

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

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

March 2026

Lee Edition - Monthly

FREE



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John Nobile

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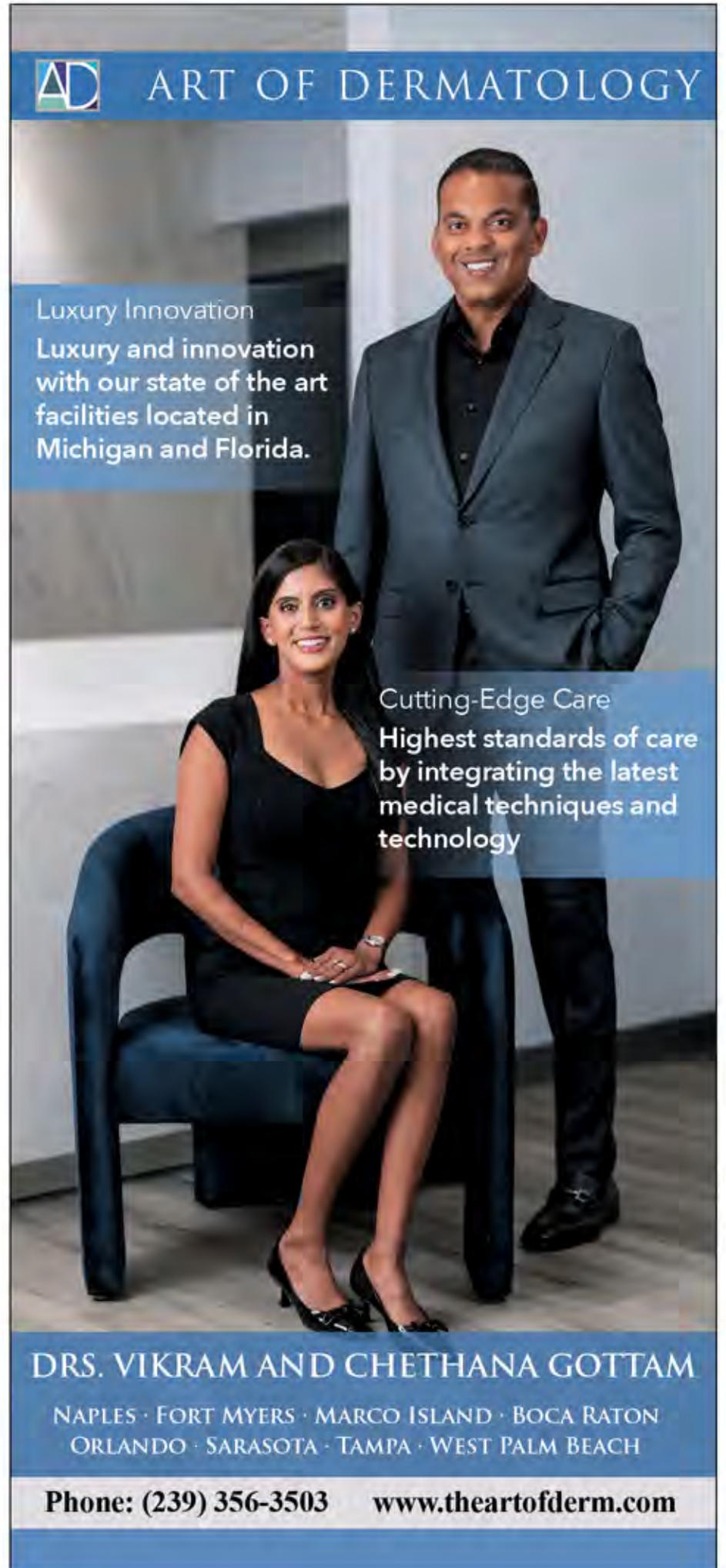
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HEARING AND MEMORY LOSS ARE CONNECTED

By John Nobile - HAS (Hearing Aid Specialist), BC-HIS, ACA



Hearing Loss Affects the Brain

Hearing loss doesn't just mean an older adult needs to turn up the TV. It's been linked to a range of health problems, including dementia. The latest aging research not only shows the two are connected but also leads scientists to believe that hearing loss may cause dementia. If you have hearing loss, you have a greater chance of developing dementia, according to a 2020 Lancet commission report that lists hearing loss as one of the top risk factors for dementia.

Brain Strain and Social Isolation

Hearing loss can make the brain work harder, forcing it to strain to hear and fill in the gaps. That comes at the expense of other thinking and memory systems. Another possibility is hearing loss causes the aging brain to shrink more quickly. A third possibility is that hearing loss makes people less socially engaged, which is hugely essential to remain intellectually stimulated. If you can't hear very well, you may not go out as much, so the brain is less engaged and active.

Quantifying Hearing Loss's Impact

Hearing loss is estimated to account for 8% of dementia cases. This means that hearing loss may be responsible for 800,000 of the nearly ten million new cases of dementia diagnosed each year.

Studies from the National Institute of Health show an association between hearing impairment and dementia while supporting the hypothesis that hearing impairment contributes to cognitive dysfunction in older adults.

Reducing the Risk of Dementia

Johns Hopkins is leading a large National Institute on Aging study to see if hearing aids can safeguard seniors' mental processes. The study has multiple locations and has recruited nearly 1,000 people ages 70-84 with hearing loss. One group is provided hearing aids, while another group receives aging education. By early 2023, the study should provide definitive results on whether treating hearing loss reduces cognitive decline risk. In essence, we'll know whether the use of hearing aids can potentially reduce brain aging and the risk of dementia.

Other Effects on Health

Hearing loss has long-term effects on health. It's believed to increase the risk for falls and depression. It also leads to higher health care costs:

People with hearing loss have, over ten years, a 47% increased hospitalization rate. Hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of institutionalization, an increased risk for dementia, and increased health care costs overall for all ages.

In Summary

Individuals with hearing loss are at an increased risk for developing cognitive decline and dementia. New research finds that treating hearing loss is the single most modifiable risk factor for reducing the risk of dementia. While your risk increases with the degree of hearing loss, it is essential to note that even mild hearing loss can increase your risk by as much as 200%! If you or a loved one struggles to hear clearly, we can help reduce your risk of dementia in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL., with our 5-star-rated hearing care.

John Nobile, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA is a licensed hearing aid specialist and an ACA-certified audioprosthologist who is also board-certified in hearing instrument sciences. With over 55 years of experience, he has transformed thousands of lives in Cape Coral



and Fort Myers, FL, by providing his patients with the gift of sound. He is also a former veteran committed to providing all veterans with free services.

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Your Guide to Getting the Right Care During Southwest Florida's Busy Season

High season in Southwest Florida brings sunshine, visitors, and plenty of activity — but it also brings busy roads, packed restaurants, and longer lines everywhere you go. That surge extends to local healthcare facilities as well. Lee Health emergency departments (EDs) are experiencing near capacity conditions, leading to longer wait times and fewer available hospital beds.

Even during the busiest months, Lee Health is here for you — whether you're dealing with sniffles, a sprained wrist, or something more serious. But knowing where to go for care can make a meaningful difference. Choosing the right setting for your minor, non-emergency needs helps reduce ED wait times for those who truly need emergency care and saves you time and money.

This guide walks you through your best options so you can get the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

Why Choosing the Right Care Matters

Dr. Larry Antonucci, President & CEO of Lee Health, emphasized the importance of making informed choices during this busy time of year.

"It's that time of year again: Flu and other contagious viruses (like RSV and COVID-19) are circulating, and our Lee Health Emergency Departments (EDs)

are seeing more patients," he said. "As viruses and patient volumes rise, we'd like to remind our patients, seasonal residents, and visitors where to go for the most appropriate care."

Dr. Antonucci noted that seasonal patterns have shifted in recent years.

"Typically, we launch this annual campaign later in the season, but this year we're already seeing a surge in our EDs. 'Season' in Southwest Florida continues to evolve, and we're no longer experiencing the sharp fluctuations in patient volume we once did; our EDs are busy year-round."

And while the ED is essential for life-threatening emergencies, it isn't always the right place for less severe issues.

"The ED is not always the most appropriate place for care," Dr. Antonucci said. "Knowing where to go can help you avoid long wait times and ensure you receive the right care while also helping preserve community healthcare resources."

Start With In Person Primary Care

Your primary care physician (PCP) should be your first stop for most health concerns. As Dr. Antonucci

explained, "Your primary care physician is the foundation of your health and wellness. They can help with general concerns, preventive care, chronic disease management, tests, and referrals."

