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THE IMPACT OF ORAL HEALTH ON OVERALL WELL-BEING: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Oral health is an integral part of overall well-being and has a profound impact on a person's general health. The mouth serves as the gateway to the body, and maintaining good oral hygiene goes beyond just a bright smile. An increasing body of evidence suggests that poor oral health is linked to a variety of systemic conditions and can significantly influence a person's overall health and quality of life. In this article, we will explore the connections between oral health and various systemic diseases, emphasizing the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene.

Oral Health and Cardiovascular Disease

The link between oral health and cardiovascular disease has gained significant attention in recent years. Several studies have established a correlation between periodontal (gum) disease and an increased risk of developing heart disease. Gum disease causes inflammation in the mouth, and these inflammatory markers can enter the bloodstream and contribute to inflammation in blood vessels, raising the risk of atherosclerosis (narrowing of arteries) and ultimately increasing the likelihood of heart attacks and strokes (Tonetti et al., 2017).

Oral Health and Diabetes

Individuals with diabetes are more susceptible to gum disease due to impaired blood sugar regulation. On the other hand, gum disease can also negatively impact diabetes management. The presence of periodontitis can lead to insulin resistance, making it more challenging to control blood sugar levels (Llambés et al., 2015). This two-way relationship underscores the importance of proper oral care for those with diabetes to improve their overall health outcomes.

Oral Health and Respiratory Conditions

Maintaining good oral hygiene is crucial for maintaining respiratory health. Poor oral health has been associated with an increased risk of respiratory infections such as pneumonia, especially in vulnerable populations like the elderly and individuals with compromised immune systems (Azarpazhooh & Leake, 2006). The aspiration of oral bacteria into the respiratory tract can lead to infections, highlighting the need for good oral hygiene practices in preventing respiratory illnesses.

Oral Health and Pregnancy

During pregnancy, oral health takes on added significance as it has implications for both the mother and the baby. Periodontal disease has been linked to adverse pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight (Srinivas et al., 2009). Pregnant women should pay extra attention to their oral health, and regular dental check-ups can help reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy.

Oral Health and Mental Health

The connection between oral health and mental health is a relatively new area of research. However, some studies suggest that poor oral health, particularly tooth loss, may be associated with an increased risk of developing conditions like depression and anxiety (Friedlander et al., 2017). The impact of oral health on self-esteem and social interactions can also affect a person's mental well-being.

The evidence is clear: oral health is closely intertwined with overall health. Neglecting oral hygiene can have far-reaching consequences, affecting various systems within the body and leading to increased risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes complications, respiratory infections, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and potential mental health challenges. To promote optimal well-being, individuals should prioritize oral health by adopting good oral hygiene practices, including regular dental check-ups, brushing and flossing daily, and maintaining a healthy diet.

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Mat Mouritsen, DMD

Dr. Mat Mouritsen considers himself a lifelong student of all things dental health-related and is constantly engaged and eager to learn. His passion for teaching and learning has been the driving force in his career.

He worked as a mentor at the Spear Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. There he helped other dentists learn and understand many advanced concepts in dentistry.

Dr. Mouritsen has studied with some of the most prominent experts in the field of airway and sleep-breathing disorders. As a member of airway prosthodontics, he continues to study and learn with doctors worldwide to find new ways to understand better and treat breathing-related health issues. He is particularly passionate about this because several close family members have been affected by sleep breathing disorders, including sleep apnea. He has unbounded enthusiasm for helping people to find individual solutions that can result in dramatic changes in nighttime rest and overall health.

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WORLD CANCER SUPPORT MONTH: Breast Cancer Patients Uniting for Strength and Hope

By Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

World Cancer Support Month serves as a powerful reminder of the collective strength and compassion needed to combat cancer. Among the many types of cancer, breast cancer continues to affect millions of lives worldwide. This article explores how breast cancer patients come together during World Cancer Support Month, forming bonds of solidarity, sharing experiences, and offering unwavering support to one another. Through their united efforts, they inspire hope, raise awareness, and make a profound impact on the fight against breast cancer.

The Significance of World Cancer Support Month
World Cancer Support Month, observed annually in October, holds immense importance in raising awareness about cancer, highlighting the challenges faced by patients, and fostering a sense of community among cancer survivors. It provides a platform for individuals, organizations, and communities to come together and support those affected by cancer, including breast cancer patients.

Empowering the Breast Cancer Community

Breast cancer patients often find solace and strength by connecting with others who have shared similar experiences. During World Cancer Support Month, numerous support groups, both online and offline, organize events and activities exclusively for breast cancer patients. These platforms enable individuals to share their stories, exchange coping strategies, and build lasting connections.

Supportive Networks and Resources

World Cancer Support Month showcases the diverse range of resources available to breast cancer patients. From local support groups to global initiatives, patients gain access to a wealth of information, emotional support, and practical advice. These networks offer a safe space for patients to discuss concerns, seek guidance, and find comfort amidst the challenges of their journey.

Community Events and Fundraisers

World Cancer Support Month witnesses a surge of community events and fundraisers dedicated to breast cancer awareness and support. Walks, runs, and other activities bring breast cancer patients,



survivors, caregivers, and advocates together, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. Such events not only raise funds for research and treatment but also generate awareness and highlight the importance of early detection.

Educational Campaigns and Awareness Initiatives

Breast cancer patients and survivors play a vital role in educating others about the disease during World Cancer Support Month. Through speaking engagements, online campaigns, and local initiatives, they share their personal stories, knowledge, and experiences, promoting awareness and encouraging proactive healthcare measures. Their collective voice helps debunk myths, dispel stigma, and emphasize the significance of regular screenings and self-examinations.

Creating Supportive Online Communities

In today's digital age, breast cancer patients leverage the power of social media and online platforms to connect and support one another. World Cancer Support Month sees an upsurge in online communities, forums, and social media groups specifically designed for breast cancer patients. These virtual spaces offer a constant source of encouragement, information, and a platform to express concerns and triumphs.

Inspiring Stories of Resilience

World Cancer Support Month shines a spotlight on the incredible resilience and determination displayed by breast cancer patients. Their stories of survival, courage, and resilience inspire others facing similar challenges and create a sense of hope. These narratives foster an environment where breast cancer patients can find strength, hope, and motivation to persevere.

World Cancer Support Month serves as a powerful reminder of the strength, resilience, and unity within the breast cancer community. Through shared experiences, support networks, community events, and awareness initiatives, breast cancer patients find solace, support, and empowerment. Their unwavering spirit and determination create a ripple effect, inspiring others, raising awareness, and fostering a global movement against breast cancer. Together, they embody the essence of World Cancer Support Month, reminding the world that no one fights alone in the battle against cancer.

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PHYSICIANS REGIONAL EXPANDS THEIR COMPREHENSIVE STROKE PROGRAM



Physicians Regional Pine Ridge Hospital is the Only DNV Accredited Comprehensive Stroke Center in Collier County

Physicians Regional Pine Ridge announces that it has received certification from DNV as a Comprehensive Stroke Center, reflecting the highest level of competence for treatment of serious stroke events. Physicians Regional Pine Ridge hospital is the only Comprehensive Stroke Center in Collier County.

“With stroke care, you must have the best clinicians and resources, but also the ability to act organizationally with extreme efficiency because of the time-critical nature of these events,” says Scott Lowe, CEO for Physicians Regional Healthcare System. “This certification from DNV validates all the effort we have put into this program and to ensure the health and safety of our patients.”

The DNV Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification is based on standards set forth by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association, and affirms that the medical center addresses the full spectrum of stroke care – diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and education – and establishes clear metrics to evaluate outcomes.

Comprehensive stroke centers are typically and largest and best-equipped hospitals and a given geographical area that can treat any kind of stroke or stroke complication. In a growing number of states, stroke center certification determines to which facility a patient should be taken for the most appropriate, reimbursable care.

Physicians Regional Collier Blvd Hospital Receives Certification from DNV as a Primary Stroke Center.

Physicians Regional Collier Blvd announces that it has received the DNV Primary Stroke Center Certification. This certification is based on standards set forth by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association, and affirms that the medical center addresses the full spectrum of stroke care diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and education and establishes clear metrics to evaluate outcomes.

“Achieving certification shows commitment to excellence,” says Kelly Proctor, President of DNV Healthcare USA Inc. “And it helps demonstrate to your community that you are performing at the highest level.”

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is a leading cause of death, killing nearly 130,000 people each year, and is a leading cause of serious, long-term adult disability. Because stroke or “brain attack” affects blood flow to the brain, rapid and effective treatment can save lives and provide the best chance of limiting the extent of long-term damage.

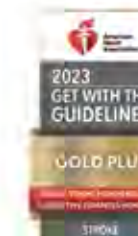


Physicians Regional Collier Blvd Receives American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Award

Physicians Regional Collier Blvd is awarded the American Heart Association's Get with the Guidelines Stroke

Gold Plus quality achievement award for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines, ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability.

Get With The Guidelines puts the expertise of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association to work for hospitals nationwide, helping ensure patient care is aligned with the latest evidence- and research-based guidelines. Get With The Guidelines - Stroke is an in-hospital program for improving stroke care by promoting consistent adherence to these guidelines, which can minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and even prevent death.



Physicians Regional Pine Ridge Receives American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines®-Stroke Gold Plus Award

Target: Stroke Elite Honor Roll
Target: Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll

Physicians Regional Pine Ridge received the American Heart Association Get with the Guidelines Stroke Gold Plus award and also received the American Heart Association's Target: Type 2 Honor Roll award. Target: Type 2 Diabetes aims to ensure patients with Type 2 diabetes, who might be at higher risk for complications, receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based care when hospitalized due to stroke.

Each year, program participants qualify for the award by demonstrating how their organization has committed to providing quality care for stroke patients. In addition to following treatment guidelines, Get With The Guidelines participants also educate patients to help them manage their health and recovery at home.



Cardiac PET

By Michael Shriver, MD - Proscan Imaging NCH Partner

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in the United States and is often a result of coronary artery disease (CAD) that reduces cardiac blood flow and myocardial function. Risk factors for CAD are rampant among our society, including hypertension, smoking, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, and family history, to name a few. CAD alone accounts for approximately 600,000 deaths annually, about **1 in 4 deaths in the United States**. Healthcare services for CAD are estimated to cost more than 200 billion dollars annually, often associated with the high costs of intensive and critical care needed for patients who suffer from myocardial infarctions.

The current gold standard for the diagnosis and treatment of CAD is **invasive coronary angiography**, however it is **associated with procedural risks and complications** due to its invasive nature. As well, 20-40% of all diagnostic invasive coronary angiography procedures are performed without any interventional procedures being applied such as angioplasty and stenting. This highlights the need for a non-invasive diagnostic modality for CAD assessment.

Nuclear medicine has played a critical role in the noninvasive assessment of myocardial perfusion. Single-photon emission computed tomography (**SPECT**) is a widely used diagnostic imaging test for the diagnosis and quantification of myocardial ischemia. Through the use of various tracers, most commonly today technetium 99m sestamibi, myocardial perfusion is assessed at both rest and stress, which typically takes **3 to 4 hours to perform**. While this modality has been the mainstay of myocardial perfusion imaging, it is often **limited by artifacts** such as diaphragmatic, chest wall, and breast attenuation, along with motion artifact. The false **positive rate of SPECT** myocardial perfusion imaging has been **reported in up to 50% of cases** in some published articles. A meta-analysis by Moudi, et al. in 2011 found a sensitivity of 82%, specificity of 76%, and accuracy of 83%.

These limitations of SPECT myocardial perfusion imaging highlighted the necessity for a new, more accurate imaging modality for the diagnosis of myocardial ischemia. In that same meta-analysis study as referenced above, **cardiac PET myocardial perfusion imaging** demonstrated a sensitivity of 91%,

specificity of 89%, and accuracy of 89% for the diagnosis of coronary artery stenosis greater than 50%.

PET stands for positron emission tomography and utilizes different radiotracers than SPECT imaging that have a higher energy and ability to be localized with more precision and accuracy. The most commonly used PET tracer for myocardial perfusion imaging is **Rubidium-82 (Rb)**. Rb-82 is an analogue of potassium ion and localizes to cells utilizing the sodium-potassium transcellular ion pump. These pumps are rampant among myocardial cells, and its localization to the myocardium is directly proportional to myocardial blood flow.

Cardiac PET is also acquired at both rest and stress to adequately assess for myocardial ischemia. A generator that produces Rb-82 tracer is located directly adjacent to the PET scanner. Rest imaging is initially acquired, which is then subsequently followed by stress imaging. Stress conditions for the heart are performed with the administration of regadenoson while the patient is lying on the PET/CT scanner, followed by a second dose of Rb-82 tracer. In its entirety, the protocol for rest and stress PET myocardial perfusion **only takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes**, starkly different from a SPECT protocol that takes 3 to 4 hours. As well, the imaging acquired by the PET/CT is of higher resolution, precision, and accuracy with minimal to no artifactual degradation. In comparison to SPECT imaging, the **diagnostic images of PET are far superior and easier to consistently interpret** on the part of the interpreting cardiologist or nuclear medicine physician.

In addition to improved perfusion assessment, cardiac PET also provides other benefits beyond SPECT. The increased accuracy of gated cardiac imaging allows PET to **provide accurate and precise ejection fractions**, with strong correlation between PET ejection fraction assessment and other modalities such as cardiac MRI (r value ~0.9).

The most important additional diagnostic data from cardiac PET is arguably **myocardial flow reserve assessment**. This allows for the absolute quantification of myocardial blood flow and facilitates the assessment of multivessel CAD, but also

allows for the assessment of **coronary microvascular disease**. This assessment of microvascular disease can accurately identify the precursors to flow-limiting coronary artery disease, **allowing the cardiologist to institute and monitor responses to medical therapy for patients at risk of developing significant CAD**. These techniques can also be used for the assessment of graft function after heart transplant.

Overall, **cardiac PET is more accurate, sensitive, and specific in the assessment of myocardial perfusion**, offering cardiologists and patients a better option for the diagnosis of CAD. This newer, more advanced technique will benefit patients for years to come with its superior ability to provide insight for the correct management of cardiovascular disease related to CAD.



Dr. Michael Shriver is board eligible by the American College of Radiology and Board Certified by the American Board of Nuclear Medicine. He completed an Integrated Nuclear Radiology Fellowship and Neuroradiology Fellowship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. His diagnostic radiology residency was also completed at Penn. Dr. Shriver completed medical school at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, OH, and an Internal Medicine Internship at Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Shriver has relocated to Naples with his wife, Stacy and daughter, Lily. He is excited to add his expertise and experience to the most qualified Radiology services team in the Southwest Florida Region. Our team of talented physicians, caring and professional technologists, and advanced imaging equipment provide our patients with the highest quality of care.

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UNDERSTANDING GLAUCOMA

Advances in Diagnosis and Treatment

By Julie A. Carter, M.D. - Fellowship-Trained Glaucoma Specialist

Glaucoma, a group of eye diseases, poses a significant threat to vision worldwide. Characterized by damage to the optic nerve, it often progresses silently, leading to irreversible vision loss. However, with advancements in medical science and technology, there is hope for early detection and effective management of this condition. This article delves into the different types of glaucoma, explores diagnostic techniques, and discusses the treatment options available to combat this sight-stealing disease.

Types of Glaucoma

Glaucoma encompasses several subtypes, including primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG), angle-closure glaucoma, normal-tension glaucoma, and secondary glaucoma. POAG, the most common form, develops gradually without apparent symptoms until late stages. Angle-closure glaucoma occurs due to blocked drainage channels in the eye, causing rapid and painful increases in eye pressure. Normal-tension glaucoma involves optic nerve damage despite normal eye pressure, while secondary glaucoma arises as a result of other eye conditions or systemic diseases.

Diagnosing Glaucoma

Early diagnosis is crucial in preventing vision loss from glaucoma. Ophthalmologists employ various methods to evaluate the condition of the optic nerve, measure intraocular pressure (IOP), and assess the visual field. Regular eye examinations, including tonometry to measure IOP, funduscopy to inspect the optic nerve, and visual field testing, are essential for detecting glaucoma. Additionally, advanced techniques like optical coherence tomography (OCT) and scanning laser polarimetry (SLP) aid in providing precise measurements of the optic nerve and retinal nerve fiber layer, enhancing diagnostic accuracy.

Treatment Options

The treatment of glaucoma aims to reduce intraocular pressure, the primary risk factor for optic nerve damage. Eye drops, such as prostaglandin analogs, beta-blockers, alpha agonists, and carbonic anhydrase inhibitors, are commonly prescribed to lower IOP. These medications work by either reducing the

production of aqueous humor or improving its outflow. Laser therapy, including selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) and laser peripheral iridotomy (LPI), can also help in controlling IOP. SLT enhances the drainage of fluid from the eye, while LPI creates a small opening to improve the outflow.

In more severe cases, surgical interventions may be necessary. Trabeculectomy, a filtration surgery, creates a new drainage channel to reduce IOP. Minimally invasive glaucoma surgeries (MIGS) have emerged as a viable option, involving the use of small devices to enhance fluid drainage. These procedures are less invasive and have quicker recovery times compared to traditional surgeries.

Promising Advances

Research is continually advancing our understanding of glaucoma and uncovering potential breakthroughs in its treatment. Gene therapy, neuroprotective agents, stem cell therapy, and novel drug delivery systems are areas of active investigation. Genetic testing may provide insights into a patient's predisposition to glaucoma, aiding in early intervention. Additionally, emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, show promise in assisting with glaucoma diagnosis and monitoring.

