causes of long COVID, which are currently theories within the scientific community.

The first hypothesis is that long COVID results from lingering viral remnants, such as viral protein or RNA. These pieces of the virus can remain in the tissues and cause chronic inflammation.

Another theory is that long COVID results from an autoimmune reaction, which can occur with acute respiratory infections.

Finally, scientists speculate that long COVID symptoms can result from dysregulation in the gut microbiome, which can occur during infection.



With there being three possible causes, it can be hard to determine who may develop long COVID and who won't. However, predictive tests are in development.

The Power of Taurine

Taurine is an amino acid the human liver produces, and it is also found in meat and fish. It plays a vital role in regulating various physiological functions, including the immune system.

Researchers from the University of Alberta have found that long COVID patients with lower levels of taurine had more symptoms, were hospitalized more often, and were at a higher risk for mortality. However, the purpose of their study was not to analyze taurine's role in long COVID, but to create a predictive model.

Of the 117 patients enrolled in the study, the researchers analyzed blood samples for each, looking for changes in various proteins, metabolites, and markers of inflammation. Utilizing the results obtained on 20 molecules, they then created a predictive model that had an 83% accuracy rate when predicting adverse clinical outcomes after discharge from acute infection.

While 20 molecules were used in the predictive model, the researchers did find that the difference in taurine levels among the patients was the most prominent. Beyond the poorer clinical outcomes seen in those with low taurine levels, those with high taurine levels had much fewer ongoing symptoms.

The results of this trial suggest that there may be promise in taurine supplementation when it comes to treating long COVID. However, further study is

needed to gauge the impact of taurine supplementation.

What is exciting about this discovery is that the treatment for long COVID may not require fancy drugs but instead simple supplementation to return balance in the body. This also matches up with the hormonal imbalances that can occur due to COVID-19, potentially evolving into long COVID. In these cases, restoring balance through hormone replacement therapy can also help to relieve symptoms.

Other Benefits of Taurine Supplementation

Taurine supplementation may offer the potential to help with more than just long COVID.

Taurine helps with the following:

- forming bile salts, which help with digestion
- maintaining hydration and electrolyte balance in the cells
- supporting the central nervous system and eyes
- regulating immune system health and the function of antioxidants
- regulating minerals in the cells

Taurine deficiency on its own is rare because of the body's ability to produce it. Still, when you're ill or under stress, it is possible that your body needs more taurine, which is why supplementation may help.

Research has shown that taurine supplementation can help regulate blood pressure in those with heart conditions, enhance insulin sensitivity, and increase the amount of oxygen taken in by the body.

These findings show great promise in taurine supplementation, and as research into it continues, it may soon be a viable treatment for those with long COVID.

Hormonal Imbalance, Another Need for Supplementation

Women, in particular, are more susceptible to long COVID, and researchers speculate that this is because of their hormones or, more specifically, the way that the COVID-19 virus can potentially infiltrate the ovaries and lower estrogen production.

Unfortunately, this side effect will persist unless an effort is made to correct the amount of estrogen in the body, such as through hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Similar to taurine supplementation, HRT helps to bring estrogen back to normal levels. This not only relieves the resulting symptoms (which are often indicative of long COVID) but also allows the ovaries to heal so that they can resume normal estrogen production.

Recovering From Long COVID

With how persistent long COVID can be, it's essential to think of your recovery as a shift in your lifestyle. There is no overnight fix, which can be frustrating to many. However, if you keep in mind that your recovery will take time, it can be easier to push through it and, eventually, feel better.

You can make the following holistic lifestyle changes to ease your long COVID recovery and help your body return to balance.

Promote Gut Health

Within your gut are trillions of bacteria, most of them having crucial roles in your digestion and immune health. However, when we get sick, the balance of bacteria in our gut can shift, lowering the amount of helpful bacteria and allowing the number of harmful bacteria to increase. The result can be digestive troubles, such as diarrhea or bloating, alongside difficulty recovering from illness.

One of the theories around long COVID is that it results from dysregulation in the gut, so those looking to recover from long COVID should focus on improving and promoting their gut health. Nothing fancy is needed to do this, either; simply focus on consuming more plant-based foods such as fruits, veggies, nuts, and seeds, and prioritize getting a variety of different foods. The more variety, the more types of vitamins and nutrients you get, and thus, the healthier your body.

Alongside a balanced diet, it's also best to focus on consuming probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt or fermented foods like kefir or sauerkraut. Probiotic supplements are also available if you do not get enough probiotics from your diet.

By prioritizing the food you put into your body, you can help return balance to your gut, healing your body from the inside out.

Relax

One of the most common symptoms of long-COVID is fatigue. Even more frustrating is that this fatigue is often accompanied by sleep problems, meaning not only are you tired, but even when you try to sleep, you can't.

Relaxation techniques can help you to minimize your fatigue and finally get some much-needed sleep. Not only will sleep help minimize your daytime fatigue, but quality sleep also gives your body time to heal and repair itself, which can help fight any lingering infection or heal the damage sustained by your cells while sick with COVID-19.

Go Easy on Yourself

When you have long COVID, it's most important to remember that it's not something that will quickly get better. It's a process, but each healthy habit you implement can help you to feel better.

With long COVID, it's common for people to try to push through the symptoms and return to normal activity levels before their body is physically ready. No one wants to feel as though they are out of commission for too long, but pushing your body can cause more harm and increase the length of time that you are ill.

Instead, remember that you're healing, and your body doesn't need to be worked as strenuously. This can mean opting for low-impact workouts instead of something demanding; you can still move your body, but in a gentler way. This might also mean going to bed earlier each night to help you get more sleep.

Recovering from long COVID is a journey, so take note of what activities help you feel better and try adding more of them to your day.

Long COVID and Future Treatments

Long COVID is a health condition that follows COVID-19 infection in some individuals. It is characterized by continued or new onset symptoms that last weeks or months after infection. It does not affect everyone, and those who develop long COVID often experience different types of symptoms.

New research into predictive markers of long COVID revealed that taurine levels are dramatically different between those experiencing long COVID symptoms and those without. Specifically, those with low levels of taurine were more likely to experience severe symptoms, be hospitalized, and have a higher rate of mortality.