Virtual Care: 24/7 Convenience

If you can't wait for an in-person appointment, Lee Health's Virtual Care options offer fast, affordable access from home.

- **Lee TeleHealth On-Demand Video Visits.** Provides on-demand live video consultations with a healthcare provider. This service is \$59 and self-pay only.

- **Lee TeleHealth Scheduled Video Visits.** Provides scheduled live video consultations with your primary care provider or specialist. Costs vary by service and your chosen provider.

- **Lee TeleHealth e-Visits.** A message-based telemedicine service that doesn't require appointments or real-time communication. This service is \$29 and self-pay only.

- **Symptom checker.** Choose a symptom, and we'll connect you to the appropriate care options based on your condition.

These services are ideal for non-emergencies such as cold symptoms, minor infections, or medication questions.

Urgent Care: Same Day, Non-Emergency Treatment

When you need prompt care but it's not an emergency, Lee Convenient Care is a strong choice. Clinics are open 7 days a week and treat:

- Allergies, cold, flu, and strep throat
- Ear infections and urinary tract infections
- Rashes and skin issues
- Minor fractures (not protruding through the skin)
- Labs, TB tests, IVs, EKGs, and more

Each location offers X-ray services, and you can check current wait times online.

"If you need quick treatment for minor, non-emergency injuries or illnesses and can't wait for an appointment with your primary care provider, Lee Convenient Care or another urgent care clinic is your best option," Dr. Antonucci said.

Emergency Care: For Life-Threatening Conditions Only, 24/7

If you believe your life is at risk, call 911 immediately. The ED is the right place for:

- Chest pain, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Severe abdominal pain
- Stroke symptoms (slurred speech, numbness)
- Major injuries, broken bones protruding through the skin
- Severe allergic reactions
- Unresponsiveness, fainting, or seizures
- Vaginal bleeding during pregnancy
- Head or eye injuries
- Deep lacerations or wounds requiring stitches

Remember: EDs triage patients, meaning the most severe cases are treated first. Calling 911 does not guarantee faster treatment once you arrive. All patients are triaged on arrival to ensure the safest and most appropriate care.

Lee Health is here and ready to care for you. Find the right care, at the right place, at the right time, at Lee Health.



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.



BRADLEY MIDDAGH, O.D.
Optometric Physician

Dr. Bradley Middaugh is a board-certified optometric physician committed to providing his patients the highest level of care through innovative technology and a focus on providing an excellent patient experience. Dr. Middaugh has extensive training in ocular disease, vision testing, eyewear prescriptions, specialty contact lenses and the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders for patients of all ages, from pediatric to geriatric.

Dr. Middaugh graduated from Wake Forest University and earned his doctorate at The University of Alabama at Birmingham. He has been in private practice since 1988 and founded The Fort Myers Eye Center in 1993. In 2020, he joined the Center For Sight team to offer his patients direct access to some of the finest cataract, LASIK, glaucoma, cornea, retina, and oculo-plastics specialists in Southwest Florida.

Dr. Middaugh has served on the Lee County School Board as a member of the Health Care Advisory Panel and the Early Intervention Health Care Panel. He is also an active member of the Southwest Florida Optometric Association, the Florida Optometric Association, and the American Optometric Association, and Above Board Chamber. In addition, he enjoys leading Medical Mission teams annually to El Salvador.

Dr. Middaugh and his wife, Meg, enjoy raising their two boys. The family is very active in their church, Walk to Emmaus, Kairos Prison Ministry, and enjoy serving on medical mission teams.

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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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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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SKIN CANCER BELOW THE KNEE:

What Your Feet and Legs Are Trying to Tell You

By Patrick Bartholomew, DPM - Family Foot & Leg Center, Cape Coral, FL

Living here in Cape Coral, we are blessed with year-round sunshine and a lifestyle that keeps us outdoors. Whether we are boating, golfing, or just enjoying a walk near the water, the Florida sun is a constant companion. When my patients think about skin cancer, they usually think about the "high-exposure" areas: the face, shoulders, or back. However, as a podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Center, I spend my days focusing on the parts of the body often forgotten until they cause discomfort. I can tell you with absolute certainty: skin cancer does not stop at the hemline.

In our local community, the skin below the knee is one of the most overlooked frontiers in preventative medicine. The lower extremity is a surprisingly common—and dangerous—place for certain skin cancers to appear, particularly melanoma. Because these areas are less visible and less frequently checked, cancers here are often detected at a much later stage than those on the upper body. By the time a patient in my office mentions a "bruise" on their heel that won't go away, the condition may have already progressed significantly.

Why the Southwest Florida Lifestyle Increases Risk

Skin cancer develops from damage to skin cells, most commonly triggered by ultraviolet (UV) radiation. In our "sandals and shorts" climate, the lower legs and feet are frequently exposed to intense UV rays. We often fall into the trap of thinking that because our feet are on the ground, they are naturally shaded. In reality, sand and water reflect UV rays back up toward the ankles and the soles of the feet, increasing the dosage of radiation.

Beyond sun exposure, several risk factors contribute to the development of lesions below the knee:

- **Cumulative UV Exposure:** It isn't just the beach days; it is the decades of wearing flip-flops to the grocery store or gardening in the backyard.
- **Biological Vulnerability:** Research suggests melanoma appears on the lower extremities more often in women than in men, often presenting on the calves or ankles.
- **Skin Type and Genetics:** It is a dangerous myth that people with darker skin tones are "immune." In fact, people of color are more likely to develop Acral Lentiginous Melanoma (ALM), a specific type of melanoma that appears on the palms and soles.

The Hidden Danger of Foot Melanoma

Melanoma on the foot or ankle is particularly concerning because it defies standard expectations. While a "sun spot" on the shoulder might be obvious, a melanoma on the foot may hide on the sole, between the toes, or even beneath a toenail (subungual melanoma).

Because these spots don't always look like the "typical" irregular brown mole, they are frequently misdiagnosed as more benign conditions. In my practice, I have seen malignant lesions that were initially mistaken for stubborn bruises, fungal infections, or even simple calluses. This leads to a "diagnostic delay." When melanoma is caught early, the survival rate is high. When caught late—after it has spread into the lymph nodes—the prognosis becomes much more serious.

Warning Signs: The ABCDEs and Beyond

I encourage all my Cape Coral patients to make it a habit to check their legs and feet once a month. Use a mirror to see your heels and the soles of your feet. While the traditional ABCDE rule (Asymmetry, Border, Color, Diameter, Evolving) is a great baseline, you should be specifically vigilant for:

- **The "Ugly Duckling":** A mole or spot that looks entirely different from any other marks on your body.
- **Nail Changes:** A vertical dark streak in a toenail not caused by injury. If the pigment extends onto the cuticle (Hutchinson's Sign), it is a medical emergency.
- **Non-Healing Sores:** Any "sore" or "blister" on the foot or leg that hasn't healed in three weeks, even if it is completely painless.

Prevention and Professional Care

Prevention is a multi-step process involving both lifestyle changes and professional intervention. Many skin cancers below the knee can be caught in the "pre-cancerous" stage with the right approach.

Sunscreen and Footwear

Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30+) to your legs and feet. Most people stop at the ankle, but you must include the tops of the feet and the soles if you are lounging. While we love the freedom of sandals, they offer zero UV protection; consider lightweight, breathable shoes for long days at the park or on the boat.



The Role of the Podiatrist

At Family Foot & Leg Center, we serve as an "early warning system." During a routine exam for an ingrown toenail or heel pain, we are trained to scan the skin for suspicious lesions. Because we see the feet more closely than almost any other provider, we can catch subtle changes that a patient might ignore.

When to Take Action

If you notice a suspicious spot, do not wait for your annual physical. We can perform a physical exam, use dermoscopy to look at the pigment structure, and coordinate a biopsy if necessary.

The most important takeaway is this: Pain is not a requirement for cancer. Most early-stage melanomas are completely painless. If you wait for it to hurt, you have waited too long. Take five minutes this month to take off your socks and really look at your feet. It is a small effort that could quite literally save your life.

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



Dr. Patrick Bartholomew is a podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Center in Cape Coral, Florida, specializing in complex wound care and deformity reconstruction. He is committed to helping the Cape Coral community remain active and healthy.

530 SE 16th Place, Suite A
Cape Coral, FL 33990
(Across from Cape Coral Hospital)

(239) 430-3668 (FOOT)
www.NaplesPodiatrist.com





ALIGNMENT MATTERS: Feeding the Body Through Movement

By Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

When we talk about nutrition, the conversation almost always centers on food. Protein intake. Micronutrients. Fiber. Caloric balance.