Glaucoma demands attention as a leading cause of irreversible blindness. Timely detection, diligent monitoring, and appropriate treatment can help preserve vision and improve patients' quality of life. Regular eye examinations, compliance with prescribed medications, and lifestyle modifications, such as maintaining a healthy diet and managing systemic conditions, contribute to effective management. As research progresses, new diagnostic tools and treatment modalities offer hope for earlier intervention and improved outcomes in the battle against glaucoma.



JULIE A. CARTER, M.D.

Dr. Carter is a board-certified ophthalmologist with fellowship training in the specialty of Glaucoma.

Dr. Carter was born and raised in Sarasota, Florida. She attended Georgia Tech, where she earned a degree in mechanical engineering. After college, Dr. Carter worked for the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, where she contributed to patents on products ranging from baby diapers to surgeon's gowns. During her time at Kimberly-Clark, she realized her passion was in medicine and returned to medical school at the University of South Florida, where she earned the honor of joining the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society.

Dr. Carter completed her ophthalmology residency at the University of South Florida, serving as Chief Resident. She completed an additional year of fellowship training in the specialty of glaucoma at the University of South Florida.

At Center For Sight, Dr. Carter treats general ophthalmology patients, in addition to glaucoma patients. She works closely with her glaucoma patients to develop an effective treatment plan to maintain and protect their eyesight. She feels that one of the most rewarding parts of her career is the opportunity to build long-term relationships with her patients; many of whom now feel like family.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her three children, her husband, Jason, and their many pets! She is passionate about healthy living and wellness. She is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Collier County Medical Society and the Florida Society of Ophthalmology.

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The Vital Role of Community in Promoting Health and Well-being

By Colin E. Champ, MD, CSCS - Radiation Oncologist

In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, the significance of community in shaping our health and well-being cannot be overstated. Whether it is through social connections, emotional support, or access to resources, communities play a crucial role in fostering positive mental and physical health outcomes.

Social Connections and Emotional Support

Being part of a community provides individuals with a sense of belonging and social connection, which has a profound impact on mental and emotional well-being. Colin Champ, a board-certified radiation oncologist, emphasizes in his article "The Importance of Community" that loneliness and social isolation are linked to an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders. Engaging in meaningful relationships within a community offers emotional support, reduces stress levels, and enhances overall psychological resilience.

A study conducted by Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015) and referenced in an article on happiness.com highlights that social connections have a significant impact on longevity, similar to well-established factors like smoking and obesity. Having strong social ties within a community can lead to lower rates of depression, increased self-esteem, and improved overall well-being.

Health Resources and Support Systems

Communities act as a vital source of health resources and support systems, facilitating access to health-care services, information, and educational opportunities. Local organizations, community centers, and health initiatives often provide resources such as health screenings, workshops, and educational campaigns on various health topics.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) emphasizes the importance of community support in promoting mental health. In their article "The Importance of Community and Mental Health," they highlight the role of community-based programs in offering support networks, reducing stigma, and providing accessible mental health services. These initiatives can improve mental health outcomes by encouraging early intervention, enhancing treatment adherence, and promoting recovery.



A Sense of Belonging and Purpose

Community involvement fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, which positively influences overall well-being. The happiness.com article stresses that being part of a community provides opportunities for individuals to contribute, share experiences, and create meaningful connections. Engaging in activities or causes that align with personal values and interests helps individuals develop a sense of purpose, which contributes to greater life satisfaction and happiness.

Studies have shown that individuals with a strong sense of community belonging have lower rates of mental health disorders, reduced stress levels, and improved resilience. The support and validation received from community interactions can boost self-esteem, reduce feelings of isolation, and promote a positive outlook on life.

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The significance of community in shaping health and well-being is undeniable. Social connections, emotional support, access to health resources, and a sense of belonging all contribute to positive outcomes in mental and physical health. As emphasized by experts and research studies, communities play a vital role in promoting well-being by providing social connections, emotional support systems, and resources for individuals to thrive. Recognizing the importance of community and actively engaging in community-based activities can enhance overall health, happiness, and quality of life.



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Dr. Colin Champ, MD, CSCS

Dr. Colin Champ, MD, CSCS, is a radiation oncologist with board certifications in radiation oncology and integrative and holistic medicine. Dr. Champ is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, and his research interests include the prevention and treatment of cancer with lifestyle modification, including exercise and dietary modification.

WHAT IS VASCULAR DISEASE?

Vascular disease (vasculopathy) affects the blood vessels that carry oxygen and nutrients throughout your body and remove waste from your tissues. Common vascular problems happen because plaque (made of fat and cholesterol) slows down or blocks blood flow inside your arteries or veins. Lifestyle changes often help, but some people need medication or surgery.

Vascular disease includes any condition that affects your circulatory system, or system of blood vessels. This ranges from diseases of your arteries, veins and lymph vessels to blood disorders that affect circulation. Blood vessels are elastic-like tubes that carry blood to every part of your body. Blood vessels include:

- Arteries that carry blood away from your heart.
- Veins that return blood back to your heart.
- Capillaries, your tiniest blood vessels, which link your small veins and arteries, deliver oxygen and nutrients to your tissues, and take away their waste.

Some vascular diseases affect your arteries, while others occur in your veins. They can also happen only in specific parts of your body. Types of Vascular Diseases include:

- **Peripheral artery disease:** Like the blood vessels of your heart (coronary arteries), your peripheral arteries (blood vessels outside your heart) also may develop atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque (fat and cholesterol deposits), inside them. Over time, the buildup narrows the artery. Eventually, the narrowed artery causes less blood to flow, which may lead to ischemia, or inadequate blood flow to your body's tissue. Types of peripheral arterial disease include:
 - **Peripheral artery disease:** A blockage in your legs. Total loss of circulation can lead to gangrene and loss of a limb.
 - **Intestinal ischemic syndrome:** A blockage in the blood vessels leading to your gastrointestinal system.
 - **Renal artery disease:** A blockage in your renal arteries can cause renal artery disease and kidney failure.
 - **Popliteal Entrapment Syndrome:** A rare vascular disease that affects the legs of some young athletes. The muscle and tendons near the knee compress the popliteal artery, restricting blood flow to the lower leg and possibly damaging the artery.
 - **Raynaud's Phenomenon:** Consists of spasms of the small arteries of your fingers, and sometimes toes, from exposure to cold or stress.
 - **Buerger's Disease:** Most commonly affects the small and medium-sized arteries, veins and nerves.

Although the cause is unknown, there is a strong association with tobacco use or exposure. The arteries of your arms and legs become narrowed or blocked, causing lack of blood supply (ischemia) to your fingers, hands, toes and feet. With severe blockages, the tissue may die (gangrene), making it necessary to amputate affected fingers and toes. Superficial vein inflammation and symptoms of Raynaud's can occur as well.

Carotid artery issues happen in the two main carotid arteries in your neck.

- **Carotid artery disease:** A blockage or narrowing in the arteries supplying your brain. This can lead to a transient ischemic attack (TIA) or stroke.
- **Carotid artery dissection:** Begins as a tear in one layer of your artery wall. Blood leaks through this tear and spreads between the wall layers.
- **Carotid body tumors:** Growths within the nervous tissue around your carotid artery.
- **Carotid artery aneurysm:** A bulge in your artery wall that weakens the wall and may cause a rupture.

Venous disease occurs in the veins. Veins are flexible, hollow tubes with flaps inside, called valves. When your muscles contract, these one-way valves open, and blood moves through your veins. When your muscles relax, the valves close, keeping blood flowing in one direction through your veins. If the valves inside your veins become damaged, the valves may not close completely. This allows blood to flow in both directions. When your muscles relax, the valves inside the damaged vein(s) will not be able to hold the blood. This can cause pooling of blood or swelling in your veins. The veins bulge and look like ropes under the skin. The blood begins to move more slowly through your veins and may stick to the sides of your vessel walls. Symptoms include heaviness, aching, swelling, throbbing or itching. Blood clots can form.

- **Varicose veins:** Bulging, swollen, purple, ropy veins, seen just under your skin. Damaged valves within the veins cause this.
- **Spider veins:** Small red or purple bursts on your knees, calves, or thighs. Swollen capillaries (small blood vessels) cause this.
- **Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome (KTS):** A rare congenital (present at birth) vascular disorder.
- **May-Thurner syndrome (MTS):** Your right iliac artery compresses your left iliac vein, which increases the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in your left extremity.
- **Thoracic outlet syndrome (TOS):** A group of disorders that happen with compression, injury or irritation of the nerves and/or blood vessels (arteries and veins) in your lower neck, armpit and upper chest area.

- **Chronic venous insufficiency (CVI):** A condition that happens when the venous wall and/or valves in your leg veins are not working effectively, making it difficult for blood to return to your heart from your legs.

Blood clots are formed when clotting factors in your blood make it coagulate or become a solid, jelly-like mass. When a blood clot forms inside a blood vessel (a thrombus), it can come loose and travel through your bloodstream, causing a deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, heart attack or stroke. Blood clots in your arteries can increase the risk for stroke, heart attack, severe leg pain, difficulty walking or even the loss of a limb.

- **Hypercoagulable states or blood clotting disorders:** Conditions that put people at increased risk for developing blood clots because they make blood more likely to form blood clots (hypercoagulable) in the arteries and veins. You can inherit these conditions (congenital, occurring at birth) or acquire them. These disorders include high levels of factors in your blood that cause blood to clot (fibrinogen, factor 8, prothrombin) or not enough natural anticoagulant (blood-thinning) proteins (antithrombin, protein C, protein S). The most aggressive disorders include circulating antiphospholipid antibodies, which can cause clots in both arteries and veins.
- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT):** A blood clot occurring in a deep vein.
- **Pulmonary embolism:** A blood clot that breaks loose from a vein and travels to your lungs.
- **Axillo-subclavian vein thrombosis, also called Paget-Schroetter Syndrome:** Most common vascular condition to affect young, competitive athletes. The condition develops when your collarbone (clavicle), first rib or the surrounding muscle compresses a vein in your armpit (axilla) or in front of your shoulder (the subclavian vein). This increases your risk of blood clots.
- **Superficial thrombophlebitis:** A blood clot in a vein just under your skin.

Vascular diseases are very common in America, partly because so many people weigh too much and have diabetes. The most common vascular diseases include peripheral artery disease (PAD) and carotid artery disease.



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Male Infertility

A Brief Overview

Approximately 1 in 6 couples will experience difficulty in conceiving 1 year after unprotected intercourse. About 7 million couples seek fertility evaluation in the U.S. annually. A male factor is solely responsible in 20% of the time. It is contributory in 30-40% of the cases. Because couples are delaying pregnancy to a later age is now recommended that if fertility is ever question that both male and female be evaluated.

The goals of male infertility evaluation include:

- Identify potentially correctable conditions
- Diagnosis irreversible conditions that can be treated with assisted reproductive techniques using sperm of the male partner
- Diagnosis irreversible conditions that will require donor sperm for conception
- Identify life or health threatening conditions that affect fertility and require medical treatment
- Detect transferable genetic abnormalities if assisted reproductive techniques are used

The initial fertility evaluation consists of a complete medical and reproductive history, a physical exam, and 2 semen analysis. The reproductive history should include the timing infrequency of intercourse related to the menstrual cycle, prior fertility of both partners, duration of past or present infertility, childhood illnesses, developmental history, systemic medical conditions such as diabetes mellitus or chronic respiratory illnesses, prior surgeries, gonadal toxin exposures, sexual history including sexual transmitted disease history, and family fertility history. The physical exam will include examination of the male genitalia to determine abnormalities of the penis, urethra, testes, epididymides, vas deferens, and spermatic cords.

The semen analysis will show the following:

- Presence or absence
- Sperm count and concentration
- The motility of the sperm
- The morphology or shape of the sperm

Based on the results of the initial evaluation, additional testing may be ordered. This may include blood work, imaging with ultrasound, genetic screening, post ejaculatory urinalysis, or sperm integrity testing.

The following her common male infertility conditions that her correctable:

- **Scrotal varicose sees or varicocele.** This is a condition of abnormal varicose veins of the spermatic cord. This can affect both sperm production and maturation. The treatment consists of an outpatient surgery culture varicocelectomy.
- **Obstructive azoospermia.** This is a condition where there is normal production of sperm but they were unable to reach the ejaculatory duct. This is most commonly caused from a previous vasectomy. This can be treated with a phase sec to me reversal or with testicular sperm extraction which can be used for assisted reproductive techniques.
- **Hypogonadism.** This condition relates to inadequate signal into the testicles to produce sperm. This can often be treated with medication.

This particle gives a very brief overview of male infertility evaluation and treatment. Evaluation is important not only to diagnosis underlying malignancies (6% of male infertility patients) but also to identify potential genetic abnormalities that can be transferred with assisted reproduction. Because some conditions are irreversible, it is essential for couples and no that they will need to consider donor sperm or adoption.



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The Art of Self-Care While Traveling

Nurturing Your Mind, Body, and Soul on the Road.

Travel can be exciting and stressful; we love one but not the other!

Recently, I embarked on a journey to California, exploring local shops and stores, meeting new people, and revisiting familiar places. It was a wonderful experience that reminded me of the crucial ways to care for oneself while traveling.

In my work with clients, I have often encountered the need to address post-vacation burnout. Many express the need for an extra day at home to recuperate before returning to work after a vacation.

Traveling can take a toll on the body, and self-care can easily be forgotten amidst the thrill of exploration.

We think one more drink, appetizer, or dessert won't hurt. After all, we're on vacation!

Of course, you deserve to indulge once in a while.

But, when we overindulge in food, frequently stay up later, and skip the water while on vacation, we find ourselves on the path to burnout.

Here are some essential practices to integrate into your journey,

1. Prioritizing Rest and Sleep

Maintaining a healthy sleep schedule while traveling is hard, especially when you want to squeeze 20 hours of activities into your daily itinerary.

Allow yourself to savor each moment, and remember that leaving some activities for the next trip is okay.

Try to maintain your typical sleep routine. It's also okay to sneak in naps when you need them to stay energized.

2. Stay Hydrated and Nourished

Maintaining proper hydration and nutrition is crucial while traveling. Carry a reusable water bottle and *refill it frequently*.

Look for restaurants that offer a balance of nutritional dishes and local delicacies, providing nourishment and a taste of the region's culinary delights.

However, avoid excessive indulgence in unhealthy food and alcohol; it can leave you feeling lethargic and unwell.

3. Exercise and Stretch Regularly

Long rides, whether by bus, train, or airplane, can lead to stiffness and discomfort.

Combat this by incorporating short exercises or stretches throughout your days to keep your body limber and alleviate tension.

Simple things like yoga, brisk walking, or Tai Chi can make a significant difference in keeping your body limber and reducing tension.

4. Embrace Mindfulness

When visiting new places, our brain will try to absorb all the information around it all at once -- people rushing by, cars and buses zooming around, and even unfamiliar buildings towering above you.

If you're overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle, *don't try to ignore it!*

Instead, practice mindfulness, such as:

- Deep breathing; inhale through your nose for five seconds, then exhale through your mouth for five seconds. Continue this until your breathing returns to its natural state.
- Observe your surroundings with curiosity.
- Be present in the here and now.

5. Create a Traveling Self-Care Kit

Prepare a self-care kit that includes items from home, such as your favorite tea or snacks, a journal, scented candles, vitamins, herbal supplements, neck pillows, noise-canceling headphones, etc.

Items you use at home will help you center yourself and help maintain some semblance of normalcy even in an unfamiliar place.

Incorporating these self-care practices into your travels can enhance your overall experience and allow you to return home feeling rejuvenated and enriched.

Remember that self-care while traveling is not a luxury but essential to ensuring a fulfilling and rewarding journey for everyone.

So, as you embark on your next adventure, prioritize self-care and witness its positive impact on your mind, body, and soul.

Safe travels!



Who is Dr. Alik?

Dr. Alik started his education at the renowned Lesgaft National State University of Physical Education, Sport, and Health, famous for training Russian Olympic athletes and coaches. There he studied the principles of Western exercise science, including anatomy, physics, sports physiology, and nutrition. While there, he was also introduced to Traditional Chinese medicine, particularly the concepts of manipulating our natural energy fields, or Qi, with the ancient but established techniques of acupuncture, meridian massage, and medical Qi Gong. Dr. Alik continued his studies in various Hindu monasteries gaining deeper insight into Ayurvedic and yogic principles. Combining his knowledge and education, he created signature remedies for a Forbes Four-diamond spa at Namacolin Woodlands Resort, which remain the most requested.

Acu-Healing's combination of Western and Eastern medicine provides the best of both worlds. Acu-Healing treats the root of the client's problem, thereby alleviating the symptoms; it inherently reduces stress and brings everyone an excellent range of holistic healing.

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HOW TO PREVENT HEAT EXHAUSTION

Temperatures across the United States are rising and so are incidents of heat exhaustion. In fact, between 2016 and 2021, the number of patients diagnosed with heat exhaustion between the months of May and September rose by 53%.

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt. Symptoms include dizziness, headache, nausea and muscle cramps and the condition is more likely to affect the elderly, those with high blood pressure and people who work in a hot environment according to the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC). If heat exhaustion is left untreated, it can cause heat stroke which can lead to permanent disability or death.

"We spend more time outside in the summer whether that's working, playing or lounging around, which increases the risk of excessive heat exposure and exhaustion," says Dr. Ricardo Alonso, M.D. "By understanding the symptoms of heat exhaustion and how to prevent it, you can stay safe and healthy all summer long."

