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(SEE PAGE 27)

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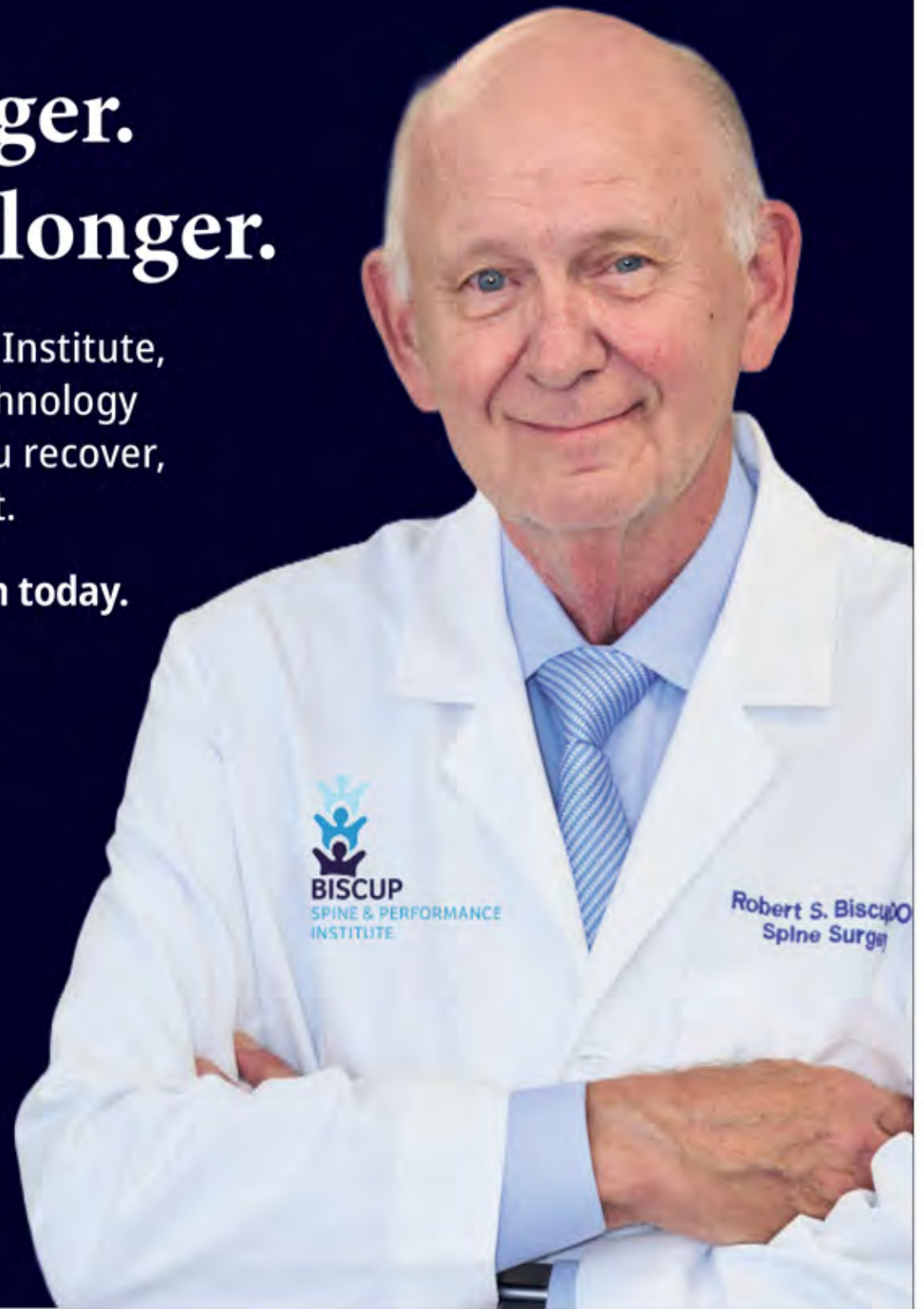
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A Smile Worth Waiting For:

Michael Hamblen's Full-Mouth Implant Journey

By Dr. Tamer Eshra

For years, Michael Hamblen avoided smiling.

"I was embarrassed by my teeth," he says. "I would literally compose my face and avoid situations where people could see them."

His wife encouraged him for years to do something about his smile, but Michael never realized how many options were available—or how dramatically modern dentistry could change his life.

"I had bad teeth from birth," he explains. "I just didn't know there was a process that could completely reinvent my smile."

Everything changed during a routine dental appointment at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

"I was there for a regular cleaning and finally asked Dr. Eshra what my options were," Michael recalls. "He sat down with me and explained everything."

According to Michael, Dr. Eshra presented three treatment options, carefully discussing the benefits, longevity, and costs associated with each.

"There was never any pressure," he says. "He explained the pros and cons of each choice and answered all my questions. After learning more about the options, I decided that full-mouth dental implants were the best long-term solution for me."

What Are Full-Mouth Dental Implants?

Full-mouth dental implants are an advanced restorative treatment designed for patients who have multiple failing, damaged, or missing teeth. Rather than relying on removable dentures, dental implants use titanium posts that are surgically placed into the jawbone to serve as artificial tooth roots. A custom-designed arch of replacement teeth is then attached to the implants, creating a stable, natural-looking smile.

Research has shown that dental implants have very high long-term success rates in many patients when properly maintained. In addition to restoring appearance, implants can improve chewing ability, speech, comfort, and overall quality of life.

For Michael, the decision was easy once he understood the long-term benefits.

"I am so glad I chose implants," he says. "I would do it all over again in a heartbeat."



The Journey

The transformation was a significant commitment that unfolded over an extended period of time, but Michael says the results made every step worthwhile. Throughout the process, the team carefully coordinated multiple procedures to help make treatment as efficient and seamless as possible. Michael was also given several options to ensure his comfort throughout treatment.

"One thing that surprised me most was how comfortable the entire process was," Michael says. "I never felt pain—even during the extractions. That was something I was nervous about beforehand, but Dr. Eshra and the team took excellent care of me."

Patients undergoing complex treatment may choose from a variety of comfort options, including different levels of sedation. Michael elected to remain fully awake during his procedures and was pleasantly surprised by how easy the experience was.

"And look at the results," he says. "It was absolutely worth it."

The Power of a Great Team

While Michael is thrilled with his new smile, he is equally appreciative of the people who helped him achieve it.

"Dr. Eshra and his team are so patient and thorough," he says. "Miriam and Gigi are both excellent at their jobs. Together they make the perfect team."

Throughout the process, Michael says he always felt informed, supported, and comfortable.

"They genuinely care about their patients," he says. "You can tell they want the best outcome possible."

A New Reason to Smile

Today, Michael finds himself doing something he avoided for much of his life—smiling.

"Now I just can't stop smiling," he says with a laugh. The confidence he has gained extends far beyond his appearance.

"When you're embarrassed by your teeth, it affects more than just your smile. It affects how you interact with people and how you feel about yourself. Having this work done has changed all of that."

When asked what he would tell someone considering dental implants, his answer is immediate.

"Don't wait as long as I did," he says. "Talk to Dr. Eshra and learn what your options are. I would recommend Dr. Eshra and his team to take care of all your dental needs."

For Michael, the investment of time was well worth the reward.

After years of hiding his smile, he now wears it proudly every day.

About Tamer Eshra, DDS

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



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Could Oxygen Be the Missing Piece in the Fight Against Memory Loss?

By Dr. Robert S. Biscup, M.S., D.O., F.A.O.A.O.

Every 67 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's disease. For families watching a loved one slowly lose pieces of themselves, that statistic isn't abstract, it's personal. As Alzheimer's Awareness Month puts a spotlight on memory and brain health, a therapy once reserved for divers and burn patients is now drawing serious attention for a very different reason: its potential to support the aging brain. At Biscup Spine and Performance in Naples, Florida, we're exploring how Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) may offer a promising piece of the cognitive health puzzle.

The Brain Runs on Oxygen — And It's Hungry

Your brain makes up only about 2% of your body weight, yet it consumes roughly 20% of your oxygen supply. That oxygen fuels nearly everything the brain does, forming memories, processing information, and keeping neurons firing efficiently. As we age, blood flow to the brain can decrease, and oxygen delivery to brain tissue often becomes less efficient. Reduced cerebral blood flow has been linked in research to cognitive decline, brain fog, and conditions like mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease.

This is where hyperbaric oxygen therapy enters the conversation.

What Is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy?

HBOT involves breathing 100% pure oxygen inside a pressurized chamber, at levels significantly higher than normal atmospheric pressure. This increased pressure allows oxygen to dissolve more thoroughly into the blood plasma, reaching tissues, including brain tissue, that may otherwise receive insufficient oxygen flow. The process can stimulate the growth of new blood vessels (angiogenesis), reduce inflammation, and may even support neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to form new neural connections.

What the Research Suggests

While HBOT is not a cure for Alzheimer's disease and should never be presented as one, a growing body of research is examining its role in supporting brain health. Some studies have explored how increased oxygen pressure may help:

- **Improve cerebral blood flow** to underperforming areas of the brain
- **Reduce neuroinflammation**, which is increasingly tied to cognitive decline
- **Support mitochondrial function**, helping brain cells generate energy more efficiently
- **Encourage angiogenesis**, potentially restoring oxygen delivery to areas affected by reduced circulation

Researchers have also studied HBOT's effects on patients with mild cognitive impairment, traumatic brain injury, and post-stroke recovery, with some showing measurable improvements in memory, attention, and processing speed. The science is still evolving, and HBOT should be viewed as a complementary, supportive approach, not a replacement for medical care, medication, or guidance from a neurologist.

What a Session Looks Like at Biscup Spine and Performance

Biscup Spine and Performance offers an incomparable patient experience. Patients relax in a comfortable, monitored hyperbaric chamber while breathing concentrated oxygen for a session that typically lasts 60 to 90 minutes. There's no discomfort beyond a brief sensation similar to ear pressure changes during airplane takeoff. Many patients use the time to rest, listen to music, or simply unwind while their body and brain absorb the therapeutic benefits.

Treatment plans are individualized. Some patients pursue HBOT alongside other cognitive health strategies, proper sleep, cardiovascular exercise, nutrition, and mental stimulation, as part of a broader approach to brain wellness.

Why This Matters for Alzheimer's Awareness Month

Awareness isn't just about statistics; it's about action. Understanding emerging therapies like HBOT gives families and patients more informed conversations to have with their doctors. If you or a loved one are noticing early signs of memory changes, brain fog, or cognitive slowing, it's worth discussing all available options, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, with a qualified medical provider.

Take the Next Step

Biscup Spine and Performance is proud to serve the Naples, Florida community with innovative, evidence-informed approaches to wellness. If you're curious whether hyperbaric oxygen and other integrative therapies could be part of your cognitive health journey, contact Dr. Biscup and his team today to schedule your initial consultation. Memory matters, and so does exploring every avenue to protect it.

ABOUT DR. BISCUP

Dr. Robert S. Biscup, M.S., D.O., F.A.O.A.O., is a board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon with over 35 years of experience. Dr. Biscup has earned international recognition for his developments in minimally invasive spine surgery, major reconstructive, and failed spine surgery. Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Biscup has remained at the forefront of innovation, continually integrating advanced surgical techniques with the latest developments in regenerative medicine and integrative therapies to help patients achieve optimal outcomes.

Dr. Biscup's approach to whole body wellness includes a focus on regenerative medicine, such as PRP and Exosome therapies, along with integrative medicine including hyperbaric oxygen, IV nutrient, and advanced light therapies to support the body's natural healing processes, reduce inflammation, optimize recovery, and promote long-term health and function.

Dr. Biscup's commitment to clinical excellence, innovation, and individualized treatment has established Biscup Spine & Performance as a premier concierge practice dedicated to restoring function, improving quality of life, and helping patients achieve their highest level of health and performance.



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Reveal Smoother, Younger-Looking Skin with CoolPeel CO2 Laser

If you've been searching for a way to turn back the clock on aging skin without the lengthy downtime of traditional laser resurfacing, the CoolPeel CO2 laser at Naples Aesthetic Institute may be exactly what you've been waiting for. Under the expert care of Dr. Kiran Gill, MD, patients throughout the Naples area are discovering how this revolutionary treatment delivers dramatic skin rejuvenation with remarkable comfort and convenience.

What Is the CoolPeel CO2 Laser?

The CoolPeel is an innovative fractional CO2 laser treatment that harnesses the proven power of carbon dioxide laser technology in a groundbreaking new way. Traditional CO2 lasers have long been considered the gold standard for skin resurfacing, capable of addressing fine lines, wrinkles, sun damage, uneven texture, and enlarged pores with impressive results. However, they have historically required significant downtime and recovery, keeping many patients from pursuing treatment.

CoolPeel changes that equation entirely. By delivering a precise, superficial ablation of the skin's outer layer, CoolPeel stimulates the body's natural collagen production and cellular renewal without the intense heat buildup associated with older CO2 systems. The result is a treatment that achieves real, measurable skin improvement while dramatically reducing recovery time compared to traditional laser resurfacing.

How Does CoolPeel Work?

At Naples Aesthetic Institute, CoolPeel is delivered using the DEKA Helix platform, a more powerful, next-generation CO2 system that goes beyond what earlier devices like the Tetra can offer. Notably, Dr. Kiran Gill is the only plastic surgeon in Naples with the Helix laser, giving patients access to a level of precision and capability that simply isn't available anywhere else in the area. The Helix allows Dr. Gill to deliver precise bursts of energy in tiny spots, creating micro-channels of treated skin while leaving surrounding tissue untouched. This controlled delivery is the key to the treatment's efficiency and safety, triggering the skin's healing response and producing fresh collagen and elastin without causing the deeper injury that leads to prolonged redness and peeling.



During your treatment at Naples Aesthetic Institute, a topical numbing cream is applied to ensure your comfort. Dr. Gill then passes the laser handpiece over the targeted areas, delivering thousands of microscopic energy columns into the skin. Each session typically takes between 15 and 30 minutes, making it easy to fit into a busy schedule.

What Skin Concerns Does CoolPeel Address?

CoolPeel is a versatile treatment capable of improving a wide range of skin concerns, including:

- Fine lines and wrinkles, particularly around the eyes, mouth, and forehead
- Sun damage and age spots caused by years of UV exposure
- Uneven skin tone and texture, leaving skin looking dull or rough
- Enlarged pores that make skin appear coarse
- Acne scars and other surface irregularities
- Early signs of skin laxity and loss of firmness

Whether you are beginning to notice the first signs of aging or looking to refresh skin that has accumulated years of sun damage, CoolPeel offers a path to visibly younger, healthier skin.

What to Expect After Treatment

One of the most compelling advantages of CoolPeel is its minimal downtime. Most patients experience mild redness and a sensation similar to a light sunburn for one to three days following treatment. Some light peeling or flaking may occur as the skin sheds its outer layer and new, refreshed skin emerges beneath.

Dr. Gill and the team at Naples Aesthetic Institute will provide you with personalized aftercare instructions to protect and support your skin during the healing process. Diligent sun protection is essential in the days and weeks following your treatment to preserve your results and protect the newly renewed skin.

Patients typically notice an improvement in skin tone and texture within one week of treatment, with continued enhancement over the following months as collagen remodeling progresses. Many patients choose to undergo a series of three treatments spaced four to six weeks apart for optimal, long-lasting results.

Why Choose Dr. Kiran Gill, MD at Naples Aesthetic Institute?

When it comes to advanced laser treatments, experience, precision, and an individualized approach make all the difference. Dr. Kiran Gill brings a meticulous eye and a deep commitment to natural-looking results to every patient consultation. At Naples Aesthetic Institute, no two treatment plans are alike, Dr. Gill takes the time to understand your unique skin concerns, your lifestyle, and your goals before recommending the approach best suited to you.

The team at Naples Aesthetic Institute prides itself on delivering exceptional care in a welcoming, patient-centered environment. From your first consultation through your follow-up appointments, you can expect honest guidance, expert technique, and results you'll be proud to show the world.

Schedule Your CoolPeel Consultation Today

If you're ready to experience the confidence that comes with clearer, smoother, more radiant skin, contact Naples Aesthetic Institute to schedule your CoolPeel CO2 laser consultation with Dr. Kiran Gill, MD. A more refreshed, youthful appearance may be just one treatment away.



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The Heart Attack Risk Test You May Not Know About: Understanding the CT Calcium Score

By Felipe Gascon, MD, Internal Medicine at Millennium Physician Group

Heat disease remains the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S., yet some people may have no warning signs before experiencing a heart attack or stroke. In fact, plaque can build up inside the arteries for years without causing noticeable symptoms.

That's why preventive care and early detection are so important. One tool that may help identify hidden heart disease risk is a CT calcium score, also known as a coronary artery calcium (CAC) test. This quick, noninvasive scan can provide valuable insight into your heart health and help your healthcare provider determine whether additional steps are needed to reduce your risk of future cardiovascular events.



What Is a CT Calcium Score?

A CT calcium score is a specialized computerized tomography (CT) scan that looks for calcium deposits within the coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart.

Over time, a mixture of cholesterol, fat, calcium, and other substances can accumulate along artery walls. This buildup, known as plaque, can narrow the arteries and restrict blood flow to the heart. When plaque develops in the coronary arteries, it can lead to coronary artery disease (CAD), a condition that increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

A calcium score test uses advanced imaging to detect calcified plaque before symptoms develop. While the scan does not strictly measure arterial blockage, it can identify evidence of CAD at an early stage, allowing patients and their providers to make more informed decisions about their care.

Who May Benefit from a CT Calcium Score?

A CT calcium score is not intended for everyone. It is often most useful for individuals who fall somewhere between low and high cardiovascular risk and need additional information to better understand their risk profile.

Your healthcare provider may recommend a calcium score test if you:

- Have a family history of heart disease
- Have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes
- Currently use or previously used tobacco products
- Are medically overweight or obese
- Live a largely sedentary lifestyle
- Have an unclear or intermediate risk of heart disease

For some adults between the ages of 40 and 70, the test can provide valuable insight into whether more aggressive preventive measures may be appropriate.

However, a calcium score test is generally not recommended for individuals who already have known CAD, have experienced a heart attack, have undergone procedures such as stent placement or bypass surgery, or are currently experiencing symptoms that may indicate heart disease. In these situations, other diagnostic tests are often more applicable.

Understanding Your Results

The result of a calcium score test is reported as a number called an Agatston score. This score reflects the amount and density of calcium detected within the coronary arteries. A score of:

- **0 (zero)** indicates no detectable calcium and suggests a very low risk of heart attack over the next 5 years.
- **1 to 100** suggests mild evidence of CAD.
- **101 to 300** indicates moderate plaque buildup and an increased risk of future cardiovascular events.
- **Greater than 300** suggests more extensive plaque accumulation and a significantly higher risk of heart disease and heart attack.

Some reports may also include a percentile ranking that compares your results with others of the same age and sex.

What a Calcium Score Can – and Cannot – Tell You

The CT calcium score can be a powerful preventive tool, but it does have limitations.

The scan identifies calcified plaque, which is one indicator of CAD. However, it does not detect all forms of plaque. Some types of soft plaque may not appear on the scan, meaning a normal score does not completely eliminate the possibility of cardiovascular disease.

Likewise, the test does not show how much blood flow is reaching the heart or whether a specific artery is blocked.

For these reasons, CT calcium scoring is best viewed as one component of a comprehensive cardiovascular risk assessment rather than a standalone diagnosis.

Supporting Your Heart Health at Millennium Physician Group

Understanding your personal risk factors and having informed conversations with your healthcare provider can help you make proactive decisions that support your heart health for years to come.

At Millennium Physician Group, our healthcare providers take a comprehensive approach to your overall health. By understanding your medical history, lifestyle factors, and preventive care needs, we can help determine which screenings, tests, and other health assessments may be appropriate for you. Our goal is to help you stay informed, stay proactive, and stay focused on living your healthiest life.

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You Could Have Cancer Right Now and Have No Idea – This Scan Changes That

Most people don't find out something is seriously wrong with their body until they feel it. By then, the window for the easiest, most effective treatment has often already closed.

That's the uncomfortable truth about how most of us approach our health: we wait. We wait for symptoms. We wait for a doctor to order a test. We wait until we have no choice. And statistically, that waiting costs lives.

But what if you didn't have to wait?

The Scan That Sees What You Can't Feel

BodyView Full Body MRI, offered by Encore Imaging, is rewriting the rules of preventive medicine. In under 60 minutes, this single, non-invasive scan can screen for cancer and over 500 health conditions across 13 major organs, including the brain, thyroid, spine, lungs, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, adrenal glands, bladder, ovaries, uterus, and prostate.

And here's the part that stops people in their tracks: it uses zero radiation.

No X-rays. No contrast dye. No exposure to anything harmful. Just powerful 3T MRI technology creating detailed, high-resolution images of your body's most vital systems, while you simply lie still.

Why Early Detection Is Everything

We've all heard "catch it early", but most people don't realize just how dramatic the difference really is. Early-stage detection of many cancers can dramatically improve survival outcomes compared to late-stage diagnoses. BodyView's advanced imaging can detect tumors and cysts as small as 0.5 cm, findings that would be completely invisible to any other routine test or physical exam.

Think about that for a moment. Something that small, something that could be growing silently inside you right now, can be identified and monitored before it ever becomes a crisis.

That's not just peace of mind. That's a potential lifesaver.

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

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

Don't wait for symptoms.

BodyView
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Who Should Be Getting This Scan?

The honest answer is: almost everyone. But BodyView is especially powerful for:

People with a family history of cancer or chronic disease. If your parents, siblings, or grandparents have faced serious health conditions, your risk profile is different and your approach to health monitoring should be too.