Those matter.

But physiology does not stop at digestion. The body must transport nutrients, distribute them, absorb them into tissues, and remove metabolic waste. That process depends heavily on movement.

The human body is a pressure-regulated, fluid-based system. Blood, lymph, interstitial fluid, and synovial fluid shift continuously in response to load and breath. Mechanical input influences circulation, tissue remodeling, and cellular signaling.

Biomechanist Katy Bowman describes “nutritious movement” as the varied mechanical stimulus tissues require to stay adaptable. Bones need compression. Tendons need tension. Cartilage needs cyclical pressure. Cells require load to maintain structure.

But mechanical input does not operate in isolation. The biological response to movement depends on nutritional quality.

Collagen remodeling requires adequate protein and vitamin C. Bone adaptation depends on sufficient minerals and vitamin D. Muscle contraction relies on electrolyte balance and mitochondrial efficiency. Connective tissue repair requires amino acids and trace nutrients.

If those raw materials are insufficient, the adaptive response is limited.

Diets high in ultra-processed foods may further complicate this process. Excess refined sugars and industrial oils are associated with chronic low-grade inflammation. Highly processed foods often displace micronutrient-dense options, reducing the cofactors needed for tissue repair. Blood sugar volatility may also interfere with recovery and collagen synthesis over time.

In practical terms, the body may be moving, but not adapting optimally.

Pilates provides the structured mechanical signal. Whole-food nutrition provides the biochemical substrate. When both are present, tissues are better equipped to respond to load with resilience rather than breakdown.

Mechanical Load as Biological Input

At the cellular level, tissues respond directly to force. Mechanical stress influences collagen production, repair processes, and inflammatory balance.

Bone strengthens under compression.

Tendon adapts under tensile load.

Cartilage relies on alternating compression and decompression to circulate synovial fluid.

Pilates uses springs and body weight to create these cycles deliberately.

Footwork applies rhythmic compression through the hips and knees. Bridging shifts load through the posterior chain. Spinal articulation creates alternating pressure through the intervertebral discs, supporting diffusion of nutrients into tissues that lack direct blood supply.

This is not choreography. It is joint nourishment.

Movement stimulates circulation where stillness cannot.

The Lymphatic System, Breath, and the Internal Pump

The lymphatic system does not have a central pump. Lymph moves because the body moves.

It relies on skeletal muscle contraction, fascial recoil, and pressure changes created by breathing. During inhalation, the diaphragm descends and intra-abdominal pressure shifts. During exhalation, pressure changes again. These fluctuations help draw lymph upward toward central circulation.

Sedentary behavior minimizes this variability. Shallow breathing limits diaphragmatic excursion. Over time, lymphatic return can become less efficient.

Pilates restores this stimulus intentionally.

Posterior rib expansion encourages full diaphragmatic movement. Coordinated pelvic floor engagement supports pressure regulation at the base of the system. Trunk flexion, extension, and rotation create alternating compression and decompression across abdominal and thoracic cavities.

On the reformer, rhythmic muscle contraction gently compresses lymphatic vessels while fascial recoil assists return. Combined with steady breathing, this creates a repeated mechanical pumping effect.

The physiologic implications are straightforward.

Nutrients move in through digestion and absorption.

Metabolic byproducts must move out through circulation and lymphatic clearance.

Efficient lymphatic flow supports immune function, waste removal, and the transport of dietary fats absorbed in the small intestine.

Food provides input. Breath and movement help regulate output.

Fascia, Hydration, and Variability

Fascia is a responsive, force-transmitting network. Anatomist Tom Myers describes continuous fascial pathways that distribute load across the body.

These tissues are highly hydrated and responsive to variability. Pilates introduces rotation, lateral flexion, extension, and reciprocal limb patterns in controlled sequences. That variability stimulates fluid exchange within connective tissue and maintains glide between layers.

Hydrated fascia improves force transfer. Efficient force transfer reduces compensatory strain and distributes load more evenly across joints and muscles.

Over time, this supports structural resilience.

Core Regulation and Digestive Motility

Gastrointestinal motility, the coordinated contractions that move food through the digestive tract, is influenced by breathing patterns and abdominal pressure regulation.

Shallow breathing limits diaphragmatic descent. Chronic bracing elevates baseline intra-abdominal pressure. Both may reduce the subtle mechanical motion that assists intestinal movement.

Pilates trains coordinated engagement rather than rigid contraction. The diaphragm, pelvic floor, and abdominal wall function as a pressure system. During spinal articulation and rotation, abdominal contents experience gentle pressure shifts that may support peristaltic activity and improve transit efficiency.

Transit time influences nutrient absorption, microbial balance, and inflammatory signaling within the gut environment.

Core training, in this context, contributes to digestive regulation.

Muscle and Metabolic Health

Skeletal muscle plays a central role in blood sugar regulation. When muscle contracts under resistance, it draws glucose from the bloodstream to meet energy demands. Over time, this improves insulin sensitivity.

Pilates provides sustained muscular demand through controlled resistance and time under tension. It may not resemble high-intensity training, yet it creates meaningful metabolic stimulus without excessive joint stress.

Movement influences how efficiently nutrients are utilized once they are in circulation.

A Practical Perspective

Modern routines reduce mechanical variability. Long hours sitting minimize compression cycles through joints and limit breath-driven pressure change. Nutrition alone does not address that mechanical gap.

Pilates restores structured variability. It supports joint health, fluid movement, metabolic efficiency, and neuromuscular coordination through deliberate load management.

Food provides the materials.

Movement influences how those materials circulate and are used.

For adults navigating sedentary work, inflammatory load, and metabolic stress, that distinction is clinically relevant and observable over time.

Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

Shannon Willits is a Master Pilates Educator with over 20 years of experience in functional movement and athletic performance. She is STOTT-certified, a Fellow of Applied Functional Science (FAFS), and a Functional Golf Specialist, bringing expertise to both rehabilitation and sport-specific training. As the owner of four Club Pilates studios in Lee County, FL, she trains and mentors aspiring instructors through her Southwest Florida Pilates Academy and innovative apprenticeship model. Shannon is also the host of the Alignment Matters Podcast, where she shares insights on Pilates, movement science, and wellness. www.clubpilates.com may be the wisest health decision they make.



[WWW.CLUBPILATES.COM](http://www.clubpilates.com)

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.



References:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181715/>
<https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/february-2020/women-who-inspire-researchers-making-their-mark-i>

Widening Gender Gap in Life Expectancy in the US, 2010-2021 | Health Disparities | JAMA Internal Medicine | JAMA Network



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 14271 Metropolis Avenue., Fort Myers, FL

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

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

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

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

The Power of Early Detection

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

Recognizing the Warning Signs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Screening Process

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

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

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

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

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

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

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

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

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

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

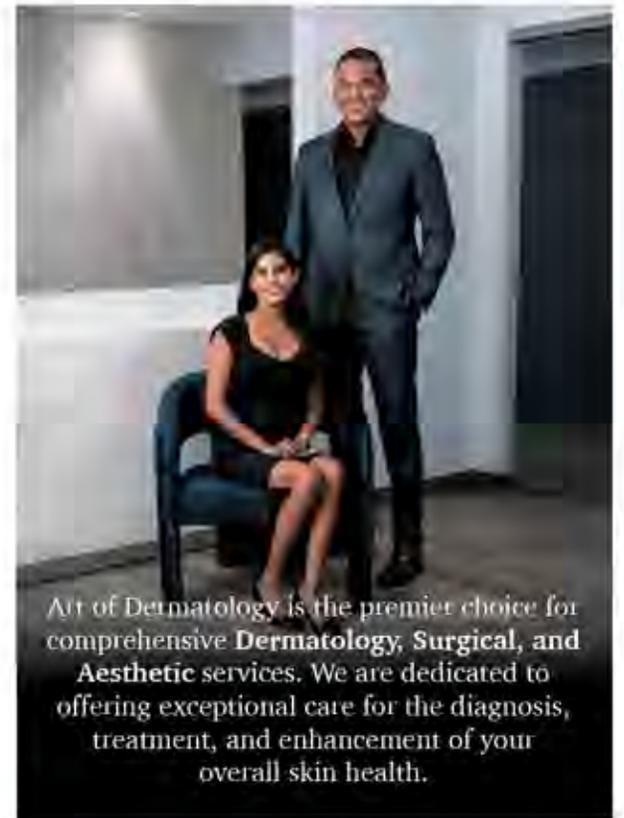
The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

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

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



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

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WHEN 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



**LOW VISION OF
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**
(941) 799-8044

www.lowvisionofswfl.com

(Located inside Eye Centers of Florida)
4101 Evans Ave, Fort Myers, FL 33901

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
of Low Vision Specialists

Specialized care for macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and other vision-limiting conditions.