To help prevent heat exhaustion, Dr. Alonso recommends the following tips:

- **Cover up:** When outside, wear lightweight and loose-fitting clothing, hats, sunglasses, and broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least 15 (but 30 to 50 SPF is better) to protect against sunburn which affects the body's ability to cool down.
- **Keep cool:** When the temperature is up, take cool showers, go swimming or apply wet towels on the neck or forehead to help lower body temperature.
- **Hydrate:** Drink fluids, especially water, throughout the day to stay hydrated. Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol and caffeine which can contribute to dehydration.
- **Stay in the shade:** Stay in shaded areas or indoors during the hottest parts of the day which are usually between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.



- **Rest often:** If working outside or participating in outdoor activities, make it a point to take regular breaks to cool down in a shaded area where you can rest and rehydrate.

"Spending time outside, enjoying the sunshine and warm weather is why so many people love the summer, but it can be dangerous without the proper precautions. If you or a loved one experience symptoms of heat exhaustion, and you can't cool down, it's time to seek medical care," says Dr. Alonso.

Dr. Alonso is board certified in family medicine and is located at Physicians Regional urgent cares. Our

urgent cares are staffed with providers trained to diagnose and treat minor emergencies and medical conditions. As part of the Physicians Regional Healthcare System, we can refer you to a specialist if follow-up care is needed. We accept most major healthcare insurance plans. Just walk right in.

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SO, IS SUGAR THAT BAD FOR ME?

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

When we think of bad sugars, most of us conjure up the images of fast carbs – the ones that send blood sugar soaring-like bagels, cookies, and white bread. While these will surely pack on pounds, there are some important truths about carbohydrates in general. They are essential for peak energy and brain-power, since the glucose they are converted to is the preferred form of fuel for the body and the brain.

And why is it a preferred source of energy? Because it is the fastest! Unfortunately though, the fast carbs we tend to turn to have a high glycemic impact. This means that they will flood the bloodstream with glucose (sugar) triggering a rapid insulin peak, which fosters fat storage. It makes sense: we don't need all that much sugar for energy, so insulin will move some of it into the liver and some into the muscle for storage as glycogen, and the rest will be stored as a fat. Some common examples of high GI sugars: white bread, white rice, corn flakes, cookies, and candy.

The analogy I used in my book "Diet Slave No More!" is: "As sugars rapidly enter our bloodstream, the liver "policeman" calls upon his partner pancreas to release a "police dog" called insulin – and together they all go to work, trying to clear "the streets" of blood vessel from all the sugar floating in there.

Sugar criminals that cannot be caught and cuffed as glycogen - turn to fat deposits.

This explains why people whose diets are highest in fast sugars are also the most obese. Moreover, a study published in *The Lancet*, a reputable British medical journal, found that a diet rich in fast carbs doubled body fat storage. This redundant fat storage happens to be very dangerous for people with fatty liver. This is a very common condition in which a person does not have any symptoms, but on a routine blood test the doctor discovers that the liver numbers are off and the ultrasound of the liver shows extensive fatty deposits. Over the course of time, this condition could lead to liver cancer. So, you can see how everything is interconnected and how loading yourself with cookies can lead to unexpected nasty issues over the years.



In addition to harmful fat deposits, fast sugar with its powerful insulin peaks causes a subsequent steep drop of blood sugar below normal levels. Such dips result in mood swings and appetite spikes. This of course fuels a cycle that makes over-eating inevitable. Studies show that people, who eat meals high in fast carbs, eat way too much food over the next 5 hours – about 82% more than average.

Another downside to fast (high Glycemic Index) sugar foods, which is very relevant for today's world – is that a sugar overload creates a high oxidative stress on the body. To put it simply, when the body's resources are being used up on sugar utilization and "clearing up the streets of arteries" – the person is actually at highest risk from having viruses like Coronavirus wreak havoc on their immune system, cardiovascular integrity – and lead to poor clinical outcomes.

But I don't mean to give sugar a bad name. I don't like extremes. In fact, people who steer clear of sugars entirely, hoping to burn their inner fat stores – a so-called ketogenic diet – end up in another trap. When energy derived from sugar is in short supply, the body starts consuming lean muscle as a fuel long before it will tap into the fat as energy source. Do you really want to start losing your muscles on a ketogenic diet? I didn't think so. I saw a study in which subjects whose carbs consumption was extremely low, lost an average of 32%

of lean tissue in 12 weeks! And the body is not stupid: when it senses how the muscle gets "cannibalized" by ketogenic diet, it slows down its metabolism altogether. This is what I described in my book as a "Starvation mode" – an energy-conserving state which can slow your metabolism by 40%. And since carbohydrate deprivation robs the brain of the sugar needed for peak performance on the go, you are guaranteed to have brain fog and inability to focus.

Avoiding the high glycemic index and processed foods, and eating smaller portions frequently – will help avoid the extremes and steer your metabolism in the golden middle.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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Psoriasis Awareness Month: Advancing Treatment with Infusible Therapies

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune skin condition affecting millions worldwide. As we observe Psoriasis Awareness Month, it's essential to shed light on the challenges faced by psoriatic patients and the innovative treatment options that are transforming their lives. In recent years, infusible therapies have emerged as a promising approach to managing psoriasis, offering hope for those seeking effective, long-term relief from the physical and emotional burdens of this condition.

Understanding Psoriasis

Psoriasis is characterized by the rapid buildup of skin cells, leading to red, scaly patches that often cause itching, pain, and discomfort. It can manifest in various forms, including plaque psoriasis, guttate psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, and more. Beyond the physical symptoms, the psychological impact of psoriasis, such as reduced self-esteem and social isolation, can significantly affect a patient's overall well-being.

The Need for Awareness

Psoriasis Awareness Month, observed annually in August, serves as an opportunity to raise awareness about this chronic condition and educate the public about the challenges faced by those living with psoriasis. By fostering understanding and empathy, we can reduce the stigma surrounding psoriasis and promote early diagnosis and effective treatment.

Infusible Therapies: A Game-Changer

In recent years, advancements in medical science have led to the development of infusible therapies, transforming the landscape of psoriasis treatment. These therapies are biologic drugs administered intravenously, targeting specific molecules in the immune system responsible for triggering the inflammatory response seen in psoriasis.

How Infusible Therapies Work

Infusible therapies work by neutralizing specific cytokines like TNF-alpha, IL-17, and IL-23, which play pivotal roles in the immune response involved



in psoriasis. By inhibiting these inflammatory molecules, infusible therapies help to control the excessive cell growth and inflammation associated with psoriasis, effectively managing the symptoms and preventing disease progression.

Benefits of Infusible Therapies

- 1. Efficacy:** Clinical trials have shown that infusible therapies provide significant improvement in psoriasis symptoms, achieving high rates of skin clearance and long-lasting remission.
- 2. Long-term Control:** Unlike traditional treatments, which may lose effectiveness over time, infusible therapies can maintain disease control for extended periods, enhancing the patient's quality of life.
- 3. Targeted Treatment:** Infusible therapies target specific molecules, minimizing the impact on healthy cells and reducing the risk of systemic side effects.
- 4. Convenience:** Many infusible therapies require less frequent administration, allowing patients to resume their daily routines with minimal disruption.

Challenges and Considerations

While infusible therapies offer promising results, they are not without challenges. Access to these treatments, cost considerations, and potential side effects require thoughtful discussion between healthcare providers and patients to determine the best course of action.

Empowering Patients with Knowledge

During Psoriasis Awareness Month, it is crucial to empower patients with information about the available treatment options, including infusible therapies. An informed decision, made in collaboration with healthcare professionals, can lead to better outcomes and improved management of the condition.

Psoriasis Awareness Month serves as a reminder of the millions of individuals living with psoriasis, enduring its physical and emotional impact every day. Thanks to advancements in medical science, infusible therapies offer new hope and improved outcomes for patients seeking relief. By raising awareness and promoting education about psoriasis and its treatment options, we can support those affected and foster a more compassionate and understanding society. Together, let us continue striving for better solutions to enhance the lives of psoriatic patients worldwide.

At Paragon Healthcare, we support the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis community through infusible therapies such as Avsola, Cimzia, Ilumya, Inflectra, Infliximab, Orenzia, Remicade, Renflexis, Simponi Aria, Spevigo and Stelara. Nationally, our infusion centers have treated nearly 1.5k psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients year-to-date. This puts us in a place to serve more psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients this year compared to the 2,000+ patients we supported in 2022.



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THE POWER OF CORD BLOOD: WHAT IS WHARTON'S JELLY AND CAN IT HELP ME?

By James M. Ray, MD

Cord blood, once considered medical waste, is now recognized as a valuable source of stem cells with numerous potential applications. Among the different components of cord blood, Wharton's jelly, a gelatinous substance found within the umbilical cord, has gained attention for its unique properties. In this article, we will explore what Wharton's jelly is, its composition, and the potential ways it can be utilized to benefit human health.

Understanding Wharton's Jelly

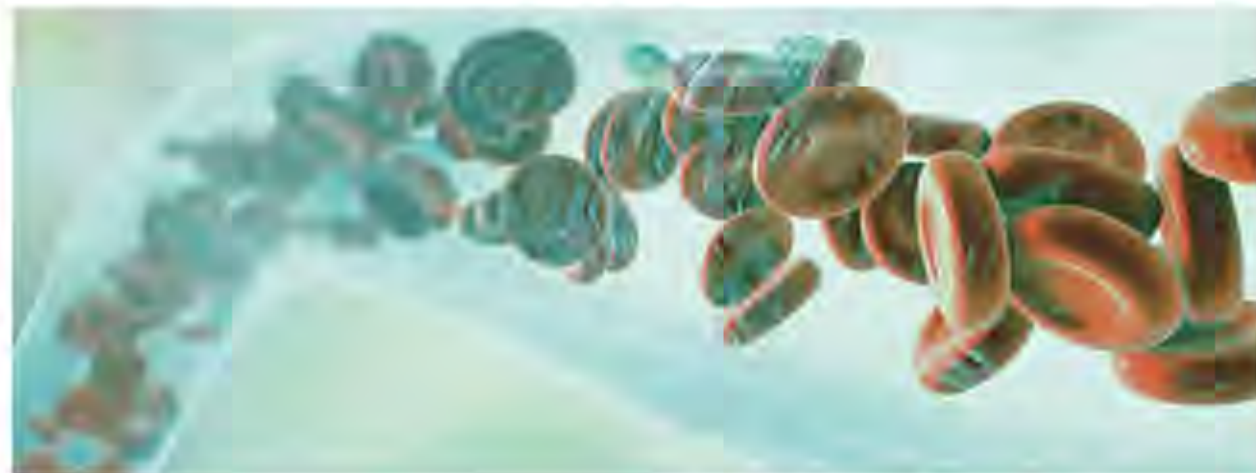
Wharton's jelly is a specialized gelatinous substance found in the umbilical cord. Named after the English physician Thomas Wharton, who first described it in the 17th century, this gel-like connective tissue surrounds and protects the blood vessels within the cord. It is composed of a rich matrix of structural proteins, such as collagens, hyaluronic acid, and proteoglycans, providing it with unique characteristics.

Stem Cell Potential

One of the primary reasons Wharton's jelly is garnering attention is due to its abundant supply of mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs). MSCs possess remarkable regenerative capabilities and can differentiate into various cell types, including bone, cartilage, and fat cells. These cells are considered to be more primitive and versatile than other types of stem cells found in the body. Wharton's jelly-derived MSCs have shown promise in tissue engineering, cell-based therapies, and immunomodulatory applications.

Therapeutic Applications

Wharton's jelly-derived MSCs have been studied extensively for their potential therapeutic applications. Researchers have explored their use in treating various conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, neurological disorders, orthopedic injuries, and autoimmune disorders. Studies have suggested that these cells may promote tissue repair, reduce inflammation, modulate the immune system, and enhance the body's natural healing processes.



Non-Controversial Source

Unlike embryonic stem cells, which raise ethical concerns, Wharton's jelly-derived MSCs offer a non-controversial source for stem cell therapy. They can be obtained ethically and painlessly from the umbilical cord after a baby's birth without harming the mother or the child. This accessibility and ethical advantage have made Wharton's jelly an appealing resource for stem cell research and potential clinical use.

Ongoing Research and Future Possibilities

While Wharton's jelly and its MSCs show immense promise, further research is necessary to fully understand their capabilities and limitations. Ongoing studies aim to optimize cell isolation and expansion techniques, explore their potential in regenerative medicine, and assess their long-term safety and efficacy. The ultimate goal is to harness the therapeutic potential of Wharton's jelly-derived MSCs to develop innovative treatments for various diseases and injuries.

Wharton's jelly, a component of cord blood, harbors a rich source of mesenchymal stem cells with tremendous therapeutic potential. Its regenerative capabilities and non-controversial sourcing make it an attractive option for stem cell research and clinical applications. As scientific knowledge and technologies advance, Wharton's jelly may play a significant role in revolutionizing the field of regenerative medicine and providing novel treatments for a range of conditions, improving lives in the process.



James M. Ray, MD

James M. Ray, MD is an orthopedic surgeon who graduated Medical School in 1979 from Louisiana State University. Dr. Ray trained in Orthopedic Surgery at Orlando Health, Orlando, Florida. He was a Sports Medicine Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was also an Academic Physician as an Assistant Professor of Orthopedics/Sports Medicine at the University of Kentucky, Lexington. He has a master's degree in Executive Health Administration from the University of Florida, Gainesville. He has traveled with numerous Sports Teams Nationally and Internationally. He is now interested in treatment and management of Orthopedic injuries, arthritis, and chronic problems limiting function. He specializes in Quality-of-life issues using IV therapies, biologic injectables and immune boost treatments.

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Lasene Therapeutic Light Therapy: Illuminating the Path to Health and Well-being

Lasene represents an innovative advancement in Therapeutic Light Treatments, merging cutting-edge technology with proprietary treatment protocols to address chronic pain and enhance the quality of life for individuals suffering from Parkinson's disease, sleep disorders, executive function decline, and other neurological degenerative conditions.

Through extensive research and development, Lasene has become an integral part of a series of evidence-based protocols focused on pain management and neurological restoration. These protocols aim to provide safe, affordable, and effective care to those seeking relief.

As the creators of Lasene, our primary objective is to integrate the finest technologies and treatment strategies to alleviate the challenges faced by individuals with neurodegenerative and neuromusculoskeletal disorders. Our goal is to empower our patients, enabling them to regain an active and productive lifestyle.

What Does Lasene Do?

Loss of normal nerve function can arise from various factors such as trauma, malnutrition, vascular compromise, aging, toxicity, diseases, and, to a lesser extent, genetics. These compromises in neurological function can affect different areas of the nervous system, including peripheral, spinal, and cranial neurology.

LASENE Programs offer a powerful solution for addressing neural deficits associated with specific

conditions such as Parkinson's disease, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and sleep dysfunction. These programs target not only the conditions themselves but also the symptoms related to them, such as chronic pain, tremors, digestion issues, balance problems, gait abnormalities, mood disturbances, anxiety, memory impairments, and more.

The implementation of LASENE Programs has the potential to reduce long-term suffering by improving quality-of-life metrics for individuals with compromised neurology. This approach offers significant benefits without the side effects, adverse events, contraindications, or modifications to traditional treatment methods.

The utilization of LASENE Programs opens up expanded treatment capabilities and new opportunities to help patients with neurological conditions. These programs can be integrated into a healthcare practice, allowing staff members to deliver care while doctors oversee the treatment of other patients. The ease of integration and compatibility with current practices and staff, including comprehensive training, makes it a convenient option.

Our LASENE Programs support both the clinical and business aspects of addressing patients' neurological needs. They facilitate an efficient workflow, provide necessary equipment, offer training, enable the creation of individualized and dynamic patient treatment plans, ensure HIPAA compliance in patient processing and records, and encompass other essential aspects required for successful treatment.

Brand Partnership Benefits

The brand partnership opportunity for Lasene offers numerous benefits that set it apart from other options in the market. It provides advanced solutions that are not available anywhere else, delivering life-changing results to patients. The brand partnership package includes a turnkey solution with all the necessary equipment, systems, and training, ensuring a smooth implementation process. Brand partnership can expect a fast and significant return on investment (ROI) due to the high demand for the unique Lasene treatments. Furthermore, there is a vast untapped market share, allowing the brand partners to leverage their current patient base and attract new clients easily. The high patient referral rate further contributes to the potential for success and growth. Additionally, the brand partnership is easily expandable, allowing partners to scale their operations as desired.

The Lasene Proprietary System is a comprehensive management tool that guides the patient's journey from intake to treatment completion. Implementing this system is straightforward and efficient. It dynamically generates individual treatment maps and progress graphs, ensuring personalized care for each patient. The treatment sessions are delivered by trained staff members, optimizing the efficient use of staff and clinicians' time. This approach also simplifies the delivery of treatment for the providers themselves. Importantly, all patients purchase and commit to full treatment programs, eliminating the need for billing, insurance, or collections processes.

Lasene stands out from the competition for several reasons. It has a strong foundation in data-driven patient outcomes, with predictability, dependability, and reproducibility rates of 95%. This reliability instills confidence in both franchisees and patients. Moreover, Lasene has broader applications beyond traditional healthcare approaches, offering non-invasive and non-pharmaceutical solutions. This positions Lasene as a low-risk option for patients seeking alternative treatment methods, further enhancing its appeal and market potential.

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THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF WEIGHT LOSS IN PREVENTING NUMEROUS DISEASES

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

Maintaining a healthy weight is not merely a cosmetic concern; it plays a significant role in safeguarding our overall health. Weight loss, particularly when approached through sustainable means, holds immense importance in preventing various diseases. From heart disease and diabetes to certain types of cancer, shedding excess weight can significantly reduce the risk of developing these conditions. In this article, we will delve into the critical link between weight loss and disease prevention, emphasizing the positive impact it can have on our well-being.