After seeing this potential connection between low taurine levels and long COVID, a logical conclusion would be that supplementing taurine can help treat long COVID. While this is not a verifiable treatment at this time, researchers are looking into its promise.

If you are suffering from long COVID, it's only natural to wonder what you can do to help ease your symptoms. Various lifestyle habits can help, such as eating a balanced diet, relaxing, and getting enough sleep and physical exercise. However, other interventions can also work, especially if you are experiencing a deficiency.

If your long COVID symptoms are not getting better, reach out to your doctor to schedule an appointment and go over what options you have to treat this condition and restore balance to your body.

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Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

PKD Treatment

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

How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

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

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

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

By Susan Keller, BSN, MPH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

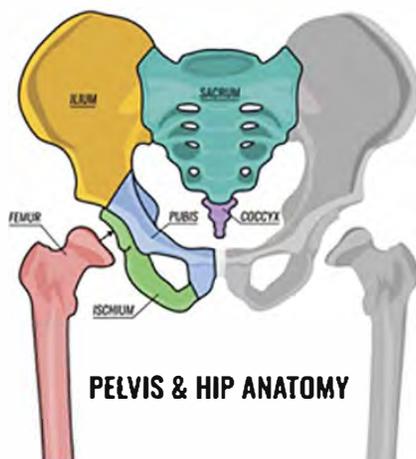
program at a local rehabilitation hospital. Physical therapy was scheduled daily, progressing from two sessions a day, increasing to four times a day by week's end.

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

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

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

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



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

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

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

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

Signs and risk factors, including:

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

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

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

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

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AVOID FADS AND QUICK FIXES: Align Dietary Strategy with Individual Physiology for Optimal Nutrition

By Rick Weber

Our current diet culture is driven by trending diets and quick fixes. That can take us down the wrong road, because the goal should be personalization, not perfection.

“Public health guidelines are designed to serve large populations, not individuals,” says Joan Faris, who has served on the faculty of the Marieb College of Health and Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University since 2001, teaching nutrition and mentoring future health professionals. “While general principles such as emphasizing whole foods, fiber, healthy fats and reducing ultra-processed foods are valuable, individual responses to the same diet can vary dramatically.

“Two people can eat the same diet and have completely different outcomes in weight reduction, blood sugar control, lipid levels, inflammation markers or cognitive clarity. Our genetics, lifestyle, stress levels, activity patterns—and even our life stage—all influence how food affects us.”

One of the most compelling developments in personalized nutrition is nutrigenomics—the study of how nutrients interact with genes and how genetic variations influence dietary response.

Genes are not static blueprints that dictate our destiny. Many genes are regulated by environmental inputs, including food. Certain bioactive compounds found in foods such as cruciferous vegetables, berries, green tea, turmeric and omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to influence gene expression related to inflammation, detoxification and antioxidant defense.

Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) are small genetic variations. These SNPs can alter how individuals process nutrients.

“One individual may metabolize caffeine rapidly with minimal cardiovascular impact, while another person will experience elevated blood pressure and sleep disruption from the same intake,” she says. “Some people thrive on higher carbohydrate intakes, while others demonstrate improved metabolic markers with moderated carbohydrate distribution. Sodium sensitivity, lactose tolerance, folate metabolism, vitamin D receptor activity and inflammatory response to dietary fats can all differ significantly between individuals.”

Recognizing this variability has shifted her professional focus toward integrative and functional nutrition where personalization becomes central.

Throughout her career at FGCU, Joan has integrated academic instruction with clinical practice. She has provided nutrition counseling through Student Health Services, worked with FGCU student-athletes to optimize performance and recovery and supported veterans participating in the Home Base Warrior Health and Fitness program.

She has always used a personalized approach when developing a plan for students and clients. As nutrition science has evolved, more tools—like nutrigenomics—are available for a more targeted approach for the individual. Her approach blends evidence-based science with real-world strategies, helping individuals use food to support inflammation balance, metabolic health, cognitive function and healthy aging. Rather than prescribing rigid rules, she encourages curiosity and awareness, learning how your body responds and adjusting accordingly.

“Nutrigenomics does not replace foundational nutrition principles or justify extreme or restrictive diets,” she says. “It moves nutrition from generalized recommendations toward a more refined, targeted strategy. Nutrigenomics reinforces what years of clinical practice have taught me—the best nutrition plan is tailored to the individual.”

To design an individual plan:

- **Pay attention to patterns, not just rules.** Instead of following generic diet plans, start noticing how your body responds to certain foods. Do you feel energized after meals, or sluggish? Satisfied, or hungry? Tracking patterns for even one week can provide valuable insight.
- **Consider your life stage and activity level.** Nutritional needs shift with age, stress, sleep, hormonal changes and physical activity. What worked in your 20s may not work in your 50s. Adjust protein, fiber and overall intake to reflect your current reality.
- **Focus on food quality and preparation.** Food is more than calories and macros. How it's sourced, prepared and combined matters. Emphasize whole foods, anti-inflammatory ingredients, herbs and spices, and simple cooking methods that preserve nutrients and enhance flavor.

Many people don't realize that food has healing properties. It's medicine because it directly influences the biological systems that determine our health.

“Nutrients are not simply sources of calories—they are biochemical signals,” she says. “Every meal influences gene expression, inflammatory pathways, insulin sensitivity, mitochondrial function, immune response and neurotransmitter production.

“Proteins provide amino acids necessary for tissue repair and neurotransmitter synthesis. Fats influence cell membrane integrity and inflammatory signaling. Carbohydrates affect glucose metabolism and hormonal balance. Phytonutrients found in plants modulate oxidative stress and detoxification pathways. Even the gut microbiome responds dynamically to dietary patterns.

“Over time, daily food choices can either support resilience and healing or contribute to chronic disease. Unlike a prescription taken occasionally, food is information we provide to our bodies multiple times a day—making it one of the most powerful and consistent tools we have for shaping long-term health.

“Over months and years these signals accumulate, shaping metabolic resilience or vulnerability. This is why dietary patterns are strongly associated with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, neurodegeneration, autoimmune disorders, and certain cancers. Despite this powerful influence, dietary recommendations are often generalized.”