Healthy Life Center

Education and Navigation

MARCH 2026

WEEKLY IN-PERSON EVENTS

Every Friday
SWFL Produce Box
 3-4 p.m.
 To place an order, visit
www.swflproduce.com

MIND & BODY PROGRAM

*Class Passes Available for Purchase

Tuesdays:
(March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31)
Outdoor Chair Yoga
 10-11 a.m. RSVP
 Instructor: Molly

Thursdays:
(March 5, 12, 19, 26)
Outdoor Chair Yoga
 10-11 a.m. RSVP
 Instructor: Molly

Fridays:
(March 6, 13, 20, 27)
Walking Club
 9-10 a.m. RSVP

Outdoor Stretch, Balance & Strength
 10:30-11:30 a.m. RSVP
 Instructor: Meredith

Fridays:
(March 6, 13, 20, 27)
Free Blood Pressure Screenings
 9 a.m.-noon
 Walk-ins welcome



IN-PERSON EVENTS

Lee Health Coconut Point
 23450 Via Coconut Point, Estero, FL 34135
 To register for these events, call 239-468-0050.

Tuesday, March 3
Stroke Across the Continuum: Signs, Treatment, and Advances in Recovery (Vivistim)
 1-2 p.m. RSVP

Wednesday, March 4
When the Heart Struggles: Understanding Heart Failure
 1-2 p.m. RSVP
 Dr. Elizabeth Cosmai, cardiologist

Thursday, March 5
Audiology 102: Hearing Loss and Hearing Aids
 10-11 a.m. RSVP

Smart Food Swaps for Better Health
 Noon-1 p.m. RSVP
 Fee: \$5

Friday, March 6
MyChart Support
 10 a.m.-noon
 Walk-ins welcome

Monday, March 9
Senior Blue Book: Senior Housing Options
 Noon-1:30 p.m. RSVP
 Lunch will be provided

Tuesday, March 10
Lunch & Learn: Clear the Cabinet - Safe Medicine Disposal Saves Lives
 Noon-1 p.m. RSVP

Wednesday, March 11
Strength and Mobility: Learn & Move
 10-11 a.m. RSVP
Longevity on Your Plate
 Noon - 1 p.m. RSVP
 Fee: \$5

Saturday, March 14
Free Community Yoga
 9:30-10:30 a.m. RSVP
 Lakes Regional Park, meet in parking lot #3

Event brought to you by Cancer Support Community at Lee Health:
Tuesday, March 17
Cooking for Chemo with Chef Ryan Callahan
 10-11:30 a.m. or
 Noon-1:30 p.m. RSVP

Wednesday, March 18
iPhone/Apple Watch Tips & Tricks
 10- 11:30 a.m. RSVP

Thursday, March 19
Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group
 10 a.m. -noon RSVP

Friday, March 20
Monthly Grief Support Group
 1-2 p.m. RSVP

Tuesday, March 24
Navigating Heartburn
 11 a.m.-noon RSVP
 Monica Holbert, APRN

Wednesday, March 25
MyChart 101: Navigating Your Healthcare
 10-11 a.m. RSVP

Thursday, March 26
Skin Cancer Screening
 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
 Call for appointment
 239-468-0050

"Know Where to Go" Emergency or Urgent Care?
 10-11 a.m. RSVP

Plant-Powered Kitchen: A Monthly Cooking & Learning Experience
 Noon-1 p.m. RSVP
 Fee: \$5

Friday, March 27
Music Therapy: The Groovy Group
 10-11 a.m. RSVP

Your Body's Built-in Filter: Kidney Disease is a Leading Cause of Heart Disease
 2-3 p.m. RSVP
 Dr. Ankush Gulati, Nephrologist

Tuesday, March 31
Cook to Protect: A Cancer-Preventive Cooking Demo
 Noon-1 p.m. RSVP
 Fee: \$5

Healthy Life Center

Education and Navigation

MARCH 2026

HEALTHY LIFE CENTER @ CAPE CORAL

609 SE 13th Ct., Cape Coral, FL 33990

Tuesdays, (March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31)

Walking Club
9-10 a.m. RSVP

Tuesday, March 3
Walk-in MyChart Support
10-noon RSVP

Wednesday, March 4
MyChart 101: Navigating Your Healthcare
10-11 a.m. RSVP

Friday, March 13
Clear the Cabinet: Safe Medication Disposal Saves Lives
10 -11 a.m. RSVP

Knee - Arthritis from Pain to Progress
3-4 p.m. RSVP
Dr. Alexis Jorgensen, Orthopedic Surgeon

Monday, March 16
Senior Blue Book: Aging in Place
Noon-1:30 p.m. RSVP
Lunch will be provided

Wednesday, March 18
Strength and Mobility: Learn & Move
10-11 a.m. RSVP

Thursday, March 19
Prevention in Action: What You Should Know About Colon Health
11 a.m.-noon RSVP
Monica Holbert, APRN

Friday, March 20
Music Therapy: The Groovy Group
10:30-11:30 a.m. RSVP

Wednesday, March 25
R.E.A.D.Y - Women's Basic Self-Defense Program
10 a.m.-noon RSVP

Thursday, March 26
Memory Screening
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. RSVP
Appointment required. Please call 239-468-0050 to schedule.

Friday, March 27
Monthly Grief Support Group
10-11 a.m. RSVP

Tuesday, March 31
Longevity On Your Plate
11 a.m.-noon RSVP

WELLWAY

NEW! WA-KE HATCHEE RECREATION PARK AND RECREATION CENTER

16760 Bass Rd., Fort Myers, FL 33908

Friday, March 6
Your Body's Built-in Filter: Kidney Disease is a Leading Cause of Heart Disease
10-11 a.m. RSVP
Dr. Ankush Gulati, Nephrologist

Friday, March 20
Brain Health & Memory
10-11 a.m. RSVP



Please call 239-468-0050 for more information and to register.

Personalized Health Navigation Available

Are you new to the area? Need a new physician? We are here for you! Call 239-468-0050 to speak with one of our Navigators who can connect you with a wide scope of health services.



Scan for information

Healthy Life Center is your destination for healthy events in your area.

RSVP at 239-468-0050
healthylifecenter@leehealth.org
LeeHealth.org/Events



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



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.

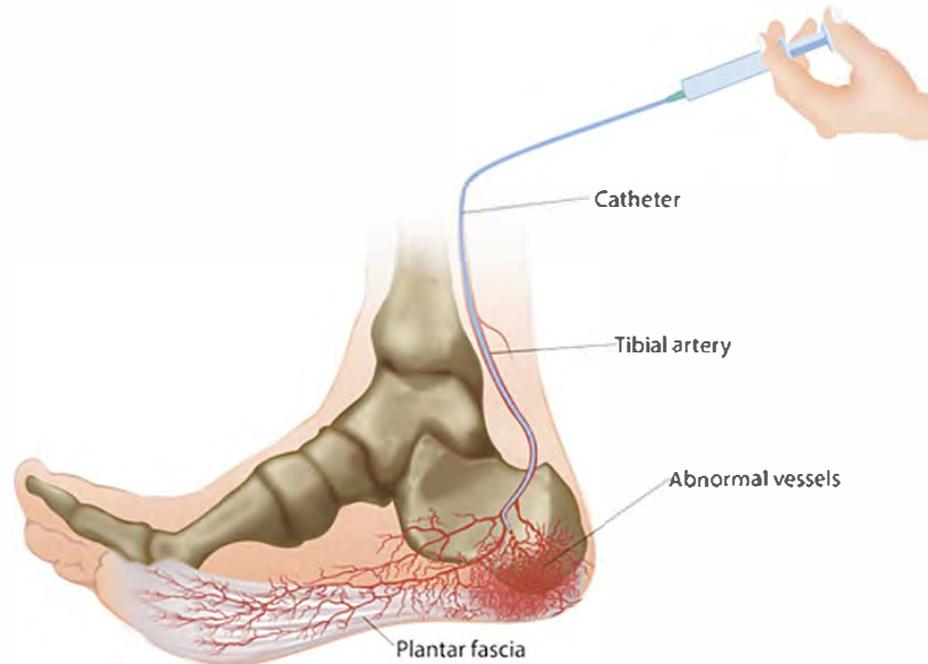
What Is Embolization, and How Does It Work?