The Link Between Weight and Disease

Carrying excess weight places strain on vital organs and systems, increasing the risk of numerous health conditions. For instance, obesity is closely associated with cardiovascular disease, as the extra weight strains the heart, elevates blood pressure, and contributes to the accumulation of harmful cholesterol. Additionally, being overweight or obese raises the likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, as excess body fat interferes with insulin regulation. Furthermore, certain forms of cancer, such as breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer, have been linked to obesity. By understanding the connection between weight and disease, we can recognize the significance of weight loss as a preventive measure.

Reducing the Risk of Heart Disease

Heart disease remains a leading cause of mortality worldwide, and weight loss plays a pivotal role in its prevention. Losing excess weight reduces the strain on the heart, lowers blood pressure, and decreases the levels of harmful cholesterol. Moreover, weight loss can enhance heart function and reduce the risk of developing conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and maintaining a sustainable weight loss regimen can significantly decrease the chances of cardiovascular complications. By prioritizing weight loss, individuals can proactively safeguard their heart health and enjoy a longer, more fulfilling life.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes, a chronic condition characterized by high blood sugar levels, can be prevented or delayed through weight loss and a healthy lifestyle.



Excess weight and obesity contribute to insulin resistance, making it difficult for the body to regulate blood sugar effectively. By shedding pounds, individuals can improve insulin sensitivity, reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Weight loss achieved through a balanced diet and regular physical activity not only lowers blood sugar levels but also helps control blood pressure and cholesterol. Embracing a healthy lifestyle and achieving a healthy weight are essential steps in preventing this prevalent and potentially debilitating disease.

The Impact on Cancer Risk

Obesity has been identified as a risk factor for various types of cancer, emphasizing the importance of weight loss in cancer prevention. Excess body fat produces hormones and chemicals that promote cell growth, increasing the likelihood of cancer development. By maintaining a healthy weight, individuals can reduce the risk of breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer, among others. Engaging in regular physical activity and adopting a balanced diet can aid weight loss efforts and contribute to the prevention of cancer. It is crucial to recognize the role of weight loss as a modifiable risk factor in the fight against cancer, enabling individuals to take proactive steps toward reducing their susceptibility to this disease.

Weight loss is a key factor in preventing various diseases and improving overall health. By shedding excess weight, individuals can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain forms of cancer. Adopting a sustainable weight loss approach, which includes a healthy diet, regular physical activity, and lifestyle modifications, is crucial for long-term success. Moreover, weight

loss not only benefits physical health but also enhances mental well-being, self-confidence, and overall quality of life. It is important to emphasize that weight loss should always be pursued in a healthy and balanced manner, focusing on long-term lifestyle changes rather than quick fixes or extreme measures. By prioritizing weight loss as a preventive measure, individuals can take charge of their health, reduce the burden of disease, and promote a healthier future for themselves.

At Soleil Health and Wellness, we believe that true health and beauty are intertwined, forming the foundation for a fulfilling and vibrant life. Led by Nurse Practitioner Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC, our practice is dedicated to providing exceptional care and transformative services that empower our patients to unlock their full potential. With a focus on holistic well-being, cutting-edge treatments, and personalized care, we strive to build lifelong relationships with those we serve.



Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

Lisa Gonzalez is a compassionate and highly skilled Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). After graduating with honors from Nova Southeastern University, Lisa's remarkable journey has been

marked by both didactic and clinical achievements. Her extensive training includes aesthetic procedures such as Botox/Dysport injections, Dermal Fillers, Microneedling, and Platelet-Rich Plasma Injections. With experience in Primary Care, Acute Care, and Skilled Home Care, Lisa was drawn to the profession by her deep desire to serve others and build lifelong relationships with her patients.

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FINDING RELIEF: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF AQUATIC THERAPY FOR CHRONIC PAIN

Living with chronic pain can be an overwhelming and debilitating experience. However, emerging research suggests that aquatic therapy may offer a promising solution for individuals seeking relief. Aquatic therapy harnesses the healing power of water to provide a low-impact environment that promotes physical activity, relaxation, and pain management. In this article, we will delve into the challenges faced by those with chronic pain, explore the unique benefits of aquatic therapy, and highlight how this innovative approach can be a game-changer in managing chronic pain effectively.

1. Understanding Chronic Pain

Chronic pain affects millions of people worldwide, disrupting their daily lives and diminishing their quality of life. It can arise from various conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, or back injuries, lasting for weeks, months, or even years. Traditional pain management approaches often involve medication, physical therapy, or surgical interventions. However, these treatments may not always provide satisfactory results or may have unwanted side effects. This is where aquatic therapy comes into play, offering a holistic alternative that targets pain relief while promoting overall well-being.

2. The Therapeutic Power of Water

Aquatic therapy, also known as water therapy or hydrotherapy, utilizes water's unique properties to enhance healing and rehabilitation. The buoyancy of water reduces the impact on joints and allows for gentle movement without exacerbating pain. Additionally, the resistance provided by water helps strengthen muscles, improve flexibility, and increase range of motion. The hydrostatic pressure exerted by water reduces swelling and inflammation, alleviating pain and promoting circulation. These combined benefits make aquatic therapy an attractive option for individuals dealing with chronic pain.

3. Managing Pain through Aquatic Therapy

Aquatic therapy offers a range of exercises and techniques tailored to address specific pain issues. From simple stretches and movements to more advanced activities, such as water aerobics or resistance training, the therapy can be customized to suit individual needs and abilities. The warm water



temperature used in aquatic therapy sessions further aids in muscle relaxation and pain reduction. Moreover, the supportive and soothing nature of water creates a calming effect on the mind, reducing stress and anxiety often associated with chronic pain.

4. Benefits and Considerations

One of the key advantages of aquatic therapy is its accessibility to people of different ages and fitness levels. It is particularly beneficial for individuals who struggle with weight-bearing exercises on land or those who experience limited mobility. The water's natural resistance helps improve muscle strength and endurance, enhancing overall fitness and promoting better posture. Additionally, aquatic therapy fosters a sense of community among participants, offering emotional support and motivation throughout the healing journey. However, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the suitability of aquatic therapy and identify any precautions or contraindications.

The advantages of aquatic therapy

Aquatic therapy has been used for hundreds of years! And it is available at Absolute Physical Therapy.

The following are some of the advantages:

- Increasing flexibility and mobility
- Assisting with locomotion and gait
- Increasing muscular strength and endurance
- Improving the healing process to reduce recovery time
- Increasing aerobic capacity for better health
- Improving coordination and balance
- Reducing stress and promoting relaxation

Depending on your specific requirements, your physical therapist may choose to add aquatic therapy into your treatment plan.

Chronic pain can significantly impact one's physical and emotional well-being. Aquatic therapy emerges as a promising option, offering a unique approach to pain management that combines gentle exercise, buoyancy, and the therapeutic benefits of water. By reducing pain, improving mobility, and enhancing overall quality of life, aquatic therapy empowers individuals to take an active role in their recovery. As research continues to highlight its effectiveness, it is crucial for those living with chronic pain to explore the potential benefits of aquatic therapy, potentially finding relief and renewed hope in their journey towards a pain-free life.

Why Choose Absolute Physical Therapy of SW FL

Absolute Physical Therapy is a state-of-the-art 2,500 square foot facility with modern amenities located just off Bonita Beach Road in a quaint medical district. With offerings like a heated therapeutic exercise pool, fully equipped gym space, traction room, and multiple private treatment rooms, Absolute is the #1 destination for many Southwestern Floridians therapy needs. Absolute Physical Therapy is well known for providing pelvic health therapy and aquatic therapy, but our skilled team can help with all conditions like orthopedics, neurological, vestibular training, soft tissue injuries, and so much more.

Absolute Physical Therapy in Bonita Springs, FL believes that each patient has a unique need unlike any other we've treated; you are not just "another patient". We will work to get you in as quickly as possible to assess your needs and develop a personalized plan of care that will help you attain your goals, reduce your pains, and get you back to the life you love.



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The Importance of a Baseline Hearing Test for Overall Health

Rachel Spencer, Au.D. - Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

When we think about hearing tests, we often think back to our days in grade school when we got time out of class to get our hearing tested - but hearing testing shouldn't stop there.

Just because we get older doesn't mean our hearing becomes any less important.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GET A HEARING TEST?

Anyone over the age of 50 should have an annual baseline hearing test.

This will give your audiologist a hearing test on file so they can use it to compare your future hearing tests results for signs of hearing loss. It'll make it easier if diagnosed with hearing loss and allow you to get the help you need quickly.

If you haven't had a baseline hearing test, then your audiologist won't be able to monitor how your hearing has changed over time. This will make it difficult to prescribe the best possible treatment.

A baseline hearing test will show your audiologist if you currently have mild hearing loss - something you might not have even been aware of as it's not easily detected by yourself! But, with a baseline hearing test, your audiologist will be able to diagnose even the mildest of hearing loss with ease.

HOW COMMON IS HEARING LOSS IN ADULTS?

According to the Johns Hopkins Cochlear Center for Hearing and Public Health, hearing loss is incredibly common and affects one in eight Americans.

The number of adult Americans with hearing loss is also increasing year on year. It's been reported that the number of people with hearing loss in the US will rise from 44 million in 2020 to over 73 million by 2060.

Most people with hearing loss are age 60 and older, so it's important to know now what your current hearing status is in case you are diagnosed later in life.

A baseline hearing test will determine your level of hearing and allow your audiologist to set up any necessary follow-up hearing tests so they can monitor any changes.

WHY DO YOU NEED A BASELINE HEARING TEST?

"I can hear fine: why do I need a baseline hearing test?"

We hear this a lot. People believe their hearing is fine and don't feel like it's necessary to busy their schedule with a baseline hearing test. But hearing tests are vital for the future of your hearing.

Hearing loss isn't always something you can simply diagnose, and sometimes it can go unnoticed for years.

WHY DOES HEARING LOSS GO UNDIAGNOSED?

It goes unnoticed because you can have normal hearing when it comes to low frequencies but have hearing loss in the high frequencies or vice versa.

Hearing loss in the high frequencies could give you trouble hearing high consonant sounds. For example, not noticing a difference between the words pass and path. But with other context clues, you may be able to understand what was said.

Hearing loss is typically a slow, gradual process that occurs over time. You could have an unnoticeable hearing loss, and believe your hearing is fine.

Some significant signs of hearing loss include:

- Slowly raising the TV or phone volume
- Asking others to repeat what they said
- Trying to read lips to understand what was said
- Being aware of visual cues

The sounds we're used to hearing, like turn signals or chirping birds, will fade away without realization. This slow decline in hearing ability lets our brain adapt to hearing loss. The brain may not translate the lack of picking up sounds around us, and hearing loss isn't noticed.

Often, the people around you, friends, and family, are the ones who'll notice your hearing difficulties. They'll notice before you and possibly before your doctor too!

Hearing loss affects your loved ones as they must make the appropriate adjustments while interacting with you. For example, they'll have to:

- Constantly raise their voice
- Repeat what they've said
- Raise the TV volume
- Repeat what another person has said - like your doctor

If you've noticed any of these indications, you should check-in for a hearing test right away.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN WITH UNTREATED HEARING LOSS?

Hearing loss is more common than you think, and it tends to be more common as we age. 14% of people in the US have clinically relevant hearing loss, and it affects ¼ of adults in their 60's and ¾ of adults aged seventy and older.

This is because as you get older, the hair cells in the inner ear that transmit sounds to your brain get damaged. Noise exposure, aging, ototoxic medications, and other damage to the hair cells can cause hearing loss over time.

Hearing loss is also linked with an increased risk of dementia and poor health outcomes. This is because hearing loss prevents sounds from reaching the brain, which then focuses the brain on working much harder than usual - impairing communication. Studies have shown that hearing loss is the most significant risk for dementia, and it's also linked with depression and accidents.

Untreated hearing loss can cause:

- Irritability, negativity, anger
- Fatigue, tension, stress, depression
- Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations
- Loneliness
- Reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety
- Impaired memory and the ability to learn new tasks
- Reduced job performance
- Diminished psychological and overall health

We hope this helped you discover the importance of baseline hearing tests and why you should schedule one right away. At Decibels Audiology, we are offering complimentary Baseline Hearing Tests and our team will be able to answer any questions you might have about hearing loss.

Take charge of your hearing and health by scheduling a baseline hearing test today!

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UNDERSTANDING GROUP THERAPY AND ITS BENEFITS

By Gregory J. Finer LCSW, MCAP – Clinical Director Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group

At Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group, located at 704 Goodlette Frank Rd. Naples, FL 34102, group therapy is a valued and frequently utilized form of psychotherapy. Crossroads utilizes group therapy as an essential form of treatment for individuals struggling with addictions, anxiety, depression, relationship problems, post-traumatic stress, and other mental health conditions.

Group therapy provides a supportive and confidential environment where individuals relate with others facing similar challenges. This sense of connection reduces feelings of isolation. Participants in group therapy discover that they are truly not alone. Hearing others share similar thoughts and emotions has a profound normalizing effect. A safe group atmosphere allows individuals to feel comfortable to share.

Group therapists at Crossroads are trained to assist individuals to feel open to discuss issues and topics that allow for group discussions in a non-judgmental way. This allows opportunities for the group members to hear how individuals cope with similar problems and conflicts. This type of observational learning is an important factor to motivation towards self-improvement. In the group process and through the dissemination of psycho-educational information, individuals begin to re-evaluate their own emotional and interpersonal issues. The compassionate and supportive interaction that is developed within the group moves individuals in a positive direction toward healthier ways of relating to others in their personal lives.

At Crossroads, we strive to have our group members' experiences be informative, challenging, dynamic, and educational- and above all, unconditionally supportive. We employ techniques such as empty-chair dialogues, role-playing, guided imagery, icebreakers, meditation, art therapy and many other group activities. The healing properties of the group therapy experience cannot be overstated.

In my 30 years of clinical practice in mental health and addiction treatment, I have heard individuals describe the group therapy experience as one of the most positive and transformative experiences of their life. Early on, some members are hesitant and unsure about opening up in a group, but in short order, most describe a profound sense of acceptance and belonging – something that they had never experienced before. It's a feeling and connection on a deeper level where the veils are lifted, and the walls are broken down. This vulnerability, just below the surface, houses a well-spring of gratitude and self-acceptance.

At Crossroads, multiple therapies are offered with unique benefits to specific challenges. Our treatment structures include Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP) programs which provide the most comprehensive treatment – three days per week and typically not less than ten to twelve hours per week. This treatment is extremely effective in treating addiction and substance abuse issues. Crossroads Outpatient Group therapy is less intensive and usually incorporates one to two group meetings per week. Both programs utilize various types of therapies within each program.

- Psychoeducation focuses on providing education and information about specific issues, including mental health disorders, coping skills, or life skills. Psychoeducational groups enhance participants' knowledge and understanding of their challenges and equip them with practical tools and strategies to manage their concerns effectively.

- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques help individuals identify and modify negative thought patterns and behaviors. Our participants learn coping skills, problem-solving strategies, and ways to challenge and reframe unhelpful beliefs. Crossroads CBT groups are effective for treating substance abuse disorders, as well as conditions including anxiety disorders and depression.

- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) techniques help individuals struggling with emotional dysregulation, self-harm behaviors, or certain personality disorders. Crossroads DBT groups focus on teaching mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness skills. Our DBT groups provide a supportive environment for practicing these skills and improving emotional well-being.

- Family therapy involves the participation of family members or significant others in the therapeutic process. Crossroads family therapy groups improve communication, address family dynamics, and enhance understanding between family members. Our family support groups offer a space for families facing similar challenges to share experiences and support each other.

- Expressive therapies utilize creative arts, including music, art, dance, or drama, to facilitate emotional expression and exploration. Crossroads holistic groups offer a nonverbal means of communication, allowing participants to access and process emotions that may be difficult to articulate verbally.

- Process-oriented groups focus on the here-and-now experiences of group members. At Crossroads, this is referred to as our Gestalt Group. This group offers a wonderful opportunity for those wishing to engage in this influential and powerful experience. The group members observe and reflect on the group dynamics, interactions, and group themes, providing insights into participants' emotional patterns, communication styles, and interpersonal dynamics. Our process-oriented groups promote self-awareness, improved communication, and relationship growth. In this group, individuals share their experiences, emotions, and interactions while receiving validation, support and feedback from the Crossroads therapist and other group members.

If you or a loved one is considering mental health or addiction treatment, emotions surrounding this decision can be confusing. You may recognize that you are experiencing more than normal difficulties in your life. You may have persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger, or hopelessness- yet resistance is blocking you. You may acknowledge that substance use, or addictive behaviors are causing significant disruptions and emotional difficulties in your life, yet the resistance is strong.

Amidst all of the hesitation and doubts, there is a solution in the form of seeking treatment that will lead to positive changes in your life. Imagine having the support of other like-minded individuals struggling with the same issues who completely understand your pain. This is what occurs in group therapy.

To close, here are a few testimonials of individuals and their experiences in group therapy:

"The groups at Crossroads became something to look forward to each week. I always felt welcome and appreciated, and it was a place where I felt free to share my problems if I wanted to."

"It is helpful to know that you are not alone in your emotional struggles and pain; it helps lessen the blame you assign to yourself."

"For me it made me feel like I was validated. It reduced my sense of isolation. Through the shared experiences and the ideas and suggestions, I learned a lot of positive ideas to use to work on my own issues."