She says scientific insight alone is insufficient if it cannot be implemented. Food must be practical, culturally meaningful and enjoyable. Culinary nutrition bridges the gap between research and real life.

“Rather than focusing solely on nutrients and numbers, I feel it is important to emphasize how food is prepared, shared and enjoyed,” she says. “Anti-inflammatory dietary patterns, adequate protein distribution, blood sugar stabilization and phytonutrient diversity can all be achieved through simple, well-prepared meals. Herbs and spices provide bioactive compounds and seasonal produce enhances both flavor and nutrient density. Cooking methods influence nutrient retention.

“I provide my students and clients with simple recipes and encourage them to experiment with different flavors and cooking methods and, most of all, to have fun with cooking!”

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Revolutionizing Bone Health: The Cutting-Edge REMS Echolight Assessment

By Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

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

Beyond Traditional Bone Density Scans

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

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

How REMS Echolight Works

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

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

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

Clinical Applications and Benefits

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

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

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

The Future of Bone Health Management

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

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

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

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

The Strength Lab Plus Promise

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

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

Functional and Integrative Medicine with Dr. Krystyna Shepetiuk

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

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

Services include:

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

Why Choose Us?

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

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By Jean Remy, FNP-BC

For patients living with Stage 2 chronic wounds, the road to healing can feel overwhelming. Frequent trips to wound care centers, long wait times, and the physical toll of travel can turn an already difficult situation into an exhausting ordeal — especially for those with limited mobility. That is where Remy Cares steps in, offering a concierge-level mobile wound care service that brings expert treatment directly to the patient's home.

Understanding Stage 2 Chronic Wounds

Chronic wounds impact over 6.5 million Americans annually, contributing to approximately 5 million deaths from complications like severe infections, sepsis, and gangrene. Stage 2 chronic wounds requiring advanced treatment include:

- Diabetic foot ulcers unresponsive to 30+ days of conventional care
- Pressure ulcers with tissue breakdown extending into deeper layers
- Venous stasis ulcers showing minimal healing after standard therapy
- Arterial insufficiency wounds with compromised blood flow
- Non-healing surgical sites with persistent drainage
- Traumatic wounds complicated by underlying health conditions

Every treatment begins with a thorough wound assessment conducted in the comfort and privacy of the patient's own home or residence. Jean Remy evaluates the wound, develops a personalized care plan,

and applies the appropriate treatment — whether that involves advanced dressings, debridement, or skin graft application. Patients receive consistent, hands-on care from a dedicated provider who understands the complexities of chronic wound healing.

Communication with the patient's broader care team is a cornerstone of the Remy Cares approach. Jean Remy keeps each patient's primary care physician or referring provider fully informed throughout the treatment process. Progress notes, wound measurements, and clinical updates are shared regularly, ensuring seamless coordination of care and the best possible outcomes for every patient.

Remy Cares accepts Medicare and select commercial insurance plans, making this specialized service accessible to those who need it most. Patients no longer have to endure the burden of traveling to a wound care center week after week. Instead, they can focus on what matters most — healing — while receiving top-tier treatment in the familiar surroundings of their own home.

Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

Chronic wounds do not improve on their own, and every day without proper treatment increases the risk of infection, complications, and further deterioration. If you or a loved one is struggling with a Stage 2 wound that is not responding to standard home health care, now is the time to act. Jean Remy, FNP-BC, is ready to visit you in your home, assess your wound, and begin the advanced treatment you deserve. Don't wait for infection to set in — contact Remy Cares today and take the first step toward healing.

WHY CHOOSE US FOR WOUND CARE?

Expertise: Jean E. Remy, FNP-BC has specialized training in advanced wound care techniques.

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Personalized Attention: Every patient receives a tailored care plan based on their specific condition.

Holistic Approach: We focus on treating the wound while addressing the underlying causes to support long-term healing.

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Transitioning from Hospital to Home Care: The Role of In-Home Care Professionals

David Ruiz - Client Care Liaison

When patients are discharged from the hospital, the transition back to their home environment can be challenging, regardless of age. Post-operative care is crucial for ensuring a smooth recovery and preventing complications. Whitsym's In-Home Care provides a comprehensive range of services, including Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), companions and homemakers, home health aides, registered nurses (RNs), and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to support patients during this critical period. This article explores how these professionals can assist in recovery and highlight common post-operative conditions that benefit from in-home care.

The Importance of In-Home Care

In-home care offers personalized support tailored to the specific needs of each patient. The benefits include:

- 1. Continuity of Care:** Patients receive consistent care from the same professionals, fostering a sense of trust and security.
- 2. Personalized Attention:** Care plans are tailored to individual needs, ensuring that each patient receives the appropriate level of care.
- 3. Comfort and Convenience:** Patients recover in the comfort of their home, enhancing their overall well-being and speeding up recovery.
- 4. Reduced Risk of Readmission:** Professional monitoring and care help identify and address potential complications early, reducing the likelihood of hospital readmission.

Services Provided by Whitsym's In-Home Care Professionals

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)

CNAs provide essential daily care, including:

- Assisting with bathing, dressing, and grooming.
- Monitoring vital signs such as blood pressure and temperature.
- Helping with mobility and transfers to prevent falls.
- Assisting with basic exercises to aid recovery.

Companions and Homemakers

Companions and homemakers offer non-medical support, including:

- Providing companionship and emotional support.

- Assisting with household tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry.
- Running errands and grocery shopping.
- Accompanying patients to medical appointments.

Home Health Aides

Home health aides (HHAs) provide a combination of personal care and health-related services, including:

- Assisting with personal hygiene and dressing.
- Helping with medication reminders and administration.
- Monitor patient conditions and report any changes to healthcare providers.
- Providing light housekeeping and meal preparation.

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)

RNs and LPNs deliver specialized medical care, including:

- Administering medications, including injections and IV therapies.
- Performing wound care and dressing changes.
- Managing pain and other post-operative symptoms.
- Educating patients and family members on post-operative care and recovery strategies.
- Coordinating with physicians and other healthcare providers to adjust care plans.