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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Understanding Colorectal Cancer: PREVENTION AND RISK FACTORS

Colorectal cancer, a malignancy affecting the colon or rectum, remains a significant health concern globally. According to the American Cancer Society, it is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. While the risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with age, it is not exclusive to older demographics. However, individuals aged 45 and older are at higher risk, with most cases occurring in this age group.

Statistics reveal the gravity of colorectal cancer's impact on public health. Each year, millions of people worldwide are diagnosed with this disease, and sadly, many lose their lives to it. In the United States alone, approximately 150,000 new cases are diagnosed annually, with over 50,000 deaths attributed to colorectal cancer. These numbers underscore the urgency of understanding risk factors and implementing preventive measures.

Several factors contribute to the development of colorectal cancer, including genetics, lifestyle choices, and environmental influences. While some risk factors, like age and family history, cannot be modified, others are within our control. Adopting a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins while limiting processed foods, red meats, and alcohol consumption can significantly reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. Regular physical activity also plays a crucial role in maintaining digestive health and minimizing cancer risk.

Emerging research suggests the potential benefits of nutrient IV therapy in colorectal cancer prevention. Nutrient IV therapy involves administering vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system for enhanced absorption. These intravenous infusions may include ingredients such as vitamin C, vitamin D, selenium, and glutathione, all of which possess antioxidant properties and contribute to immune function and cellular health.



Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant, helps combat oxidative stress and inflammation, which are implicated in cancer development. Vitamin D plays a vital role in regulating cell growth and immune function, and deficiency has been linked to an increased risk of colorectal cancer. Selenium, another essential nutrient, exhibits anticancer properties by supporting DNA repair mechanisms and inhibiting tumor growth. Glutathione, known as the body's master antioxidant, aids in detoxification and immune system modulation, potentially reducing cancer risk.

While nutrient IV therapy shows promise as a complementary approach to colorectal cancer prevention, it is essential to emphasize that it should not replace conventional screening methods or medical advice. Screening tests such as colonoscopies remain the gold standard for early detection of colorectal cancer and precancerous polyps, allowing for timely intervention and improved outcomes. Individuals should consult their healthcare providers to determine the most appropriate preventive strategies based on their medical history and risk profile.

Colorectal cancer remains a significant public health concern, impacting millions of lives worldwide. While age and genetics play a role in predisposing individuals to this disease, lifestyle factors such as diet and physical activity can influence risk. Incorporating a healthy lifestyle and considering complementary approaches like nutrient IV therapy

may help reduce the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer. However, it is crucial to prioritize regular screening and medical guidance to detect and address any potential concerns promptly. Together, through awareness, prevention, and early detection, we can strive toward a future where colorectal cancer incidence and mortality rates are significantly reduced.

Sources:

• American Cancer Society. (2022). Key Statistics for Colorectal Cancer. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>



Doreen DeStefano, PhD, APRN, DNP

Dr. DeStefano is also a lifelong student. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing and another in exercise physiology. She has a Master's (ABT) in criminology, a master's in public business administration, and a master's in nursing. She holds a doctorate in natural health and is a licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. She holds numerous licenses and certifications from advanced practice training. She attends educational seminars in integrative and functional medicine twice yearly to stay abreast of the most recent, cutting-edge therapies available.

Her practice is centered on naturopathic principles, including healing the whole person on various levels and avoiding pharmaceutical intervention unless necessary. She believes your health is within your control. Her goal is to help you achieve maximum health.

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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.

Associates in Nephrology

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.

- All forms of Dialysis – Hemodialysis and Peritoneal
- Diabetic Kidney Disorder
- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
- Disorders of Blood Chemistry
- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
- Glomerulonephritis
- Hypertension
- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

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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Marsh Cove Dental Brings Specialized Full-Arch Implant Expertise to Fort Myers

By Dr. Eugene Titov and Dr. Olga Titov

Residents of Fort Myers and surrounding communities will soon have access to world-class dental implant care as Naples-based Marsh Cove Dental announces the opening of their new specialized facility. Unlike traditional dental expansions, this new location will focus exclusively on providing revolutionary full-arch dental implant treatments, bringing their cutting-edge technology and unparalleled expertise to Lee County.

Specialized Full-Arch Implant Center

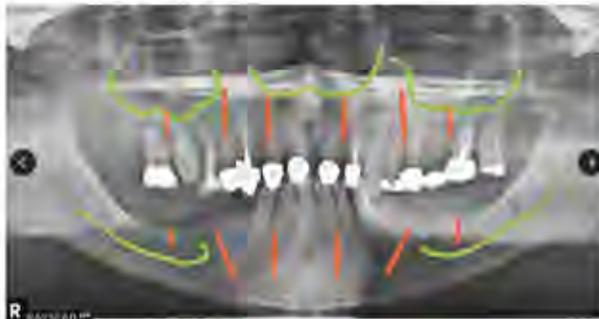
The new Fort Myers location will exclusively focus on full-arch dental implants – also known as All-On-4, Teeth-In-A-Day, or Same-Day Teeth – making them Southwest Florida's premier destination for this life-changing procedure. By concentrating solely on full-arch treatments, Marsh Cove's specialized team performs these complex procedures daily, offering a level of expertise unmatched by offices that only occasionally offer such services.

"Our decision to focus exclusively on full-arch dental implants in Fort Myers stems from recognizing a significant gap in specialized care in the area," explains Dr. Titov, the practice's leading implant specialist. "We're bringing an alternative to corporate chain offices that often treat patients as just another number. Our patients consistently tell us how different their experience feels with our personalized approach."

State-of-the-Art Technology Under One Roof

The Fort Myers facility will house Marsh Cove's complete suite of advanced technology, including their 3D CBCT scanner, RayFace Scanner, 3Shape digital scanner, and in-house dental lab. Additionally, the revolutionary Yomi robot-assisted implant system will be coming to the Fort Myers office, bringing the precision of robotic guidance to select implant procedures. This FDA-cleared robotic system provides real-time guidance during implant surgery, ensuring placement accuracy to within fractions of a millimeter while allowing Dr. Titov to maintain complete control throughout the procedure.

A standout feature of their approach is the in-house manufacturing capability. Using digital scans taken before and during surgery, the team designs and creates temporary arches on their 3D printer within hours of implant placement, ensuring every patient



leaves with functional teeth the same day as surgery. Final restorations are milled in their on-site lab using zirconia, dentistry's strongest material.

Advanced Solutions for Complex Cases

Marsh Cove Dental has built a reputation for successfully treating patients previously told they weren't candidates for full-arch implants due to bone loss. While less experienced providers might require extensive sinus lifts and bone grafting, Dr. Titov often employs zygomatic implants, anchoring into the cheekbone and eliminating the need for sinus procedures.

"We routinely welcome patients who've been turned away elsewhere," shares Dr. Titov. "Our advanced techniques allow us to provide solutions even in challenging cases with significant bone loss."

Comprehensive Care with Patient Safety Focus

Another distinguishing element of their approach is the use of dedicated anesthesia professionals. Unlike many practices where the dentist manages both sedation and the surgical procedure, Marsh Cove partners with licensed anesthesiologists and CRNAs, allowing Dr. Titov to focus exclusively on the dental procedure while ensuring optimal patient safety.



"Having dedicated anesthesia professionals is especially valuable for medically compromised patients," explains the practice manager. "It also significantly reduces sedation time, as Dr. Titov can work efficiently without dividing his attention."

The new Fort Myers location will maintain Marsh Cove's signature comprehensive care model, from complimentary consultations with transparent treatment planning to personalized support throughout the healing process. Patients can schedule a consultation to view before-and-after transformations, hear patient testimonials, and experience firsthand the difference specialized care makes.

For Fort Myers residents seeking an alternative to corporate dental chains for full-arch implant treatment, Marsh Cove Dental offers the rare combination of specialized expertise, advanced technology, and personalized care, all under one roof. Schedule your complimentary consultation today at (239) 300-0290 to discover how our life-changing full-arch implant solutions can restore both your smile and confidence—and see why our patients consistently recommend us as Southwest Florida's premier dental implant specialists.



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See What Our Patients Say



REGINA M.

After five disappointing consultations elsewhere, Regina found hope at Marsh Cove Dental who provided detailed explanations and complete transparency about her 4-on-4 dental implant surgery. Despite suffering from dental anxiety, she never felt anxious during any visit with the caring staff who treated her like family. With her brand new smile, Regina has gained new confidence and can finally enjoy foods she hasn't been able to eat for a long time.



DANIEL B.