"For me, group therapy at Crossroads is a place I could get honest with myself. Group therapy has helped me know my triggers, taught me to have more self-respect, and healthier relationships. I definitely recommend group therapy at Crossroads."

Please feel confident to contact us at (239) 692.1020 to learn more about Crossroads and our programs. We strive to promote a safe and helpful environment that supports each individual's unique journey to long term growth, well-being, and recovery.



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UNDERSTANDING GASTROPARESIS SYMPTOMS, CAUSES, AND TREATMENT

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

Gastroparesis is a debilitating digestive disorder characterized by delayed stomach emptying, leading to a range of distressing symptoms. This article explores the various aspects of gastroparesis, including its symptoms, causes, and available treatment options. By understanding this condition, individuals and healthcare professionals can work together to manage and improve the quality of life for those affected by gastroparesis.

Symptoms of Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis manifests in several symptoms, which may vary in intensity among individuals. The most common signs include:

- 1. Nausea and Vomiting:** Feelings of nausea and recurrent vomiting are prevalent symptoms of gastroparesis. Vomiting may occur hours after eating, as the stomach fails to properly empty its contents.
- 2. Abdominal Discomfort:** Individuals with gastroparesis often experience persistent abdominal pain, bloating, and a sensation of fullness, even after consuming small meals.
- 3. Erratic Blood Sugar Levels:** Gastroparesis can disrupt the normal digestion and absorption of food, leading to erratic blood sugar levels in individuals with diabetes.
- 4. Weight Loss:** Due to inadequate absorption of nutrients, unintentional weight loss is common in individuals with gastroparesis.

Causes of Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis can stem from various underlying causes, including:

- 1. Diabetes:** The most common cause of gastroparesis is diabetes, where high blood sugar levels can damage the nerves responsible for regulating stomach contractions.
- 2. Post-Surgical Complications:** Certain surgeries, particularly those involving the stomach or upper digestive tract, can lead to gastroparesis as a result of nerve damage.



3. Neurological Disorders: Conditions such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and stroke can interfere with the normal functioning of the nerves that control stomach movements.

4. Medications and Lifestyle Factors: Some medications, such as certain antidepressants and opioids, can contribute to delayed stomach emptying. Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can also worsen gastroparesis symptoms.

Treatment Options for Gastroparesis

While gastroparesis is a chronic condition, several treatment approaches can help manage its symptoms effectively:

- 1. Dietary Modifications:** Adopting a low-fiber, low-fat diet that consists of smaller, more frequent meals can aid digestion. Soft foods and liquids are often better tolerated. Working with a registered dietitian can be beneficial in tailoring a suitable meal plan.
- 2. Medications:** Various medications, such as prokinetics, antiemetics, and antibiotics, may be prescribed to stimulate stomach contractions, control nausea, and prevent bacterial overgrowth.
- 3. Feeding Tubes:** In severe cases where oral intake is inadequate, a feeding tube can be used to deliver liquid nutrition directly to the small intestine.
- 4. Electrical Stimulation:** Gastric electrical stimulation, a procedure involving the implantation of a device to stimulate the stomach muscles, may be considered for individuals who do not respond to other treatments.

5. Psychological Support: Coping with a chronic condition like gastroparesis can be challenging. Seeking psychological support, such as therapy or support groups, can help individuals manage the emotional impact of the condition.

Gastroparesis presents significant challenges for individuals affected by this digestive disorder. Understanding the symptoms, causes, and treatment options is essential for effectively managing the condition and improving quality of life. With proper medical guidance and lifestyle modifications, individuals with gastroparesis can find relief from symptoms and achieve better overall well-being. If you suspect you may have gastroparesis, it is crucial to consult with a healthcare professional for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

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

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The Benefits of Heavy Metal Chelation

By Eduardo Maristany, MD

Hheavy metal toxicity is a growing concern in today's industrialized world, with metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and arsenic posing significant health risks. Heavy metal chelation therapy has emerged as an effective method for removing these toxic substances from the body. This paper explores the benefits of heavy metal chelation, including detoxification, symptom relief, improved health outcomes, and the potential for disease prevention.

If you google, "EPA Top 200 Toxicants", the CDC lists Mercury, Lead, and Arsenic at the top of the list!

Arsenic is commonly found from contaminated sources (rice, tea) from certain regions in Asia/India.

Mercury is commonly found in larger fish, amalgams

Lead is commonly found in water service lines to houses... Certain cities have more lead service lines than others. (Ex: Chicago has the most in the country)

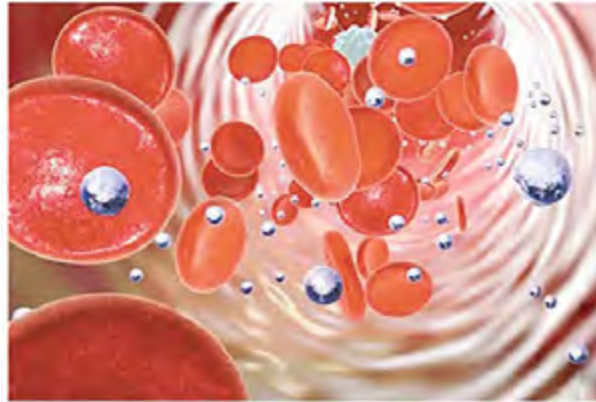
BENEFITS

1. Detoxification:

Heavy metal chelation works by employing chelating agents, which are substances that bind to toxic metals and facilitate their elimination from the body. These agents form stable complexes with the metals, preventing their reabsorption and aiding in their excretion through urine or feces. Chelation therapy helps to reduce the body burden of heavy metals, thus promoting detoxification and reducing the potential for long-term health issues associated with metal accumulation.

2. Symptom Relief:

Heavy metal toxicity can manifest in various symptoms, including fatigue, cognitive impairment, neurological disorders, cardiovascular problems, and immune dysfunction. Chelation therapy has shown promise in alleviating these symptoms by reducing the metal burden in the



body. Studies have reported improvements in energy levels, cognitive function, mood, and overall well-being following chelation treatment, especially in individuals with documented heavy metal toxicity. I have seen heavy metal chelation reverse autoimmune disease multiple times, like Rheumatoid arthritis for example.

3. Improved Health Outcomes:

Chelation therapy has been beneficial in certain medical conditions associated with heavy metal toxicity. For instance, in lead poisoning, chelation therapy has been used successfully to remove lead from the body and improve symptoms. Chelation has also shown promise in addressing mercury toxicity, particularly in cases of mercury amalgam dental fillings. By reducing the heavy metal load, chelation therapy may help prevent or manage associated health conditions and improve long-term health outcomes.

4. Cardiovascular Benefits:

Emerging research suggests that heavy metal chelation may have cardiovascular benefits. Some studies have found that chelation therapy, particularly with a chelating agent called EDTA, can lead to reduced plaque formation, improved blood flow, and enhanced endothelial function. These effects may contribute to cardiovascular health and potentially reduce the risk of heart disease, particularly in individuals with high heavy metal exposure or existing cardiovascular conditions.

5. Disease Prevention:

Chelation therapy holds promise as a potential preventive measure for certain diseases. For example, the accumulation of heavy metals, particularly lead and cadmium, has been associated with increased oxidative stress and cellular damage, which are risk factors for various chronic diseases, including cancer. By reducing heavy metal burden, chelation therapy may help mitigate these risks and potentially lower the incidence of certain diseases.

CONCLUSION

Heavy metal chelation therapy offers several benefits, including detoxification, symptom relief, improved health outcomes, and the potential for disease prevention. By effectively removing toxic metals from the body, chelation therapy plays a crucial role in reducing the health risks associated with heavy metal toxicity. It is important to note that chelation therapy should be administered under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional, as it requires careful evaluation, monitoring, and individualized treatment plans. Further research and clinical studies are necessary to fully understand the potential of heavy metal chelation in promoting overall health and well-being.

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THE TOP 5 CANNABIS PRODUCTS TO BEAT ANXIETY IN FLORIDA

Florida has opened the doors to the medicinal potential of cannabis, inviting a new era of wellness for Floridians. Many of these products offer a fantastic solution for those who face the burden of anxiety, without the “medicated” or “high” feeling most consider when thinking of medicinal marijuana.

The market has blossomed in the sunshine state, offering innovative cannabis products tailored for various conditions, including anxiety. Today, we navigate this vibrant landscape to present you with five top-tier cannabis products in Florida designed to combat anxiety.

1. Cream Cake Mints at Sunnyside

The Cream Cake Mints strain available at Sunnyside is a top choice among Floridians managing anxiety.

Developed from a unique fusion of Ice Cream Cake and Animal Mints strains, Cream Cake Mints offers a sensory feast, with its minty-sweet flavor complemented by a subtle hint of diesel. Notably, this strain possesses a THC content of around 17%, making it potent for inducing relaxation and alleviating anxiety symptoms.

The three core terpenes are essential to its anxiety-combating capabilities: Limonene, Caryophyllene, and Linalool. Limonene is acclaimed for its mood-elevating properties, Caryophyllene for its anti-inflammatory and anxiety-reducing effects, and Linalool, a terpene found in lavender, for its calming and soothing properties.

For residents in Florida looking to unwind from a stressful day, Cream Cake Mints is an excellent choice that can enhance their sleep quality.

2. MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler

MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler presents an innovative solution for Florida's residents seeking balanced and controlled anxiety relief.

Its user-friendly design, akin to a traditional inhaler, ensures a controlled delivery of medical cannabis. Notably, the 1:1 formulation of THC and CBD synergizes their effects, which is critical in managing anxiety symptoms.

The inhaler provides 200mg each of THC and CBD, guaranteeing a metered dose with each use. This precision ensures the effective use of the medicine



and provides predictable results. The inhaler also provides discretion, a vital aspect for many users, by eliminating the traditional smells associated with cannabis usage.

Hence, Florida's residents who need consistent, anxiety-reducing effects in a user-friendly, discrete, and efficient design will find the MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler a top option.

3. Tikun Olam Midnight from Vidacann

Tikun Olam's Midnight tincture from Vidacann offers Floridians an effective solution for anxiety.

This product is derived from a high-CBD, sativa-dominant strain known for managing pain, inflammation, indigestion, sleep disorders, restlessness, and anxiety. Its balanced blend of 250mg each of THC and CBD provides the synergistic therapeutic benefits of both cannabinoids without the overpowering high usually associated with high-THC products.

The tincture form adds flexibility in consumption, allowing it to be ingested or taken sublingually. Additionally, precise dosing is facilitated by the graduated syringe included with the purchase.

The natural avocado oil base improves absorption while offering further health benefits. Therefore, Tikun Olam's Midnight tincture is an excellent option for Florida's elderly population and those new to cannabis, making it a versatile solution for managing anxiety.

4. Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge at GrowHealthy

The Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge at GrowHealthy redefines the medical marijuana experience for residents in Florida with its mojito-inspired distillate.

A standout feature of this cartridge is its balanced 1:1 ratio of THC to CBD, which potentiates anxiety symptoms. The distillate's substantial CBD content (49.7%) and THC content (31.7%) induce relaxation and reduce stress without causing a high. Its minty, tangy taste also creates an uplifting experience that's as enjoyable as sipping a refreshing mojito.

The balance of cannabinoids and the delightful flavoring make this distillate a pleasure to consume and a powerful tool for managing anxiety symptoms. Consequently, the Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge emerges as an exceptional choice for Floridians seeking a potent, refreshing, and balanced solution for their anxiety management.

5. Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate - 5:1 (THC: CBN) at Trulieve

Finally, the Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate available at Trulieve brings a novel approach to managing anxiety with its unique 5:1 THC to CBN ratio.

Recognized for potent relaxation properties, CBN combined with THC can enhance sleep, relieve pain, and significantly reduce anxiety symptoms. These gummies pack a flavorful punch, blending tart and sweet flavors while delivering potent therapeutic effects.

Notably, the gummies' creation involves a solventless process, ensuring a clean, chemical-free product that lets Florida's residents consume confidently. The potent combination of THC and CBN promotes enhanced relaxation, making it easier to manage anxiety symptoms, especially at night.

Therefore, Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate is a top choice for Floridians dealing with anxiety, providing a safe, high-quality product that combines delightful flavors and powerful therapeutic properties.

Taking the Next Step with A Florida Medical Card

From potent strains to innovative inhalers and delicious gummies, these five cannabis products offer Floridians struggling with anxiety various options.

Each product leverages the power of cannabinoids and terpenes to help users manage anxiety symptoms. By procuring a Medical Marijuana Card, Florida residents can start their journey towards an anxiety-free life with the help of these cannabis products.



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FACELIFTS PERFORMED WITH OR WITHOUT ANESTHESIA

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

Facelifts are performed as Full or Limited procedures and give lift to different areas of the face. These can be done surgically, with or without anesthesia. The minimally invasive treatments do not produce the same results, but may be just what a patient needs. Which approach that is best for you, is a decision made during your consultation with Dr. Bergqvist. He also evaluates if a patient would like to replace lost fatty volume by way of fat transfer or fillers and offers skin treatments such as laser, peels or resurfacing improve the skin's texture. Although a facelift can improve the appearance of sagging, wrinkles and aging, it does not stop the aging process.

Deep Plane Full Face Lift, is the most common facelift with long-term effects, which involves tightening the deeper structures. Its also known as **SMAS**, which stands for submuscular aponeurosis system. This is performed on the deeper tougher tissues which retain the deep structures of soft tissue within your face. Anticipated recovery: 2 weeks of sutures and swelling, (can be longer). There are incisions for this surgery around the ear, extending into the hairline posteriorly, and a small incision under the chin. A compression garment is necessary to wear for a total of 1 month. Initially, all the time for the first two weeks, then, reduced night time wear. Generally, your friends and family will be quite aware that you had a surgical intervention.

Limited surgical face lifts, like the **Thread Lift** tightens the lower face and cheek area by inserting threads with small hooks them. Often used on lesser sagging and these do not last as long.

Ponytail Lift requires a cut above ear in hair line. A small amount of skin and deep structures are lifted at the midface.



Renuvion/J Plasma is a newer modality that was just cleared by the FDA for face and neck tightening. This procedure uses a small canula that is inserted under the skin. A helium plasma beam delivers energy to the tissue thereby generating collagen creation and skin tightening. There are no incision, but a small puncture. This procedure has shown to have great results and is state of the art in technology. The benefit of this compared to facelift is reduced downtime and no true incisions. Results are great but not immediate, about 3-5 months.

Other less invasive modalities include stimulation to the skin by means of either needles, ultrasound or chemicals which can improve the appearance of the face.

A well-known noninvasive facelift is Ultherapy which is focused ultrasound energy that creates microwave injuries at multiple levels of the skin and deeper tissue, thereby creating tightening over the next 3-6 months. This can be very good option for some candidates and requires no downtime.

Often to get the best results, Dr. B may have to restore some volume in the face which may involve injectables such as hyaluronic acid or taking some fat from the patient itself and fat grafting.

All procedures can be done with or without anesthesia. The benefits for having no anesthesia would be reduced bruising, nausea and increased privacy. Nausea and vomiting after anesthesia cause pressure and may create much more swelling and bruising. Under the experience and skill of double boarded Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon, Dr. Gunnar Bergqvist, MD, any of the facelift procedures may be done in-office, using the Tumescent Lidocaine Delivery, offering more privacy. However, Dr. & patient may choose to use anesthesia in the surgery center. It's important these procedures are only to be performed by a board-certified Plastic Surgeon. They should have training in Tumescent surgery in addition to a Certificate proving they are Boarded by the *American Board of Plastic Surgeons, ASPS*.

Ask your doctor how many facelifts they have done, where and how long they trained. No one should be delivering cosmetic procedures if they have completed residency training in another field or doing procedures if they are for example, an Internal Medicine Doctor who has gone to weekend courses for cosmetic clinical applications. Beware of "Physicians" who go to medical school and skip any residency. It's not safe or cheaper! In fact, DR. Bergqvist sees the damage done by many patients from undertrained "aesthetic" clinicians. Just because someone with less training offers a less invasive treatment, does not mean it's the correct one. Why not go to the right surgeon who offers ALL the options with the best advice possible for the specific results you are looking for?

Dr. Bergqvist is double boarded by the American Board of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery as well as the American Board of Surgery and a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons which hold the Highest standard of care in the field. In 2019 Dr. Bergqvist and Dr. Jeffery Klein, (the inventor of Tumescent Anesthesia), showed new results with an even more advanced formula called TLAD, (Tumescent Lidocaine Antibiotic Delivery,) which further reduces pain and discomfort after even more invasive surgeries that can be used for all types of surgeries. This solution has allowed Dr. Bergqvist to expand its use for many other procedures allowing many procedures to be done directly in his office.

The Plastic Surgery Center of Naples
860 111th Ave., N., Suite #6, Naples Florida, 34108
239.431.7967 | www.SwedishDr.com



Gunnar Bergqvist, MD
Practice Made Perfect

The Single Most Important Question to Ask When Choosing a Hospice

By Jeff Alexander, Director of Business Development

In my work every day, I hear stories of panicked and scared family members trying to decide which hospice to choose for their terminally ill loved one. For most families, the decision to admit a sick person for end-of-life care comes after months, and sometimes years, of fighting a challenging illness and managing its devastating effects on everyone in the patient's orbit. Turning a loved one over to a hospice is an act of trust. Fortunately, there are ways for you to assess which hospice to choose when the time comes, so you are confident you have done all you could for the sick person you love.

The most important question we suggest you ask each potential hospice provider is whether it is a nonprofit (NFP) community organization or a for-profit (FP) corporation. The answer will likely give you insights into the personality, values, mission and vision of the hospices you're considering. It will also lead you to objective, third-party analyses of how quality of care measures consistently show that nonprofit hospices provide better care.