Common Post-Operative Conditions Requiring In-Home Care

1. Orthopedic Surgery

Surgeries such as hip or knee replacements often require extensive rehabilitation and assistance with mobility. In-home care professionals can help with physical therapy exercises, pain management, and daily activities to ensure a safe recovery.

2. Cardiac Surgery

Patients recovering from heart surgery need close monitoring and assistance with medication management, wound care, and gradual physical activity. RNs and LPNs are vital in managing these aspects to prevent complications such as infections or heart failure.

3. Neurological Surgery

Recovery from brain or spinal surgeries can be complex, requiring assistance with mobility, daily activities, and cognitive tasks. In-home care helps patients regain their independence while ensuring their safety.

4. General Surgery

Procedures like appendectomies, hernia repairs, and gallbladder removals often necessitate in-home care for wound management, pain control, and monitoring for signs of infection or complications.

5. Cancer Treatment and Surgery

Patients undergoing cancer treatments or surgeries often face a lengthy recovery process. In-home care provides support with medication management, nutritional needs, and emotional support, which are vital for recovery.

6. Post-Stroke Recovery

Recovering from a stroke involves professionals assisting with therapy schedules, daily activities, and monitoring for any signs of recurrent strokes.

7. Chronic Illness Management

Patients with chronic illnesses like diabetes, COPD, or heart failure often require ongoing care after hospital discharge. In-home care helps manage symptoms, medication, and lifestyle adjustments to prevent readmission.

Let Whitsym's Help You

Transitioning from hospital to home is critical in a patient's recovery journey. Whitsym's In-Home Care offers a broad spectrum of services from CNAs to RNs and LPNs, providing comprehensive support tailored to each patient's needs. Whether it's post-operative care, chronic illness management, or rehabilitation after surgery, in-home care ensures patients receive the attention and care they need to recover safely and comfortably. If you or a loved one is preparing for a hospital discharge, consider the benefits of in-home care to facilitate a smooth and successful recovery. Contact Whitsym's In-Home Care to learn more about how their professional team can assist you.

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UNLOCKING YOUR NUTRITIONAL JOURNEY: How Food Sensitivity Testing Can Transform National Nutrition Month

As National Nutrition Month invites us to reflect on our dietary choices, many Americans find themselves navigating conflicting advice about what constitutes "healthy eating." While general nutrition guidelines provide a valuable framework, they often overlook a crucial factor in individual wellness: food sensitivities and intolerances that may be silently undermining your health goals.

Food sensitivities differ from allergies in that they typically produce delayed reactions—fatigue, brain fog, digestive discomfort, and inflammation that might not appear until hours or even days after consumption. This delay makes it exceptionally difficult to identify culprit foods without systematic testing.

A comprehensive 50 Food Sensitivity and Intolerance Test offers a scientific approach to personalizing your nutrition plan. By analyzing your body's immune responses to common foods, these tests can reveal which ingredients might be triggering inflammation or digestive distress, even when symptoms seem unrelated to eating.

For those who've struggled with persistent health issues despite following conventional nutrition advice, sensitivity testing can provide missing pieces to the wellness puzzle. Many patients report significant improvements in energy levels, digestive function, and mental clarity after eliminating reactive foods identified through testing.

The timing of National Nutrition Month makes it ideal for this deeper nutritional exploration. Rather than adopting generic eating plans, testing allows you to create a truly personalized approach. When you know exactly which foods support your unique physiology—and which ones don't—you can make targeted dietary choices that deliver noticeable results.

Beyond immediate symptom relief, identifying and removing reactive foods can help reduce chronic inflammation, potentially addressing root causes of persistent health concerns. This approach aligns perfectly with National Nutrition Month's emphasis on sustainable dietary changes rather than short-term restrictions.

The process is straightforward: a simple blood sample is analyzed for immune reactions to 50 common foods spanning dairy, grains, meats, seafood, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Results typically categorize foods by reaction severity, allowing you to prioritize which items to eliminate or reintroduce strategically.

While elimination diets serve a similar purpose, they require months of restrictive eating and meticulous tracking. Testing accelerates this discovery process, providing clear direction in days rather than seasons.

For optimal results, consider working with a nutritionist who can interpret your test results and develop a personalized reintroduction plan.

This expert guidance ensures nutritional balance while helping you identify your ideal food pattern.

This National Nutrition Month, consider investing in a food sensitivity test to transform your relationship with food. By understanding your body's unique responses, you'll move beyond generic nutrition advice toward a truly personalized approach—one that honors your biochemical individuality and sets the foundation for sustainable wellness.

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.

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Can Melatonin Help Treat Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

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

Irritable Bowel Syndrome, often called IBS, is a common digestive condition that affects the large intestine. In the United States, an estimated 10 to 15 percent of adults live with IBS. Symptoms may include belly pain, bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhea, or a mix of both. While IBS does not damage the intestines or cause cancer, it can strongly affect daily life, sleep, work, and overall well-being. Many people with IBS try different treatments, such as diet changes, stress management, or medications. However, not all patients find full relief. Because of this, researchers continue to study other options that may help manage symptoms. One area of growing interest is melatonin.

Most people know melatonin as a hormone that helps control sleep. It is often used as a supplement for insomnia or jet lag. What many people do not realize is that melatonin also plays an important role in the digestive system.

What Is Melatonin and Why Does It Matter for the Gut? Melatonin is a natural hormone made by the body. While it is produced in the brain, much larger amounts are made in the digestive tract. In fact, the gut contains several times more melatonin than the bloodstream.

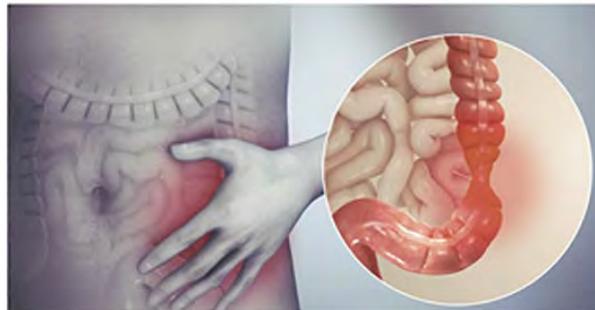
In the digestive system, melatonin helps regulate how the intestines move, how sensitive the gut is to pain, and how the body responds to inflammation. These functions are important because IBS is linked to changes in gut movement, increased pain sensitivity, and communication problems between the gut and the brain.