My name is Daniel and for me Marsh Cove Dental is the best dentist office I've ever been to - their knowledgeable staff took time to explain procedures, answer all my questions, and they've gone above and beyond my expectations.



CHRIS S.



PAMELA F.

Pamela enthusiastically recommends Dr. T and the staff at Marsh Cove for dental implants, highlighting their exceptional care, the doctor's perfectionism, and how the experience transformed her smile and life.



KAREN W.



CHERYL D.



JOHNNY

My name is Johnny I was very happy with my experience at Marsh Cove Dental... **so happy in fact,** I brought my friend in to have his teeth fixed also.

The Doctor has a very discerning eye and my outcome was **aesthetically pleasing and most importantly functional.** Dr. Titov has state of the art digital technology and an on-site lab. The staff very knowledgeable, kind and caring and make you feel like one of the family.



PAMELA

My name is Pamela and I **give Marsh Cove 5 Stars!!!** From my first visit to my most recent visit I have only great things to say. Everyone is so friendly and knowledgeable, patient and kind. **All my questions were answered and my anxiety was addressed not only in person but also via telephone.** I had 17 teeth pulled and permanent implant supported "dentures" placed. Following all directions and taking products provided I had very little swelling, no bruising and returned to work in 5 days!

I highly recommend Dr. Titov and all his group at Marsh Cove Dental and Implant Center.



TOBY R.



MIKE S.



CAN YOU HAVE A CRACKED TOOTH?

By KELLY M. DAINIAK, DMD, GENERAL DENTIST

Have you ever noticed a crack in your tooth?

Don't be alarmed, not all cracks become problematic. As we age, we develop cracks in our teeth due to regular wear and tear as well as paroxysmal habits like clenching and grinding (bruxism). Cracks should be noted and monitored by your dentist. When a crack deepens your tooth is at risk to develop symptoms and possible tooth loss.

What to look for:

- Pain on biting and relief when you stop biting.
- Deep cracks (visible in dental chair)
- Deep cracks that are visible on dental radiograph
- Tooth movement when biting
- Sharp pain when biting

The proper treatment after diagnosing a Cracked Tooth is a crown preparation then wait 3-4 weeks to see if symptoms resolve. If symptoms resolve, great! Then the permanent crown can be placed. If symptoms don't resolve then a root canal treatment is needed. After the root canal treatment if symptoms are resolved then the permanent crown can be delivered. In rare circumstances, there is still pain on biting after a root canal treatment and final crown. In this case the only way to relieve symptoms is tooth extraction.

Pain when biting is not something that should be ignored. Over time the crack in the tooth will continue to worsen and bump into the nerve or worse case scenario, split the tooth. The sooner it is diagnosed and treated the less dental work will be required.

In my practice I have seen teeth without any dental restorations crack and split requiring dental extraction. I closely monitor tooth cracks with photographs and radiographs to advise my patients for the best dental treatment.



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PLATELET-RICH PLASMA:

A Promising Approach for Tendinitis, Ligament Injuries, and Early Arthritis

By Dennis O. Sagini, MD

In the evolving landscape of regenerative medicine, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) has emerged as one of the most widely studied and clinically applied biologic therapies for musculoskeletal conditions. PRP is an autologous blood product derived from a patient's own blood, concentrated to contain a significantly higher platelet count than baseline levels. These platelets are rich in growth factors—including platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF), transforming growth factor-beta (TGF- β), vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), and insulin-like growth factor (IGF)—that play essential roles in tissue repair and regeneration. For patients suffering from tendinitis, ligament injuries, and early arthritis of the upper extremity, PRP therapy offers a minimally invasive treatment option that harnesses the body's own healing mechanisms.

How PRP Works

The preparation of PRP begins with a simple blood draw, typically between 15 and 60 milliliters depending on the system used. The blood is then processed through centrifugation, which separates the components and concentrates the platelets into a small volume of plasma. The resulting PRP preparation can contain three to seven times the normal concentration of platelets. Once prepared, the PRP is injected directly into the site of injury under ultrasound guidance to ensure precise placement. Upon activation, the concentrated platelets release their growth factors, initiating and accelerating the cascade of tissue healing, reducing inflammation, and promoting the formation of new collagen and blood vessels.

PRP for Upper Extremity Tendinitis

Tendinitis and tendinopathy are among the most common indications for PRP in the upper extremity. Conditions such as lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow), medial epicondylitis (golfer's elbow), and rotator cuff tendinitis often become chronic and resistant to conventional treatments like rest, physical therapy, and corticosteroid injections. PRP has shown particular promise in lateral epicondylitis, where multiple randomized controlled trials have demonstrated superior outcomes compared to corticosteroid injections at follow-up periods beyond three months. While corticosteroids may provide rapid short-term relief, PRP addresses the underlying degenerative process by stimulating tendon repair at the cellular level. For rotator cuff tendinopathy, PRP injections have been associated

with improvements in pain and functional scores, and some evidence suggests that PRP may also enhance healing when used as an adjunct during surgical rotator cuff repair.

PRP for Ligament Injuries

Ligament injuries of the upper extremity, including ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) sprains in overhead athletes, scapholunate ligament injuries of the wrist, and acromioclavicular joint sprains, represent another area where PRP is gaining traction. Ligaments have an inherently limited blood supply, which contributes to slow and often incomplete healing. By delivering a concentrated dose of growth factors directly to the injured ligament, PRP can enhance the local biological environment and promote more robust tissue repair. In the case of UCL injuries in throwing athletes, PRP injections combined with structured rehabilitation programs have allowed some patients to return to sport without surgical reconstruction. Although the evidence for ligament applications is still growing, early clinical results and case series support PRP as a reasonable non-operative treatment strategy for partial ligament tears and sprains.

PRP for Early Upper Extremity Arthritis

Early osteoarthritis of the shoulder, elbow, and hand joints is an increasingly recognized application for PRP therapy. In joints affected by mild to moderate cartilage loss, PRP injections have demonstrated anti-inflammatory effects and the potential to slow cartilage degradation. The growth factors released by platelets can modulate the inflammatory environment within the joint, reduce the production of destructive enzymes, and support the activity of chondrocytes—the cells responsible for maintaining cartilage health. For glenohumeral arthritis, basal joint arthritis of the thumb, and early degenerative changes in the elbow, PRP offers an alternative for patients seeking to delay or avoid joint replacement surgery. Studies in knee osteoarthritis have provided the strongest evidence base, and emerging data suggest similar benefits can be expected in upper extremity joints.

Looking Ahead

While PRP therapy holds significant promise, it is important to acknowledge that not all PRP preparations are identical. Variations in platelet concentration, leukocyte content, and activation methods can influence clinical outcomes, and standardization across protocols remains an ongoing challenge.

Patients should seek evaluation from a qualified physician who can determine whether PRP is appropriate for their specific condition and severity. As research continues to refine preparation techniques and identify the patients most likely to benefit, PRP is poised to play an increasingly important role in the non-surgical management of upper extremity tendinitis, ligament injuries, and early arthritis—offering patients a safe, biologically driven path toward healing and restored function.