As you look for the hospice that's right for your family, let's review some things you don't have to worry about.

- All hospices that accept Medicare/Medicaid (virtually all of them) provide the same required core services, such as care by nurses and home health aides.
- All hospices must follow the same state and federal regulations.
- Medicare pays all hospices the same daily rate, regardless of diagnosis.

So, what makes nonprofit hospices different, if they share so many characteristics with for-profit hospices?

- A recent study* shows that nonprofit hospices provided patients with 10% more nursing visits, 35% more social worker visits, and twice as many therapy visits as for-profit hospices, per patient day.

Patients in nonprofit hospices received almost three times as many visits from a hospice physician or nurse practitioner (1.49 vs. 0.51 visits per 100 patient days) than for-profit hospice patients.

- Nonprofit hospices welcome everyone – regardless of diagnosis, ability to pay, or their potential to be “lucrative” patients. Ask which diagnoses are the most common at the hospices you're considering. You are likely to see that for-profit hospices care for more patients with degenerative diseases than other diagnoses because those patients need less care and stay in the program longer, thus generating more revenue. Nonprofits welcome all.

- Because nonprofit hospices have no need to pay dividends to shareholders, they use donations and reserves to:

- Offer additional services to patients and the community, for which they are not paid. Examples are music therapy, massage therapy, and art therapy for patients and multifaceted bereavement programs for children and adults, open to all without cost.

- Invest in ongoing training and development for patient care team members, and to hire more advanced practice registered nurses and therapists to the team.

- Reinvest in their communities through partnering with other organizations, hiring locally and building within the communities that support their mission.

Ask each hospice you're considering to describe the “extra” services they offer beyond what's required. Can they show you how they invest in staff training? Will they share a list of community partners whose work they help advance?

* “Hospice Medicare Margins: Analysis of Patient and Hospice Characteristics, Utilization, and Cost”, July 2019, Commissioned by the National Partnership for Hospice Innovation. Bozell, Coplen, Coates, Pelizzori, and Pyenson.

- Nonprofit hospices are governed by a volunteer board of directors who represent the demographics and unique needs of their communities. Such boards guide the development of their hospices based on what their communities need to navigate difficult transitions such as illness, death, and loss. They may, for example, vote to invest in money-losing programs because they know people desperately need those services, and that it is the hospice's mission to provide them.

Selecting the right hospice for your family is a big responsibility that usually comes at a time of great stress and urgency. Fortunately, in addition to considering the points in this article, you can review these additional objective measures of a hospice's quality:

- Accreditation by a third party, such as The Joint Commission. Accreditation isn't required, but it does show a hospice's commitment to excellence and going beyond minimum requirements.

- Family satisfaction scores from former patient families, showing how hospices compare in a head-to-head matchup on various quality indicators. This Medicare tool is available at <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>

Please accept my personal invitation to talk about finding the perfect hospice for your family. My team in the Avow Patient Access Center welcomes your toughest questions about why Avow may be the right fit for you. We are Collier County's original nonprofit hospice, formed in 1983, and we remain the only nonprofit hospice ready to care for you. We are proud of our 21 continuous years of quality accreditation by The Joint Commission and our satisfaction scores from former patient families. To reach us 24/7/365, call us 239-280-2288.



239.280.2288
www.avowcares.org



Diabetes Adversely Affects Foot and Leg Health

Dr. Michael J. Petrocelli, Board Certified in Ankle and Foot Surgeries

Diabetic neuropathy is a progressive disease that affects nearly 200,000 new patients per year. Roughly, 29 million Americans have diabetes. Many of these cases are undiagnosed, but for those individuals that struggle with the disease, symptoms of diabetic neuropathy can be debilitating.

People with diabetes have an extremely high storage of glucose; Glucose damages many organs in the body but also has a severely adverse effect on nerves. This nerve damage happens because the small blood vessels, which supply blood and nutrients to the nerves becomes impaired. When the nerves are no longer fed nutrients, they either die, or their signals to the brain are ineffective.

Individuals with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing foot ulcers. These are not just simple wounds that are to be overlooked. When a diabetic person develops these foot ulcers, it can be life threatening.

Understanding the disease state is complex, but in short, having high blood sugar levels, along with low blood and oxygen supply, damages the nerves throughout the body. This damage affects the long peripheral nerves that feed sensations to the legs, feet, and toes from the spinal cord, through communication with the brain. If your condition has progressed, along with nerve damage, you may develop lingering sores on your feet and toes that are resistant to healing.

Diabetic Foot Neuropathy Symptoms

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



Once the peripheral nerves are damaged, there is no cure. Along with medications and drug therapies, there are proven methods to lessen the symptoms of diabetic foot neuropathy.

Foot Ulcers

Because of the nerve damage, the feet will most likely not secrete oils or sweat properly and can develop cracks and deep slits from dry skin. Calluses can also split, and once these issues start to take place, bleeding, infections and non-healing wounds form on the bottom of the foot and toes. The lack of blood supply and the nerve issues, do not allow the wound to heal properly on its own. Along with this disorder, the individual will continue to put pressure on the foot; this rubbing action is similar to wearing a hole in your sock or shoe.

It's critical to keep your glucose levels regulated.

Diabetic Foot Ulcer Treatment

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

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

Collier Podiatry

Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 20 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. Podiatrists treat the entire knee down area of the leg, so if you are experiencing diabetic leg, ankle, or foot wounds, rest assured that Collier Podiatry's podiatric care is your best option.

Their kind and well-trained staff are ready to answer your questions and concerns and get you back on your feet again. Collier Podiatry is available to answer your questions and make your appointment. Please call them at (239) 775-0019.



COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A.
Michael J. Petrocelli
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CANNABIS PRICING

HIGH, LOW or HECK NO?

By Hans Doherty - Growing in Health Florida

Would you rather pay for a \$20 co-payment for your prescription medication, or pay the full price?

I know... It's a stupid question.

Many pharmaceutical drugs can cost thousands of dollars.

Cannabis has no co-payment option yet. It's all full price. It's all out of pocket which can be prohibitive for some. Let's be honest, cannabis would be much more attractive as an alternative if insurance companies would pay some or all of the cost.

Well that's not going to happen anytime soon, unfortunately.

Members of the cannabis community are working diligently to inform them about the benefits. However, the pharmaceutical lobby in Washington is very powerful. It's the main reason marijuana is still listed as a schedule 1 drug. Tobacco and alcohol also view cannabis as competition for them. They are also actively trying to suppress it as well.

At Growing in Health we will teach people how to grow their own. When cannabis becomes legal recreationally here in Florida, growing will be part of the benefit. That's the best way to know what you're getting and the least expensive way of obtaining it.

Until then you should be diligent in your research before you buy.

Product prices is all over the map. Product quality also varies from company to company. Strength and consistency also vary.



I don't ever judge people for trying to help themselves. I want them all to find relief from their suffering regardless of the product(s) they choose. That's why I offer to help determine what you have bought. And what you might consider buying.

Bring in what you have or take a couple photos of it. Let's go through it together and see. The strength of the product matters. The formulation matters. Ingredients matter. Length of time of use matters too.

Always feel welcome to come in and chat with us about it. What matters most is whether or not it works for you. (Because it doesn't work for everyone) Health is a regime of many things. Sleep, diet, exercise, etc.

Learn more and get busy living!!

Educational seminars are every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6pm.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Be well and thank you!!

**COME INTO THE STORE AND
LEARN HOW THESE PRODUCTS
ARE CHANGING LIVES
FOR THE BETTER.**

For more information, please message me at info@growinginhealthflorida.org, come by the store, or give me a call. I'm always happy to answer your questions. The more informed people are about cannabis the more they will seek it out as an alternative to other pharmaceutical drugs. That's a big step in a more natural direction.

Thank you for reading!

FDA disclaimer: Cannabis does not treat, cure remedy any medical condition. No medical advice given.

**Hans Doherty,
Owner of Growing
in Health Florida,
with his pal
Moochie.**



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THE "ULTIMATE" SPINE CARE AND SPINAL DECOMPRESSION PROGRAM

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Spine pain is extremely prevalent in the United States. **Low back pain** is a number one pain related diagnosis in our country and it's the number one cause of long-term disability. It is also the number 1 reason for long-term use of opiates and addictive painkillers. **Neck pain** is the number one chronic complaint for those who have suffered a car accident injury or whiplash. 65% of people who have suffered a whiplash never fully recover and have long-term symptoms. Conventional medicine basically has no answer besides painkillers, steroid injections, nerve ablations, and surgery.

Very few physicians are trained to treat and rehabilitate the spine apart from physical therapists and chiropractors. Medical practitioners who also train in Regenerative therapeutics and Biologics may also offer a better than average outcome for suffering patients. At **Feel Amazing Institute** we have advanced training in the diagnosis and treatment of your spinal complaints. We combine chiropractic, physical therapeutics, rehabilitation, and regenerative medicine to get the best possible outcomes.

What is the ultimate spinal care program?

At **Feel Amazing Institute** we were the original clinic to offer **non-surgical spinal decompression therapy** back in 2003. After 20 years of experience, becoming board-certified in functional neurology, and becoming medically integrated and trained in regenerative procedures, our results are exceptional. To this day we are the only clinic in southwest Florida to combine this many modalities to enhance the outcomes for the community of Naples.

Spine pain can be very different for different people

The source of spine pain and other complaints varies from one person to the next. The source of pain may be the bones, joints, discs, ligaments, or muscles. Ultimately these structures cause pain due to neurological irritation or damage.

The "Ultimate" spinal care program should include advanced technologies performed in physician's office and treatments for self-care at home. It can include different types of chiropractic treatment,

some of which do not involve manipulation of the spine but may include very gentle techniques. Treatment may include advanced technologies like spinal decompression therapy, shockwave therapy, class 4 lasers, pulsed electromagnetic fields, regenerative treatments such as platelet rich plasma, and cellular therapies that involve injections of growth factors, including products containing stem cells.

Feel Amazing Institute has six providers; a supervising medical doctor, two nurse practitioners, and three chiropractors. We also have four chiropractic assistants who perform our physical therapies. Each morning our entire office meets to discuss each new case from the previous day. We put our heads together and come up with the best possible prescription for treatment based on our over 120 years of combined experience. We feel it's usually not ideal to rely on just one type of treatment, such as chiropractic to stabilize and strengthen the spinal ailment. We will often combine several of our modalities to get the best improvement as quickly as possible. We want the condition to heal as thoroughly as possible so our clients do not suffer chronic problems for their lifetime, robbing them of their happiness and joy, and in the long run costing more than getting the job done right in the first place.

What modalities are used for improvement?

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

- Six decompression therapy tables
- Five different electrical therapies
- Two types of lasers
- Pulsed electromagnetic fields (PEMF)
- Sound waves / Shock waves / Pressure waves
- Massage therapy
- Stretching and strengthening exercises, both in office and for home
- DME durable medical equipment including back braces and supports ozone and peptide therapies
- Injections or infusions of Natural Biologics, including Wharton's jelly allografts, growth factors, and platelet rich plasma



What results can be achieved through the ultimate spinal care program at Feelamazing Institute?

Our patients report that better than 92% have excellent results. Most who undergo our treatments experience reduced pain, lower dependency on medication, improved activities, improve sleep, and more joy. We only except patients who we truly feel we can help and will let people know upfront if we feel there is a better option elsewhere.

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

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

For more information or to schedule a free telephone consultation or for a free informational seminar call today!



**FEEL AMAZING
INSTITUTE**

239.330.1000

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FEELAMAZING.COM

Dr. Richard Hiler DABCN, is a board-certified Chiropractic Neurologist with more than 26 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.



Pedestrian Accidents in Collier County: What You Need to Know

By F. Scott Pauzar, III, Naples Personal Injury Attorney

Each year, there are approximately 10,000 pedestrian accidents in Florida. Many of these accidents result in life-altering injuries, tragically, some prove fatal. If you have been seriously injured or lost a loved one in a pedestrian accident in Collier County, here is an overview of what you need to know:

Common Causes of Pedestrian Accidents

While pedestrian accidents can result from a variety of causes, most of these accidents involve some driver negligence. When drivers cause accidents, they can—and should—be held accountable. Some of the most common causes of pedestrian accidents for which victims and their families can seek just compensation include:

- Distracted driving
- Drowsy driving
- Drunk or drugged driving
- Running a red light or stop sign
- Speeding
- Turning without checking for pedestrians

Common Injuries in Pedestrian Accidents

These driving mistakes (among others) can result in many types of serious injuries. Regardless of the injury you or your loved one suffered, if someone else is to blame, you and your family deserve to be fairly compensated. Florida's personal injury laws cover all types of traumatic injuries—including (but not limited to):

- Back, neck and spinal cord injuries
- Broken and dislocated bones
- Burns
- Internal bleeding and organ damage
- Nerve and soft tissue damage
- Traumatic brain injuries (including concussions)

What to Do After a Pedestrian Accident in Collier County

After a pedestrian accident in Collier County, there are some essential steps that you need to take to protect your (and your family's) legal rights. For example, when dealing with a serious or fatal pedestrian accident, it is important to:



1. Record as Many Details as Possible

Write down everything you can remember about the accident. If you have photos or videos on your phone, keep these to share with your lawyer.

2. Avoid Relying on the Insurance Companies

Despite what they say, the insurance companies are not on your side. They will try to take advantage of you, so you must avoid relying on their "advice" about handling your claim.

3. Hire a Lawyer to Seek Just Compensation

When you have a pedestrian accident claim, the best thing you can do is talk to an experienced lawyer. Your lawyer can deal with the insurance companies for you, and your lawyer can help ensure you seek the total compensation you and your family deserve.

Damages Our Lawyers May Be Able to Help You and Your Family Recover

When you hire a lawyer for your pedestrian accident case in Collier County, they will work to

help maximize the amount you and your family recover. Accident victims and grieving families can recover financial compensation for various types of losses, including:

- Medical expenses
- Other out-of-pocket expenses (including funeral and burial expenses in wrongful death cases)
- Loss of income and benefits
- Loss of inheritance
- Emotional trauma
- Pain and suffering
- Loss of consortium, companionship, and enjoyment of life

If you need to know more about protecting your legal rights after a pedestrian accident in Collier County, we invite you to get in touch. Call 239-649-6555 or contact Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. for a free consultation.

About the Author

F. Scott Pauzar is a litigation and personal injury law attorney at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. in Naples and Marco Island, Florida. He has a broad base of legal knowledge and skills cultivated through over 15 years of experience as a litigator in complex litigation in both state and federal courts. Previously, Scott was an Assistant State Attorney at the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office in Fort Myers. During his five years as a Prosecutor, Scott conducted over 30 jury trials. After leaving the Office of the State Attorney, Scott served as an insurance defense attorney for 11 years, where his practice focused on litigation of complex cases and catastrophic injuries. Scott now combines his jury trial and defense experience to successfully represent his clients in litigation and personal injury law matters.



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CAN A HIGH-TECH CHAIR CURE INCONTINENCE?

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Do you wear urinary pads or diapers? Do you leak when you exercise or sneeze? Aging, childbirth, and menopause can all lead to incontinence. There are many treatments such as surgical procedures, pessary devices, and medications to help cure or reduce incontinence.

There is a new device by BTL called Emsella that makes incontinence treatment as simple as sitting in a chair! The Emsella is a unique chair that patients can simply sit and relax in (fully clothed) and have their pelvic floor significantly strengthened during a 28 minute treatment.

The Emsella chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. Each treatment provides the equivalent of doing over 10,000 kegel exercises. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder. Results can often be noticed as quickly as the first treatment. Most women and men will undergo just six sessions in a full three-week program to restore their pelvic muscle strength. The best part is, 67% of treated patients totally eliminated or decreased the use of hygienic pads, and 95% of treated patients improved quality of life.

Who Is The Right Candidate For BTL Emsella?
BTL EMSELLA™ is a great option for patients of any age who desire solution for urinary incontinence and improvement in their quality of life.

How Long Is The Treatment?

How Many Sessions Do I Need?

Your provider will tailor a treatment plan for you. A typical treatment takes 28 minutes and you will need about 6 sessions, scheduled twice a week.

What Does The Procedure Feel Like?

Is It Painful?

You will experience tingling and pelvic floor muscle contractions during the procedure. The treatment is painless and you may resume daily activities immediately after the treatment.



The following patients should not seek Emsella treatment.

1. Subject is pregnant, planning to get pregnant or within 3 months postpartum;
2. Subject has a pacemaker;
3. Subject has an implant or IUD containing metal (e.g. copper 7);
4. Subject has piercing between the waist and knees and is not willing to remove it before each treatment

How Fast Will I See Results?

You may observe improvement after a single session. The results will typically continue to improve over the next few weeks.¹

This progressive treatment is helping numerous men and women find their freedom, confidence, and get their life back without having to worry about urinary incontinence. Emsella has been featured on the Doctors and in various news and media outlets.

References:

1. Body by BTL, A Breakthrough Treatment For Incontinence And Confidence, 2019 Btl Industries Inc.



Some comments from local users:

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

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



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CELEBRATING NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION MONTH AND PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

August is an important month for public health as it is designated as National Immunization Month in many countries worldwide. This observance serves as a reminder of the crucial role immunizations play in preventing and eradicating diseases. Vaccines have proven to be one of the most effective and cost-efficient means of safeguarding individuals and communities from various infectious diseases. In this article, we will explore the significance of National Immunization Month, delve into the importance of vaccinations, highlight key initiatives and events during August, and discuss how we can all contribute to promoting immunization and protecting public health.