Anyone who is proactive about their health. You work out, watch what you eat, stay on top of wellness trends. This is the logical next step, a data-driven baseline that tells you what's actually happening inside.

Anyone over 40. The statistical reality is that risk for a wide range of conditions rises significantly with age, often without any outward signs.

People who just want to know. There is something genuinely powerful about getting a comprehensive look inside your own body and walking away with real information, not guesses.

How It Works — Simpler Than You'd Expect

The process begins with a preliminary consultation with a Preventive Medicine Concierge who walks you through every detail, scheduling, timing, and choosing the right program package. Then comes the scan itself, conducted using Encore Imaging's state-of-the-art 3T MRI equipment. Within one to two weeks, board-certified radiologists deliver a thorough evaluation of your results, and you receive everything through a personalized app with detailed findings and recommendations. A follow-up consultation with a healthcare practitioner walks you through what it all means.

Program Options Built Around You

BodyView offers three flexible program tiers. The **Premier** package covers head, neck, abdomen, and pelvis. The **Elite** adds either spine or chest imaging to that foundation. The **Elite+** goes further, allowing you to add a specific area of concern, a knee, a shoulder, for a truly customized scan. Every tier includes the full consultation, radiologist review, and app access.

The technology to look inside your own body, safely, thoroughly, without radiation, exists right now. Board-certified specialists are ready to evaluate what they find. The only thing standing between you and that knowledge is the decision to schedule it.

What would you do differently if you knew?

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WHY YOUR YEARLY EYE EXAM MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

Most people think of an eye exam as a quick errand: read a few letters off a chart, get a prescription, and move on with their day. But as an optometrist, I see eye exams very differently. Every comprehensive exam is a chance to catch small changes before they become big problems, not just in your vision, but in your overall health.

It's About More Than 20/20 Vision

A yearly eye exam isn't only about whether you need a new pair of glasses. During a comprehensive exam, I'm looking closely at the structures inside and around your eyes for early warning signs of conditions like glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy. Many of these conditions develop slowly and silently, with no noticeable symptoms until vision loss has already occurred. Catching them early often makes the difference between a manageable condition and irreversible damage.

Your Eyes Can Reveal Whole-Body Health Issues

One of the most surprising things patients learn is that the eyes can be a window into systemic health. Tiny blood vessels in the retina can show early signs of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes, sometimes before a primary care doctor catches them through routine bloodwork. I've had patients come in for what they thought was a routine vision check, only to leave with a referral to their physician for further testing based on what I saw during their dilated exam.

Changes Happen Gradually and That's the Problem

Our eyes change every year, even when we don't notice it. Near vision often starts shifting in our 40s, dry eye becomes more common with age and screen use, and risk for conditions like glaucoma increases over time, especially with family history. Because these changes are usually gradual, it's easy to adjust without realizing your vision has actually declined. An annual exam gives us a baseline to compare against, so we can spot subtle shifts you might otherwise miss.

What to Expect at Your Exam

A comprehensive eye exam typically includes:

- A review of your vision and any changes in symptoms



- Testing for refractive errors (nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism)
- Eye pressure measurement to screen for glaucoma
- A dilated exam to view the retina and optic nerve
- A discussion of your overall health, medications, and family history

This last point matters more than people realize. Conditions like diabetes, autoimmune disorders, and even certain medications can affect your eyes, so I always want the full picture of your health, not just your vision.

Don't Wait for Symptoms

Many eye diseases — especially glaucoma, are sometimes called "silent thieves of sight" because they progress without pain or obvious symptoms until significant damage has occurred. By the time you notice a problem, treatment options may be more limited. An annual exam is one of the simplest, most effective things you can do to protect your vision for the long term.

Make It a Yearly Habit

Think of your eye exam the way you'd think of an annual physical, a proactive checkpoint, not a reactive fix. Whether your vision feels perfectly fine or you've noticed subtle changes, scheduling your yearly exam at Center for Sight ensures we catch anything that needs attention early, while it's most treatable.

Your eyes work hard for you every day. Give them the same care.



JENNA GETMAN, O.D. Optometric Physician

Dr. Jenna Getman earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee, before completing a residency in Ocular Disease at the Eagle Square Veterans Affairs Eye Clinic in Rhode Island. During her residency, she gained extensive experience managing a wide range of complex eye conditions, building a strong foundation in medical optometry.

Originally from Naples, Florida, Dr. Getman is board-certified and has been practicing since 2024. She is passionate about providing personalized, compassionate care to every patient she meets and is dedicated to helping people achieve their best possible vision. Her inspiration to become an optometrist stemmed from a deep appreciation for how vision impacts every aspect of life—from learning and working to connecting with others. For Dr. Getman, optometry is a meaningful way to make a lasting difference in her patients' lives.

Beyond the clinic, Dr. Getman finds fulfillment in volunteer work, having provided eye care to communities in Belize and to athletes at the Tennessee Special Olympics.

Outside of work, she enjoys live music and musicals with her husband and loves spending quality time with her family, friends, and her cat, Lila.

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ONE TREATMENT, LASTING CONFIDENCE:

A Smarter Way to Tighten and Contour

By Dr. Aldene McKenzie

Summer in Southwest Florida is the season when many people become more aware of how they feel in their own skin. Between long pool days, beach gatherings, and lighter clothing, it is natural to notice areas that feel less firm, less defined, or simply not as youthful as they once were. For years, the main options for tightening and contouring those areas were surgery with scars and downtime, or surface treatments that did not always create the level of change patients hoped for.

Today, there is a newer option that helps bridge that gap. At Kenzi Medical and Aesthetics Group, a single-treatment radiofrequency contouring procedure can work beneath the surface of the skin to tighten, smooth, and refine with minimal disruption to daily life. This type of technology offers meaningful improvement in one visit while still supporting the natural-looking results many patients want.

How the treatment works

Radiofrequency contouring uses focused energy to gently heat the deeper layers of tissue under the skin. That controlled warmth contracts existing collagen and elastic fibers while also signaling the body to produce new collagen and elastin over time. As that remodeling process continues, skin can gradually look firmer, smoother, and better supported from within.

Peer-reviewed studies of radiofrequency-assisted body contouring show that uniform, carefully controlled heating in the fat and skin layer can safely liquefy adipose tissue and trigger collagen contraction, with tightening that continues for months as the tissue remodels.

Unlike topical products or treatments that work only at the surface, this approach reaches the structures that help support the skin. Small access points allow energy to be delivered precisely where tightening and contouring are needed, helping address mild fullness and laxity in a single step. Because of that deeper approach, the right candidate may see meaningful improvement from one focused treatment instead of committing to a long series of sessions.

What patients can expect

One of the most common questions is whether one treatment can really make a visible difference. Many patients notice some early tightening as tissue contracts and initial swelling settles. Over the following weeks, improvements in contour and smoothness often become easier to appreciate in the mirror and in the way clothing fits.

The most important changes happen more gradually as the body continues to heal. New collagen and elastin are produced and remodeled over roughly three to six months, which is why results often continue to improve well after the procedure itself. This is best understood as one treatment with progressive results, not a quick fix.

Who may benefit most

This type of treatment is often best for people with mild to moderate skin laxity or small, stubborn areas of fullness that do not respond to diet and exercise. Common treatment areas include the lower face and neck, upper arms, abdomen, flanks, and thighs. It can also be an option for patients who have lost weight and want to address residual looseness without moving directly to surgery.

It is not a replacement for major weight-loss treatment or for patients with significant excess skin, where surgery may still offer the strongest result. A careful consultation helps determine skin quality, elasticity, and overall goals so the treatment plan matches the patient rather than forcing one technology to fit every concern.

Downtime and safety

Because the treatment is minimally invasive, most patients are able to return to normal daily activities relatively quickly. Some temporary swelling, bruising, or tenderness can occur, and proper after-care supports a smoother recovery. Compared with traditional surgery, there are no large incisions and generally far less downtime.

Modern radiofrequency systems are also designed with temperature monitoring and safety controls to help deliver consistent heating while protecting surrounding tissue. As with any procedure, treatment quality depends on proper patient selection and an experienced medical team. The best outcomes come from pairing advanced technology with careful, individualized care.

Why one treatment matters

For the right patient, this approach can provide the kind of firming and contouring that previously required multiple non-surgical sessions. The advantage is that the underlying support structures are treated more directly, allowing the procedure to concentrate meaningful work into one planned session. That makes it appealing for busy patients who want visible change without repeated appointments.

The key is setting expectations correctly from the start. Early tightening can be encouraging, but the full value of treatment develops over the months that follow as the body heals and remodels collagen. Describing it as one treatment with results that build over time is both accurate and helpful for patients considering whether it fits their goals.

A natural next step

At Kenzi Medical and Aesthetics Group, the goal is always to help patients look like the best version of themselves, refreshed and confident without appearing overdone. This one-treatment radiofrequency contouring option fits that philosophy by offering an effective, medically sound way to address laxity and contour concerns while respecting both schedule and lifestyle.

Patients who have been curious about refining the jawline, smoothing the abdomen, or tightening another area without surgery may benefit from learning more about this approach. A personalized consultation can determine whether this single-treatment option is the right fit for a patient's anatomy, goals, and timeline for results.

One Treatment, New Confidence - Now in Naples

- One advanced radio-frequency treatment designed to tighten skin and refine stubborn areas with minimal downtime.
- Early tightening may be visible soon after treatment, with results that continue to improve for months as new collagen develops.
- Common areas include the lower face, neck, arms, abdomen, flanks, and thighs in patients with mild to moderate laxity.

Celebrate My Birthday & Our Grand Opening -July 18

Come celebrate my birthday and the arrival of our new one-treatment contouring option on Saturday, July 18, from 1-4 PM at our Naples office. Join us for a relaxed afternoon with a brief educational talk about tightening and contouring, light refreshments, and limited same-day consultation opportunities. It is a chance to see whether this approach is right for you, meet the team, and celebrate another year of feeling confident in your own skin.

To reserve your spot, please RSVP by calling or texting 1-877-KENZISPA and noting "July 18 event" in your message.



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THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

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

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

What is the Ultimate Neuropathy Program?

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

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

All neuropathies are not the same and require different programs.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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What modalities are used for improvement?

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

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

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

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

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

Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute is equipped to diagnose and help a wide range of conditions that include:

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

If you are in need of a highly experienced Chiropractic Neurologist in Naples, FL, look no further than **Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute**. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, call us today!

Dr. Richard Hiler DABCN, is a board-certified Chiropractic Neurologist with more than 27 years of clinical experience. Dr. Hiler and his team offer a complementary telephone consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment contact the office at 239.330.1000.



BEYOND PAIN RELIEF: How Stem Cell Therapy Is Changing Lives

By Derek P. Wimmer, PA-C

For millions of people living with chronic pain, traditional treatment options often feel like a revolving door of temporary relief, invasive surgeries, and mounting frustration. Whether it's degenerative joint disease, sports injuries, or age-related wear and tear, conventional approaches frequently mask symptoms rather than address underlying tissue damage. Patients find themselves cycling through anti-inflammatory medications, cortisone injections, and physical therapy with diminishing returns. However, a transformative shift is occurring in orthopedic medicine, and Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics stands at the forefront of this revolution through advanced stem cell therapy.

Stem cell therapy represents a paradigm shift from symptom management to actual tissue regeneration. Unlike pain medications that merely suppress discomfort or surgical interventions that remove or replace damaged tissue, regenerative medicine harnesses the body's innate healing capabilities. At Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics, this cutting-edge approach offers patients a promising alternative that targets the root cause of their pain while promoting natural recovery and long-term wellness.

The science behind stem cell therapy is both elegant and powerful. Stem cells possess the remarkable ability to differentiate into various cell types, including cartilage, bone, and soft tissue. When strategically introduced into damaged areas, these cells can stimulate repair processes, reduce inflammation, and regenerate deteriorated structures. They also release growth factors and proteins that create an optimal healing environment within the affected tissue. For patients suffering from conditions like osteoarthritis, rotator cuff injuries, meniscus tears, tendinitis, or degenerative disc disease, this means potentially avoiding surgery while achieving meaningful, lasting relief.

What sets Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics apart is their comprehensive, patient-centered approach to regenerative medicine. Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all solution, their team conducts thorough evaluations to determine each patient's candidacy for stem cell therapy. This personalized assessment considers the severity of tissue damage, overall health status, and individual treatment goals, ensuring that regenerative interventions are both appropriate and optimally effective.



The stem cell therapy process at Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics is designed with patient comfort and safety as top priorities. Procedures are typically performed in an outpatient setting using minimally invasive techniques. We use umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cells, which are processed to concentrate the regenerative components, and then precisely delivered to the affected area using advanced imaging guidance. This targeted approach maximizes therapeutic benefits while minimizing risks and recovery time.

Patients who undergo stem cell therapy at Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics often report remarkable improvements in pain levels, mobility, and overall quality of life. Unlike surgical recovery that may require months of rehabilitation and carries risks of complications, many individuals return to daily activities within weeks. The regenerative effects continue developing over time, with some patients experiencing progressive improvement for six months or longer as new tissue forms and inflammation subsides. Many report being able to return to activities they had given up, from recreational sports to simple pleasures like gardening or playing with grandchildren.

Beyond pain relief, stem cell therapy offers the potential to slow or even reverse degenerative processes. For active individuals hoping to maintain their lifestyle or older adults seeking to preserve independence, this represents a game-changing opportunity. Rather than accepting progressive decline as inevitable or resigning themselves to joint replacement surgery, patients can take proactive steps toward genuine healing and tissue restoration. This is particularly significant for younger patients who want to delay or avoid artificial joint replacements that have limited lifespans.

The promise of regenerative medicine extends beyond current applications. As research advances and techniques become more refined, the scope of treatable conditions continues expanding. Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics remains committed to staying at the cutting edge of these developments, ensuring their patients have access to the most innovative and evidence-based treatments available.

For those exhausted by ineffective pain management strategies or hoping to avoid invasive surgery, stem cell therapy at Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics offers renewed hope. By combining advanced regenerative techniques with personalized care and deep clinical expertise, they're helping patients reclaim active, fulfilling lives free from chronic pain. In the evolving landscape of orthopedic medicine, this represents not just a treatment option, but a fundamental reimagining of what healing can be.

Contact Wimmer Regenerative Orthopedics today at 239-829-4300 to schedule your consultation and discover how regenerative medicine can transform your path to pain free living.

"Concierge treatment without the concierge price."

STEM CELLS

Revitalize Your Health with Stem Cell Injections

Unlock the power of regenerative medicine with intramuscular stem cell injections, designed to support whole-body wellness.

- ✓ Increased energy and vitality
- ✓ Enhanced immune function
- ✓ Reduced inflammation and signs of aging
- ✓ Accelerated tissue repair and recovery

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PROTECT YOUR SKIN THIS SUMMER: ART OF DERMATOLOGY WANTS YOU TO TAKE CAUTION

July marks UV Safety Month, a crucial time when Art of Dermatology reminds patients and the community about the importance of taking caution and protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet radiation. As summer temperatures soar and outdoor activities beckon, exercising caution with your skin should be your top priority.

July marks UV Safety Month, a crucial time when Art of Dermatology reminds patients and the community about the importance of protecting their skin from harmful ultraviolet radiation. As summer temperatures soar and outdoor activities beckon, taking care of your skin should be your top priority.

Understanding UV Radiation Risks

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun poses significant risks to your skin health year-round, but summer's intense rays make protection even more critical. UV exposure is the leading cause of skin cancer, including melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma. Additionally, prolonged sun exposure accelerates skin aging, causing wrinkles, age spots, and loss of skin elasticity.

Art of Dermatology's Summer Protection Strategy

At Art of Dermatology, we believe prevention is the best medicine. Our comprehensive approach to UV safety includes education, early detection, and personalized protection plans for each patient's unique skin type and lifestyle.

ESSENTIAL SUN PROTECTION TIPS:

- **Sunscreen Selection and Application** - Choose broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Apply generously 15-30 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply every two hours or immediately after swimming or sweating. Don't forget often-missed areas like ears, feet, and lips.
- **Seek Shade Strategically** - UV rays are strongest between 10 AM and 4 PM. Plan outdoor activities during early morning or late afternoon hours when possible. When shade isn't available, create your own with umbrellas, wide-brimmed hats, or UV-protective clothing.
- **Protective Clothing Matters** - Invest in UPF-rated clothing, sunglasses with 100% UV protection, and



wide-brimmed hats that shade your face, neck, and ears. Dark, tightly woven fabrics offer better protection than light, loose weaves.

YEAR-ROUND VIGILANCE

UV Safety Month serves as an important reminder, but skin protection shouldn't end when summer does. UV rays reflect off snow, sand, and water, making protection necessary during all seasons and weather conditions.

Professional Skin Examinations

Regular dermatological check-ups are essential for early detection of skin changes or potential cancers. Art of Dermatology recommends annual skin examinations for most adults, with more frequent visits for those with risk factors such as fair skin, family history of skin cancer, or numerous moles.

Take Action Today

This UV Safety Month, commit to making sun protection a daily habit. Schedule your annual skin examination with Art of Dermatology, update your sunscreen supply, and invest in quality protective clothing and accessories.

Your skin is your body's largest organ and deserves the best care possible. By following these guidelines and partnering with Art of Dermatology, you can enjoy summer activities while keeping your skin healthy for years to come. Remember: today's sun protection is tomorrow's healthy skin.

The Art of Dermatology Difference

At Art of Dermatology, we combine medical expertise with aesthetic sensibility. Our comprehensive skin examinations include advanced technologies

for detecting subtle changes invisible to the naked eye. Our dermatologists take time to understand your concerns, family history, and lifestyle factors affecting your skin health.

Rather than simply treating visible problems, we partner with you in preventative care—identifying risk factors and potential issues before they manifest. This approach not only supports graceful aging but potentially prevents serious health complications.

Don't wait for visible problems to appear. Schedule your comprehensive skin check at Art of Dermatology today and take the first step toward lifetime skin health. Remember, healthy aging isn't about fighting time—it's about supporting your skin's natural processes with expert care and attention.

Your skin's journey deserves the art of professional dermatology. Call Art of Dermatology today for more information.



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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HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMMON SUMMERTIME SKIN CONCERNS

By Svetlana Kogan, MD, IFMCP

One of the challenges of living in a beach town is dealing with the UV light skin damage. As they age, many people find themselves "paying the price" for all those days spent in the sun without proper protection. Thousands of dollars are subsequently spent on cancerous lesion excisions, lasers, and skin resurfacing. All of this can be avoided if we remember the basic tenets of safe sunbathing. If you like going to the beach or playing tennis or golf or pickle ball - do it early in the morning and return back indoors at 11 am at the latest. Midday sun is very harmful in its carcinogenic UV content and if you want to return to the outdoors safely - do it after 5 pm.

Make sure you consult with your doctor about any of your prescription medications being potentially compromising to your skin in the sun. Believe it or not, but many prescription and over the counter drugs can lead to photo toxicity. What happens in photo toxicity is that sun's UV rays interact with a drug's chemistry to produce a skin reaction that looks and feels like sunburn. In that case, you can either ask the doctor to change you to a different medication, or simply avoid the dangerous midday sun, while applying SPF 70 or above when going outdoors in the morning or in the early evening.

Even if you are not taking any photosensitizing medication, there are some wonderful natural remedies that can help boost your resilience to sun's cancer-causing effects. One of them is vitamin C. This powerful nutrient helps skin bounce back from sun exposure by accelerating repair and neutralizing UV-activated free radicals. You can either take vitamin C in a pill form 500 mg twice a day, or choose to eat fruits or vegetables naturally high in vitamin C, such as strawberries, citrus fruits and bell peppers. Consult with your doctor about whether vitamin C is safe for you to take. It is not safe to take with some health conditions, such as certain kinds of kidney stones or high iron conditions such as hemochromatosis, and some others.



Another natural gift from Mother Nature is tomatoes. Tomatoes contain lycopene, an antioxidant which is proven to neutralize reactive oxygen species, commonly called free radicals - that cause skin cell damage following sun exposure. Cooking tomatoes actually helps to make this healing lycopene more bioavailable, so grilled tomatoes and tomato-based soups and sauces are your best bet. In fact, volunteers in one study who consumed 5 tablespoons of tomato paste daily, increased their skin sunburn resistance by 33%. Once again, tomatoes are not something everyone should be eating. If you are suffering from GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), gastritis, or rosacea - stay away from tomatoes.

Interestingly, while some foods possess skin-healing properties, others can be quite damaging. Consider lime, celery, and parsley for example. All of these wonderful veggies contain psoralens. When our hands' skin comes in touch with these veggies, the psoralens in them can induce phyto-photo-dermatitis - a sunlight-fueled reaction marked by hyperpigmentation. I recommend washing your hands thoroughly after prepping dishes which contain these trigger foods and not eating them in direct sunlight.

Photo sensitivity and photo allergy can also arise from using some skin creams, especially if they contain salicylates, cinnamates, benzophenone, and 6-methylcoumarin. When UV rays strike these chemicals on your skin, certain metabolites form in the skin itself. In some women, the immune system can respond by producing itchy redness, typically a few hours after sun exposure. So even if you develop a rash at night, try to avoid the ingredients above.