Because melatonin affects both sleep and digestion, researchers have explored whether it could help ease IBS symptoms.

What Does the Research Say?

Several clinical studies have looked at melatonin use in people with IBS. These studies compared melatonin supplements to a placebo (a pill with no active ingredients).

A review of multiple studies found that people with IBS who took melatonin had less abdominal pain and lower overall symptom severity than those who took a placebo. Improvements were also seen in quality of life scores, meaning patients felt better able to manage daily activities.



In one study, patients who took 3 milligrams of melatonin each night for eight weeks reported significant relief from abdominal pain compared to those who did not receive melatonin. Another study showed that melatonin increased pain tolerance in the gut, meaning the intestines were less sensitive to discomfort.

A larger, more recent clinical trial followed over 130 adults with IBS. Participants took melatonin daily for eight weeks. The results showed reduced pain, less bloating, improved bowel habits, and better overall symptom control. These benefits were seen even in people who did not have sleep problems.

Across studies, melatonin doses typically ranged from 3 to 6 milligrams per day.

Does Melatonin Help All Types of IBS?

IBS is often grouped into subtypes based on bowel habits. These include constipation-predominant IBS (IBS-C), diarrhea-predominant IBS (IBS-D), and mixed IBS.

Some research suggests that melatonin may be especially helpful for people with IBS-C, particularly in reducing abdominal pain and bloating. Results for IBS-D are more mixed, and not all patients respond the same way.

Because IBS affects each person differently, response to melatonin can vary.

Is Melatonin Safe?

In clinical studies, melatonin was generally well tolerated. Side effects were mild and occurred at rates similar to placebo. The most commonly reported effects included sleepiness or headache.

Short-term use of melatonin (up to eight weeks) did not show serious safety concerns in IBS studies. However, long-term effects are still being studied.

Because melatonin can influence digestion and sleep cycles, it is important that patients do not self-treat without guidance. A medical provider can help determine whether melatonin is appropriate and what dose may be safest.

What Are the Limits of the Research?

While results are promising, melatonin is not a cure for IBS. Many studies included small numbers of participants, and treatment periods were short. Researchers are still working to understand the best dose, timing, and length of treatment.

IBS is also known for having strong placebo effects, meaning symptoms can improve simply from receiving treatment. For this reason, larger and longer studies are still needed.

What This Means for Patients

Current research suggests that melatonin may help reduce pain and improve overall symptoms in some people with IBS. It appears to work by calming the gut, reducing pain sensitivity, and supporting healthy digestion.

Melatonin may be most helpful as part of a broader IBS treatment plan, which can include diet changes, stress management, and medical therapy.

Anyone considering melatonin for IBS should speak with a healthcare provider first. A provider can review symptoms, medical history, and current medications to determine whether melatonin may be helpful and safe.

Bottom Line

Melatonin shows promise as a supportive option for managing IBS symptoms, especially abdominal pain and bloating. While early research is encouraging, melatonin should be used under medical guidance and not as a replacement for professional care.

Patients with ongoing digestive symptoms are encouraged to schedule an appointment with a qualified medical provider to discuss personalized treatment options and develop a comprehensive care plan.

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Pain Awareness in Senior Pets: Understanding and Managing Your Pet's Discomfort

As our pets age, it's common for them to experience joint pain, arthritis, and other chronic conditions that can cause discomfort. However, many pet owners are unaware of the signs of pain in their pets and may not realize that their furry friends are suffering. It's important to understand the signs of pain in senior pets and to take steps to manage their discomfort.

One of the most common signs of pain in senior pets is a change in behavior. Pets may become less active, reluctant to play, or have trouble getting up or going down stairs. They may also be less interested in their food, toys, or other activities that they used to enjoy. In severe cases, pets may cry or whimper when they are touched or moved.

Physical changes can also be a sign of pain in senior pets. This may include changes in posture, difficulty walking, or limping. Pets may also become less groomed and have a rough or unkempt appearance. In some cases, pets may even develop sores or wounds from lying in one position for too long.

In order to manage pain in senior pets, it's important to have a thorough understanding of their condition. This may involve visiting a veterinarian for a physical exam, x-rays, or other diagnostic tests. The veterinarian can then develop a treatment plan that may include medication, physical therapy, or other treatments to manage the pet's discomfort.



One of the most effective ways to manage pain in senior pets is through weight management. Excess weight puts extra stress on the joints and can exacerbate joint pain and arthritis. By controlling your pet's weight, you can help to reduce the severity of their pain.

In addition to medication and weight management, there are other steps you can take to manage pain in senior pets. For example, providing a comfortable and supportive bed, regular exercise, and regular massage can all help to reduce pain and discomfort. You can also provide a variety of toys and activities to keep your pet mentally stimulated, which can help to distract them from their pain.

It's also important to be aware of the environment and to make changes as necessary to make your senior pet more comfortable. For example, providing a ramp or steps to help your pet get up

and down from furniture, or installing non-slip flooring to prevent slips and falls, can make a big difference in your pet's quality of life.

It's also important to work closely with your veterinarian to manage pain in your senior pet. Regular check-ups and monitoring of your pet's condition can help to ensure that their treatment plan is effective and that any changes in their condition are detected early.

Pain awareness is crucial for senior pets. By understanding the signs of pain and taking steps to manage their discomfort, pet owners can help their furry friends live a comfortable and happy life. Whether through medication, weight management, or environmental modifications, there are many steps that pet owners can take to help their senior pets live their best life. By working closely with their veterinarian, pet owners can help to ensure that their senior pets are comfortable, pain-free, and happy.

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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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TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION: A Breakthrough in Treatment-Resistant Depression and Anxiety

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) has emerged as a promising therapeutic intervention for individuals struggling with treatment-resistant depression and anxiety. This non-invasive procedure uses magnetic fields to stimulate specific areas of the brain, offering hope to patients who haven't responded well to traditional treatments like medication and psychotherapy.