Importance of Immunizations

Immunizations are vital in preventing the spread of contagious diseases and safeguarding public health. Vaccines have played a significant role in eliminating or reducing the prevalence of once-devastating diseases such as polio, smallpox, and measles. They work by stimulating the body's immune system to recognize and fight specific pathogens, thus providing immunity. By ensuring that individuals, particularly children, receive the recommended vaccines, we can not only protect them but also create a shield of immunity within the community, a concept known as herd immunity.

National Immunization Month Initiatives

National Immunization Month brings together healthcare providers, policymakers, and communities to emphasize the importance of immunization. Throughout August, numerous initiatives are organized to promote awareness, education, and accessibility to vaccines. Health departments and organizations collaborate to offer immunization clinics, school vaccination drives, and public campaigns to reach diverse populations.

One of the key objectives during this month is to ensure that people of all ages are up-to-date with their immunizations. The focus extends beyond childhood vaccines to include vaccinations recommended for adolescents, adults, and seniors. Highlighting the benefits of vaccines, dispelling common myths and misconceptions, and addressing any



concerns are integral parts of these initiatives. Additionally, healthcare professionals engage in outreach activities to reach underserved communities, emphasizing equity in access to immunizations.

Community Involvement and Education

Community involvement plays a vital role in raising awareness about the importance of immunizations. Schools, workplaces, and local organizations can participate by organizing educational events, distributing informational materials, or hosting vaccination drives. By fostering a culture of vaccine literacy, communities can empower individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and the health of their loved ones.

Education is a crucial component of National Immunization Month. Informative materials, brochures, and online resources are readily available to answer common questions about vaccines and address concerns. It is essential to combat misinformation and debunk myths that may lead to vaccine hesitancy. By providing accurate information backed by scientific evidence, we can help individuals understand the benefits and safety of vaccines.

National Immunization Month in August serves as a reminder of the critical role vaccines play in protecting public health. By celebrating this observance, we can promote the significance of immunizations, emphasize the importance of staying up-to-date with vaccines, and encourage community involvement. Vaccines save lives, prevent diseases, and contribute to the well-being of individuals and societies as a whole. As we commemorate National Immunization Month, let us work together to ensure that everyone has access to immunizations and that accurate information about vaccines is readily available. By doing so, we can continue to safeguard public health and build a healthier future for all.

Contact Well-Being Medical Center of Naples today at (239) 315-7801.



Dr. Ricardo Martinez

Dr. Ricardo Martinez is an internist in Naples, FL and is affiliated with NCH Baker Hospital. He received his medical degree from Superior Institute of Medical Sciences of Santiago de Cuba and has been in practice 20 years. He also speaks multiple languages, including Spanish. He specializes in hospital medicine, ambulatory care and is experienced in hospice and palliative medicine, bariatric medicine, diabetes mellitus, food allergy, and infectious disease. As of March 16th, 2020, Dr. Martinez has founded Well-Being Medical center in Naples Florida. He is looking forward to providing Medical care within primary care settings and urgent care service throughout the Naples Florida area.



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SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE WITH A MOVE TO A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

By Mary Beth Baxter

National Simplify Your Life Week, observed August 7-13, is a timely reminder to reevaluate our priorities and seek ways to simplify our lives. One significant step towards achieving a simpler, stress-free lifestyle is considering a move to a senior living community. From rental communities such as The Carlisle Naples to those requiring a large, upfront entrance fee, there is a community designed to fit every lifestyle and comfort level. Typically, these communities offer a range of services, amenities and health and wellness programs that not only simplify your life but can enhance your overall quality of life.

Here are a few ways your life can be improved:

- **Maintenance-Free Living:** Without the day-to-day responsibilities of maintaining a home, many residents at senior living communities find they now have time to pursue hobbies and even discover new ones. Embracing a maintenance-free lifestyle allows you to prioritize activities that bring you joy and fulfillment. Whether it's finally picking up that paintbrush, learning a musical instrument or taking a new fitness class, the newfound free time empowers you to explore your passions and cultivate a sense of purpose.

"The biggest benefit of living at The Carlisle Naples is not having to cook or clean," said Natalie Gurley, who has lived at the community for almost a year. "We're well taken care of, and now there's much more time to enjoy the things you might not have had time to do."

- **Life Beyond Your Residence:** While you may have to downsize from your existing home to move to a senior living community, think of the move as rightsizing your life. Upon closer examination, you might be surprised to learn how much of your home you're actually using. At The Carlisle in North Naples, the community is an extension of residents' homes, offering a wealth of amenities and



services. Instead of maintaining an extensive personal library or a private gym, residents take advantage of the community's fully stocked library and well-equipped fitness center. These resources are readily available, fostering a sense of convenience and accessibility. Plus, it's not uncommon to find visiting grandchildren and great grands enjoying the lovely outdoor pool.

- **More Freedoms:** In addition to the freedom from home repairs and maintenance, senior living communities offer many more freedoms, including a "lock and leave" lifestyle enabling you to know your residence will be safe and secure should you wish to leave for a few days or several weeks. Plus, there is also the freedom of choice. You can spend each day as you wish – from reading the book club's monthly selection from your residence to participating in a community-wide holiday celebration.

- **Peace of Mind for the Future:** Senior living communities offering a continuum of care can simplify your life today and into the future. There is security and peace of mind knowing your future needs will be addressed without having to relocate to another community. This allows you to proactively plan for your future. For example, independent and assisted living

services are offered at The Carlisle. Plus, the community's extended congregate care license (ECC) allows The Carlisle to provide additional supportive and nursing services to residents who would otherwise need to transition to a skilled nursing facility.

"Senior living communities provide a multitude of freedoms that can significantly enhance your quality of life," said The Carlisle's Executive Director Bill Diamond. "At The Carlisle, you'll find that by being relieved of homeownership burdens, daily chores, and isolation, you can live life to the fullest and enjoy a more fulfilling and simplified lifestyle."

Located at 6945 Carlisle Court in Naples, The Carlisle offers independent and assisted living lifestyles featuring spacious one-and two-bedroom residences, weekly housekeeping and flat linen services, basic cable TV, all utilities except telephone, and delicious dining with daily, chef-prepared specials. The community is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an important distinction that provides residents with the assurance that the highest standards of quality care, services and safeguards are maintained. For more information about the community, please call 239-249-3247 or visit www.TheCarlisleNaples.com.



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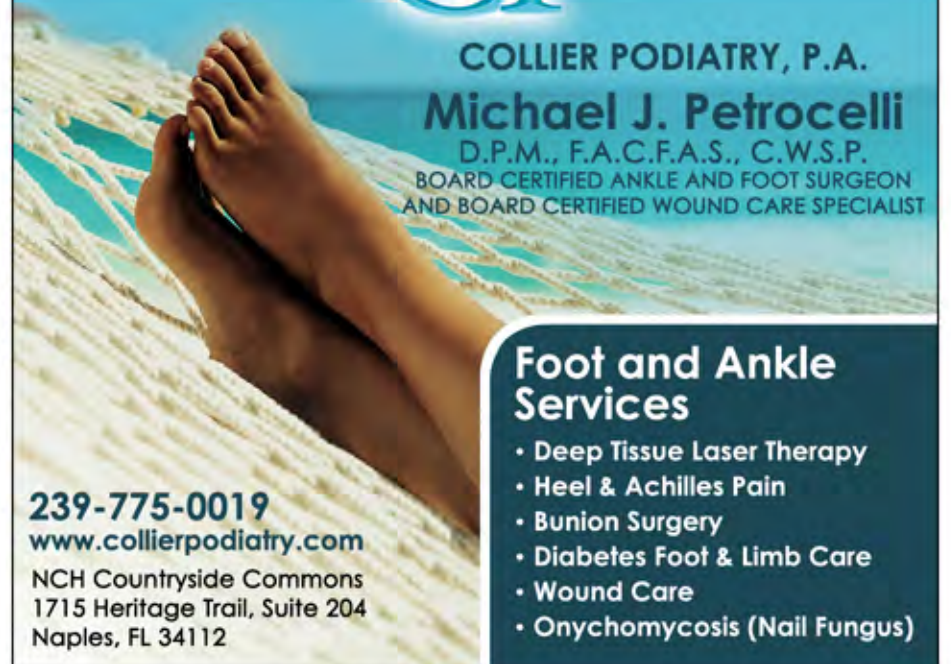
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The Relationship Between Inflammation and Sugar Consumption

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

Inflammation is a natural component of the immune system that aids the body through its healing process. However, certain foods, such as sugar, can cause inflammation in the body. While this is normal, overconsumption of sugar can lead to chronic low-grade inflammation, which can contribute to many different health problems.

Let's further explore the relationship between sugar consumption and inflammation and what you can do to protect your health.

The Connection Between Sugar and Inflammation

When the body senses an injury or infection, it reacts by releasing chemicals that fight off the harmful antigens while also protecting it. This results in inflammation, which can cause warmth, redness, and swelling.

Like a virus or bacteria, sugar can also cause inflammation in the body. Scientists believe that this is because sugar stimulates the production of free fatty acids in the liver. The compounds that result as the body digests these free fatty acids can then trigger inflammatory processes.

In 2018, a systematic review found several studies that linked the consumption of more dietary sugar, primarily due to sugary drinks, with chronic inflammation. The studies found that those who had a higher sugar diet possessed more inflammatory markers in the blood, especially a marker called C-reactive protein.

Additionally, a 2014 study found that those who reduce their sugary drink intake experienced a decrease in inflammatory markers in the blood.

Findings such as this not only show that sugar can cause inflammation, but that the inflammation caused by sugar can be undone by decreasing sugar consumption. However, it is important to do this sooner than later since, while you can lower inflammatory markers, it is not possible to undo the damage already caused by chronic inflammation.

The Dangers of Chronic Inflammation

Some of the signs of chronic inflammation can include:

- body pain
- anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders
- weight gain
- insomnia and constant fatigue
- frequent infections
- diarrhea, constipation, and acid reflux

Chronic inflammation can also increase the risk of certain health conditions, including depression, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and dementia.

Detecting Chronic Inflammation

Chronic inflammation can be gauged based on the presence of inflammatory markers, some of which include C-reactive protein (CRP), plasma viscosity (PV), and erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR). These markers are measured through blood tests, and they serve an important role in helping doctors diagnose and monitor inflammatory conditions.

Research has shown that sugar not only increases inflammatory markers but also increases LDL cholesterol and insulin resistance. A study on 29 healthy individuals saw these increases after the participants drank just one can of soda each day, consuming an additional 40 grams of added sugar.

Not only does sugar cause inflammatory markers to spike, but this effect lasts even after the food is consumed. For example, a study on fructose consumption found that a 50 g dose of fructose caused a spike in CRP 30 minutes later, and it remained high for more than two hours.

How Does Sugar Cause Inflammation?

We've seen the studies showing that eating sugar causes an increase in inflammatory markers, but why is it that this occurs?

There are many ways that sugar may affect the body and cause inflammation, such as:

Increased Gut Permeability

Consuming too much sugar can increase the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes, two conditions that can increase gut permeability.

The gut is a central part of the body, playing a significant role in the immune system. However, when gut permeability increases, toxins, bacteria, and undigested food can more easily move out of the gut and into the bloodstream. Your body then reacts to these foreign components with inflammation.

With high sugar consumption, the gut is continually "leaky," leading to chronic low-grade inflammation.

Excess AGE Production

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are harmful compounds that can form when fat or protein combines with sugar in the bloodstream. The more sugar you consume, the more sugar in the bloodstream, and the greater chance of this happening.

When there are too many AGEs in the body, oxidative stress and inflammation can occur.

Weight Gain

One of the complications of excess sugar consumption is weight gain, which can lead to inflammation in two ways: excess fat can increase inflammatory markers and may lead to insulin resistance, increasing sugar levels in the bloodstream.

Higher LDL Cholesterol

There are two types of cholesterol in the body, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Despite there being two types of cholesterol, one is often referred to as "bad" cholesterol (LDL), while the other is referred to as "good" (HDL).

This is because LDL cholesterol contributes to the build-up of fatty deposits in the arteries. This then narrows the arteries and increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, or other cardiovascular health concerns.

Excess LDL cholesterol has also been associated with higher levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein (CRP).

Sugar can increase LDL cholesterol, which then increases inflammation.

Risks of Chronic Inflammation

While sugar is not the only cause of inflammation in the body, it is a contributor, and many health conditions can result from excess sugar consumption and the resultant chronic low-grade inflammation.

Diabetes

One effect that a diet high in added sugar can cause to the body is insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone responsible for turning blood sugar into energy for cells. However, with insulin resistance, the body is unable to use the sugar circulating in the blood, and this sugar can end up building up.

Over time, this insulin resistance can lead to diabetes, a comorbidity factor for many other health concerns.

Heart Disease

Multiple studies have reported a strong link between sugary drink consumption and heart disease risk. There are many ways in which sugar can lead to this increased risk, including the increase in LDL cholesterol, increased blood pressure, increased inflammatory markers, insulin resistance, and obesity.

The relationship between sugar and heart disease can be significant, with one study on more than 75,000 women finding that a diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates resulted in a 98% greater risk of heart disease.

Cancer

Multiple studies have shown a relationship between sugar consumption and increased cancer risk.

More research is needed to further examine this relationship, but scientists suspect that the inflammatory nature of sugar is what causes the increased risk of cancer. This is because chronic inflammation may damage the cells of the body and their DNA.

Other scientists believe that chronically high insulin levels play a role in cancer development, something to which excess sugar consumption also contributes.

How to Reduce Inflammation Naturally

You can reduce inflammation in many ways, with one of the biggest being a reduction in sugar consumption. Multiple studies have shown that eating less sugar can decrease inflammation, so this should be a top priority.

As a guide, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that your sugar intake not exceed 10% of your daily energy intake, but aiming for a lower percentage may offer greater health benefits.

Another way to naturally reduce inflammation is by getting enough sleep. Studies have shown that inflammatory markers rise when you don't get enough sleep. So, to help with your inflammation, make sure that you are spending enough time asleep each night.

To lower inflammation, it is also helpful to avoid other foods that commonly cause inflammation. While sugar can cause inflammation in the body, it is not the only food to be a culprit of this, with some other inflammatory foods including:

- trans fats (fried foods, fast food, donuts, cookies)
- saturated fats (red meat, decadent desserts, full-fat dairy products)
- alcohol
- excess omega-6 fatty acids (sunflower oil, corn oil, vegetable oil)
- MSG (soy sauce, prepared soups, deli meats)
- refined carbohydrates (white rice, bread, white potatoes)

Managing your weight is another important way to reduce the risk of inflammation since obesity is a risk factor for chronic inflammation. This is because excess fat in the body can increase inflammatory factors, so weight loss is the most effective strategy for reducing chronic inflammation.

A final way to address inflammation is by correcting any hormonal balances. The sex hormones of testosterone and estrogen can slow the production of inflammatory factors. So, if estrogen or testosterone levels are low, which can occur with age and certain life stages (i.e., menopause), the production of inflammatory factors may increase.

By working with a doctor to test your hormone levels and address any imbalances, you could reduce chronic inflammation.

Sugar and Inflammation

While sugar is a component of many tasty drinks and beverages, consuming it in excess can cause chronic inflammation in the body, which can increase the risk of health conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Sugar is not the only thing to blame for chronic inflammation, but it does play a key role and limiting sugar consumption has shown significant improvements in inflammation levels.

Other ways to address inflammation and lower it include getting enough sleep and correcting hormonal imbalances. If you are concerned about inflammation in your body, reach out to your doctor to check your inflammatory markers and discuss how to lower them and protect your health.

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LET US KEEP YOU IN THE GAME

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

It's back to school for our kids and Football season is around the corner and for a lot of people it can't come soon enough. However, with the onset of football season a lot of athletes can and will suffer injuries. High school and college football camps start and unfortunately injuries can occur. Hopefully many athletes took the opportunity to rest and recover during the off-season, have any ailments addressed and undergo rehabilitation recovery. Or started a rigorous off-season training program.

The highest rate of injuries occur in the preseason, followed by the regular season and then the playoffs or post season. The most common injuries typically are ligamentous injuries involving the ankle, the knee, the shoulder and the hip. Athletes who play football are seven times more likely to get injured in a game than in practice. Unfortunately, despite the improvements in equipment, and tackling techniques, concussions are still a significant part of the sport. Repeat injuries are common, as well as injuries occurring to compensate for a recovering body part. It's important to get the appropriate rehab, rest, and treatment to avoid significant season ending injury.

What can the college or high school athlete do to prevent these injuries? First, get a preseason physical. Make sure your previous ailments were addressed and you have no other injuries that require rehab before you get involved with your preseason conditioning program. Second, be involved in a preseason conditioning program that also includes cross training and participating in other sports.

Understand the importance of nutrition and hydration when training and recovering from your previous season. Single sport training can result in overuse injuries. 10% of athletes will have an injury from over training. Mix up your training. Consider bike riding, hiking, swimming, yoga, or beach volleyball to keep your whole body in shape. Isolating your training within a single sport can result in injury and loss of playing time.



With many nationally recognized high school and college football programs in the state of Florida, appreciate that summer camps are hot and humid. It's important to drink crystal clear, cold water as well as sports drinks to keep yourself hydrated, prevent cramps, and heat related injuries. Make sure all of your protective equipment fits and is in good serviceable condition. A piece of tape should not replace a broken strap or snap.