If you already happened to develop itchy redness on the sun-exposed skin, try using natural products which can help quell the inflammation. The most well-known remedy of course is Aloe Vera - it is widely available over the counter and in the drugstores in a lotion or gel form. Another good one is iced green tea. When taken internally, its polyphenols boost skin cell DNA's resistance to sun-induced mutations that set the stage for cancer. Additionally, iced green tea will also work beautifully as a topical soother. When applied as a cool compress, the polyphenols have an anti-inflammatory action that calms redness and stinging. Lastly, I find calendula ice cubes very helpful for this. Just brew a cup of calendula tea, cool and strain it. Pour it into the ice cube tray and freeze. Use a cube topically as needed to rescue skin from sun rash, sun allergy, and other photosensitive rashes.

And it's not only the sun rays themselves that can pose a threat to our skin in the summer. Skin infections caused by the drug-resistant strain of staphylococcus known as MRSA are 30 % more common in the summer, partly because the exposed skin is more prone to cuts. If you have stepped on a shell, and the wound is superficial, clean it with sterile water and hydrogen peroxide and then smear a thin layer of dark raw honey on the affected area. Traditionally dark unprocessed honey has anti-bacterial properties which can help ward off infections in uncomplicated cuts. Now that you know so much more about your skin's risks and remedies - have a safe and healthy summer!



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

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By Russell Becker, DO

Are Those Bulging Leg Veins Quietly Putting Your Health at Risk?

If you've noticed twisted, rope-like veins creeping across your legs, or that achy, heavy feeling by the end of the day, you're not just dealing with a cosmetic nuisance. You could be looking at the early warning signs of a real vascular condition. And if you're over 40, you're far from alone.

Varicose veins affect an estimated 1 in 3 adults over the age of 50, and for many people in midlife, they show up sooner, triggered by years of standing at work, sitting at a desk, pregnancy, weight changes, or simply genetics catching up with you. The team at Vascular Center of Naples sees this every week: patients who assumed their leg veins were "just cosmetic," only to learn they were dealing with an underlying circulation problem that needed attention.

What's Actually Happening Under Your Skin

Veins in your legs rely on one-way valves to push blood back up to your heart, fighting gravity with every beat. Over time, those valves can weaken or fail. When they do, blood pools in the lower leg instead of flowing upward, causing the vein to stretch, bulge, and twist, the visible varicose vein you see on the surface.

This isn't just about appearance. Pooled blood increases pressure in the vein walls and surrounding tissue, which is why so many people with varicose veins also experience:

- Aching, throbbing, or heaviness in the legs, especially by evening
- Swelling around the ankles and lower legs
- Itching or burning skin near the affected veins
- Muscle cramping or restless legs at night
- Darkening skin or sores near the ankles in more advanced cases

If any of that sounds familiar, your body may be telling you something important.

Why Midlife Is the Tipping Point

Vein walls and valves naturally lose elasticity with age, and decades of standing, sitting, or carrying extra weight add cumulative strain. Hormonal shifts,

particularly during and after menopause, can also weaken vein walls in women, while men often see varicose veins worsen due to long-term occupational standing or prior injuries. Combine that with a family history of vein disease, and your 40s and 50s often become the decade when symptoms that were once minor suddenly become hard to ignore.

The good news: this is exactly the stage where early treatment makes the biggest difference, both for comfort and for preventing complications down the road.

When Varicose Veins Become More Than Skin Deep

Left untreated, chronic venous insufficiency (the medical term for this pooling problem) can progress. Some patients develop painful skin changes, recurring leg ulcers, or even blood clots in superficial veins. Others simply lose quality of life, skipping activities, avoiding shorts and skirts, or struggling to stay on their feet through a workday or a grandchild's soccer game.

The encouraging reality is that varicose veins are highly treatable, and treatment today looks nothing like it did a generation ago.

Modern, Minimally Invasive Solutions

At Vascular Center of Naples, our board-certified vascular specialists use advanced, minimally invasive techniques performed right in the office, no hospital stay, no general anesthesia, and minimal downtime. Depending on your individual case, treatment options may include:

- **Endovenous laser ablation (EVLA):** Uses targeted laser energy to seal off the diseased vein
- **Radiofrequency ablation (RFA):** A gentle heat-based approach with excellent long-term results
- **Sclerotherapy:** A precise injection technique for smaller veins and spider veins
- **VenaSeal or other vein closure systems:** Medical adhesive options for select patients

Most patients return to normal activity within a day or two, and many see real symptom relief, less swelling, less aching, lighter-feeling legs, within just a few weeks.

Don't Wait for "Someday"

Varicose veins rarely improve on their own, and the longer they're left untreated, the more they can progress. If you're noticing visible veins, leg fatigue, swelling, or discomfort that wasn't there a few years ago, it's worth getting evaluated now rather than waiting until symptoms worsen.

Vascular Center of Naples offers comprehensive vein evaluations, including painless vascular ultrasound, to pinpoint exactly what's happening beneath the surface and build a treatment plan suited to your life, whether that's golf, gardening, travel, or simply being able to stand comfortably through a long day.

Your legs carry you through every season of life. At Vascular Center of Naples, we're here to make sure they keep up with you, comfortably, confidently, and for years to come.

Ready to find out what's behind your leg discomfort? Schedule a consultation with Vascular Center of Naples today and take the first step toward healthier, lighter legs.

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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THE CARLISLE NAPLES' LONGEVITY CLUB REDEFINES HEALTHY AGING

By Cassie Calwell

When most people hear the word “longevity,” they think about living longer. Increasingly, however, researchers are focusing on something equally important: healthspan, how well we live during those years.

Studies have shown that healthy aging is influenced by far more than genetics. Strong social connections, a sense of purpose, lifelong learning, creativity and meaningful engagement all play important roles in supporting physical, emotional and cognitive well-being.

These concepts are at the heart of the recently launched Longevity Club at The Carlisle Naples, a luxury senior rental community owned and operated by Senior Resource Group (SRG), LLC. Inspired by Marc Middleton’s book “Growing Bolder,” the Longevity Club encourages residents to challenge outdated assumptions about aging and embrace opportunities for growth, connection, and personal fulfillment. Through discussions, videos and shared experiences, participants explore practical ways to enhance their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

One of the central themes of the club is learning to say “yes” to new experiences. For some residents, that recently meant stepping onto a stage.

Last month, a group of Carlisle residents came together to create a resident-led 1950s variety show. What started as a simple idea grew into a months-long collaboration involving singers, musicians, performers, organizers, emcees and volunteers. Residents selected songs, coordinated rehearsals, planned refreshments and worked together to bring the production to life. More than 100 residents attended the performance.

While audience members enjoyed an evening of nostalgia and entertainment, the performers were experiencing something even more meaningful.

“There were about 16 performers, and we met three times a week,” recalled resident Carol Souers. “No one is perfect; we’re just having a good time.”

The rehearsals became much more than preparation for a show. Residents gathered after dinner to sing, laugh and spend time together.



“It gave us something to look forward to,” said Souers. “It was a very positive thing.”

Research consistently shows that purpose and social connection are among the strongest predictors of healthy aging. Having meaningful activities, maintaining friendships and engaging in lifelong learning can contribute to improved emotional well-being and greater life satisfaction.

Resident Natalie Lewis witnessed these benefits firsthand while serving as master of ceremonies for the performance.

“These types of events provide us opportunities to share talents we may have thought we lost,” she said. “We were able to strengthen our self-confidence and realize that no matter our age, we can contribute.”

Lewis was particularly inspired by the joy she saw on the faces of the performers.

“It helped give others the incentive to live life to the fullest and do what they enjoy,” she added.

For resident Paul Helmut, who helped coordinate the production while also performing, the experience demonstrated that personal growth doesn’t stop at retirement.

He spent months helping organize rehearsals, coordinating technical details, and preparing his own performances. For him, the project reinforced one of the things he values most about community living: the opportunity to stay socially engaged and connected through shared experiences.

At The Carlisle Naples, residents are proving every day that some of life’s most rewarding opportunities can happen long after retirement.

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Inflammatory Lung Conditions and the Emerging Role of Stem Cell Exosomes

By Axel Ruiz, MD, DABFP, CWS

Inflammatory lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, post-viral respiratory syndromes, pulmonary fibrosis, and environmental hypersensitivity pneumonitis pose ongoing challenges for patients and clinicians alike. Traditional treatments such as bronchodilators, corticosteroids, and biologic therapies are effective for managing symptoms and acute exacerbations, but many individuals continue to experience persistent inflammation and impaired lung function.

In recent years, researchers and clinicians have explored next-generation biologic approaches that aim to influence the underlying immune and tissue responses in the lung. One area of interest is stem cell-derived exosomes — microscopic vesicles released by stem cells that carry regulatory molecules involved in intercellular communication.

What Are Exosomes?

Exosomes are tiny extracellular vesicles that carry microRNAs, growth factors, and signaling proteins between cells. Unlike living stem cells, they are not capable of replicating but can influence the behavior of other cells by modulating immune responses and tissue repair processes.

Routes of Delivery: Systemic and Local Approaches
Two principal methods of administering exosome-based therapies are under investigation:

- **Intravenous delivery:** Introduces exosomes into the bloodstream, where they may interact with systemic immune pathways and support vascular and inflammatory regulation throughout the body.
- **Nebulized delivery:** Converts exosomes into an aerosol that can be inhaled directly into the airways, potentially enabling local interactions with airway epithelial cells and the surrounding immune environment.

Inflammatory Lung Conditions of Interest

- **COPD:** COPD extends beyond airflow obstruction; it encompasses chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, and progressive structural changes in the lungs. Exosome-based approaches are being investigated for their capacity to influence immune signaling and support tissue homeostasis in this context.



- **Asthma:** Adult-onset and difficult-to-control asthma involve complex immune hypersensitivities. There is emerging interest in whether exosomes might help regulate aberrant immune signaling without broad suppression.

- **Post-Viral Lung Syndromes (Post COVID Syndrome):** Persistent respiratory symptoms following viral infections — including long-term post-viral inflammatory states — may be linked to ongoing immune activation even after the virus has cleared. Immune modulatory signals from exosomes are under study in this setting.

- **Pulmonary Fibrosis:** In fibrosis, chronic inflammation can lead to irreversible structural changes in lung tissue. Exosomes are not expected to reverse established fibrosis but may interact with inflammatory pathways associated with early or ongoing fibrotic processes.

- **Environmental Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis:** This immune-mediated inflammatory response to inhaled antigens highlights the need for environmental management. Biologic modulators like exosomes are being examined for their potential to support immune recalibration once triggers are removed.

Scientific Context and Future Direction

It is important to emphasize that stem cell-derived exosomes are an area of scientific exploration, not established therapies. Rigorous clinical trials and regulatory evaluation are needed to clarify safety, efficacy, appropriate delivery methods, and long-term

outcomes. Current research draws from preclinical models and early clinical investigations demonstrating the biological activity of exosomes in immune regulation and tissue response.

As research continues, the concept of biological regulation — influencing how cells communicate and respond to stress and injury — may offer new avenues for understanding and potentially supporting lung health in inflammatory conditions.

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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Happy Feet—Happy Life— How Foot Procedures Can Help

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

If you have pain in your feet from issues such as bunions, plantar fasciitis, hammertoes or multiple other conditions, you may have tried different at-home remedies like self-massage, soaking, taping or bracing, but these often leave individuals still in pain and dealing with stiffness, immobility and the list goes on and on.

The force we place on our feet each day with every step is two to three times your body weight. To put it in perspective, if a person weighs 150 lbs., they can potentially be putting 450 lbs. of pressure on their feet! In this intricate body part, many things can cause foot pain.

Painful feet make daily living and activities challenging. The good news is, there are viable options to correct, regenerate, and improve your condition, and many of those are noninvasive.

Muscle Spasms | Sciatic Pain | Joint Pain Leg Pain | Foot & Ankle Pain

Deep tissue laser therapy is a noninvasive, advanced technology used to accelerate your body's own natural healing process. In a process called photo-bio-stimulation the laser sends photons into damaged cells, which increases blood flow, stimulates the healing process, and reduces inflammation by penetrating throughout the layers of tissue, ligaments, and muscles.

Using this non-invasive laser therapy will reduce the amount of tissue or joint pain in just one session, and after the 6th session it usually feels better, but 90% of healing usually comes after 10 sessions. The regenerative effects are long-lasting.

Heel Pain | Plantar Fasciitis | Heel Spur Achilles Tendonitis | Achilles tendinosis

Heel pain is one foot condition that strikes with surprise. You may be totally fine one day and then all of a sudden, your heel hurts with every step you try and take. Because several conditions can lead to heel pain, it's important to be seen by an experienced podiatrist.

You will need an examination of your foot and ankle using high-definition X-rays or an ultrasound. In some cases, Collier Podiatry sends patients out for an MRI to confirm a tear or fracture.

• **Plantar fasciitis and heel spur:** If you notice pain and inflammation in your heel, you might have plantar fasciitis. If the condition worsens, it might develop into an abnormal heel bone growth called a heel spur.

• **Achilles tendonitis and Achilles tendinosis:** Achilles tendonitis is a condition where you feel pain in your Achilles tendon, which is located at the back of your leg near your heel. It can turn into Achilles tendinosis, where the tendon breaks down and tears.

If you think you may have one of these conditions, contact Dr. Petrocelli to identify the source of your pain and receive the best treatment.

After examining your foot and determining the precise cause of your pain, Dr. Petrocelli might recommend the following approaches, depending on your condition:

- Laser therapy
- Custom orthotics to help your feet absorb shock as you walk
- Surgical shoe or boots are used so that the fracture will heal
- Taping of the foot
- Physical therapy or gentle stretches
- Ice application for 24 to 48 hours and then heat application

If the condition does not improve, our doctor may recommend surgery, cortisone injections for plantar fasciitis or heel spur, and corticosteroid shots for Achilles tendonitis or Achilles tendinosis.

Bunions

Bunions are a type of foot deformity, caused by the joint of your big toe protruding. It is often caused by wearing pointed or ill-fitting shoes that squeeze your toes into unnatural positions.

Bunions can be treated by wearing proper shoes, or wearing specialty splints or orthotics, but sometimes surgery is needed.

Here are signs that you need to consider surgery:

- It Is Often Times Hereditary
- Pain That Limits Your Everyday Activities, Even with Proper Shoes
- Inability to Walk More than a Few Blocks Without Pain
- Toe Deformity
- Pain Persisting Even with Anti-Inflammatory Drugs
- Bunions Not Healing Even After a Change in Shoes or Medication
- If It Is Affecting Your Quality Of Life, We Recommend Surgery

Hammer Toe

When the muscles in your toes get out of balance, they can start contracting into a claw like position. This causes the toe to bend in an upward position in the middle joint of the toe. When this happens, it can create severe pain. Hammertoe can be genetic and many times occurs in people with either a high arch or a flat foot. Various forms of arthritis can contribute to this issue as well. And unfortunately, ill-fitting footwear can also cause hammertoe, due to pushing the toes out of their normal position for long periods of time.

Treatment

- Padding the toe
- Wearing more comfortable shoes
- Outpatient surgery (This involves redirecting the lower tendons of the toe to the top of the toe to help straighten it into the correct position)

The causes of foot pain are vastly numerous and depend on your specific circumstances. Consulting with a podiatric specialist is the best decision for a proper diagnosis and a successful treatment outcome.

Collier Podiatry

Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 29 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. If you are experiencing any foot pain or foot conditions, please contact Collier Podiatry at (9239) 774-0019, or visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com



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THE VOLUME-EXCELLENCE CONNECTION: Why High-Volume Physicians Deliver Superior Patient Outcomes

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

In the world of medical care, there's a powerful correlation that continues to shape patient outcomes across specialties: physicians who perform procedures more frequently tend to achieve better results. This relationship between surgical volume and excellence isn't just statistical noise—it represents a fundamental truth about medical expertise that patients should understand when choosing their healthcare providers.

The Science Behind Volume and Outcomes

Research consistently demonstrates that high-volume physicians develop refined techniques, encounter diverse case presentations, and maintain peak procedural skills through regular practice. This phenomenon, often called the "volume-outcome relationship," spans numerous medical specialties from cardiac surgery to orthopedics to urogynecology.

When physicians perform procedures regularly, they develop an intuitive understanding of anatomical variations, potential complications, and optimal techniques. Their muscle memory becomes finely tuned, their decision-making sharpens, and their ability to handle unexpected situations improves dramatically. This expertise translates directly into better patient outcomes, including reduced complications, shorter recovery times, and higher success rates.

Excellence in Stress Urinary Incontinence Treatment

Stress urinary incontinence affects millions of women, causing embarrassing leakage during everyday activities like jumping, sneezing, walking the dog, or intimate moments. This condition significantly impacts quality of life, yet many women suffer in silence, unaware that highly effective treatments exist.

Dr. Gauta exemplifies the volume-excellence principle in treating stress urinary incontinence. His exceptional experience with sling procedures—ranking #1 in South Florida and #2 statewide for highest volume—demonstrates the direct connection between procedural frequency and superior outcomes. Sling procedures, which provide support to the urethra to prevent involuntary leakage, require precise placement and technical expertise that comes only through extensive experience.

Symptoms of incontinence



Normal:

When you're ready to pee, bladder muscles squeeze and pee flows through your urethra and out of your body.



Urgency incontinence:

You suddenly have to pee immediately.



Stress incontinence:

Certain activities make you leak pee.

 Cleveland Clinic

Beyond Surgery: Non-Surgical Innovation

Dr. Gauta's leadership extends beyond surgical interventions. As the #1 physician in Florida for Macroplastique procedures, he offers patients a non-surgical alternative for treating stress urinary incontinence. Macroplastique involves injecting biocompatible material around the urethra to provide additional support and reduce leakage. This minimally invasive option represents the cutting edge of urological care, requiring specialized training and experience to achieve optimal results.

The Patient Advantage

When patients choose high-volume physicians, they benefit from accumulated expertise that simply cannot be replicated through textbook knowledge alone. These physicians have encountered virtually every variation and complication, developing protocols and techniques refined through thousands of procedures.

For women struggling with stress urinary incontinence, selecting a physician with Dr. Gauta's level of experience means accessing care from someone who

has helped countless patients regain confidence and quality of life. His volume statistics aren't just numbers—they represent successful outcomes for hundreds of women who no longer worry about leakage during their daily activities.

Making Informed Healthcare Decisions

The volume-outcome relationship empowers patients to make informed decisions about their care. When facing a procedure, asking about a physician's experience and volume can provide valuable insight into expected outcomes. High-volume physicians like Dr. Gauta offer patients the confidence that comes with proven expertise and consistent results.

In healthcare, experience matters. The correlation between volume and excellence continues to guide smart patients toward physicians who deliver the superior outcomes they deserve. To schedule a confidential consultation with Dr. Gauta, contact the Florida Bladder Institute today at (239) 449-7979 or visit www.floridabladderinstitute.com.

*It's time to start living your life to the fullest.
Regain control of your life.*



Joseph Gauta, MD



Gabrielle Wright PA-C


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MACULAR DEGENERATION

"I Thought I'd Never Read Again."

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

PATIENT SUCCESS STORY

Have you been told, "There's nothing more that can be done for your macular degeneration?"

For many people, those are some of the most discouraging words they will ever hear.

The gentleman pictured above heard something very similar.

Harold, an 85-year-old Southwest Florida resident, had gradually lost the ability to comfortably enjoy one of his favorite activities—reading. Like many people living with macular degeneration, he believed he had reached the end of his options.

When Harold came to my office, I asked him one simple question that I ask every patient.

"What would you like to be able to do again?"
His answer came without hesitation.
"I'd like to read again."

Rather than focusing only on an eye chart, we focused on Harold's goals.

After carefully evaluating his remaining vision, we prescribed a customized low vision reading device designed specifically for his visual needs. Just as importantly, Harold received individualized training so he could comfortably and confidently use the device in his everyday life.

Today, Harold is reading again.

For many people, that means much more than reading words on a page. It means enjoying a favorite novel, completing crossword puzzles, reading the morning newspaper, following church bulletins, managing personal mail, or simply regaining the independence that vision loss had taken away.

One of the greatest compliments I receive isn't about helping someone read smaller print.

It's hearing a patient say,
"I got my life back."



Harold, 85, using a customized low vision reading device during a follow-up visit. After evaluation and training, he returned to reading activities he thought were lost because of macular degeneration. Individual results vary based on diagnosis and remaining vision.

More Than Magnification

Many people believe that if regular glasses, injections, or surgery can no longer improve their vision, nothing else can be done.

Fortunately, that isn't always true.

Low Vision Rehabilitation doesn't focus on curing the eye disease—it focuses on helping people make the best possible use of the vision they still have.

Depending on a person's vision and goals, specialized reading devices, telescopes, electronic magnification systems, prism glasses, contrast-enhancing filters, and other customized technology may help patients return to activities they thought were lost forever.

But the technology is only part of the solution.

The real goal is helping people regain independence, confidence, and quality of life.

What Would You Like To Do Again?

Every Low Vision evaluation begins with the same question.

- Read books or newspapers?
- Watch television more comfortably?
- Recognize the faces of family and friends?
- Sew, knit, or enjoy hobbies again?
- Read restaurant menus?
- Write checks or manage your mail?
- Attend church or sporting events with greater confidence?

Although many of my patients have macular degeneration, Low Vision Rehabilitation may also benefit people living with glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, inherited retinal diseases, albinism, optic nerve disorders, stroke-related vision loss, and many other conditions that cannot be fully corrected with ordinary glasses.

If you've been told, **"There's nothing more that can be done,"** don't assume you've reached the end of your options.

While we cannot restore normal vision or cure every eye disease, we can often help people make better use of the vision they still have—allowing them to return to the activities that give life meaning and enjoyment.

Sometimes improving vision isn't just about seeing better.

It's about living better.