Understanding the mechanism behind TMS reveals its sophistication. The treatment works by delivering magnetic pulses through an electromagnetic coil placed against the scalp. These pulses painlessly penetrate the skull and create small electrical currents that stimulate nerve cells in targeted brain regions, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which plays a crucial role in mood regulation. The stimulation helps normalize the neural activity patterns often disrupted in depression and anxiety disorders.

Clinical studies have demonstrated impressive results for TMS in treating depression. Research indicates that approximately 50-60% of patients with treatment-resistant depression experience significant improvement, with about one-third achieving complete remission. These outcomes are particularly noteworthy considering these patients had previously failed to respond to multiple antidepressant medications.

The benefits of TMS extend beyond depression to anxiety disorders. While initially FDA-approved for depression treatment, growing evidence suggests it's

effectiveness in reducing anxiety symptoms, especially when anxiety co-occurs with depression. Patients often report decreased anxiety levels, improved sleep patterns, and enhanced ability to manage daily stressors following TMS treatment courses.

One of TMS's most appealing aspects is its favorable side effect profile compared to traditional antidepressants. Common antidepressant medications can cause weight gain, sexual dysfunction, and emotional numbness. In contrast, TMS typically produces minimal side effects, with some patients reporting only mild headaches or scalp discomfort during initial sessions. The non-invasive nature of TMS means patients can immediately return to their daily activities, including driving and working.

Treatment protocols typically involve 20-30 sessions spread over 4-6 weeks, with each session lasting about 20-40 minutes. During treatments, patients remain awake and alert, seated comfortably while the TMS device delivers precise magnetic pulses. Many facilities now offer accelerated protocols that can complete the treatment course in a shorter timeframe, making it more accessible for patients with demanding schedules.

Insurance coverage for TMS has improved significantly as evidence of its effectiveness has mounted. Many major insurance providers now cover the treatment for patients who meet specific criteria, typically including failure to respond to multiple antidepressant medications. This increased coverage has

made TMS more accessible to patients who previously might have been unable to afford this innovative treatment option.

While TMS shows great promise, it's important to note that it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. Success rates vary among individuals, and some patients may require maintenance sessions to sustain improvements. Healthcare providers carefully evaluate each patient's medical history, current symptoms, and previous treatment responses to determine if TMS is an appropriate option.

As research continues and technology advances, newer TMS protocols are being developed to treat a broader range of mental health conditions. These developments, combined with increasing accessibility and growing clinical evidence, position TMS as a valuable tool in the modern psychiatric treatment arsenal, particularly for those who haven't found relief through conventional therapies.

This innovative treatment represents a significant step forward in mental health care, offering new hope to individuals who have struggled to find effective relief through traditional treatment methods. TMS treatment protocols for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and addictive disorders, including smoking cessation, have shown great results for patients, and studies are underway for other mental health conditions.

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

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Dr. Capiola focuses on the treatment of:

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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.



Father Time Is Undefeated.

Why Senior Housing Brings Peace of Mind at Every Stage of Aging

By Bruce Rosenblatt, CDP - Owner/Senior Housing Expert

Time has a quiet way of changing things.

One day, life feels familiar and manageable. Then small moments begin to stand out—tasks take longer, the house feels emptier, or loved ones start worrying a little more often. No matter how strong or independent we've been, **Father Time** is undefeated.

But aging is not something to fear.

It's something to meet with preparation, compassion, and support.

The Emotional Side of Aging We Rarely Talk About
Aging affects more than the body—it touches the heart.

Many seniors experience:

- Loneliness, even when surrounded by memories
- Worry about falls or medical emergencies
- Frustration with daily tasks
- Hesitation to ask for help
- Fear of losing independence

Families feel it too:

- Concern from a distance
- Uncertainty about when to step in
- A desire to honor independence while ensuring safety

These emotions are normal—and they often signal that it's time to explore **supportive senior housing options**.

Senior Housing Is About Gaining Peace of Mind

There's a common myth that senior housing means giving something up.

In truth, senior housing is about **gaining peace of mind**.

Modern senior housing communities are designed to:

- Support independence, not replace it
- Provide safety and reassurance
- Encourage social connection and engagement
- Adapt to changing needs over time
- Preserve dignity, choice, and comfort

Whether through independent living or assisted living, residents receive help when needed—while continuing to live life on their own terms.

Why Planning Ahead Makes All the Difference

Too many families wait until an illness or emergency forces a decision.



Planning for senior housing early allows:

- Calm, thoughtful conversations
- Seniors to express their wishes clearly
- Families to avoid rushed choices
- A smoother, more comfortable transition

Accepting that **Father Time** is undefeated doesn't mean giving in—it means planning wisely and lovingly.

Independence Doesn't Mean Doing Everything Alone
True independence is not about struggling in silence.

It's about:

- Feeling safe at home
- Staying socially connected
- Having support close by
- Reducing stress and daily burdens
- Waking up without worry

Many seniors find that moving into a senior housing community actually restores their sense of **freedom**, allowing them to focus on enjoying life rather than managing challenges alone.

Community Brings Comfort and Connection

One of the greatest gifts of senior housing is **community**.

Residents often rediscover:

- Meaningful friendships
- Shared meals and laughter
- Daily routines with purpose
- A sense of belonging
- Emotional and social well-being

Aging was never meant to be done alone.

Aging With Dignity, Comfort, and Confidence

Father Time will always move forward.

What matters is how we move with him.

Senior housing offers:

- Safety without sacrifice
- Support without loss of dignity
- Care without pressure
- Peace of mind for both seniors and families

It allows aging to be lived with grace, comfort, and confidence.

Take the Next Step—On Your Terms

If you or someone you love is beginning to feel the effects of time, now is the right moment to start the conversation.

Exploring senior housing doesn't commit you to anything, it simply gives you information, clarity, and peace of mind.

We invite you to reach out to us and speak with our caring team.

Together, we can help you plan a future that feels safe, supported, and right for you.

Because while **Father Time** is undefeated, you still get to choose how—and where—you live each chapter of your life.

Contact Senior Housing Solutions today for *free, personalized guidance* from local experts.