Dennis O. Sagini, MD

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

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

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

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



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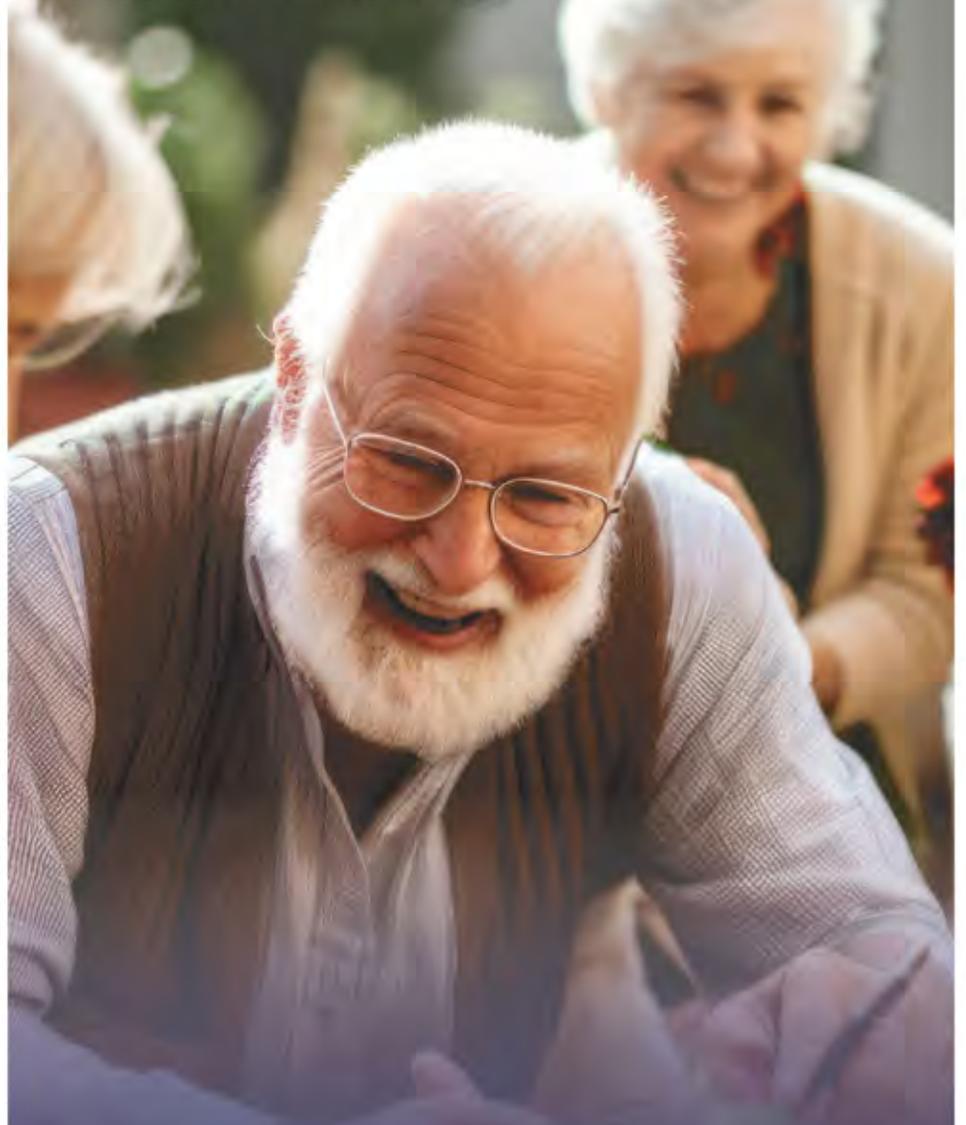


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AVOID FADS AND QUICK FIXES: Align Dietary Strategy with Individual Physiology for Optimal Nutrition

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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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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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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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

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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!

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“ ”

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 —



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*50% or greater reduction in symptoms

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

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North Port Behavioral Health is an acute psychiatric hospital in North Port, Florida, offering inpatient treatment programming for adults, and senior adults.

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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:

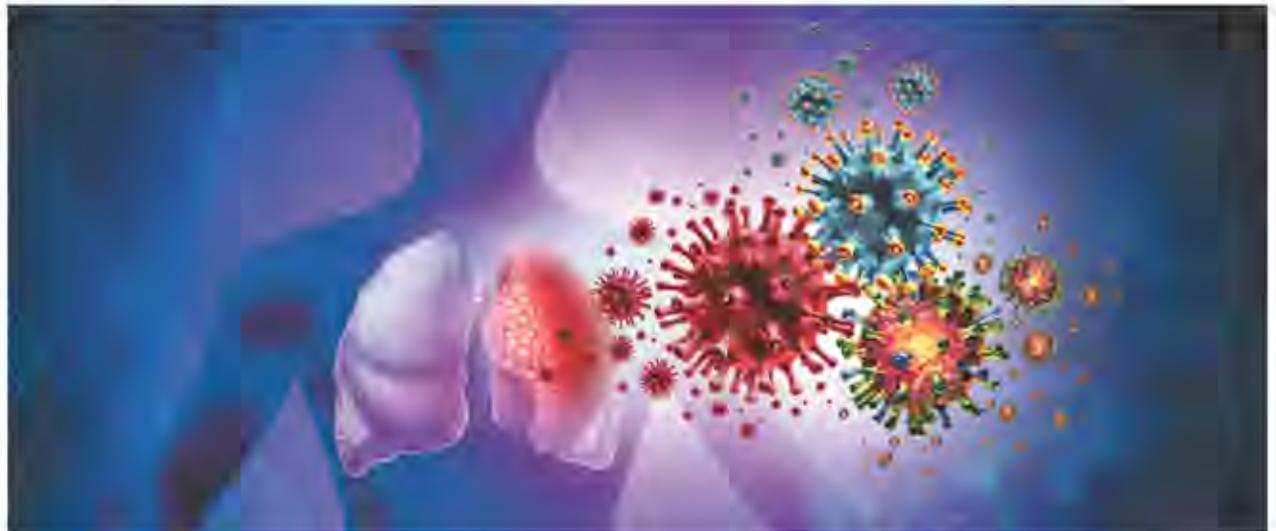
- fatigue
- brain fog
- insomnia
- changes in taste and smell
- anxiety
- depression
- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- dizziness

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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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.



Jim Ferrara



Lexie Lundquist

MOBILE REHAB & LYMPHATICS

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RECLAIMING BALANCE: HOW THE BRAIN, CORE, AND BODY WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP YOU STRONG

By Dr. Ivan Bracic, Clinical Director – Novaré® Medical and Wellness

Why Balance Is More Than Just Physical

Most people think of balance as something purely physical — the ability to stand tall or walk steadily.

But true balance begins much higher up — in the brain.

As we age, both *mental and physical* balance can start to slip. The same brain systems that help us coordinate movement also regulate focus, mood, and confidence.

That's why people who feel "off-balance" physically often describe feeling unsteady mentally, too — less sharp, less sure, and more easily fatigued.

At Novaré® Medical & Wellness, we see this connection every day — and we've developed an integrated approach to help people rebuild balance, strength, and clarity from the inside out.

The Brain–Body Connection

Balance isn't a single skill; it's a symphony between your **core muscles, vestibular system** (inner ear and body position sensors), and your **brain's coordination centers**.

When one part weakens — whether from inactivity, injury, or chronic stress — the others have to compensate. That's when you may notice:

- Muscle tightness or instability
- Loss of confidence while walking or exercising
- Slower reaction time
- Difficulty focusing or staying calm under pressure

The culprit isn't just the body — it's often the *communication* between the brain and body.

The cerebellum, which helps control movement, also influences **attention and emotional regulation**.

So when your physical balance improves, your mind becomes steadier, and when your brain feels calmer, your body moves with more confidence.

Introducing the Core-to-Mind™ Approach

At Novaré, we call this the **Core-to-Mind™ Connection** — our signature model for rebuilding stability and vitality through brain–body integration.

It's a simple truth backed by neuroscience:

"Your strength, stability, and focus are all connected through one intelligent system — your brain."

Our approach combines three advanced, non-invasive technologies to optimize that system and help patients feel grounded, energized, and in control again.

Exomind™ — The Brain Reset

Everything begins in the brain. **Exomind™** uses gentle, targeted magnetic stimulation (ExoTMS™) to activate and rebalance areas that control mood, focus, and body coordination. It helps quiet stress circuits, improve mental clarity, and enhance reaction time.

The therapy is **FDA-cleared, drug-free**, and deeply relaxing. Each 20-minute session feels like a "mental recharge" — helping the brain re-establish calm, precise control over the body.

Clinical studies show:

- **83% of participants** reported improved mood and focus
- **88%** experienced reduced stress and better balance between body and mind

When your brain functions in sync, movement and focus flow naturally.

Emsella® — The Core Stabilizer

Balance starts at your center — and that means more than abs. Your **pelvic floor** is the body's foundation for posture, stability, and confidence.

Emsella® uses electromagnetic energy to strengthen these deep core muscles, improving balance, spinal alignment, and even bladder control. It's an effortless way to rebuild the stability that supports every movement — from walking to lifting to simply standing taller.

Patients often notice they not only move better but feel *stronger emotionally* because their posture and control improve. Confidence, after all, begins with stability.

EmsculptNeo® — The Strength Builder

Finally, to complete the system, **EmsculptNeo®** helps build functional muscle and improve metabolism. Using a combination of high-intensity electromagnetic stimulation and radiofrequency, EmsculptNeo strengthens large muscle groups — like the abdomen, glutes, and thighs — while simultaneously reducing fat.

More muscle doesn't just mean better tone — it means better support for joints, balance, and circulation. When your body feels capable, your brain releases neurochemicals linked to motivation and positive mood. That's the essence of Novaré's integrative wellness model: strong body, calm mind.

**"When your brain and body
communicate clearly, balance
becomes effortless."**

Why This Matters More After 50

As we move through our 50s, 60s, and beyond, we naturally lose muscle tone and reaction speed — but we also experience changes in brain function. Stress, sleep loss, and inactivity can all slow neural communication. That's why so many adults describe feeling "off" or "unsteady" even without pain or injury.