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If you have been told "nothing more can be done," a Low Vision evaluation may help you explore additional options.

Appointments are limited.



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What If Forgetting Your Keys Is Actually Your Brain Asking for Help?

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

Millions of people wear the purple ribbon, share the posts, and quietly wonder: Could this happen to me? Could it already be happening?

At Advanced Neurology Specialists, we believe awareness without action is just decoration. So we're going beyond statistics. We're talking about what Alzheimer's disease actually looks like in real life, the early signs people dismiss, the myths that delay care, and the steps you can take right now that genuinely matter.

What Most People Get Wrong About Alzheimer's
Alzheimer's disease is not simply "bad memory." It is a progressive neurological disorder in which abnormal protein deposits, amyloid plaques and tau tangles, accumulate in the brain, disrupting communication between nerve cells and eventually causing them to die. By the time most people receive a diagnosis, this process has been quietly unfolding for 15 to 20 years.

That's the part that changes everything. Alzheimer's is not an event. It's a slow erosion, and that means there is a window of opportunity far earlier than most people realize.

Early Signs That Deserve a Second Look

Not all forgetfulness is Alzheimer's. Forgetting where you put your keys and then remembering later is normal aging. Forgetting what keys are for is not.

The early warning signs that neurologists pay attention to include:

- Asking the same question multiple times within a short period
- Getting lost on a familiar route or in a familiar place
- Struggling to follow a conversation or find common words
- Withdrawing from hobbies or social activities without explanation
- Noticeable changes in judgment or decision making
- Mood and personality shifts that feel out of character

If you are noticing these changes in yourself or someone you love, please do not wait. The instinct to explain it away, she's just tired, he's always been forgetful, is one of the most costly mistakes families make.

What a Neurologist Can Actually Do

Early evaluation matters because early intervention works. While there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease, there are FDA-approved treatments that can slow cognitive decline, along with lifestyle-based strategies with meaningful evidence behind them.

A comprehensive neurological evaluation includes cognitive and memory testing, brain imaging, and bloodwork, some of which can now detect Alzheimer's-related changes before symptoms become severe. New blood-based biomarker tests are changing the landscape of early detection, making it easier than ever to get clarity rather than worry in silence.

Dr. Cory Lamar doesn't treat diagnoses, he treats people. He walks alongside families because he knows the truth that statistics don't capture: when Alzheimer's enters a home, it doesn't just affect one person. It quietly reshapes every relationship, every schedule, and every plan for the future.

What You Can Do Starting Today

Research consistently points to a set of lifestyle factors that support long-term brain health. These are not guarantees, but they are among the most powerful tools we have:

Move your body. Regular aerobic exercise, even 30 minutes of brisk walking most days, is associated with reduced risk of cognitive decline. Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain and supports the growth of new neural connections.

Protect your sleep. During deep sleep, the brain clears out toxic waste products, including amyloid proteins. Chronic poor sleep is now considered a significant risk factor for Alzheimer's. If you snore heavily or feel exhausted despite sleeping, ask about a sleep study.

Stay socially and mentally engaged. Loneliness is hard on the brain. So is mental stagnation. Challenging conversations, new skills, reading, and community connection all build what researchers call "cognitive reserve," the brain's ability to adapt and compensate.

Manage what you can manage. High blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, hearing loss, and depression are all modifiable risk factors for dementia. Treating them is not just good for your body, it's one of the most direct things you can do for your brain.

A Word to the Families

If you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's, this month is for you too. Your patience, your grief, your exhaustion, and your love all deserve acknowledgment. Caregiver burnout is real, and seeking support, whether through a neurologist, a support group, or respite care, is not weakness. It is how you sustain the ability to show up for the person you love.

Advanced Neurology Specialists provides comprehensive neurological care, including memory evaluations, dementia management, and caregiver support resources. If you have concerns about cognitive changes in yourself or a loved one, we encourage you to reach out. Early conversations save more than time, they can change the entire course of what comes next.

To schedule an appointment with a specialist at Advanced Neurology Specialists, contact our office today at 239-667-5878. Together, we can make this July, and every month a step toward a healthier, future.



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"Hearing Health Should Feel Like a Scoop of Your Favorite Ice Cream"

By Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D.

July is National Ice Cream Month and honestly, who doesn't love that? Whether you're a chocolate fudge swirl loyalist or a pistachio purist, there's something about a good scoop of ice cream that just makes everything better.

And funny enough, I've been thinking lately about how hearing care has something in common with ice cream. Stick with me here.

We all know that the experience of eating ice cream isn't just about the scoop—it's the whole experience. The friendly smile behind the counter. The extra effort to get just the right flavor. The toppings, the cone, the service with a sprinkle of joy. It's a moment that feels personal, sweet, and satisfying.

And that's exactly how hearing healthcare should feel, too.

It's Not Just About the Devices

When people think of hearing care, they often picture hearing aids—and yes, those are an important part of the process. But great hearing healthcare is so much more than just fitting someone with a device. It's about listening, understanding, adjusting, following up, and being there through every twist and turn of the hearing journey.

As an audiologist, I'm not just here to help you hear better—I'm here to make sure you feel supported, informed, and cared for.

Service Is the Secret Ingredient

Just like a great scoop of ice cream, the experience matters. It's what keeps people coming back and what makes all the difference in long-term success. We see it all the time: someone comes in for their first hearing test, maybe a little unsure or nervous. They're not sure what to expect, and maybe they've put it off longer than they'd like to admit. Our job isn't just to run the tests—it's to make them feel comfortable, explain things in a way that makes sense, and walk alongside them as they begin to reconnect with the world around them.



It's in the little things: a clean and cozy office. An audiologist who remembers your name—and your dog's name. A front desk team that greets you like a friend. And regular check-ins that make sure your hearing aids are performing just as they should be.

These aren't "extras"—they're the foundation of great hearing care. Because hearing loss doesn't just affect your ears—it affects your relationships, your confidence, and your daily joy. The service you receive along the way is what helps rebuild all of that.

Better Hearing, Better Health

Of course, hearing is also deeply tied to your overall health. Studies have shown that untreated hearing loss is linked to everything from increased fall risk to cognitive decline. On the flip side, treating hearing loss with properly fitted devices and follow-up care has been shown to support brain health, emotional well-being, and even social engagement.

So yes—better hearing can help you stay sharper, safer, and more connected. But it's the ongoing care and service that help you get the full benefit of that better hearing.

Hearing aids are powerful tools, but they don't work their magic alone. It's the regular cleanings, the minor adjustments, the conversations about what's working (and what's not) that keep everything running smoothly.

Don't Settle for Just a Scoop—Go for the Sundae
This July, while you're enjoying a well-deserved frozen treat, I invite you to think about your

hearing health the same way. Don't settle for just the basics. You deserve the full experience—**great hearing technology, yes, but also great service, follow-up care, and a team that's truly in your corner.**

At AudioNova/Decibels Audiology, we're committed to making your hearing care journey feel easy, personalized, and even a little joyful. We offer hearing solutions for every lifestyle and budget, but what really sets us apart is our focus on people first, always.

If it's been a while since your last hearing test—or if you've never had one—now's a perfect time to start. Come in, meet our team, and let's talk about what's possible when your hearing care comes with a cherry on top.

Dr. Ava Rhodes, Au.D., is a licensed Doctor of Audiology at AudioNova/Decibels Audiology in Naples, Florida. She is passionate about compassionate hearing care, sunshine, and finding the perfect scoop of ice cream in Naples (original vanilla, if you're wondering).

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WHAT IF YOUR DOCTOR ACTUALLY LIVED THE ADVICE HE GAVE YOU?

Spinal stenosis is one of the most common causes of chronic back and neck pain, particularly in adults over the age of 50. The con- Patients hear health advice everywhere they turn. Exercise more. Move your body. Build strength. Take better care of your health.

But what if your doctor actually lived by those same principles every day?

Dr. Michael Shaffer believes that effective health-care isn't just about treating pain—it's about creating a body that can heal, adapt, and stay strong for years to come.

"I tell my patients all the time that a body that lives well heals well," says Dr. Shaffer. "If I'm encouraging people to stay active, build strength, and take care of their bodies, then I need to be doing the same thing myself."

While many patients come to Dr. Shaffer seeking relief from back pain, neck pain, sciatica, or disc-related problems, Dr. Shaffer views treatment as just one part of the equation.

Technologies such as non-surgical spinal decompression therapy and the M7 laser can help reduce pain, improve function, and support the body's natural healing processes. However, long-term results often depend on what happens outside the treatment room.

"Spinal decompression and the M7 laser are incredible tools," explains Dr. Shaffer. "They help us address the underlying causes of pain and promote healing, but patients also need a strong foundation. That's where healthy lifestyle habits become important."



One of the cornerstones of Dr. Shaffer's own health routine is strength training.

Research consistently shows that maintaining muscle strength supports healthy joints, improves balance and mobility, protects the spine, and helps reduce the risk of injury as we age. Strong muscles help stabilize the body and reduce stress on the structures that support movement.

"Many people think exercise is only about losing weight," he says. "What I focus on is function. Strength helps support your spine, improves your posture, and makes everyday activities easier. That's important whether you're 25 or 75."

Modern lifestyles often work against spinal health. Hours spent sitting, working on computers, driving, or looking at phones can create muscle imbalances and place excessive stress on the neck and lower back.

"The human body was designed to move," Dr. Shaffer says. "When we stop moving, we often start seeing problems develop. That's why I encourage patients to find activities they enjoy and make movement part of their daily routine."

"My goal isn't just to get someone out of pain," says Dr. Shaffer. "My goal is to help them get back to living. When people can move better, exercise more comfortably, and participate in the activities they enjoy, that's where real transformation happens."

Dr. Shaffer encourages patients to focus on consistency rather than perfection. Small, sustainable habits often have a greater impact on long-term health than short bursts of intense effort.

"You don't have to become an athlete overnight," he says. "Start where you are. Walk more. Build strength gradually. Take care of your body every day. Those small decisions add up."

Dr. Shaffer's philosophy is simple: combine advanced therapies such as spinal decompression and M7 laser treatment with healthy lifestyle choices that support lasting results.

"Healthcare works best when it's a partnership," says Dr. Shaffer. "We're here to help patients heal, but we're also here to help them build stronger, healthier lives. That's what true wellness is all about."

Because a stronger body isn't just better at moving—it will also be better equipped to heal.



Personalized Care at Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., P.A.

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

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The Advantages of Robotic Spine Surgery Versus Traditional Spine Surgery

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

In the evolving field of neurosurgery, robotic spine surgery represents a significant advancement in technology that is transforming how spinal conditions are treated. With increased precision, reduced invasiveness, and faster recovery times, robotic-assisted procedures are steadily becoming the preferred approach over traditional spine surgery. While conventional surgery has laid the foundation for spinal intervention, the integration of robotics enhances surgical capabilities and improves outcomes in ways previously unattainable.

Precision and Accuracy

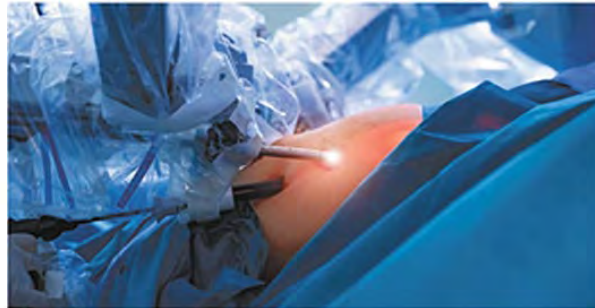
One of the primary advantages of robotic spine surgery is the unparalleled level of precision it offers. Traditional spine surgery, while effective, often relies on a surgeon's tactile feedback and anatomical landmarks, which can be less predictable due to individual anatomical variations or degenerative changes. Robotic systems such as the Globus ExcelsiusGPS utilize preoperative imaging, including CT scans, to construct a detailed three-dimensional model of the patient's spine. This allows the surgeon to plan the procedure virtually and execute it with millimetric accuracy.

This precision is particularly crucial in placing pedicle screws, where even minor deviations can lead to nerve damage, hardware failure, or suboptimal spinal alignment. Robotic navigation ensures optimal trajectories for hardware placement, reducing the risk of complications and improving overall surgical success.

Minimally Invasive Techniques

Robotic spine surgery is often performed using minimally invasive techniques, which involve smaller incisions compared to the large, open approaches typical of traditional surgery. Smaller incisions translate to less disruption of muscle and surrounding tissues, leading to decreased blood loss, less postoperative pain, and a significantly reduced risk of infection.

Traditional open surgeries can involve muscle stripping and extended exposure of the spine, which can prolong recovery and increase the likelihood of adjacent segment disease due to structural compromise. In contrast, robotic systems guide instruments through small portals with remarkable accuracy, preserving normal anatomy as much as possible.



Reduced Radiation Exposure

Spinal procedures frequently require intraoperative imaging, particularly fluoroscopy, to guide instrumentation. In traditional surgeries, this results in repeated exposure to radiation for both the patient and the surgical team. Robotic systems substantially reduce the need for continuous intraoperative imaging by relying on detailed preoperative imaging and real-time navigation. Once the robotic platform is registered to the patient's anatomy, it guides the surgical instruments with minimal reliance on fluoroscopy, significantly decreasing radiation exposure.

Improved Outcomes and Faster Recovery

Clinical studies have shown that robotic spine surgery is associated with shorter hospital stays, lower complication rates, and faster return to daily activities. Because robotic procedures are less invasive, patients often experience less postoperative discomfort and require fewer narcotics for pain control. Additionally, the enhanced accuracy of instrumentation placement contributes to greater spinal stability and fewer revision surgeries.

Faster recovery times are not only beneficial for the patient's quality of life, but they also reduce the burden on the healthcare system, making robotic spine surgery a cost-effective option in the long run.

Enhanced Surgical Planning and Flexibility

With robotic systems, surgical planning begins before the first incision. Surgeons can simulate the entire procedure, assess potential challenges, and adjust plans according to the patient's unique anatomy. This preoperative planning provides a roadmap that enhances intraoperative decision-making.

Moreover, robotic systems allow for real-time adjustments if unexpected anatomical findings are encountered. The combination of preoperative planning and intraoperative flexibility makes robotic spine surgery highly adaptive, improving both safety and surgical efficiency.

Reduced Surgeon Fatigue and Enhanced Ergonomics
Traditional spine surgery can be physically demanding, often requiring surgeons to maintain awkward positions for extended periods. Robotic systems reduce the physical strain by handling many of the instrument manipulations and allowing the surgeon to work more comfortably, often from a console or with ergonomic assistance.

This reduction in physical demand not only benefits the surgeon's long-term health but also improves concentration and precision, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes.

Limitations and Considerations

While the benefits of robotic spine surgery are numerous, it is important to acknowledge that not all patients or procedures are candidates for robotic assistance. Highly complex deformities or certain trauma cases may still require traditional open approaches. Additionally, robotic systems require substantial upfront investment and ongoing maintenance, which may limit accessibility in some facilities.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of robotic surgery is closely tied to the surgeon's experience and familiarity with the system. Like any technology, robotics is a tool that enhances—but does not replace—the skill and judgment of the surgeon.

The Future of Spine Surgery

Robotic spine surgery is poised to become an integral part of modern neurosurgical practice. As technology continues to evolve, we can expect improvements in artificial intelligence integration, augmented reality visualization, and even remote surgery capabilities. These advancements will further refine the precision, safety, and efficiency of spinal procedures, offering patients better outcomes and faster recoveries than ever before.

Hospitals and practices that invest in robotic platforms not only improve care delivery but also position themselves at the forefront of surgical innovation. For patients suffering from debilitating spinal conditions, robotic spine surgery represents a new era of hope—where the risks are minimized, the benefits are maximized, and the road to recovery is shorter and smoother.



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How The Good Feet Store's 3-Step Arch Support System (and Your HSA/FSA Funds) Can Help You Walk Pain-Free this Summer

If you've been living with that dull ache in your feet after long days—or that persistent twinge in your knees, hips, or lower back—you've probably learned to just "deal with it." Maybe you've swapped shoes, stretched, or tried to ignore the discomfort altogether. But what if the problem isn't your shoes—or even your body? What if it's your alignment?

That's where The Good Feet Store comes in. Their 3-Step Arch Support System isn't just about comfort. It's about realignment—helping your body rediscover the posture and balance it was designed for. And here's something even better: you can use your HSA or FSA funds to invest in your health before those dollars disappear at the end of the year.

Let's break it down.

The Root of the Pain

Foot pain can be sneaky. It starts with a bit of soreness, maybe after standing all day or going for a walk. But over time, that misalignment in your feet can ripple upward, causing discomfort in your knees, hips, and even your lower back. Think of your feet as your foundation. If that foundation is uneven, everything above it starts to shift and strain.

The Good Feet Store's 3-Step System is designed to rebuild that foundation. Each set of arch supports—Relaxers, Maintainers, and Strengtheners—plays a role in helping your body find balance again. The Relaxers give you soothing comfort when you're off your feet. The Maintainers support you through everyday activity. And the Strengtheners help train your arches and muscles to stay properly aligned over time.

It's not just about temporary relief; it's about long-term correction. When your feet are properly supported, everything from your stride to your posture improves. You feel lighter. More stable. More you.

Real People. Real Relief.

One of the best parts of visiting The Good Feet Store is how personal the experience feels. You're not handed a one-size-fits-all support and sent on your way. Instead, a trained Arch Support Specialist takes you through a free fitting and test walk.



Customers often describe it as "magic," but really, it's science meeting craftsmanship. The arch supports are precision-engineered and designed to fit the unique contours of your feet. Over time, they can help realign your entire body, reducing pain from the ground up.

Wait—You Can Use HSA or FSA Funds for This?

Yes! And this is where a lot of people are pleasantly surprised. Your Health Savings Account (HSA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA) dollars can be used toward Good Feet Arch Supports because they qualify as a medical expense—after all, they're designed to help relieve pain and improve your health.

Here's the catch: many FSA plans expire at the end of the year. That means if you don't spend those funds, you lose them. Poof—gone. So instead of scrambling to find something eligible in December (hello, boxes of bandages and extra contact solution), consider investing in something that gives back every single day—relief.

Using your HSA/FSA funds for The Good Feet Store's arch supports is not only smart, but also strategic. You're putting your health dollars toward something that genuinely improves your quality of life.

Why Now Is the Time

There's never a bad time to start taking better care of your body, but summer is the perfect time. As the days heat up, we're all on our feet more: walking, traveling, gardening, and soaking up time outdoors. With sandal season in full swing, there's real motivation to take that next step (literally) toward comfort.

Imagine heading into the new year with your body aligned, your pain reduced, and your posture improved—all thanks to a set of arch supports that feel like they were made just for you.

The Bottom Line

If you've been putting off addressing your foot, knee, hip, or back pain, this is your sign. The Good Feet Store's 3-Step Arch Support System can help you move through your day with less pain and more energy, and you can use your HSA or FSA funds to make it happen.

Don't let this summer slip by with pain in every step. Visit your local Good Feet Store for your free fitting and test walk and see just how good it feels to step into balance again.

Your body will thank you. Your future self will thank you.

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VELO BREASTLYFT™

The New Non-Surgical Breast Enhancement at Velo Med Spa

Many women want fuller, lifted, and more youthful-looking breasts, but not everyone wants surgery, implants, or weeks of recovery. Advances in regenerative aesthetics have created a new category of treatments that enhance the body naturally.

At **Velo Med Spa**, we are proud to introduce the **Velo BreastLyft™**, a cutting-edge non-surgical breast enhancement that uses regenerative injectables including **platelet-rich plasma (PRP) Biofiller** and the newest innovation in soft tissue restoration, **Alloclae™ by Tiger Aesthetics**.

This treatment offers a modern alternative for women seeking **breast rejuvenation without surgery**, helping improve shape, volume, and skin quality with minimal downtime.

What Is the Velo BreastLyft™?

The **Velo BreastLyft™** is a regenerative aesthetic treatment designed to enhance the breasts using advanced injectable therapies rather than implants or surgery.

This procedure focuses on:

- Restoring **lost volume**
- Improving **skin elasticity**
- Enhancing **cleavage and contour**
- Creating a **natural lifting effect**

Unlike surgical breast augmentation, the **Velo BreastLyft™** is performed **in office with little to no downtime**, making it an attractive option for women looking for subtle, natural improvement.

Many patients seek non-surgical breast enhancement after:

- Pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Weight loss
- Natural aging
- Changes in skin elasticity

The goal is not to dramatically alter your appearance, but to **enhance what you already have while maintaining a natural look and feel**.

PRP Biofiller for Breast Rejuvenation

One of the core components of the **Velo BreastLyft™** is **PRP Biofiller**, a regenerative treatment created from your own blood.



PRP, or **platelet-rich plasma**, contains concentrated growth factors that help stimulate tissue repair and collagen production. During treatment, a small sample of blood is drawn and processed to isolate the platelets. These platelets are then converted into a thicker injectable called **Biofiller**.

When injected into targeted areas of the breast, PRP Biofiller may help:

- Stimulate **collagen and elastin production**
- Improve **skin texture and firmness**
- Support **tissue regeneration**
- Enhance the **overall appearance of the breast**

Because the treatment uses your body's own natural components, it is a popular option for patients interested in **natural breast rejuvenation**.

Introducing Alloclae™: The Next Generation of Non-Surgical Fat Transfer

The newest advancement available through the **Velo BreastLyft™** is **Alloclae™ by Tiger Aesthetics**.

Alloclae is a **structural adipose filler derived from purified donor fat tissue**, designed to provide volume and structural support through injectable treatment.