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Shockwave Therapy: A Breakthrough Treatment Giving New Hope to Plantar Fasciitis Sufferers

Plantar fasciitis, a debilitating condition that affects millions of people worldwide, has met its match in an innovative treatment called shockwave therapy. This non-invasive procedure is revolutionizing how medical professionals approach chronic heel pain, offering hope to those who have exhausted traditional treatment options.

Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT) works by delivering high-energy acoustic waves directly to the affected area of the foot. These waves create microtrauma in the damaged tissue, triggering the body's natural healing response and stimulating blood flow to the region. The increased circulation brings essential nutrients and oxygen to the injured plantar fascia, promoting tissue repair and reducing inflammation.

What sets shockwave therapy apart from conventional treatments is its impressive success rate and minimal recovery time. While traditional methods like cortisone injections and physical therapy can take months to show improvement, many patients report significant pain relief after just three to four shockwave sessions. Studies have shown success rates as high as 80% in treating chronic plantar fasciitis cases that haven't responded to other interventions.



The procedure itself typically takes about 15 minutes and is performed on an outpatient basis. During treatment, patients may experience mild discomfort, but the session is generally well-tolerated without the need for anesthesia. Most importantly, patients can usually return to their daily activities immediately after treatment, making it an attractive option for those with busy lifestyles.

Medical professionals are particularly enthusiastic about shockwave therapy's long-term benefits. Unlike temporary solutions that mask pain, ESWT addresses the root cause of plantar fasciitis by promoting actual tissue healing and regeneration. This approach not only provides pain relief but also helps prevent the condition from recurring.

The treatment is particularly beneficial for chronic sufferers who have dealt with plantar fasciitis for six months or more. Athletes, runners, and individuals who spend long hours on their feet have reported remarkable improvements in their mobility and quality of life after undergoing shockwave therapy.

While the treatment may have a higher upfront cost compared to traditional methods, its effectiveness and potential to prevent surgery make it a cost-effective solution in the long run. As more insurance companies begin to cover this procedure, it's becoming increasingly accessible to patients seeking alternative treatments for their chronic heel pain.

Recent technological advancements have further enhanced the precision and effectiveness of shockwave therapy. Modern devices now allow practitioners to target specific areas with greater accuracy, customizing treatment intensity based on individual patient needs. This personalized approach has contributed to higher success rates and increased patient satisfaction.

The growing body of clinical evidence supporting shockwave therapy's effectiveness has led to its adoption by major medical centers and sports medicine facilities worldwide. As research continues and technology evolves, this revolutionary treatment promises to remain at the forefront of plantar fasciitis care, offering hope and healing to those suffering from this persistent condition.

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2026 Open Enrollment is Here!

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

Medicare Open Enrollment is January - March. What can be changed at this time of the year is Medicare Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. You can make one change from one Part C Advantage Plan to another Advantage Plan from the same company or another. You can change from one Advantage Plan to a stand-alone Part D Drug Plan, this is not advised unless you have a secondary to Original Medicare, which is a Medigap and also called a Medicare Supplement. I always do the Medicare Supplement Applications 1st to make sure that the person is approved. Medicare Supplement have medical underwriting and you may not qualify. There are certain Special Election Periods that may qualify you as a guaranteed issue. You can NOT change from one Part D drug Plan to another this time of year.

Substantial changes to Medicare Part D, stand-alone 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, and coinsurance. It is especially important to check your plans formulary as medication must be in formulary to be capped. 2026 RX deductibles 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 to be covered it must be used for certain heart conditions or diabetes, Medicare does not cover weight loose medications at this time.

Medicare Part C / Advantage Plans annually Medicare Advantage Plans make changes. They must all include 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 \$9,250 and \$13,900 for in-network and out-of-network services combined. However, individual insurance plans may set lower limits. These limits apply to Part A and B services only, and do not apply to Part D cost share.



The old saying if it is not broken do not fix it DOES NOT apply to Medicare Advantage Plans. 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 companies in our area and to carry 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 we need 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 we will change your insurance plan for you. Ethics is most important and if you are on the best plan we will tell you, plus you can see for yourself.

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 it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D, and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guaranteed issue, you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6 months on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! **Especially important:** when you move you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

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.

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Spring Cleaning Mental Prep

Spring is just around the corner! Sadly, it's also time to start thinking about how you will fit all those big, time-consuming spring cleaning jobs into your life. Consider trying out MaidPro's 49-Point Checklist for your recurring cleaning services (after you have purged and organized) and let them handle the tougher jobs listed below.

Purge and organize small storage areas (closets, junk drawers, cabinets, vanities, toy boxes, paper and digital files). These are great places to start before the weather gets too nice. Discard clothes that are worn or don't fit, food, cosmetics and medicines that are past date and be ruthless about shredding old bills and statements and deleting or archiving defunct files, emails and terrible photos from your computer.

Purge big storage areas (attic, basement, garage). Spring is a time for church and school fairs. For you, it's an opportunity to donate unwanted stuff AND get a tax deduction.

Wash walls, clean ceilings and lighting fixtures. This works wonders to brighten your home especially if you burn lots of candles or fires in the winter. It's also yucky, backbreaking work, requiring proper technique and an assortment of specialized tools (so, definitely worth outsourcing to a professional crew if you plan and budget carefully).



Large appliances (refrigerator, oven, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer). Appliances ought to be cleaned and, where appropriate, sanitized at least two to four times a year, so chances are at least some of these appliances are going to require your attention within the coming few months.

Deep clean carpets/treat hardwood floors. Being physically lowest, floors are the last thing you want to clean and treat before summer arrives. Be sure to wait until after spring's mud season to get the greatest long-term benefit.

Clean windows, screens and treatments. This is another excellent candidate for outsourcing if you budget for it now. Otherwise, plan on dedicating at least an entire weekend and check out MaidPro's Spring Cleaning Survival Guide before turning your attention to the next several items on the list.

Heavy linens, upholstery, behind and underneath furniture. The guideline here is to take down and clean anything that lives higher up and is likely to shed dust, dander and other micro debris onto your floors in the process.