The good news is that this decline isn't permanent — it's reversible. When we stimulate the brain (with Exomind™) and strengthen the body (with Emsella® and EmsculptNeo®), we reignite the communication pathways that keep us steady, confident, and energized.

Real Stories of Renewal

Our patients often tell us they came in for one thing — but gained so much more.

- A 70-year-old retiree who worried about losing balance on the golf course now feels steady and focused through every swing.
- A grandmother who struggled with posture and back pain regained strength and confidence after Emsella treatments, saying, *"I didn't realize how much better I could move until my core was strong again."*
- Another patient described combining Exomind™ and EmsculptNeo® as "feeling my body and brain finally working together again."

Aging Strong, Not Slowing Down

Aging doesn't have to mean decline — it can mean design. You can *retrain* your systems to work smarter, not harder. By focusing on both brain and body, Novaré helps you age with stability, clarity, and strength — what we call **powerful aging**.

Spring is the perfect time to move forward with confidence — to regain your footing, both physically and mentally.

Take Your Next Step Toward Balance

Whether you want to prevent falls, improve strength, or simply feel more stable in your body, Novaré's **Core-to-Mind™** program offers a natural path to renewal. No surgery. No downtime. Just science, technology, and care working together to help you feel your best.

Call **239-497-9355** to schedule your complimentary consultation at **Novaré® Medical & Wellness** in Fort Myers or Lehigh Acres.

Follow **@novare.wellness** to discover how today's most advanced brain–body therapies can help you stay grounded, focused, and strong.

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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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CONCIERGE-LEVEL MOBILE WOUND CARE: Remy Cares Brings Advanced Stage 2 Treatment to Your Door

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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THE CRUCIAL LINK BETWEEN NUTRITION, AND HEALTHY LIVING IN GOLDEN YEARS

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

The demographic landscape is undergoing a significant shift worldwide, with a growing proportion of individuals entering their golden years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global population aged 60 and older is expected to reach 2 billion by 2050, doubling from the year 2015. With this demographic shift comes an increased prevalence of conditions like dementia, which poses a multifaceted challenge for individuals, families, and healthcare systems. One of the major challenges which come with the aging population and dementia is nutrition.

Seniors often face unique nutritional challenges, such as decreased appetite, difficulty chewing or swallowing, and changes in taste and smell perception. These factors can contribute to inadequate nutrient intake, leading to deficiencies that may impact physical and cognitive health. As March is National Nutrition Month let us examine the intricate relationship between nutrition and dementia.

A Little Bit of History

In 1948 the Framingham Heart Study highlighted the connection between cardiovascular health and cognitive function. It set the stage for subsequent research into the impact of nutrition on cognitive health. In the late 20th century, the connection between omega-3 fatty acids and the structural integrity of the brain came to light. In the early 2000's the Mediterranean diet gained attention for its potential protective effects against cognitive decline. In recent years the Gut Brain Axis research has proven yet again the connection between proper nutrition and cognitive health.

The Brain-Nutrition Nexus

As we eat and age, the brain undergoes a series of transformations that can impact cognitive function. Healthy nutritional choices can positively impact the body and brain. For example, eating foods high in fiber and low in sugar, reduce inflammation in the body and the brain. Drinking too much alcohol and caffeine has the opposite effect; both increase inflammation. Increased chronic inflammation has been linked to tissue damage, hardening of arteries, insulin resistance, and even cancer.



A diet lacking in quality nutrition leads to a diminished number of neurons, slower synaptic connections, and reduced blood flow to the brain. These changes can contribute to a decline in memory, processing speed, and overall cognitive abilities. The poorer the nutrition the more the body experiences shifts in metabolism, muscle mass, and bone density. For these reasons, focusing on the connection between our nutrition and aging process is important.

Water, Water, Everywhere

Water, often dubbed the elixir of life, plays a central role in the biological processes that govern our bodies. Its influence on healthy aging extends beyond mere hydration, reaching into cellular function, organ health, and disease prevention. A growing body of scientific evidence underscores the profound impact that adequate water intake can have on the aging process.

Dr. Sarah Mitchell, a renowned gerontologist, explains, "Our cells are like tiny machines that require water to operate efficiently. Dehydration can compromise these cellular processes, leading to premature aging and a decline in overall health."

When we drink enough water and all of our cells are hydrated, our joints feel better, our brain works better, and our skin looks better too. On the other hand, dehydration has been linked to impaired cognitive function including lack of focus and poor concentration, both of which affect cognitive function.

Nutrition in the Home or Community

Ensuring that your elderly loved one receives good nutrition is crucial for their overall health and well-being. Here are some tips different scenarios:

Living at Home

- **Regular Check-ins:** Visit or call regularly to assess their well-being. Ask about their appetite, any changes in taste or dietary preferences.
- **Meal Planning:** Plan balanced and nutritious meals in advance. Ensure a variety of food groups are included for a well-rounded diet.
- **Stock Healthy Options:** Keep the pantry and refrigerator stocked with healthy, easy-to-prepare foods. Include fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.
- **Meal Delivery Services:** Consider using meal delivery services that provide nutritious meals to their doorstep.
- **Social Interaction:** Encourage social activities, as loneliness or depression can impact their appetite.

Living in a Senior Living Community

- **Communication with Staff:** Stay in regular communication with staff to discuss dietary needs and preferences.
- **Participation in Community Events:** Encourage participation in community dining and events to foster socialization.
- **Feedback Channels:** Establish open lines of communication to address any concerns or changes in their nutritional needs.
- **Family and Friend Visits:** Coordinate family or friend visits for shared meals, creating a supportive environment.
- **Personalized Care Plans:** Work with the community to create a personalized care plan that addresses their nutritional requirements.

If you have a loved one who does not seem to be thriving we can help. You can call our office at (239) 330-2133 or email us at info@scanyfl.com.



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Supporting Spinal Health During Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

March is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month — a time to raise understanding about a condition that affects nearly one million Americans. At Estero Family Chiropractic, we believe that education and proactive spinal care play a meaningful role in supporting quality of life for those living with MS. This month, we want to share how chiropractic care and spinal health can complement your wellness journey.

What Is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks the protective myelin sheath surrounding nerve fibers in the brain and spinal cord. This disruption interferes with communication between the brain and the rest of the body. Symptoms can vary widely from person to person but often include fatigue, muscle weakness, difficulty with balance and coordination, numbness or tingling, and chronic pain.

Because MS directly involves the central nervous system — which runs through and depends upon the spine — spinal health becomes a critical component of overall management and well-being for those living with the disease.

The Spine-Nervous System Connection

The spinal column is not just a structural support system — it is the primary highway for your nervous system. The spinal cord, housed within the vertebrae, transmits signals between the brain and the body.

When the spine is misaligned or under stress, it can place additional pressure on nerves and surrounding tissues, potentially compounding the neurological challenges that MS already creates.

For individuals with MS, maintaining proper spinal alignment may help reduce secondary discomfort and improve the body’s ability to function as optimally as possible. While chiropractic care does not treat or cure MS, it can be a valuable supportive therapy that addresses musculoskeletal symptoms related to the condition.

How Chiropractic Care May Help

At Estero Family Chiropractic, we take a gentle, patient-centered approach to care. For MS patients, our focus is on:

- **Reducing Muscle Tension and Spasms** — Spasticity and muscle stiffness are common MS symptoms. Gentle chiropractic adjustments and soft tissue therapies may help ease tension and improve mobility.
- **Improving Posture and Alignment** — MS can affect the muscles that support posture. Regular chiropractic care helps maintain proper spinal alignment, which supports balance and reduces the risk of falls.
- **Managing Chronic Pain** — Many people with MS experience neck, back, and joint pain. Chiropractic techniques offer a drug-free option to help manage this discomfort.

- **Supporting Overall Nervous System Function** — A well-aligned spine creates an environment where the nervous system can function with less interference, supporting the body’s natural healing processes.

A Partnership in Your Wellness

We understand that MS is a complex condition requiring a team approach. Chiropractic care works best alongside medical treatment, physical therapy, and other healthcare providers. Our goal at Estero Family Chiropractic is to be part of your support system — helping you maintain the highest possible quality of life.

If you or a loved one is living with MS and curious about how spinal health care might help, we encourage you to schedule a consultation. This Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, let’s take a step toward better movement, less pain, and greater well-being — together.

Contact Estero Family Chiropractic today to learn more about our gentle, compassionate approach to spinal health.



Dr. Larry Wallen



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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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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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