In many ways, Alloclae functions like a **fat transfer without surgery**.

Traditional fat transfer requires liposuction to harvest fat from another part of the body before reinjecting it into the breasts. Alloclae eliminates that step by providing **ready-to-use adipose tissue that can be injected in office**.

This innovative treatment can provide:

- Immediate **soft tissue volume**
- Natural **breast contour enhancement**
- Structural **support for breast shape**
- Improved **tissue integration**

For patients who may not have enough body fat for a traditional fat grafting procedure, Alloclae offers an exciting new option for **non-surgical breast volume enhancement**.

Benefits of Non-Surgical Breast Enhancement

Many women are choosing regenerative treatments like the **Velo BreastLyft™** because they offer a more natural approach to breast enhancement.

Potential benefits include:

- No implants
- No surgery or general anesthesia
- Minimal downtime
- Natural-looking results
- Improved skin quality and firmness
- Customized treatment approach

While results are typically more subtle than surgical breast augmentation, this treatment is ideal for women looking for **natural breast rejuvenation and gentle enhancement**.

Who Is a Good Candidate for the Velo BreastLyft™?

You may be a good candidate if you are looking to:

- Improve breast fullness or contour
- Restore volume lost after breastfeeding or weight loss
- Enhance cleavage naturally
- Improve skin texture and firmness of the breast

The best way to determine if this treatment is right for you is through a personalized consultation at **Velo Med Spa**.

Regenerative Aesthetics at Velo Med Spa

The future of aesthetic medicine is moving toward treatments that **work with the body rather than against it**. The days of synthetic fillers and foreign products that can increase the risk of rejection are over and people are seeking for a more natural solution. Regenerative technologies like PRP Biofiller and Alloclae are helping patients enhance their appearance while supporting natural tissue health.

At **Velo Med Spa**, our approach combines innovation, artistry, and advanced regenerative treatments to help patients achieve the **best version of themselves, naturally**.

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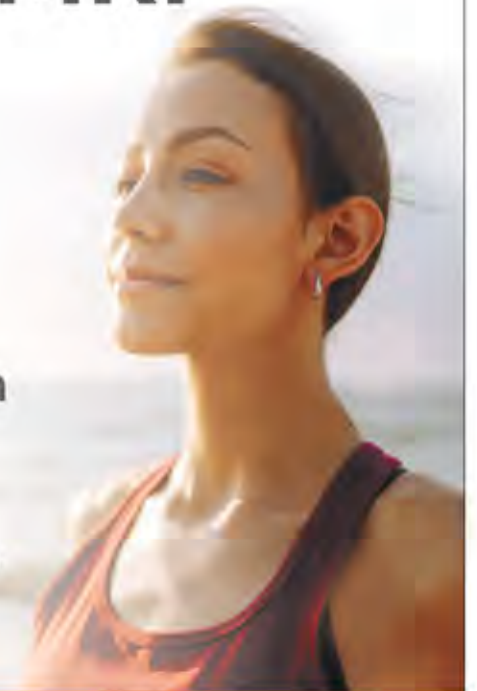
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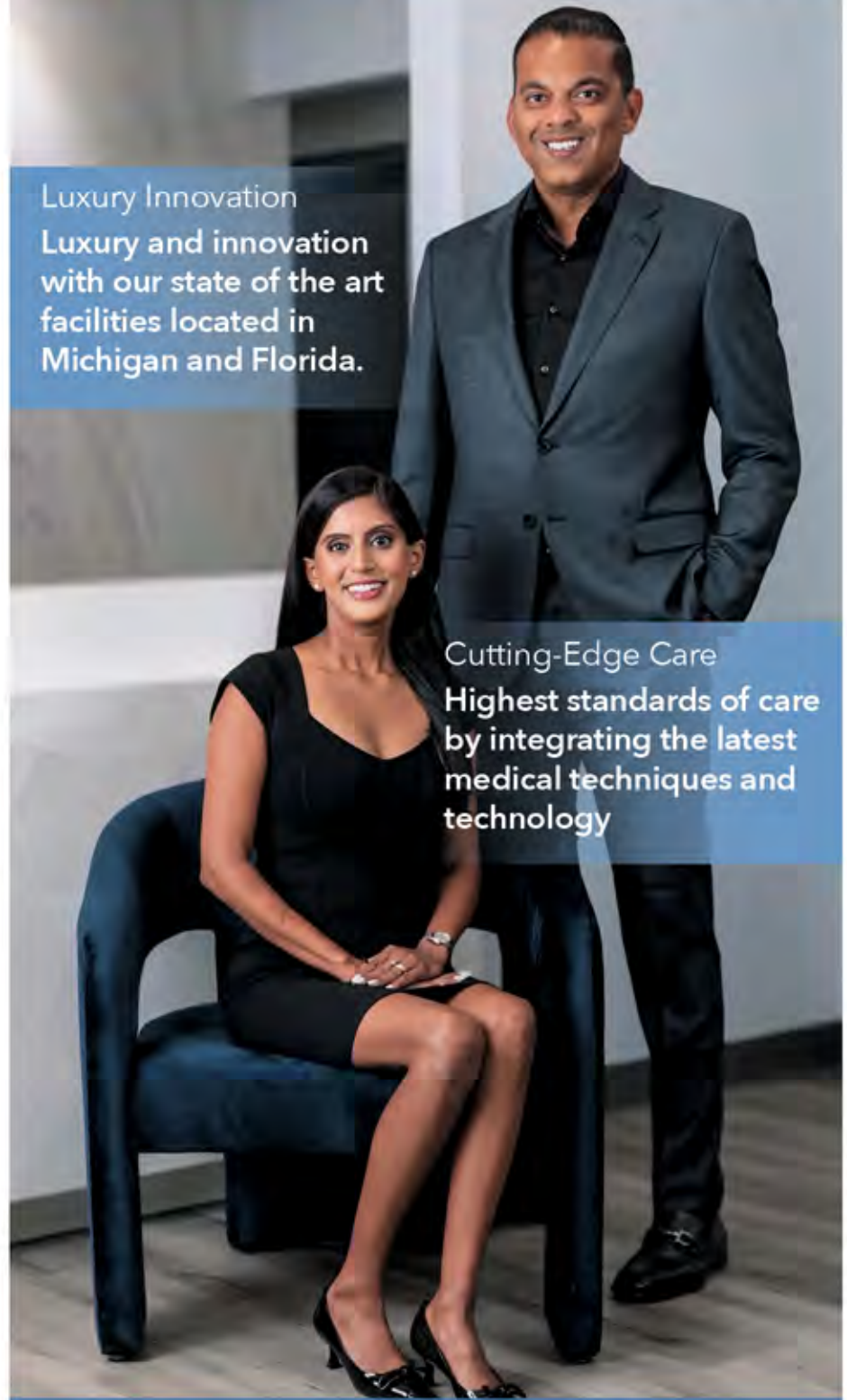
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BREATHING FREELY AGAIN

Understanding Nasal Obstruction and the Role of Nasal Valve Surgery

By David Greene, MD, FACS, FARS

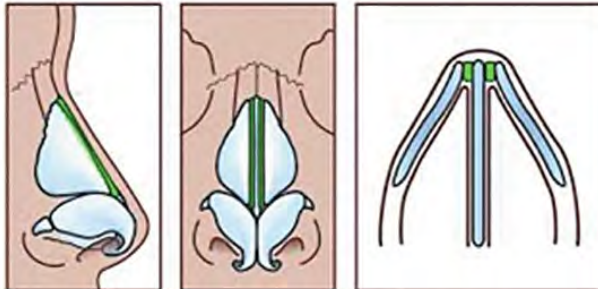
Chronic nasal obstruction, the persistent sense that the nose will not let enough air through, is one of the most common reasons patients consult an otolaryngologist or facial plastic surgeon. It can fragment sleep, limit exercise, and take a toll on quality of life. Many people blame allergies alone, but the nose is a precise mechanical structure; lasting relief depends on identifying exactly where, and why, airflow is restricted.

A comprehensive evaluation distinguishes between two kinds of causes. First, mucosal or inflammatory problems of the nasal lining, and usually respond to medical therapy such as topical steroids or antihistamines. Second, structural problems which are fixed anatomic narrowings that no medication can open. Because the two often coexist, a careful history, nasal endoscopy, and, when sinus disease is suspected, a CT scan may be needed before any decision to operate. Treating one cause while ignoring the other is a common reason surgery may lead to disappointment.

Three structural problems account for most correctable obstruction: (1) a deviated septum, the bent partition dividing the two passages, narrows one or both sides; (2) enlarged inferior turbinates, the scroll-shaped structures along the side walls that warm and filter air, crowd the airway, especially in chronic allergies; and (3) Nasal valve obstruction, the least understood, and often overlooked structural component.

The nasal valve is the narrowest part of the airway, so even small changes there have the greatest effect on breathing. The internal nasal valve is the angle—normally about ten to fifteen degrees—where the upper lateral cartilage meets the septum. The external nasal valve is the forward region near the nostril rim. The obstruction may be static, a permanently narrow passage, or *dynamic*, a sidewall that collapses inward with a brisk breath. Patients often notice the dynamic type when a deep breath makes breathing harder, or when suddenly pulling the cheek outward improves airflow. This is also why some patients who had septum surgery years ago may still feel blocked: an untreated nasal valve was the actual culprit.

Surgery is tailored to the specific defect. A septoplasty straightens the deviated septum by removing or repositioning obstructing cartilage and bone while preserving the support that maintains the nose's shape.



Turbinate reduction, or turbinoplasty, conservatively shrinks enlarged turbinates while sparing the lining, preserving humidification and widening the airway.

For internal nasal valve obstruction, the most durable correction is the spreader graft, a thin strut of the patient's own cartilage, usually taken from the septum during the same operation and placed in the seam between the dorsal septum and the upper lateral cartilage. Acting as a spacer, this graft widens the valve angle and reinforces the middle of the nose, opening the airway and resisting the inward collapse that medication and adhesive strips cannot address. Because it uses the patient's own tissue, it integrates naturally and is permanent.

These grafts can be placed through an endonasal, or closed, approach, working entirely through the nostrils, so there is no external incision and no change to the nose's appearance. The procedure is typically outpatient, performed under anesthesia, often combined with septoplasty and turbinate reduction so every contributing factor is corrected at once. When chronic sinusitis has not responded to medical therapy, endoscopic sinus surgery may be performed at the same time. Recovery usually consists of a week or two of swelling and congestion, breathing improves as healing progresses. Because these operations relieve obstructed breathing rather than changing appearance, they are generally covered by insurance, though coverage depends on the plan and documentation of medical necessity.

No operation guarantees a perfect result; outcomes depend on accurate diagnosis, sound technique, and realistic expectations. The guiding principle is to evaluate the nose, lining, septum, turbinates, and valves, so treatment addresses the true sources of obstruction. For those who have struggled for years to breathe, that approach, and the option of restoring the nasal valve without external incisions, may mean easier breathing, better sleep, and a meaningful improvement in daily life.

Dr. David Greene, MD, FACS, is a double board-certified ENT and facial plastic surgeon specializing in nasal, sinus, and breathing restoration. Trained at Harvard, Yale, UCSF, and Stanford, he is a Castle Connolly Top Doctor with 20+ years, 40+ publications, and 180+ lectures, practicing in Naples, FL since 1999.

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YOUR NAPLES COMMERCIAL LEASE: 3 KEY AREAS TO REVIEW IN 2026

By Trevor Allen, Esq.

Naples, Florida has a unique commercial real estate market. It emphasizes quality over quantity, and because of its seasonal nature and coastal location, a commercial lease here does more than secure space. It can directly impact the overall value of your business. Since Florida commercial leases generally follow a “freedom of contract” approach, the terms of the lease will usually control.

As we settle into 2026, several changes, including the repeal of Florida’s sales tax on commercial rentals and rising insurance and operating costs, make this an appropriate time to review key provisions in your lease. Below are three important areas to focus on for leases in Collier County.

1. Rent After the Repeal of Florida’s Sales Tax on Commercial Rentals

For many years, Florida imposed a sales tax on commercial rent under Chapter 212 of the Florida Statutes. It was one of the few states that taxed commercial leases in this manner. However, beginning October 1, 2025, that tax was repealed for certain types of property rental periods starting on or after that date.

This repeal affects how leases should be drafted and how rent is calculated. Many existing leases still provide that rent includes applicable sales tax as part of the cost, but that language may no longer be entirely accurate for lease or occupancy periods beginning on or after October 1, 2025. In high-demand areas such as Fifth Avenue or Third Street South, eliminating the sales tax can significantly reduce a tenant’s overall rent. For that reason, it is important to review any lease provisions that reference sales tax.

2. Common Area Maintenance (CAM) Charges in High-Value Properties

Common Area Maintenance (CAM) charges are often a source of confusion or dispute in commercial leases. These charges typically cover expenses such as landscaping, parking lot maintenance, lighting, insurance, and property taxes. In high-end retail or office properties, CAM charges can be substantial.



Unlike residential tenants, commercial tenants in Florida do not receive statutory protections regarding CAM charges. Courts will generally enforce whatever the lease provides, making clarity in drafting essential.

In Naples, property taxes often account for a significant portion of CAM expenses. Tenants should carefully review how CAM costs are defined in the lease. Are expenses such as roof repairs included? Is there a cap on annual increases? How is the tenant’s share calculated, particularly if portions of the property remain vacant? These questions are critical, and the answers can determine whether a lease supports your business or strains it.

Additionally, many Naples businesses depend heavily on the winter season for revenue. Unexpected increases in CAM charges can disrupt cash flow planning. A well-drafted CAM provision helps reduce uncertainty and promote predictability.

3. Assignment and Subletting in a Changing Market

Naples is a market where businesses frequently change hands. Medical practices are acquired, restaurants are sold, and retailers often transition ownership due to retirement or other factors. In these situations, the lease is frequently one of the business’s most valuable assets. If the lease grants the landlord absolute discretion to approve or deny an assignment, a potential sale may be at risk.

A lease may provide that the landlord cannot unreasonably withhold or delay consent to an assignment or sublease. It may also establish financial criteria for a proposed transferee and allow transfers in connection with mergers, asset sales, or transfers to affiliated entities.

In a high-demand market like Naples, the ability to transfer a lease on reasonable terms can significantly strengthen a business owner’s negotiating position. This provision should be drafted with future business transitions in mind, not solely the current occupancy.

Preparing Your Lease for the Future

Although commercial leasing in Naples follows Florida law, the local market presents distinct considerations. The repeal of the sales tax on commercial rentals affects rent calculations, and increased business transitions elevate the importance of assignment rights.

Your lease should do more than secure space for today. It should anticipate growth, market shifts, and unforeseen circumstances. In a market like Naples, a carefully drafted lease protects not only your current operations but also your long-term interests.

Lease rights and tax consequences depend on the specific language of the lease and the facts of each situation. If you have questions about your commercial lease or are considering negotiating or revising lease terms, Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A., is here to assist.

About the Author

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



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Understanding Otolaryngologists: The Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialists

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

What is an Otolaryngologist?

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

Areas of Expertise

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

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

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

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



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

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

When to See an Otolaryngologist

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

The Collaborative Approach

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

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

Expert Care You Can Trust

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



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

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



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



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CELLULAR RENEWAL:

How IV Therapies and Peptides Are Redefining Healthy Aging

In the quest for graceful aging, science is moving beyond the medicine cabinet and into the bloodstream itself. Intravenous (IV) therapies and targeted peptide treatments deliver nutrients, antioxidants, and signaling molecules directly where the body can use them, potentially offering more immediate results than oral supplements alone. Let's explore the therapies helping people rethink what healthy aging can look like.

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

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

The key distinction lies in composition and delivery. Traditional NAD+ treatments deliver the coenzyme directly into the bloodstream, while Niagen Plus uses NR, a NAD+ precursor that research suggests may offer comparable or superior benefits for energy and healthy aging. Both are available as IV or IM injections, with Niagen Plus offering shorter infusion times and a milder side-effect profile.

Many recipients describe a renewed sense of vitality, improved energy, sharper mental clarity, and better sleep quality, with effects that tend to build over multiple sessions. Some research suggests these approaches may support DNA repair mechanisms, addressing aging at the cellular level. More clinical study is needed, but preliminary findings are promising.

GHK-Cu: The Skin and Tissue Renewal Peptide

GHK-Cu (glycyl-histidyl-L-cysteine copper) is a naturally occurring copper peptide that declines steadily with age, levels at 60 are a fraction of what they were at 20. This decline has been linked in research to many of the visible and structural hallmarks of aging.

GHK-Cu is best known for its role in skin and tissue remodeling. Studies suggest it can help stimulate collagen and elastin production, support wound healing, and act as an antioxidant that helps calm inflammation. Some research has also explored its potential to influence gene expression patterns associated

with tissue repair. Patients often pursue GHK-Cu for firmer-looking skin, improved tissue resilience, and general support of the body's natural repair processes.

Epithalon: Supporting the Body's Internal Clock

Epithalon (epithalamin) is a synthetic peptide derived from a naturally occurring pineal gland compound. It has drawn interest in longevity research for its potential role in telomerase activity, the enzyme associated with protecting the protective caps (telomeres) at the ends of chromosomes, which shorten as cells divide and age.

Beyond its cellular research applications, Epithalon is often discussed for its possible effects on sleep quality, circadian rhythm regulation, and antioxidant activity. Some of the available research originates from earlier studies in aging populations, and while more rigorous, large-scale human trials are still needed, interest in Epithalon as part of a longevity-focused regimen continues to grow.

MOTS-c: The Mitochondrial Messenger

MOTS-c is a relatively recently discovered peptide encoded within mitochondrial DNA, the "powerhouse" of the cell. Unlike many peptides that act locally, MOTS-c appears to function as a signal that travels from the mitochondria to the cell's nucleus, helping regulate how the body responds to metabolic stress.

Research interest in MOTS-c centers on its potential connection to metabolic health, exercise capacity, and insulin sensitivity, all of which tend to decline with age. Because mitochondrial efficiency is closely tied to overall energy and vitality, MOTS-c is increasingly explored as a complementary piece of a comprehensive healthy-aging strategy, particularly alongside therapies like NAD+/Niagen Plus that also target cellular energy production.

Ozone Therapy: Oxygenating and Detoxifying

Ozone therapy utilizes medical-grade ozone (O₃), a form of oxygen with three atoms instead of the usual two. Administered intravenously in carefully controlled amounts, ozone can stimulate oxygen metabolism, activate the immune system, and promote detoxification pathways.

For aging individuals, this therapy may offer several benefits. Increased oxygenation could improve circulation and cellular metabolism, while the mild oxidative stress it creates paradoxically stimulates the body's own antioxidant defenses, a hormetic effect that may help the body better handle age-related

oxidative stress. Some practitioners report patients experiencing improved energy, reduced chronic inflammation, and enhanced overall well-being. As with any integrative approach, individual responses vary, and ozone therapy works best as part of a broader health plan.

Embracing These Therapies Wisely

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

Before pursuing any of these therapies, consult with healthcare providers knowledgeable in both conventional and integrative medicine. Individual health conditions, medication interactions, and personal goals should guide every treatment decision.

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

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ANGER MANAGEMENT 101

By Jennifer Vear Hoy, MS/MS - Specialist in Anger Management/Psychotherapist

Anger is an instinct inherited from our primal ancestors through evolution. Anger can be triggered when any creature is threatened, challenged, or denied something they want or need. Anger involves a strong response to a provocation. Facing a challenge, our response may be anger or fear, and it may be difficult to decide whether to face the challenge head-on or walk (run!) away. These are the choices in a fight-or-flight response. Yet there is a sharp distinction between anger and aggression (physical or verbal, direct or indirect). Both influence each other — anger can ramp up to aggression when it increases in intensity. This article will examine anger-induced bodily changes, types of anger, and some suggestions for keeping anger under control.

Hormones and Body Changes Once ignited, anger releases a cascade of physical, psychological, and neurological effects. Anger changes the human body by making the heart beat faster and increasing blood pressure and the levels of the hormones adrenaline and noradrenaline. These chemicals prime the body for action. Adrenaline reacts quickly to a challenge, increasing the supply of oxygen and glucose to the brain and muscles. These hormones gear up the body for action while slowing down less crucial bodily functions, such as digestion.

The Myriad Types of Anger

When it kicks in, anger becomes the body's central focus — behaviorally, cognitively, and physically. Without a physiological slowdown, the individual will not only lose their temper, they will also bypass the internal checkpoints needed to regain control. One way to address these issues is to take a closer look at some types of anger.

- **Passive Anger** — watch out for the cold shoulder or the silent treatment. It may manifest as turning one's back in a crisis, psychological manipulation, or obsessive behavior. Someone who is overly accident-prone, underachieves despite great potential, expresses major frustration over minor setbacks but ignores major ones, may be demonstrating passive anger.

- **Aggressive Anger** — characterized by unpredictability, such as explosive anger over minor frustrations, destructive behavior, risk-taking, showing off, and nasty bullying behavior. Selfishness, grandiosity, threats, and unjust blaming are other common displays of aggressive anger.



- **Assertive Anger** — used in a disciplinary context and may be appropriate under certain circumstances. Blame and punishment are common signs. Assertive anger maintains a balanced approach so that disapproval and punishment remain moderate.

Overall, the expression of anger becomes unhealthy if it exceeds mere expression and inflicts serious suffering on oneself or others. The victims of anger, whether adults or children, may also suffer from elevated stress, health problems, and increased tension.