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MEMORY MATTERS

March is Women's History Month! This tribute to the contributions of women actually began in the early 1980s as Women's History week and in 1987, Congress passed a resolution that March would be proclaimed Women's History Month. Women's history month celebrates the accomplishments of women in a variety of different fields that have positively impacted history. This month also serves as a celebration of women's efforts to continue to fight for equality, justice and opportunities in the world.

In the early 1900s, Dr. Alois Alzheimer identified the characteristic plaques and tangles in the brain of a 51 year old woman. He had followed her disease progression and when she died, he was able to provide analysis of her brain, where he was able to make the discovery of these histological alterations. Dr. Alzheimer's patient was a woman named Auguste Deter, who also has a place in the history of Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease impacts women more than men. Approximately twice as many men have Alzheimer's disease than men. Why is this? Age is the number one risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Women live longer than men. As noted in a recent JAMA article, the gap between men and women's life expectancy increased to 5.8 years. Life expectancy is one consideration, but are there other things at play?

One of the world's leading experts and researchers in the area of Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Reisa Sperling is working on trying to understand what other factors contribute to Alzheimer's disease in women. As highlighted in an Alzheimer's Association profile, Dr. Sperling, who is a professor at Harvard Medical school and the Director of Alzheimer's Research and Treatment at Brigham and Women's Hospital, is not only a pioneer in Alzheimer's disease research, she has mentored many women who are dedicated to dementia science. She is also the Director of Neuroimaging Core at the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease research center at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Sperling was in medical school when her grandfather died with Alzheimer's disease. Her father was also diagnosed with the disease, which also fueled her focus on finding approaches to stopping the disease.



The Alzheimer's Association has also highlighted several other prominent female researchers. Dr. Marilyn Albert, the Director of the Division of Cognitive Neuroscience and the Director of the John's Hopkins Alzheimer's Research Center has focused on the lifestyle changes that may preserve cognitive abilities as we age. Her current research is focused on early identification and ways to monitor disease progression.

Another accomplished researcher, Dr. Malu Tansey has focused her research on the role of inflammation and the immune system in brain health and the development of Alzheimer's disease. Currently, Dr. Tansey is the Professor of Neuroscience and Neurology and the Director of the Parkinson's Foundation Research Center of Excellence at the University of Florida.

Several other prominent female scientists are leading the charge at the Alzheimer's Association. Dr. Maria Carillo is the Chief Science Officer and medical affairs lead who sets the strategic vision for global research in the area of Alzheimer's disease. Among her many leadership responsibilities, Dr. Carillo is a co-investigator for the Association led US Pointer Study, a lifestyle intervention trial to prevent cognitive decline. She has also received numerous awards and in 2020, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award in Alzheimer's Disease Therapeutic Research from the Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease Conference.

Dr. Heather Snyder is the Vice President of Medical and Scientific Relations at the Association, and is recognized as an industry expert. Dr. Rebecca Edelmayer

has more than 20 years of experience as a scientist and an educator and serves as the senior Director of Scientific Engagement. These amazing women are at the forefront of Alzheimer's disease research, forging relationships and connections with global leaders in the Alzheimer's research space. The President and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association is Joanne Pike, DPH. Dr. Pike has an extensive background in social support and public health initiatives.

These are just a few of the many outstanding female scientists and leaders working with Alzheimer's disease with a commitment to finding a cure for the disease. Here at the Neuropsychiatric Research Center, we are also dedicated to finding a cure and improving the lives of people with neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, through research and education. We understand the impact of Alzheimer's disease on those who have been diagnosed, and their family and friends. If you haven't been formally diagnosed with a memory condition, yet have noticed changes please contact us at 239-939-7777.

Would you like to have a free baseline memory screen? We can help! Brain health is critical for all of us, and knowing your cognitive status via an easy and free memory screen is a service we provide to the community. Memories matter! NPRC 239-939-7777.



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DARING GREATLY

By Pastor Tim Neptune

Life with God is a grand adventure. Along the way we may encounter unforgettable moments of joy or unthinkable times of disappointment. Either way, the journey requires faith, trust, and the courage to keep moving forward.

Faith rarely blooms in the safety of the familiar. Comfort zones feel secure, but they often keep us stagnant. Playing it safe—hiding our talents, avoiding risks, or clinging to the known—may feel good in the short term but it won't really grow our faith. Think of it like investing: nothing ventured yields nothing gained. When we step out, we exercise a muscle of trust that builds inner strength and confidence.

A life without faith requires no trust, and without trust, we miss the rewards that come from exploring something new.

Consider the stories of those who have dared greatly. I think of the disciples of Jesus—just ordinary people—fishermen most of them—who encountered a call that pulled them from the routine into something truly extraordinary. They left behind security for uncertainty, and in doing so, witnessed wonders!

Their lives were forever changed because they said yes to the unknown. Think of it, they walked with Jesus, witnessed miracles, and became part of the greatest story ever told. Life was not always easy, in fact most of them were martyred. But here we are, two-thousand years later, talking about their faith and courage.

For this young group of early Christians, the excitement wasn't just in the highs; it was in the deepening trust that carried them through lows.

When we lean into challenges rather than retreat, our faith grows and we discover a resilience we never knew we had.

One of my favorite quotes is from a speech given by President Theodore Roosevelt in the early 1900's. It is known as "The Man in the Arena," and it challenges the listener to step out of the grandstands and onto the playing field. Yes, you may get muddy—or even bloody—but you will not be like the poor timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

Life is too short to always play it safe. Sometimes you just need to step out in faith and try something new—or even scary. When was the last time you took a leap of faith? The next time someone invites you to go somewhere new, have the courage



to say, "Sure, why not!" The greatest joy of your life might be right around the corner, but you'll never know if you don't take that first step.

Those who step forward often look back in awe at how far they've come. Challenges refine us. They make us better. They push us to deeper levels of trust and commitment. Pain is not always bad... it is often a sign that we've been stretched.

So, my encouragement is to embrace a life of adventure. Take some risks. Try something new. Push yourself a little further today than you did yesterday. Don't quit, give up, or throw in the towel! The most exciting chapter in your story may be around the next bend.

Tim Neptune is the Lead Pastor of Venture Church located at 14601 Tamiami Trail E. Naples. For service times, visit venturenaples.com or call (239) 775-5323.



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