Avoiding the Warpath Stopping anger escalation is the first step. One can learn tools and techniques to manage anger constructively — if not by yourself, then with the guidance of a skilled therapist. It is helpful to identify anger trigger points and learn to manage them. How? When you are emotionally calm, take an in-depth anger inventory and write down your findings from the past month. Include the following: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? Use your phone, an index card, or a daily diary to keep your trigger list handy. It should go with you everywhere. You must keep using it for it to become effective. It is an evolving document to record all future angry outbursts and will ultimately enable you to dissect them. Remember the all-important pause: if you can keep your anger in check for a minute or two, the episode may pass.

There are no shortcuts at this stage, so dig deep. What sets you off? Is there a particular circumstance that ticks you off? Is there a person, place, or thing that always grinds on your nerves? Look back at your last few outbursts and see if you can detect a pattern. Some triggers may be obvious, some not. Keep on digging and listing. Keep tabs on your physical signs, too — a dry mouth, for instance, may be your first tip-off to a potential outburst. Monitor yourself like an internal anger referee and learn to identify your triggers in their early stages.

Identify your physical danger signs and your triggers, pause, try to relax, and you can now intervene. Take a few more moments for yourself to regain control. Memorize some phrases to stall the other side — examples such as “Give me a minute to understand what you are saying...” or “Did you mean to say such and such...?” Now’s the time to zero in on your physical reactions to a pending outburst, too. Check yourself for a telltale sweaty brow, hot flash, shallow breathing, and other reactions. Try to counter these reactions by doing the opposite: cold water on overheated body parts, slower breathing, and a calming mental picture can all be useful tools.

Bottom line: you can walk away, say you need some air... or some space. Walk away and smile if you can, it leaves the other side wondering what you are up to!



Jennifer Vear Hoy

Jennifer Vear Hoy is a psychotherapist and the owner of Peaceful Summit Counseling. She holds a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling and a Master of Science in Management and Organizational Behavior. She holds a deep belief in ongoing education as well as community involvement.

Jennifer spent over 20 years in business as a corporate strategist, operating her own consulting firm in Chicago. Following the death of her husband in 2006, she realized firsthand the need for professional, caring counseling. She returned to school and earned her second master's degree as a clinical mental health counselor.

“It is my passion to help others live the life they were meant to live.” -Jennifer Vear Hoy



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Photobiomodulation (light therapy) uses specific wavelengths of red and near-infrared light to stimulate mitochondrial function. Since mitochondria produce ATP—the body's energy currency—this therapy may help improve cellular efficiency and reduce fatigue over time.

Molecular hydrogen inhalation is a newer modality gaining attention for its antioxidant properties. Hydrogen acts as a selective antioxidant, helping to neutralize harmful free radicals without disrupting beneficial cellular processes. This may reduce oxidative stress, a common contributor to low energy states.

Molecular Hydrogen Inhalation



PEMF- Pulsed Electromagnetic Field



PEMF (Pulsed Electromagnetic Field) therapy works by gently stimulating the body's natural electrical processes. By improving cellular communication and circulation, PEMF may help reduce pain, enhance recovery, and support more consistent energy levels.

Hyperbaric Chamber



Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) involves breathing oxygen in a pressurized environment, allowing more oxygen to dissolve into the bloodstream. This increased oxygen delivery can support tissue repair, reduce inflammation, and enhance overall vitality, especially in individuals with chronic fatigue or poor circulation.

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Together, these modalities aim not just to mask fatigue, but to restore the body's natural energy production systems—helping individuals feel more resilient, balanced, and energized in a sustainable way.



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Why Does Consistency Matter to Long-Term Investment Returns?

By Rick Walker, Financial Planner & CPA, and Kimberlee Clark, Financial Planner

When we talk about consistency in investing, we're referring to the ability to generate solid, dependable returns over many years rather than chasing spectacular gains one year followed by significant losses the next.

Why does this matter? The concept has parallels in many areas of life. In baseball, players who consistently get on base help their teams score more runs and win more games over the course of a season. Investing works much the same way. While some investments may post exceptional returns in a single year, those gains can be erased if they are followed by sharp declines. That type of volatility often creates unnecessary stress, sleepless nights and leads investors to make emotional decisions at the worst possible times.

Consider two hypothetical investment funds. One experiences dramatic highs and lows, while the other delivers steadier, more consistent returns. Although the more volatile fund may outperform in certain years, investors often react emotionally—buying after periods of strong performance and selling after significant declines. Unfortunately, this pattern of chasing returns and locking in losses can be one of the greatest obstacles to long-term success.

The real key isn't how you react during a difficult market. More important is the discipline exercised during periods of strong performance. Investors who remain focused on long-term goals rather than short-term market movements are often better positioned to achieve lasting results.

Flexibility in Decision-Making

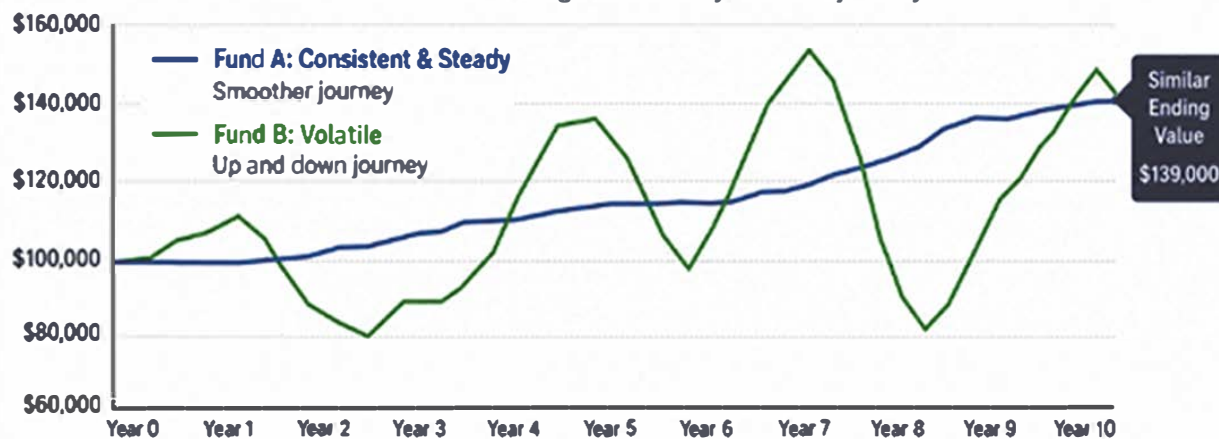
Consistent investment performance also provides greater flexibility when building a portfolio. When investors have confidence in the stability of part of their portfolio, they often feel more comfortable allocating an appropriate portion to long-term growth investments. That balance can help improve long-term returns while reducing the temptation to make emotional investment decisions.

Using Income to Fuel Growth

Many investors establish a "core" portion of their portfolio consisting of high-quality income-producing investments. These holdings often generate interest and dividends while providing greater stability during periods of market volatility.

THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

Two funds. Similar ending returns. Very different journeys.



Rather than spending that income, some investors choose to reinvest it into growth-oriented investments. For example, a \$500,000 income portfolio generating approximately \$27,000 annually could provide about \$2,250 each month to invest in growth assets. Over time, consistently reinvesting that income may significantly increase long-term portfolio value while preserving the stability of the core holdings.

Consistency During Retirement

Consistency becomes even more important during retirement. Owners of traditional IRAs and 401(k) plans are generally required to begin taking Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) beginning at age 73. The amount required increases over time and is based partly on the value of the account.

A portfolio with more consistent returns can provide retirees greater flexibility in deciding when to take those withdrawals, reducing the likelihood of having to sell investments during unfavorable market conditions.

Knowing When to Harvest Gains

Successful investing isn't just about buying quality investments—it's also about knowing when to take profits. Occasionally, certain holdings appreciate far beyond expectations. Rather than allowing a single investment to become an outsized portion of a portfolio, investors may choose to trim the position, rebalance into more diversified holdings, or simply recover their original investment while allowing the remaining shares to continue growing.

needs, and income sources all influence the appropriate strategy. As those circumstances change, investment plans should evolve as well.

Financial planning software and professional guidance can help investors evaluate different scenarios objectively and develop strategies designed to support their long-term goals. While no investment can guarantee future results, maintaining a disciplined, consistent approach often provides investors with greater confidence and a better opportunity for long-term success.

If you have questions about your own investment strategy or retirement plan, we'd be happy to discuss your individual circumstances. Please contact us at (239) 434-6613 or *RSVP to our next Luncheon at Seasons 52 August on 28th!*



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OBESITY AND ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

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

Obesity affects millions of Americans. Over the last couple of decades, it has spread from the adult population to adolescents and children. Although it is often attributed to poor eating habits and a lack of exercise, the truth is really a bit more complicated than that. The process by which the body converts food into energy can be influenced by chemicals in the environment, over which we have little control, and by genetics, over which we have zero control. It is a complex combination of genetic susceptibility, biological pathways related to metabolism and body weight regulation, and environmental factors.¹

World Health Organization Fast Facts on Obesity

- Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975.
- In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these over 650 million were obese.
- 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese.
- Most of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight.
- 39 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2020.
- Over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016.
- Obesity is preventable.²

Obesity and orthopedic conditions

Obesity is a growing concern in the health community because of the morbidities associated with it. There is also a higher occurrence of many orthopedic conditions among obese individuals than their non-obese counterparts. Obesity also worsens the progression of many of these orthopedic conditions. Studies have shown that obesity may have a negative impact on bone metabolism and may be implicated in the pathophysiology of some orthopedic conditions like osteoporosis, fractures, osteoarthritis and many soft tissue ailments by both reduction in bone mass and elaboration of proinflammatory cytokines. These contribute to preponderance of musculoskeletal co-morbidities among obese patients. Critical peri-operative issues which



include increased cardiopulmonary risks, issues of special equipment, instrumentation, surgical approach, patients' positioning and adjustments in medication should be acknowledged and meticulously addressed in operative management of orthopedic conditions in obese patients. Surgeries in obese patients are fraught with operative challenges and post-operative complications than in the non-obese and a good knowledge of the critical issues in surgical management of obese patients is necessary to facilitate decision making as well as rendering of effective and efficient orthopedic care.²

Does obesity exclude a person from orthopedic surgery?

Obese patients sometimes hear from their doctor that in order to undergo a needed orthopedic surgery, such as a knee or hip replacement, they'll need to lose 50, 75, or even 100 pounds. And sometimes the recommendation is to lose even more, as if that's an easy or realistic prospect. While the surgeon's recommendations may be disappointing, the rationale seems sound: people carrying a lot of excess weight have long been considered at higher risk for complications, and less likely to experience the profound pain relief expected from this major operation. Indeed, several studies describe higher rates of infections and dislocations and lower rates of good results after hip or knee replacement among the obese, especially the severely obese.

But there is promising news. The studies that doctors have long relied on to back up their recommendations were conducted decades ago. Newer studies are showing different results. The researchers conclude that "obesity in itself should not be a deterrent to undergoing total joint replacement to relieve symptoms." However, the potential for more complications must be considered as well, something this study did not formally examine.

Given the high and rising rates of obesity and arthritis in this country, the results of this study will likely apply to many people. And they suggest that surgeons should change expectations about what surgery has to offer obese individuals with severe arthritis.

Here are some of the new findings:

- Those who were the most obese (about 25% of those in the study) had more pain and poorer function prior to surgery than those who were leaner.
- The amount of functional gain in obese individuals six months after joint replacement was significant, and similar to that experienced by those who were not obese.
- Pain relief was greater among the most obese than other weight groups. After surgery, pain levels were similar in all weight groups.³

The bottom line is that obesity should be avoided. That is always going to be true. Obese patients DO need to lose weight and obesity CAN cause significant complications during and after surgery. However, this new study is at least promising. There is hope of relief for patients suffering from orthopedic conditions that limit their mobility.

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BLINDNESS AND BURNS IN BACKYARD: Fireworks Displays Can Go Haywire in a Hurry

By Rick Weber

Kelly Goebel can't unsee the horrific images. They are permanently embedded in her memory, forever altering how she views the events that caused them.

In her 36 years of nursing experience, she has witnessed the devastating consequences of fireworks-related injuries. Having worked in a Level I trauma center and served as Chief Flight Nurse for an aeromedical transport program, she has cared for and transported patients suffering from severe burns, traumatic eye injuries and even amputations caused by fireworks.

"I am certain that none of those individuals anticipated that a day meant for celebration would end with a trip to the emergency department—or an emergency flight to a trauma center," says Goebel, program director and assistant professor in the School of Nursing in the Marieb College of Health & Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"Many believed they were taking appropriate precautions, yet accidents still occurred. These experiences have reinforced my belief that no celebration is worth a life-altering injury and that safer alternatives can create lasting memories without the devastating consequences that can accompany fireworks. Years of providing care in these arenas have taught me one thing: People rarely expect to become the patient."

She says backyard fireworks displays are clouded by the misconception that legal means safe. In reality, even legal fireworks are considered small explosives and are capable of causing severe injury.

"Consumers also may believe that certain fireworks such as sparklers are safe," she says. "While media and advertising portray fireworks as fun and exciting, the devastating injuries they can cause receive less attention. Fireworks are deeply associated with celebrations such as the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, and many people have used fireworks for years without incident. But it's important to remember that while people may have had years of backyard fireworks display, it only takes one incident to change a life."

Class 1.4G consumer fireworks are legal to purchase in Florida for those 18 years of age or older, but their recreational use is restricted to three designated

holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and the Fourth of July. Year-round use is only legal for agricultural purposes or if the devices are non-aerial "sparklers."

Lee County's strict burn ban—which was extended through the spring months due to drought—has officially been rescinded following recent seasonal rainfall. But local fire departments still urge extreme caution and recommend keeping a connected hose or fire extinguisher immediately on hand. And if you live in a neighborhood governed by a Homeowners Association, your HOA rules can legally override state law. Many Lee County HOAs fine residents heavily for setting off loud or aerial fireworks.

As a Critical Care Nurse Practitioner currently practicing at Naples Comprehensive Health (NCH), Goebel would rather see fewer people celebrate the holiday with backyard fireworks displays.

"I think attending a community fireworks display is safer," she says.

But if consumers are determined to stage their own backyard fireworks displays, Goebel stresses that they should follow established safety guidelines by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the National Safety Council, HealthChildren.org, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the American Burn Association (ABA) and the National Fire Protection Agency.

"Consumers should never point or throw fireworks at another person, never hold lighted fireworks in their hands, never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol, never ignite devices in a container," she says. "Additional safety measures include wearing protective eyewear when using or standing near someone using fireworks."

In 2024, there were 11 reported fireworks-related deaths in the United States—a 38% increase over 2023, with most involving misuse and device misfire/malfunctions, according to the CPSC. An estimated 14,700 people were injured by fireworks, up 52%. An estimated 1,700 emergency room-treated injuries in 2024 involving sparklers.

In multi-year tracking of fireworks-related deaths by the CPSC, 44% of the victims had consumed alcohol or drugs prior to the fatal incident. Multi-year injury estimates analyzed by Monge & Associates reveal that 11.7% of all adult fireworks injury cases treated in emergency departments directly involve alcohol or drug impairment.

"Burn injuries account for most firework injuries and may involve the hands, face, arms and legs," Goebel says. "Burn injuries may result in redness, blistering, swelling, severe pain, and in full-thickness injuries, the burn may destroy all layers of the skin and underlying tissues. Do not apply ice, butter, ointments or home remedies. Burns should be covered with a clean, dry dressing. 911 should be called for severe burn injuries."

Goebel's recommendation: Keep kids out of the equation.

"Children should never be allowed to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers," she says. "While sparklers may be considered 'safe', they burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and, according to the National Fire Protection Association, accounted for 29% of fireworks injuries for children under the age of 5 in 2022.

"Safer alternatives to sparklers or traditional fireworks include glow sticks, LED light toys, bubble machines, confetti poppers and colored streamers. Families can create a festive atmosphere and reduce the risk of fireworks-related injuries by planning safer alternatives such as outdoor movie nights, glow-in-the-dark games and patriotic craft activities. Decorating flag, painting rocks and other hands-on projects provide children with engaging experiences while eliminating the risk of injury."

Have fun. But be safe.

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Weight Loss Through Neuroregulation:

Addressing Binge Eating, Stress Eating, and Cognitive Overload

By Dr. Waldo Amadeo

Weight loss resistance is frequently approached through the lens of caloric intake, macronutrient ratios, and physical activity. While these variables play an important role in metabolic health, they do not fully explain why many individuals struggle with binge eating, stress-driven food behaviors, and cyclical weight regain despite repeated dietary interventions. Increasingly, clinical evidence suggests that dysregulated eating patterns are not solely behavioral issues, but neurophysiological responses driven by stress, emotional processing, and impaired executive function.

Reframing weight loss as a neurobehavioral process allows for more precise intervention—particularly in individuals who experience compulsive eating, intrusive food thoughts, and difficulty sustaining dietary consistency.

The Brain's Role in Eating Behavior

Eating behavior is regulated by an interconnected network of brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex, limbic system, hypothalamus, and brainstem. The prefrontal cortex governs impulse control, planning, and decision-making, while the limbic system processes emotional input, reward, and threat perception. The hypothalamus integrates hormonal signals related to hunger, satiety, and stress.

Under conditions of chronic stress, sleep disruption, or emotional overload, prefrontal cortex activity decreases while limbic system reactivity increases. This shift compromises impulse control and biases behavior toward immediate relief rather than long-term goals. Highly palatable foods—particularly those high in sugar or refined carbohydrates—provide rapid dopaminergic and serotonergic stimulation, making them a common coping mechanism during periods of cognitive strain.

In this context, binge eating is not a failure of discipline, but a predictable neurological response to reduced executive function and heightened stress signaling.

Stress, Cortisol, and Metabolic Consequences

Chronic psychological stress activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, resulting in sustained cortisol elevation. Cortisol increases appetite, promotes visceral fat storage, disrupts insulin sensitivity, and alters hunger-regulating hormones such as leptin and ghrelin. Over time, this hormonal environment favors fat retention and metabolic inefficiency.

Cortisol also intensifies mental rumination and emotional reactivity, reinforcing cycles of stress eating. Many individuals report feeling “out of control” around food during high-stress periods—not due to increased

caloric need, but because the brain is seeking rapid relief from cognitive overload. Repeated activation of this pattern strengthens neural associations between food and emotional regulation.

Binge Eating as a Nervous System Response

Binge eating behaviors are frequently associated with autonomic nervous system dysregulation. Individuals may spend much of the day in sympathetic dominance (fight-or-flight), followed by parasympathetic collapse (freeze or shutdown) later in the evening, when binge episodes most commonly occur.

This pattern is especially prevalent among high-performing adults, caregivers, and individuals with chronic stress exposure. In these cases, food functions as a self-soothing mechanism when adaptive nervous system regulation is insufficient. Traditional dietary counseling alone does not address this physiological pattern, which explains why compliance often deteriorates under stress.

Neuromodulation and Cognitive Control

Neuromodulation therapies have gained clinical interest for their role in regulating cortical excitability and improving executive function. By influencing neural activity in regions involved in impulse control, emotional regulation, and stress processing, these interventions may support behavioral change at the neurological level rather than relying solely on willpower.

Research on repetitive magnetic stimulation has demonstrated effects on mood regulation, compulsive behaviors, and cognitive flexibility. Improvements in mental clarity and emotional resilience may indirectly reduce binge eating frequency by restoring prefrontal control over limbic-driven impulses.

The Role of ExoMind Neuromodulation in Weight Loss Support

ExoMind is a noninvasive neuromodulation technology that applies repetitive magnetic stimulation to targeted cortical regions involved in executive function, emotional regulation, and stress response.

In the context of weight loss, ExoMind may be clinically relevant for individuals whose eating behaviors are driven by impulsivity, emotional reactivity, or chronic cognitive overload rather than metabolic hunger. By modulating activity in prefrontal networks responsible for decision-making and impulse control, ExoMind may help reduce intrusive food-related thoughts, diminish stress-driven eating patterns, and improve behavioral flexibility. Patients often report

improved mental clarity and reduced emotional reactivity, which can support greater consistency with nutritional and lifestyle recommendations.

Thought Patterns, Rumination, and Weight Loss Resistance

Persistent internal dialogue surrounding food—restriction, planning, guilt, and compensation—creates significant cognitive load. This mental fatigue further diminishes executive function, perpetuating cycles of overeating followed by restriction. Over time, the psychological burden of weight loss efforts becomes a barrier in itself.

Reducing maladaptive thought patterns is therefore essential for sustainable weight management. When cognitive noise decreases, individuals frequently report improved satiety awareness, less urgency around eating, and a more neutral relationship with food. Addressing neurological contributors to rumination allows nutritional strategies to be implemented more effectively.

Rethinking Weight Loss Interventions

Weight loss is not solely a metabolic equation, but a neurobehavioral process shaped by stress physiology, emotional regulation, and cognitive capacity. Approaches that fail to address the brain's role in eating behavior often lead to temporary success followed by relapse.

By integrating nervous system regulation, cognitive support, and functional nutrition, weight loss interventions can become more sustainable and less punitive. As clinical understanding continues to evolve, addressing binge eating and stress-related weight gain through a neuro-integrative framework represents a meaningful advancement in weight management care.

Dr. Waldo Amadeo is a chiropractor and functional neurology practitioner with advanced training in functional medicine and metabolic health. His clinical work focuses on the relationship between nervous system regulation, brain-based behavior, and chronic metabolic conditions in both adults and children.



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The Relationship Between COVID-19 And Hair Loss

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

C OVID-19 sent out shockwaves through all aspects of society, many of which we still feel today. We all remember the toilet paper shortages and the social distancing requirements, but less known are the long-term effects that can come from those who had this virus, some of which we're still trying to understand.

Among these conversations about COVID-19's lasting impact is an increasing number of reports of hair loss, which many people notice only after they have had the virus. By logical reasoning, the question then arises of whether COVID-19 can cause hair loss and how to reverse it in the case that it does.

Hair Loss from COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus most notably known for its effects on the respiratory system, where it likes to invade the lungs and interfere with breathing. This begs the question, though, of how this virus that prefers the lungs can result in hair loss. However, this hair loss might not be as central to COVID-19 as we expect.

Hair loss is normal after having any high fever or illness, and fever is a common symptom in those who have COVID-19 because of the body's desire to attack and rid itself of this outside contagion. So, hair loss has less to do with COVID-19 itself, and more to do with it being a virus that causes illness and fever in the body.

Furthermore, while many people may consider it hair loss, it's actually hair shedding, with the medical name of telogen effluvium. Still, the term hair loss is commonly used to depict the scenario.

A 2022 study into telogen effluvium found that of the 198 patients included in the study, 48 showed hair loss after having COVID-19, making it a prominent comorbidity, or lasting health complication, for those who had this virus.

Telogen effluvium (TE) is one of the most popular types of alopecia in women and can be provoked by:

- trauma
- stressful events
- hormonal imbalance
- malnutrition
- drugs



This condition occurs when more hairs than usual enter the shedding, or telogen, phase of the hair growth lifecycle at the same time.

So, while COVID-19 is not the only cause of TE, as a viral infection it is a possible culprit.

Why Does COVID-19 Trigger Hair Loss?

It can be a distressing situation to have undergone COVID-19 infection, something with aftereffects that are still largely unknown, only to begin experiencing hair loss. Furthermore, since hair shedding due to COVID does not occur immediately following infection, it can often be hard to narrow down if the cause is COVID, genetics, or something else entirely.

There are a few reasons why COVID-19 may cause hair loss, and they all primarily stem from stress. As for the type of stress, it can be physical stress on the body, or mental stress of the mind.

For physical stressors, those with COVID-19 often have a high fever, which is often associated with hair shedding following infection. While this stressor is mild, more serious physical stressors can also lead to

hair loss, such as being placed on a ventilator because of respiratory complications. Both of these complications place the body under physical stress, which may trigger TE.

COVID-19 also increases mental stress as you deal with the infection and how you feel because of it.

When you look at it this way, it is clear that COVID-19 infection can place tremendous stress on the body through various means, which is resulting in more cases of TE following infection.

Still, the severity of hair loss does not always relate to how severe the illness was. For instance, some people with severe COVID symptoms may not have any hair loss, while those with mild symptoms experience severe hair loss.

How Long Can It Last?

If you suffer from hair shedding due to COVID-19, or any other illness, it becomes most noticeable about two to three months after having the fever or infection. As for how long it lasts, it may take six to nine months before shedding stops and your hair begins to look normal again. However, some

studies on COVID-19-related hair shedding have seen that it stops sooner than this, sometimes in only two to three months instead of the six-month average.

Is COVID-19 Hair Loss Permanent?

The good news about TE from COVID-19 is that it is not permanent. The hair phase shifts to telogen more quickly than it should, but once the new strand begins growing in, the hair can return to normal.

This is because TE does not cause someone to lose their hair follicles, which is what occurs in the case of hair loss. While there might be a bit of time when the hair does not grow, since the hair follicle is still there, the hair will eventually regrow.

Still, as with most things, there is an exception. In less than 10% of cases, those experiencing hair shedding may suffer from chronic TE, which is when the hair shedding persists beyond six months. While the exact cause of chronic TE is unknown, in cases linked to COVID-19, it's suspected to be from the significant amount of stress you underwent while infected and the fact that you might not yet be back to normal even after six months. Even in this case, though, TE is not permanent, only longer lasting.

Reversing COVID-19-Related Hair Loss

If you are experiencing hair shedding due to TE, you do not have to worry about losing all of your hair, as the proportion of telogen hairs never exceeds 50%. Still, this is something that you likely want to avoid.

So, what can be done if you are suffering from hair loss? The following are some great steps:

Check For Other Causes of Hair Loss

Since TE is delayed from your COVID-19 infection, it can be hard to know if your hair loss is from COVID or something else. To be sure, you can check other possible causes of hair loss.

Nutritional deficiencies are one such possibility. Hair relies on a balanced amount of nutrients, and in some cases, your hair loss might be because you're suffering from a deficiency in one type.

A blood test can be used to check for any nutritional deficiencies that might be affecting your hair growth. Furthermore, focusing on a more well-rounded and healthy diet can increase your chances of getting all the nutrients your body needs from the food you eat.

Your hormones might also be the culprit, with thyroids that are unbalanced possibly being the cause of your hair loss. A laboratory test can check your thyroid hormones, and if they are unbalanced, medication can be prescribed to address the low or high levels.

Check Your Stress

If tests for nutrient deficiencies and unbalanced hormones show no problems in these areas, and TE is determined to be the cause of your hair shedding, the only thing that you can really do is wait it out.

However, it's easier said than done to give your hair months to hopefully regrow, but one very important thing that you can do in this time is focus on your stress levels and keep them as minimal as possible.

TE most often results from stress, whether the stress of your environment or stress placed on your body from the illness. To ensure that TE runs its course and does not stick around longer than you want, you want to ensure that your stress levels do not remain high.

If you experience stress in your life, whether from your work, home life, or even thoughts of your hair loss, you want to work hard to address these concerns to lower your stress. Finding a healthy way to work through your worries, such as meditation, exercise, or counseling, can also be influential.

As for stress due to illness, this involves providing your body with all it needs to properly care for itself and recover from illness. For instance, your body may require more sleep as it heals or a more balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients it can use to repair and damage.

Stress can keep TE around longer, so by actively working to reduce stress in all forms, you can increase the odds of your hair finally beginning the regrowth cycle.

Medication

Medication is not always the right choice, but sometimes it can be.

For those with acute TE, hair growth will recover spontaneously, and their hair will begin growing again. Because of this, and since it can be hard to know when to stop medication once it has been started, it's not often recommended for those with acute TE. However, once you have been experiencing hair shedding for four to six months, and it does not appear to be getting better, it might be time to look into medication.

Remember: It's Not Permanent

In most cases, hair shedding results because of stress. While it is usually from stress sustained by the body due to illness, any stress you experience from the current state of the world can also influence your hair's growth phase.

However, it's also common for hair shedding to then cause increasing stress, perpetuating the problem.

In these cases, it's important to remember that any hair loss due to TE is not permanent, and your hair will recover. Even chronic cases of TE, which last longer than 6 months, are still not cases of permanent hair loss. Once the body returns to balance, hair will begin regrowing again.

So, the best thing you can do to reverse hair loss is to remain calm, both in your mindset about any hair you have lost and in all other aspects of your life.

COVID-19 Hair Loss: Key Takeaways

Because of the increasing amount of physical and mental stress COVID-19 infection places on the body, more and more people are suffering from hair loss months after their infection.

Unfortunately, there's not much that can be done to reverse hair loss from COVID-19 beyond waiting for everything to sort itself out. If you find yourself at this point, remember that your hair will grow back, and this is only a temporary process.

Still, while COVID-19 can cause hair shedding, it may not be the cause of your hair loss, which is why it is best to reach out to a doctor to look into your health profile to determine if something else is to blame for your hair loss.

Remember, while hair is often considered only for its influence on physical appearance, it can provide a lot of information about your internal health. If your hair is shedding more than before, it may be wise to listen to your body and look into why this is happening with your doctor.

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The Anti-Inflammatory Diet: CAN FOOD REALLY HELP INFLAMMATION?

What people with joint pain, autoimmune disease, and chronic fatigue should know about eating for better health

By Alain Alvarez, MD

If you live with joint pain, autoimmune disease, or chronic fatigue, you've probably heard this advice: "Try an anti-inflammatory diet." But what does that mean, just a trend, or can food really affect inflammation?

The short answer is yes, but it's more nuanced than social media suggests. An anti-inflammatory diet isn't a miracle cure, and won't replace the right medications for rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, psoriatic arthritis, or other autoimmune diseases. But it can be a useful tool for overall health and, for some, feeling better.

What Is Inflammation?

Inflammation is part of the body's natural defense system, when you're injured or sick, the immune system sends signals to protect and heal, a normal, healthy response.

But sometimes inflammation becomes a problem. In autoimmune diseases, the immune system can attack the body's own tissues, causing joint pain, swelling, stiffness, fatigue, muscle aches, and skin rashes. Poor sleep, stress, smoking, excess weight, and diet can all influence inflammation too, which is where food comes in.

Can Food Really Affect Inflammation?

Yes, but not like a light switch that turns inflammation "on" or "off." Diet works more like a pattern over time: foods eaten often may either support your health or make inflammation harder to control. Some foods, eaten regularly in large amounts, are linked to more inflammation; others support heart and metabolic health and lower inflammation-related stress. So an "anti-inflammatory diet" usually means a long-term eating pattern, not a quick cleanse.

What Is an Anti-Inflammatory Diet?

It's not one single plan, but a style of eating built around whole, minimally processed foods: fruits, vegetables, beans and lentils, whole grains, nuts and seeds, olive oil, fish, and lean proteins, while limiting highly processed foods and those loaded with sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats.



This should sound familiar, it's essentially the Mediterranean-style diet, which gets so much attention because it's realistic, balanced, and well-researched. It typically includes plenty of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, beans, lentils, and nuts, olive oil as the main fat, fish more often than red meat, and limited processed foods and sweets.

This pattern is linked to better heart health, blood sugar control, and lower risk of some chronic diseases. Some studies also suggest it may help reduce pain and disease activity in certain inflammatory conditions, especially alongside other healthy habits.

Foods to Favor and Foods to Limit

Rather than chasing one "magic" ingredient, aim for a healthier overall pattern. Helpful foods include fruits and vegetables, fatty fish like salmon and sardines, olive oil, nuts and seeds, beans and lentils, and whole grains.

No food needs to be labeled "bad" forever, but some are worth limiting if they make up a large part of your diet: sugary drinks, frequent sweets, processed snacks, fast food, refined carbs like white bread and pastries, processed meats, and trans fats. These also contribute to weight gain, insulin resistance, high cholesterol, and poor heart health, all relevant to autoimmune disease.

What About Weight?

Fat tissue isn't just calorie storage, it's biologically active and can produce inflammatory signals. So excess weight can add to the inflammatory burden. This doesn't mean weight is the only cause of pain or fatigue, or that people should feel blamed for their symptoms. It simply means that, for some, improving nutrition and working toward a healthier weight may ease stress on the joints and reduce some symptoms over time.

Can Diet Cure Autoimmune Disease?

No. This is crucial: an anti-inflammatory diet does not cure rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, psoriatic arthritis, or other autoimmune diseases. Keep working with your healthcare team and taking medications as directed. Think of it this way: medication helps control the immune system, while lifestyle habits support overall health. Both matter.

If certain foods seem to worsen your symptoms, a simple food and symptom journal can help identify patterns. But avoid overly restrictive diets unless there's a clear medical reason, like celiac disease or a true food allergy. The goal isn't to fear food, it's to find a sustainable way of eating that's realistic.

So What Should You Actually Do?

Start small: add an extra serving of vegetables daily, swap white bread for whole-grain, replace sugary drinks with water or unsweetened tea, eat fish once or twice a week, use olive oil instead of butter, and add beans, lentils, or nuts to your meals. These small steps add up over time.

The Bottom Line

An anti-inflammatory diet isn't a magic cure, but it can help when living with joint pain, autoimmune disease, or chronic inflammation. The most useful approach isn't a strict "diet", it's a sustainable eating pattern built around more whole foods and fewer processed ones.

When it comes to inflammation, the goal isn't perfection, it's consistency. Small, realistic changes over time are often more powerful than extreme plans that are impossible to maintain. If you're living with arthritis, lupus, fatigue, or another inflammatory condition, talk with your healthcare team about whether nutrition changes might fit into your care plan.

Alain Alvarez, MD is a rheumatologist who cares for patients with arthritis, lupus, and other autoimmune diseases. Through RheumCare, he focuses on making complex rheumatology topics easier for patients and families to understand.

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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Treatment

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

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

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.

Source:

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM7OKwmg3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

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
- Injections of Aranesp for Anemia related to Kidney Disease
- 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 education 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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Can Ozone Therapy Help with Spike Protein?

Exploring the Science Behind the Therapy

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

As researchers continue investigating potential therapies for post-viral complications, EBOO therapy has emerged as a topic of significant interest in integrative medicine circles. Orchidia Medical Group offers this advanced treatment as part of their comprehensive wellness services, providing patients with access to one of the most sophisticated forms of ozone therapy available today.

Understanding EBOO Therapy

EBOO, which stands for Extracorporeal Blood Oxygenation and Ozonation, represents an advanced approach to blood purification and detoxification. Unlike conventional ozone therapies that treat small blood samples, EBOO processes significantly larger volumes—typically between two and six liters—during a single session. The procedure involves drawing blood from one vein, passing it through a specialized dialyzer while infusing it with medical-grade oxygen and ozone, then returning the treated blood through another vein.

This dual-action process combines ozonation with filtration, enabling the removal of various substances from the bloodstream while simultaneously enhancing oxygen delivery to tissues. The entire procedure typically lasts between 45 and 90 minutes and is performed in a comfortable clinical environment under continuous professional monitoring.

The Spike Protein Question

Among the conditions practitioners have explored with EBOO therapy is the presence of persistent spike proteins following viral infections. Some integrative medicine specialists report observing preliminary data suggesting decreases in spike protein and associated peptide levels after EBOO treatments.

The therapy may support general detoxification processes, and some practitioners believe this could indirectly benefit patients dealing with post-viral complications. Research in this area continues, with clinicians gathering data on patient outcomes to better understand EBOO's potential applications.

The Orchidia Medical Group Approach

At Orchidia Medical Group, patient safety and personalization remain paramount. Every EBOO treatment begins with a comprehensive consultation, during which experienced physicians evaluate whether the therapy is appropriate for each individual's health profile. Required laboratory testing includes complete blood count, comprehensive metabolic panel, and glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase testing to identify any contraindications.

Patients frequently report improvements in energy levels, mental clarity, and overall vitality following treatment. The therapy has also been associated with supporting immune function and reducing chronic inflammation, making it appealing to those seeking comprehensive wellness support.

Moving Forward

While EBOO therapy shows promise as a supportive treatment for various health concerns, patients should maintain realistic expectations and consult qualified medical professionals before pursuing any new therapy. Orchidia Medical Group emphasizes evidence-based practice while remaining open to emerging treatments that may benefit patient health.

For those interested in exploring EBOO therapy's potential benefits, scheduling a consultation represents the first step toward determining whether this advanced treatment aligns with individual health goals and circumstances. The team at Orchidia Medical Group is committed to guiding patients through this process, offering personalized care rooted in both scientific understanding and a genuine commitment to patient wellbeing. Contact Orchidia Medical Group today to learn more about EBOO therapy and discover whether this innovative treatment may be right for you.



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PICKLEBALL, GOLF, AND BEYOND:

How Active Adults Can Overcome Joint and Tendon Pain

By Dr. Conor Sperzel

You finally have the time. The kids are grown, the schedule is yours again, and pickleball courts, golf courses, and tennis clubs are calling. Then, mid-swing or mid-serve, something twinges. A knee aches the next morning. An elbow burns every time you grip a racquet. For many active adults, pain becomes the unexpected price of staying active and too often, it's the reason people quietly stop doing the things they love.

It doesn't have to be that way. Understanding what's actually causing the pain is the first step toward fixing it.

Not All Pain Is Created Equal

Three culprits show up again and again in active adults: arthritis, tendon injuries, and spine-related pain and they each demand a different approach.

1. Arthritis is the gradual wear of cartilage in a joint, most commonly the knee, hip, or shoulder. It tends to show up as a deep, achy stiffness that's worse in the morning or after activity, and it builds slowly over months or years.

2. Tendon injuries, like tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) or rotator cuff tendinopathy, are a different animal entirely. These involve irritation or microtearing where a tendon attaches to bone, often from repetitive motion, think thousands of overhead serves or backhand swings. The pain is usually sharper, more localized, and flares with specific movements.

3. Spine-related pain, from the lower back, neck, or sciatic nerve, can mimic both of the above but usually involves a nerve or disc issue. It often radiates, numbs, or tingles down an arm or leg, a key clue it's coming from the spine rather than the joint itself.

Getting the diagnosis right matters, because treating arthritis like a tendon problem (or vice versa) wastes time and can let the real issue worsen.



Pinpointing the Problem with Image Guidance

One of the biggest advances in pain management has been image-guided injection therapy. Using real-time ultrasound or fluoroscopy, physicians can now place medication with pinpoint accuracy, directly into an arthritic joint space, around an inflamed tendon, or near an irritated spinal nerve. This precision means better symptom relief with less medication overall, and it allows treatment of structures that were once difficult to reach safely.

The Power of PRP

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy has become a popular option for select tendon and joint conditions, including knee arthritis and tennis elbow. The treatment uses a concentrated sample of the patient's own platelets, drawn from their blood, to deliver growth factors directly to the injured tissue, supporting the body's natural healing response. While not a fit for every condition, PRP offers an appealing option for patients hoping to delay or avoid surgery.

Movement Is Medicine, Too

No injection or procedure works in isolation. Physical therapy and targeted rehabilitation remain essential for long-term success, strengthening the muscles that support an arthritic joint, correcting the mechanics that strain a tendon, or stabilizing a vulnerable spine. The goal isn't just pain relief today; it's building a body that can keep playing pickleball, golfing, and walking for years to come.

Staying in the Game

The biggest shift in pain management isn't one single breakthrough, it's the move toward minimally invasive, precisely targeted care that gets active adults back to what they love faster, with less downtime and fewer risks than traditional surgery.

Joint and tendon pain shouldn't be the reason you hang up your racquet or clubs. With the right diagnosis and a modern, personalized treatment plan, staying active well into your 60s, 70s, and beyond isn't just possible, it's increasingly the expectation.

Vanguard Spine & Pain specializes in advanced, minimally invasive treatments to help active adults move through life with less pain and more freedom.

To learn more or schedule a consultation, contact Vanguard Spine & Pain in Naples.



Dr. Conor Sperzel is a Harvard-fellowship-trained Interventional Pain Management physician and founder of Vanguard Spine and Pain in Naples, FL. His background in Physiatry (Rehabilitation Medicine) shapes his approach to interventional pain care. Rather than focusing on pain alone, he emphasizes restoring function and helping patients return to the activities that matter most to them. He treats a wide range of conditions including sciatica, neck and back pain, arthritis-related pain, and other musculoskeletal and nerve disorders using precise, minimally invasive techniques performed in an outpatient setting. His practice emphasizes individualized care, detailed functional evaluation, and timely access to treatment.



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Navigating Solo Aging

Advocating for Yourself and Preparing for the Future

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

As our population ages, an increasing number of older adults find themselves making decisions about their future independently, without the support of adult children or close relatives. This experience, known as solo aging, is becoming more prevalent in society. With projections indicating that one in five Americans will be retirement age by 2030, it is crucial for solo agers to understand the unique challenges they may face and take proactive steps to advocate for themselves and prepare for the future.

What is Solo Aging?

Solo agers are older adults who are navigating the aging process without immediate family support. This group includes individuals or couples without children, those who never married or had children, individuals living alone due to divorce or the death of a partner, and those whose children or relatives live far away or are not involved in their lives. Many solo agers associate living alone as they age with positive feelings such as independence, satisfaction, and happiness. However, they may also experience a sense of lacking companionship, feeling left out, and isolation compared to the general population aged 50 and above.

Challenges Faced by Solo Agers

While solo agers may have a positive outlook on their aging journey, they face unique concerns and challenges. Solo agers are more likely to fear dying alone, being moved somewhere against their will, and having someone appointed by the court to make decisions for them. Additionally, this group

tends to worry about losing their independence, being alone without family or friends around, and not being able to stay in their homes.

Lack of Preparedness

One of the significant issues faced by solo agers is a lack of preparedness for the future. Only about one-third of solo agers report having someone who could assist in managing their household or handle day-to-day expenses if they were no longer able to do so. Furthermore, a considerable number of solo agers have postponed making their end-of-life wishes known. Approximately half have an advanced medical directive, and even among those who have one, only a fraction have shared it with their primary care doctor. Additionally, a significant percentage of solo agers have not created a will or trust, nor made arrangements for their funeral or burial. Many have done little or no planning for living assistance as they age.

Empowering Solo Agers Through Advocacy and Preparation

Solo agers must be proactive in advocating for themselves and planning for their future. Here are some steps they can take to navigate solo aging successfully:

- 1. Building a Supportive Network:** Engage with community organizations, social groups, and online communities that cater to the needs of solo agers. These connections can provide companionship, support, and assistance when needed.
- 2. Communicating End-of-Life Wishes:** Create advanced medical directives, such as a living will or health care proxy, to ensure your medical preferences

are known and respected. Share these documents with your primary-care doctor and trusted individuals who may be involved in your care.

3. Legal and Financial Planning: Consult with an attorney to create a comprehensive estate plan that includes a will or trust, power of attorney, and other relevant legal documents. Regularly review and update these documents to reflect any changes in circumstances.

4. Long-Term Care Options: Educate yourself about various living options available for aging adults, such as assisted living, independent living communities, or home care services. Understand the costs, benefits, and eligibility criteria associated with each option.

5. Caregiver Support: Consider building a network of trusted individuals, such as friends, neighbors, or professional caregivers, who can provide assistance with day-to-day tasks, manage household responsibilities, and offer emotional support.

Solo aging presents unique opportunities and challenges for older adults. By embracing independence, building supportive networks, and taking proactive steps to plan for the future, solo agers can advocate for themselves and ensure a fulfilling and secure retirement journey. It is essential to address concerns, communicate end-of-life wishes, and make informed decisions about long-term care to enjoy a life that is meaningful, connected, and prepared for the years to come.

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BRAIN HEALTH IS TRAINABLE: WHAT NEW RESEARCH REVEALS ABOUT KEEPING YOUR MIND SHARP

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

Most people know they should exercise their body to stay healthy as they age. What many don't realize is that the brain also benefits from regular exercise.

For decades, cognitive decline was viewed as an inevitable part of aging. Today, scientists understand that the brain possesses an incredible ability called **neuroplasticity**—the capacity to adapt, form new connections, and improve function throughout life. This discovery has led researchers to explore whether targeted brain training can help maintain cognitive health and reduce the risk of age-related decline.

One program receiving significant attention is **BrainHQ**®, an online cognitive training platform developed by neuroscientists and supported by decades of research. Unlike traditional puzzles or word games, BrainHQ uses scientifically designed exercises that adapt to each user's performance, continuously challenging the brain to improve speed, attention, memory, and processing skills.

Interest in BrainHQ recently increased following findings published in a journal of the Alzheimer's Association. Researchers analyzed data from the landmark NIH-funded ACTIVE Study, which followed more than 2,800 older adults for 20 years. Participants who completed a specific type of speed-of-processing training—now available through BrainHQ—experienced a significant reduction in diagnosed dementia compared to those who did not receive the training. In the group that completed booster training sessions, researchers reported a 25% reduction in dementia diagnoses over the study period.

These findings are particularly noteworthy because the benefit was not seen with every type of cognitive activity. Researchers found that the speed-based training produced measurable long-term results, suggesting that certain forms of cognitive exercise may be more effective than others.

Additional studies have shown improvements in areas such as attention, memory, processing speed, and everyday cognitive functioning among older adults who participated in BrainHQ training. Researchers believe these exercises help the brain



process information more efficiently, supporting skills that are important for daily life, including driving, medication management, communication, and decision-making.

Brain health affects much more than memory. Cognitive function influences concentration, problem-solving, reaction time, learning, and the ability to remain independent. As life expectancy continues to increase, maintaining cognitive wellness is becoming an important part of healthy aging.

Of course, brain training is only one piece of the puzzle. Experts continue to recommend a comprehensive approach to cognitive health that includes regular physical activity, quality sleep, social engagement, healthy nutrition, and management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Brain training programs like BrainHQ are designed to complement these healthy lifestyle habits, providing structured mental exercise that targets specific cognitive skills.

An additional benefit for many older adults is accessibility. BrainHQ is available online and can be completed from home on a computer or tablet. The program is covered by Medicare and most Medicare advantage plans, making cognitive training more accessible for eligible participants. Some co-pays may apply.

At Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy, we are excited to introduce BrainHQ as part of our commitment to supporting whole-person wellness. Just as

we take proactive steps to protect our heart health and physical fitness, caring for our cognitive health deserves equal attention.

If you have concerns about memory, focus, attention, or overall brain health, speak with your healthcare provider. Learning more about evidence-based cognitive training may be an important step toward maintaining a sharper, healthier mind for years to come.



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Childhood Obesity and Its Impact on Mental Health

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Childhood obesity is a pressing issue that has far-reaching consequences, not only on physical health but also on mental well-being. As rates of overweight and obesity continue to rise among children and adolescents, it is crucial to understand the intricate relationship between excess weight and mental health in this vulnerable population.

One of the primary contributors to childhood obesity and its impact on mental health is the stigma and discrimination associated with being overweight or obese. Children and adolescents who are affected by obesity often face bullying, teasing, and social isolation from their peers, which can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. This negative social experience can create a vicious cycle, as emotional distress may lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as overeating or sedentary behaviors, exacerbating the problem.

Furthermore, obesity itself can have direct physiological effects on mental health. Research has shown that excess body weight is associated with inflammation and imbalances in hormones and neurotransmitters, which can contribute to mood disorders, including depression and anxiety. Additionally, obesity-related health conditions, such as sleep apnea and type 2 diabetes, can further compound mental health issues.



Mental health professionals and healthcare providers should be vigilant in identifying potential mental health concerns in children and adolescents affected by obesity. Early intervention is crucial, as untreated mental health issues can persist into adulthood and may contribute to the development of other chronic health problems.

Treatment options for addressing the mental health impacts of childhood obesity often involve a multidisciplinary approach, combining psychological support, nutritional guidance, and physical activity interventions. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to be effective in improving body image, self-esteem, and coping strategies for children and adolescents struggling with obesity-related mental health issues.

Additionally, family-based interventions that involve parents or caregivers can be beneficial, as they can provide a supportive environment and promote healthy lifestyle changes within the household. Encouraging regular physical activity and promoting a balanced diet can not only improve physical health but also boost mood and self-confidence.

It is essential to address the mental health aspects of childhood obesity with sensitivity and compassion. Promoting a positive body image, fostering self-acceptance, and providing appropriate support systems can empower children and adolescents to develop healthy coping mechanisms and enhance their overall well-being.

In conclusion, childhood obesity and mental health are inextricably linked, and a holistic approach that addresses both physical and psychological factors is crucial for promoting the overall well-being of children and adolescents affected by this condition. By raising awareness, providing early intervention, and implementing comprehensive treatment strategies, we can support the mental health of our youth and help them navigate this challenging journey with resilience and confidence.

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

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Dr Capiola's mission is to focus on the strengths inherent in all of us to help overcome any problems and life stresses that make us feel stuck and limited. He combines psychotherapy and medication management into all patient visits.



Health Insurance

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

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Do not talk to someone you have not given permission to call. Ask them for their **National Producer Number** and report them to Medicare for an unsolicited call.

CMS has made many changes for Medicare recipients. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone, you need to agree to be recorded, and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person, appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that authorizes us to talk to you about Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan. It does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics.

One of the biggest changes for 2026 related to Medicare Part D Prescriptions whether withing a Part C Advantage plan or a stand-alone Part D drug Plan. Your yearly Part D out-of-pocket costs will be capped at \$2,100 in 2026. You must buy medications using your plan and the medication must be **in formulary** to go toward the cap. You will also have a payment option to pay out-pocket costs in monthly amounts over the plan year, instead of paying when you receive the medications. This is done through the insurance company that you purchased your plan.

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?

Special Enrollment Periods – You moved out of your plans service area, New to Medicare, Retiring and coming off your employer group plan, Going into or out of Skilled Nursing, Medicaid and other's may apply.

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Travel Insurance – Did you know that most health insurance does NOT cover you outside of the country and that includes a cruise, in international waters (4 miles out). Travel insurance is not just about trip cancelation but most importantly what if you got sick or had an accident on your trip. Medical Trip insurance is very important and most of the time not very costly when you are out way the benefits.

Life Insurance – You are never too young to have life insurance, and many types offer living benefits. As an example, I purchase life insurance for my grandchildren almost as soon as they are born. Their policy continues to build cash value that they can use during their lives, for education, wedding or even a 1st home purchase. The younger you are the lower the cost. There are many types of life insurance, and it is important to understand the differences between them. You also have payment options, such as 10-Pay, this type of policy you can pay the premium in full in 10 years, there are other terms available as well.

Long Term Care Insurance – Overall, 48.7% of older adults with ADL difficulties (or an estimated 3 million persons aged 70 and older) reported needing some sort of personal assistance with one or more ADLs, and, of those individuals with need, 20.7% (or an estimated 629,000 persons) had an unmet need. Long Term Care Insurance helps pay for in-home or facility-based needs, such as assistance with acts of daily living or help with paying for a facility. Start shopping for this insurance in your 40's, but it's never too late to try. Your overall health will pay a major roll in the cost of the plan's premium. The sooner than later for affordability. You have payment options such as a single payment, 10-Pay where the premium is paid-in-full in 10 years. You also get a discount with most companies doing a joint policy with your spouse. Remember Medicare is NOT meant for Nursing Home Care/Skilled Nursing.

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Paternity DNA testing is a powerful tool for determining if a biological relationship exists between a father and a child. By analyzing genetic material from both parties, our highly accurate tests can provide conclusive answers, offering peace of mind and clarity in matters of paternity.

2. GPS Origins Ancestry Test:

Embark on a captivating journey through your ancestral lineage with our GPS Origins Ancestry Test. This comprehensive analysis delves into your genetic origins, revealing your ancestral migration routes and the fascinating stories behind your family's history. Uncover the rich tapestry of your heritage and gain a deeper appreciation for your cultural roots.

3. MTHFR PGx Panel:

Genes play a crucial role in shaping our traits, from physical characteristics to health predispositions. Our MTHFR PGx Panel analyzes genetic variations that can influence the metabolism of folate, a vital

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Understanding the genetic factors contributing to conditions like addiction and ADHD can be a game-changer in managing and treating these complex disorders. Our specialized PGx Panels explore the genetic variations that may influence an individual's susceptibility to addiction or ADHD, paving the way for more targeted and effective treatment approaches.

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In cases where paternity cannot be established, our Avuncular Informational DNA Testing offers a valuable alternative. By analyzing the genetic material of an alleged uncle and the child, we can determine the likelihood of a biological relationship, providing crucial information for family matters.

6. Cardiovascular PGx Panel and Comprehensive PGx Panel:

Genetic predispositions can play a significant role in various health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases. Our Cardiovascular PGx Panel and Comprehensive PGx Panel examine genetic variations that may influence an individual's risk for heart-related issues, empowering healthcare professionals to develop personalized preventive and treatment strategies.



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Private Duty In Home Care Aides Benefit Alzheimer's Patients and their Family Caregivers

Home health care providers play a vital role in improving the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia who are aging at home. Their services encompass a wide range of support, including assistance with daily activities, medication management, emotional support, and engaging in meaningful activities. By addressing the unique needs of both individuals with Alzheimer's and their family caregivers, home health aides can significantly enhance the well-being of those affected by the disease.

1. Assistance with Activities of Daily Living:

Alzheimer's and dementia often impair individuals' ability to perform routine tasks such as bathing, dressing, and meal preparation. Home health aides are trained to provide hands-on assistance with these activities, helping individuals maintain their dignity and independence while ensuring their safety. According to the Alzheimer's Association, approximately 70% of people with dementia receive care at home, highlighting the crucial role of home health aides in supporting these individuals with daily tasks.

2. Medication Management:

Proper medication management is essential for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia to maintain their health and manage symptoms effectively. Home health aides can help ensure that medications are taken as prescribed, reducing the risk of medication errors and complications. According to a study published in the Journal of Applied Gerontology, home health care services have been shown to improve medication adherence among older adults, including those with dementia.

3. Emotional Support and Companionship:

Alzheimer's and dementia can be isolating conditions, leading to feelings of loneliness and depression among affected individuals. Home health aides provide much-needed companionship and emotional support, engaging clients in conversation, reminiscing, and stimulating activities. Research published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society has shown that social interaction and emotional support from caregivers can improve the quality of life and well-being of individuals with dementia.



4. Engagement in Meaningful Activities:

Keeping individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia engaged in stimulating activities is essential for maintaining cognitive function and reducing behavioral symptoms such as agitation and aggression. Home health aides can plan and facilitate activities tailored to the individual's interests and abilities, such as music therapy, art projects, and gentle exercise. According to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Nursing, engagement in meaningful activities has been associated with improved mood and cognitive function in individuals with dementia.

5. Respite Care for Family Caregivers:

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia can be physically and emotionally demanding, leading to caregiver stress and burnout. Home health aides offer respite care services, allowing family caregivers to take a much-needed break from their caregiving responsibilities. Research from the Alzheimer's Association indicates that family caregivers who utilize respite care services report reduced stress levels and increased satisfaction with their caregiving role.

Whitsyms home health aides play a critical role in improving the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia aging at home. Their support encompasses assistance with daily activities, medication management, emotional support, and engagement in meaningful activities. By addressing the unique needs of both individuals with dementia and their family caregivers, home health aides contribute to enhancing the overall well-being of those affected by the disease.

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5 Signs You Need a Better Cleaning Service

by **maidpro**

Hiring a professional cleaning service should make your life easier. However, not all cleaning services operate at the same standard of professionalism and cleaning quality. If you see these five signs that your current cleaning service isn't good enough, it's time for a change. When you hire the cleaning pros and MaidPro, you can feel confident that your home's cleaning needs are in professional hands.

1. Poor Timing

Your cleaning service should be able to clean your house when you need them to. This means having scheduling flexibility. You should be able to choose the day and time that works best for you. In addition, your cleaning service should arrive on time, every time. If your professional cleaner is not doing these things, they are not respecting your time as the client. At MaidPro, we work with homeowners to establish the best cleaning schedule for them. We then arrive on time, ready to work.

2. Outdated Equipment

The cleaning service you hire should have up-to-date equipment in good condition. That way, they can provide an effective cleaning service. If your cleaning service doesn't have the right equipment, it's broken, or outdated; then you need a better cleaning service. At MaidPro, we are committed to having the best. We take pride in outfitting our cleaners with the best equipment available. That way, our clients get the best clean possible in their homes.



3. Fast Not Thorough

While a fast cleaning service can initially sound appealing, this isn't necessarily good. A cleaner that moves through your home quickly is not paying attention to the details. A fast cleaner will miss things. The cleaners and MaidPro take the time necessary to clean your home thoroughly. We do this at each visit. This ensures cleaning consistency and thoroughness each time we visit.

4. Lack of Professionalism

Your cleaning service should be professional. This means dressing appropriately, being friendly, and respecting your personal items. If your cleaner isn't doing these things, they are not acting professionally. The cleaners at MaidPro pride themselves on being a service you can trust. We respect you and your home.

5. Doesn't Follow Instructions

Each home and homeowner is different. This means that no cleaning service is the same as another. Your cleaning service should know and understand this. If they routinely ignore your requests or special instructions, it is time to find a new service. When you hire the pros at MaidPro, we work with you to establish the cleaning service you need and want for your home. This could be an extra add-on service or instructions not to go in a specific room. Because we aim to have the same cleaner return to your home for each service, we can accommodate these special requests and ensure your instructions are followed.

Hire MaidPro Cleaning Service

If you see signs that your cleaning service isn't good enough, it's time to make a change. Your home is your family's sanctuary; your cleaning service should respect that. When you hire MaidPro cleaning services, you can trust that your cleaner will arrive on time, be professional, and thoroughly clean your home.

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CAREGIVER BURDEN IN ALZHEIMER'S TRIALS: Measuring an Overlooked Outcome

In Alzheimer's disease, decline rarely belongs to one person alone. It changes the household. A spouse becomes a medication manager. An adult child becomes a scheduler, advocate, driver, financial monitor, and emotional anchor. The work is intimate, constant, and often invisible.

That invisibility is beginning to matter scientifically.

For decades, Alzheimer's clinical trials have focused on cognition, function, safety, and, more recently, biomarkers such as amyloid and tau. These measures remain essential. But researchers are increasingly recognizing that the value of a treatment cannot be understood fully unless it also considers the person providing daily care.

The Alzheimer's Association's 2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures report estimates that more than 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, with nearly 13 million unpaid caregivers providing support. That scale makes caregiver burden more than a private hardship. It's a public health outcome.

Most Alzheimer's trials already rely on caregivers. A knowledgeable study partner often helps report changes in memory, judgment, daily function, medication use, and safety. The Clinical Dementia Rating—Sum of Boxes, or CDR-SB, one of the field's most widely used tools, incorporates information from both the patient and a reliable informant, often a spouse, adult child, or close care partner.

But caregiver input about the patient is not the same as measuring caregiver burden. A caregiver may be asked whether a loved one is forgetting appointments, while no one asks whether the caregiver is sleeping, missing work, feeling isolated, or grieving the gradual loss of the relationship as it once was. That distinction matters. Caregivers have long served as observers in Alzheimer's research. Only more recently have they begun to be treated as people with measurable outcomes of their own.

A 2021 review of dementia drug trials found that very few studies measured how treatment affected caregivers. When they did, researchers most often used the Zarit Burden Interview, a questionnaire



that asks about the emotional, physical, and social strain of caregiving. Some studies also measured how distressed caregivers felt by dementia-related behavior changes, such as agitation, anxiety, or sleep disruption.

Caregiver burden is not a vague or sentimental concept. It is measurable. It includes emotional strain, social restriction, physical fatigue, financial pressure, anxiety, role changes, and grief.

August is *National Grief Awareness Month* and it offers a timely reminder that dementia caregiving often includes grief before death. The Alzheimer's Association describes grief and loss as common experiences for caregivers, sometimes beginning at diagnosis and recurring as the disease changes personality, independence, and shared roles. The Family Caregiver Alliance, drawing on the work of family therapist and researcher Pauline Boss, describes dementia caregiving through the lens of "ambiguous loss" — or the painful experience of someone being physically present but psychologically changed.

This grief is not incidental. Research in dementia caregiving has linked anticipatory grief with psychological distress, including depressive symptoms. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's patient-focused drug development efforts have also emphasized the importance of systematically collecting patient and caregiver input when evaluating medical products.

One notable example came from the phase 3 Clarity AD trial of lecanemab in early Alzheimer's disease. In exploratory quality-of-life analyses published in *The Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease*, investigators reported that lecanemab was associated with less increase in care partner burden over 18 months compared with placebo, as measured by the Zarit Burden Interview.

That finding should be interpreted carefully. Not every treatment that slows decline will reduce caregiver burden. Some therapies may ease disease-related burden while adding treatment-related burden through infusions, monitoring, travel, cost, or anxiety about side effects. Future trials will need to distinguish among disease burden, caregiving workload, emotional burden, treatment burden, and the positive dimensions of caregiving, such as purpose, closeness, and love.

Clinicians do not need to wait for trial design to evolve. A brief caregiver check-in can be as important as a medication review: Are you sleeping? How many hours of care are you providing? Are you missing your own medical appointments? Because making a clinical trial more patient-centric means equipping and empowering the caregiver to remain healthy, supported, and able to sustain care.

To make it easy to get a memory screen, the Neuropsychiatric Research Center of Southwest Florida (NPRC) offers free memory screens at our office. To schedule your free memory screen, contact us at 239-939-7777. Please bring a list of your current medications to your appointment. The screening and all services provided at our center are at no cost to you and we do not ask for any insurance information. At the Neuropsychiatric Research center there are many cutting edge clinical studies that are focused on addressing memory issues. Take charge of your brain health and schedule your free memory screen today! #Memoriesmatter



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THE POWER OF HELPFUL HABITS

By Pastor Tim Neptune

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in busyness and miss what truly matters. We only get one chance to make our mark in the world, so it is important that we make wise choices and build good habits that will help us reach our goals.

Have you ever wondered what habits Jesus had during his life? In the Gospel of Luke, we discover that when Jesus was just 12-years-old, he stayed behind in Jerusalem during Passover. His parents discovered that he was not with him and went to search for him. When they found him, he was in the temple listening to teachers and asking questions.

Everyone was amazed at His understanding. Luke 2:52 reveals the balanced growth Jesus experienced: *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."* This covers intellectual development (wisdom), physical growth (stature), spiritual connection (favor with God), and social well-being (favor with man).

Jesus didn't skip the ordinary. He worked as a carpenter, spent time with family and friends, fished, laughed, and learned Scripture through regular synagogue attendance and prayer. These weren't flashy moments but consistent rhythms that shaped Him. Even during His ministry years, Jesus rose early for solitary prayer (Mark 1:35), withdrew to quiet places amid crowds (Luke 5:16), and returned to the Mount of Olives *"as was His custom"* (Luke 22:39). As the Son of God in human flesh, He modeled disciplined habits to stay grounded amid life's demands.

The same principle applies to us. Success in health and wellness rarely comes from one dramatic change but from small, repeated actions. As James Clear notes in *Atomic Habits*, tiny adjustments compound into remarkable results. Your weight reflects your eating habits, your energy your movement patterns, your peace your daily rhythms with God and others.

Think of an ice cube in a 25-degree cooler. Raising the temperature one degree at a time does nothing visible—until 32 degrees, when it melts. Breakthroughs build from incremental shifts. Reduce calories by 500 daily for steady weight loss. Commit to a short morning prayer or Scripture reading, even if just a few verses or sentences, like King



David's habit: *"In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice"* (Psalm 5:3). Take a brief walk, sit quietly in your car, or pause in the shower to breathe and recenter.

If you're feeling stressed, rushed, or disconnected, examine your habits. Struggle with consistent Bible time or exercise? Start with 10 minutes. Want deeper relationships? Schedule regular, undistracted connections. Scripture reminds us: faithfulness in little things leads to greater things. Compound interest works in finances, fitness, and faith alike.

We face evil days, as Ephesians 5:15-16 warns, so wise living means making the most of every opportunity. Daily habits of prayer, movement, learning, and connection build resilience, reduce stress, and align us more closely with God's design for flourishing.

One year from today, you'll be the same person you are today unless you choose new rhythms now. Don't wait for motivation—build the habits that create it. Commit to small, consistent steps toward intellectual curiosity, physical stewardship, spiritual depth, and meaningful relationships. You're a work in progress, being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Make the changes today, and watch transformation unfold.

Pastor Timothy Neptune is the founding lead pastor of Venture Church Naples. For more on building life-giving rhythms, visit venturenaples.com.



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