If an injury occurs in preseason, the regular season or game, no matter how slight, let your trainer or orthopedic sports medicine doctor know. Early intervention, bracing, rehab, and exercise can often quickly get you back in the game safely, preventing a season ending injury. The goal of athletic trainers and orthopedic professionals is to get you back on the field of play, provide education and intervention so you can return safely and successfully to the game of football. Help us do our job by keeping us informed early so we can keep you on the field and in the game.

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

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

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

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

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

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Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

PKD Treatment

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

How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

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

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

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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5 Tips for **Healthy** Aging

By Diana Macian, M.D. - WellcomeMD - Naples

In today's educated world, most individuals are aware of the importance of being health conscious, but how do you know you are taking the right steps? And the even more important question is how do you stay the course? When life gets busy and we fall back into our unhealthy habits, that's when disease and chronic illness takes aim.

Fundamentals that have a profound effect on our health are genetics, underlying illness, environmental toxins, chemical and heavy metal exposures, and behavioral lifestyle choices.

We can't turn the clock back, but we can mitigate and reverse damage to increase our longevity and help us live well. No matter our age, it's never too late to get started.

#1 Clean Up Your Diet

In the US, we have an obesity epidemic. Insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome are causing chronic disease to soar to record highs. It's critical for individuals to stop eating processed, prepackaged foods, and unhealthy restaurant meals that are full of saturated fat, sugar, sodium and chemicals.

Eating organic, if possible, is ideal as it eliminates toxins and chemicals such as pesticides. Eating plenty of vegetables, berries, nuts, seeds, healthy fats like avocado, olive oil and walnuts is the optimal choice for most individuals. Lean proteins such as pasture raised eggs and poultry, cold-water fish, and shellfish provide the nutrients our bodies need when it comes to amino acids and fatty acids. If you are a vegan or vegetarian, plenty of plant-based protein options provide similar benefits. Tempeh, pressure cooked beans, nuts, and seeds are a few such alternatives. Vegetables also contain protein in smaller amounts, so loading up on leafy greens and cruciferous veggies is ideal. Eating a plant-rich diet will provide essential nutrients that our bodies and brains need to thrive.

#2 Exercise

JAMA published a study in 2018 that found that those who do not exercise have an increased risk of premature death, overeating, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even cancer-related conditions. In addition to all of the primary health benefits, regular cardiovascular exercise is also



known to increase brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is a protein that protects the brain and improves cognitive function. You should always talk to your physician about the right exercise plan for you.

Exercising on a daily basis is best, but 3- 5 times per week is also favorable. Most people can benefit from taking a brisk 30-minute walk or a 30-minute swim. Exercise increases circulation, improves nutrients and oxygen-rich blood flow, helps build strength, promotes weight loss and can help you maintain a healthy weight. If you can work out at the maximum level, it's incredibly beneficial for cardiovascular health and many other conditions.

Incorporating a mix of light weight strength training, stretching, and balance exercises can help you maintain strength and improve stamina. The more your body can handle, the better your chances for remaining independent as you age.

#3 Brain Training

Staying active and social is also a useful method for maintaining optimal brain health. Along with socialization, staying physically active is imperative in the production of oxygen-rich blood flow and can decrease your risk of Alzheimer's and dementia. It is possible to prevent cognitive decline through physical exercise, diet, cognitive training, and socialization, and by lowering metabolic risk factors (conditions that increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes).

Exercise is critical for brain health. Just a few minutes a day shows marked increases in oxygen uptake in the brain as well as an increase in blood flow. As we age, we should continue to exercise and increase our cardiovascular endurance.

Eating a healthy diet such as the Mediterranean or Dash diet has also been proven to increase cognitive function. These are similar to what was mentioned in the diet section above with a large emphasis on cold-water fish, vegetables, berries and healthy fats.

#4 Socialization and Community

It's important to have a strong social network of people to enjoy life with you. Our personal communities should be our safe haven, where we engage and support one another. If you don't have a strong social network, it helps to join a club, yoga class, art class, attend town meetings or volunteer. Zoom and facetime, or even a phone call, are great ways to incorporate socialization if you can't meet face to face.

#5 The Importance of Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is critical for optimal health. The side effects and complications associated with sleep disorders include irritability, fatigue, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disorders, chronic disease, diabetes, depression, behavioral issues, stroke, and brain function impairment. If not rectified, over time, sleep deprivation can lead to heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and other serious complications. There can be multiple reasons that an individual's sleep is disrupted. Finding the root cause is critical to overall health.

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By Dr. Jeff Ziomek, EMS Program Director, Hodges University

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It all starts with a passion for helping others. For a career as a Florida paramedic, your first step is to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). That's where you'll learn the foundational skills needed. As a matter of fact, you can start with us at Hodges University and graduate from our EMT training course in just seven weeks.

With your EMT skills in hand, you can graduate from our paramedic program in just one year and take the NREMT exam for your license. Our paramedic program is flexible with daytime classes two days a week, plus clinical rotations and field internships. There are also opportunities to receive financial aid. When you graduate, you'll also have 42 college credits. Someday, you may want to return and get those last 18 credits for an associate degree. If you are thinking that moving up the ranks and into administration is something you want to do, a college degree, along with your experience, will help.

Being a paramedic means you have the knowledge and skills to provide advanced life support before your patient reaches the hospital. When it comes to helping others, every second counts.

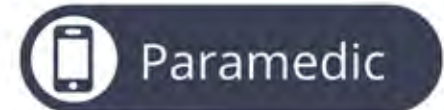


If you're wondering if being a paramedic is for you, there are a few things you can consider. You should be someone that likes to problem-solve. Your patient may not be able to communicate with you, so you'll have to figure out the best way to treat them. You must also have compassion for others and enjoy working in a team environment.

Communicating clearly with your patients, your colleagues, and the patient's family is essential. While you don't need to be the strongest person, you need a certain amount of physical fitness in order to successfully and safely move and transport patients from the scene, into the ambulance, and then from the ambulance into the hospital emergency room.

As a paramedic, the rewards are many. You'll build a special sense of family with your colleagues. The most satisfying aspect is helping people when they need you the most. You could be responding to someone who's having difficulty breathing, a mother in labor, or a car accident. You could work at a scene with other agencies, like the fire department and law enforcement.

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Diabetes Emergency Preparedness: Safeguarding Your Health During Natural Disasters

By Andrea Hayes, MD, F.A.C.E.

As a resident of Southwest Florida who sheltered in place during Hurricane Ian, I experienced firsthand managing my own Type 1 diabetes while dealing with a natural disaster. As we approach the peak of another hurricane season, I think people with diabetes or any other chronic condition should think through the potential disruptions they may experience and plan to help minimize a storm's potential impact on managing their disease.

Loss of Power, and Medicines

People with chronic disease face additional challenges when impacted by a natural disaster. It never occurred to me that some pharmacies would sustain such destruction and loss of power that many refrigerators of insulin were trashed and lost. If a person didn't have a backup stockpile and if their own insulin was destroyed or lost, urgent replacement was difficult.

As individuals with diabetes, it is crucial to take extra precautions when preparing for a natural disaster to ensure your health and safety. Power outages, limited access to medical facilities, and disrupted routines can pose unique challenges. If you plan to ride out a storm, you'll need to plan for your supplies, food, potential power outages and how you're going to communicate with others. If you need to evacuate, you'll need a plan for that, as well.

Build an Emergency Supply Kit

Make sure you have an emergency supply kit specifically tailored to your diabetes needs. This kit should include:

Diabetes Supplies: Pack at least a two-week supply of all necessary diabetes medications, including insulin (if applicable), oral medications and blood glucose monitoring supplies. Ensure you have extra batteries for your glucose meter and a sufficient number of lancets and test strips.

Glucose-Raising Products: Keep fast-acting carbohydrates such as glucose tablets, juice boxes, or hard candy in your kit to treat hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).



Cooler and Ice Packs: Invest in a cooler and ice packs to maintain the temperature integrity of your insulin. Pre-freeze additional ice packs and label them for quick access.

Plan for Your Food Needs

You need to assume that your food supply may be disrupted. Make sure you have what you may need during this time:

Non-Perishable Food: Stock up on non-perishable food items that are suitable for managing diabetes, such as canned fruits and vegetables, whole grain crackers, nuts, and protein-rich foods like canned tuna or chicken.

Water: Ensure an ample supply of clean water for drinking and hygiene purposes. Store at least one gallon of water per person per day for a minimum of three days.

Power Outages are Likely

Losing your power, even for a short time, can pose problems. You should have:

Backup Power Sources: If you use an insulin pump, consider having a backup power source, such as a portable power bank or an alternate insulin delivery system, like insulin pens or syringes. Consult your healthcare provider for guidance on temporary changes to your diabetes management plan.

Insulin Storage: To keep your insulin cool during a power outage, place it in an insulated bag or cooler with frozen ice packs. Avoid direct contact between the insulin and the ice packs to prevent freezing. Insulin exposed to extreme heat or freezing temperatures may lose its effectiveness.

Keep Essential Documents With You

Emergency Contacts: Create a list of emergency contacts, including your healthcare provider, pharmacy, and nearby hospitals. Keep a hard copy in your emergency kit and save these contacts in your phone.

Medical Identification: Wear a medical identification bracelet or carry a card stating that you have diabetes. In case of an emergency, this will alert first responders and aid in appropriate care.

Medical Information: Write down critical information about your diabetes, including medication dosages, allergies, and any pre-existing conditions. Keep a copy in your kit and share this information with a trusted family member or friend outside the affected area.

Prescriptions and Medical Records: Photocopy your prescriptions and store them in your emergency kit. Additionally, make digital copies of your medical records and store them securely in the cloud or on a USB drive.

Prepare for a Potential Evacuation

You'll need to keep abreast of the latest developments regarding potential evacuation orders, including your own.

Emergency Alerts: Stay informed about approaching storms through local news channels, weather apps, or a NOAA weather radio. Sign up for emergency alerts and follow the instructions provided by local authorities.

Evacuation Routes: Know the designated evacuation routes in your area and plan your journey accordingly. If you require assistance, contact local emergency management agencies to arrange transportation and accommodations.

Hurricanes and other natural disasters can disrupt our daily routines and pose additional challenges for people managing diabetes. By taking proactive steps to prepare for emergencies, you can safeguard your health and well-being. Please stay safe and stay prepared!

Andrea Hayes, MD received her Type 1 diagnosis at age 15. She is a board-certified endocrinologist who has been in practice for 25 years. She offers prompt appointments for patients in home, local office or via telehealth.

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How Orchidia Medical Group Can Help You IMPROVE YOUR SEXUAL PERFORMANCE

By Dr. Carolina Young

Having erection trouble from time to time isn't necessarily a cause for concern. If erectile dysfunction is an ongoing issue, however, it can cause stress, affect your self-confidence, and contribute to relationship problems. Problems getting or keeping an erection can also be a sign of an underlying health condition that needs treatment and a risk factor for heart disease.

If you're concerned about erectile dysfunction, talk to our team at Orchidia Medical Group. There is zero need to be embarrassed. Sometimes, treating an underlying condition is enough to reverse erectile dysfunction. In other cases, medications or other direct treatments might be needed. We have several options to address the underlying issues. There is no one size fits all treatment, but there are options for everyone. *In many cases, erectile dysfunction is caused by something physical. Common causes include:*

- Heart disease
- Clogged blood vessels (atherosclerosis)
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Metabolic syndrome — a condition involving increased blood pressure, high insulin levels, body fat around the waist and high cholesterol
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Certain prescription medications
- Tobacco use
- Peyronie's disease — development of scar tissue inside the penis
- Alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse
- Sleep disorders
- Treatments for prostate cancer or enlarged prostate
- Surgeries or injuries that affect the pelvic area or spinal cord
- Low testosterone

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The science behind GAINSWave® reveals benefits lasting up to 2 years. However, patients can continue to receive treatments ongoing as part of the GAINSWave® maintenance protocol. Compounding benefit not only helps maintain the results, but clients have also reported continued improvement and enhanced sexual performance.

• **P-Shots with Platelet Rich Plasma** are non-surgical, minimally invasive treatments that can help reduce the frustrating side effects of erectile dysfunction and promote male enhancement. The Priapus Shot®, or the P-Shot®, uses PRP, or platelet-rich plasma, to encourage natural body growth processes. There is no set downtime associated with this non-surgical, minimally invasive treatment option. You should be able to return to your normal daily activities after a treatment session, and you may experience results and a spontaneous erection within 24 hours of treatment!

• **The P-Shot® with Regenerative Medicine, or Priapus Shot,** is a popular sexual rejuvenation treatment for men. This non-surgical treatment harnesses the abilities of your body's natural growth factors to reduce the effects of erectile dysfunction and promote male enhancement. Our professional staff in Naples performs the P-Shot with regenerative medicine with regenerative medicine from Wharton's jelly from Predictive Biotech. These ethically sourced regenerative medicine cells are collected from this umbilical cord layer. These cells can protect and cushion the area as well as promote regenerative processes. Results achieved with the P-Shot with regenerative medicine will vary for each person. However, some initial results may be enjoyed shortly after treatment. These results will gradually improve as your body responds to the growth factors. With a series of regular treatments, optimal results may last up to 18 months.

• **Bocox™** - When it comes to men's sexual health, the Bocox™ procedure has emerged as a revolutionary technique utilizing Botox® injections to improve penis health and function. Botox®, commonly known for its cosmetic applications, is now being employed as a minimally invasive solution to address various sexual concerns. In this article, we will delve into the details of the Bocox™ procedure, its potential benefits, and what men need to know about this innovative approach to enhancing their sexual well-being.

Understanding the Bocox™ Procedure

The Bocox™ procedure is a specialized technique that involves injecting Botox, a purified form of the botulinum toxin, into specific areas of the penis. The injections are

strategically administered to target the smooth muscle tissue responsible for erectile function. By temporarily relaxing these muscles, Botox can alleviate conditions such as erectile dysfunction (ED), Peyronie's disease, and premature ejaculation. This groundbreaking procedure offers a non-surgical alternative to traditional treatment options, providing men with a safe and effective solution for improving their sexual health.

Benefits of the Bocox™ Procedure

The Bocox™ procedure offers several potential benefits for men experiencing sexual health issues. Primarily, it can aid in the treatment of erectile dysfunction by promoting better blood flow and relaxation of the penile muscles. Additionally, Botox injections can address the symptoms of Peyronie's disease, a condition characterized by the abnormal curvature of the penis, by relaxing the affected area and reducing pain during intercourse. Moreover, the Bocox procedure has shown promising results in combating premature ejaculation, extending sexual stamina, and enhancing overall sexual satisfaction. These benefits make the Bocox procedure an appealing option for men seeking to improve their sexual performance and regain confidence in the bedroom.

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Health Insurance - Important Dates! Extension Due to Hurricane Ian & Nicole

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

Travel Insurance - Most of our USA Health plans do not include coverage when leaving the United States, including Cruises. We recommend always getting a comprehensive Medical Travel Insurance Policy. They are less than you think and can make a world of a difference.

HEALTH INSURANCE is more important than ever! There is no way to determine when something will happen or when you could be diagnosed with a serious medical condition. So, saying I am healthy, so I do not need health insurance makes no sense. Insurance is moving the financial risk from you to the insurance company. There are always options for about every budget. Work with a professional that is contracted with many carriers and offers multiple options. Many plans are available year-round, the government plans such as the Marketplace and Medicare have specific times that you can enroll unless you have a Special Enrollment Period due to, as an example loss of coverage, marriage, moving out of the plans service area, etc.

MEDICARE – Extension - applications submitted by the end of the month will be effective the 1st of the following month; extensions end 9/30 for 10/1/2023 effective.

Medicare Advantage – Part C & Part D Prescription Plans

Most of the plans in your area have made many changes and things you might not notice, especially important, are your doctors still in network, what tier are your medications and maybe the tier changed, copays, coinsurance. What extras are the plans offering? Maybe you need extra dental, vision, hearing aids. Many plans include some wonderful extra benefits, but it is also particularly important to know how to use the benefits and if they work for you.

CMS has made many rules for 2023 Medicare season. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone or on a Webex, 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 just authorizes us to talk to you about what you checked, such as Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan it does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics. Many plans have decreased the cost of Insulin which will be a huge savings for so many in 2023. Talk about maximum of \$2,000 drug cost in a year, is not valid

in 2023 but hopefully in 2025. Many changes are happening year after year. Find an agent that will be there for you, year after year.

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-month 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?

We offer Free New to Medicare Seminars, Personal Appointments & Virtual appointments. Please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is: www.Medicare.gov.

Individual/Family Health Insurance - Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government Market Place Guaranteed Issue Health Insurance. There is a lot to know about the differences, as well as the cost. The monthly premium should not be your only consideration. *You do not know what you do not know* so ask the experts, who know about all the plans and can help educate and guide you through



the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans, most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.

Life Insurance – It is never too early to apply for Life Insurance! The younger and healthier you are the lower the premium. There are great Whole Life policies that can be paid in full in multiple years, such as a 15-year paid in full, etc. Whole Life Insurance premiums do not go up in price once you have purchased the plan and they accumulate cash value that you can use. Your options are to take the cash and repay it at a fixed rate or reduce the death benefit and not pay the policy back the cash you used. I have these for my grandchildren so I can leave behind a legacy. Many young people become uninsurable, and this guarantees they have something. How many toys can you buy them, this is a good option to invest in their future.

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We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

What's the Difference Between Misir Pharmacy & the Big Chains?

We take the time to get to know our customers and treat them like family. They're not just another number. When you call here, a real person will answer. The key difference between Misir Pharmacy and large corporations is that large corporations services care primarily about their corporate profits, while Misir Pharmacy cares about their patients and the quality of care they are receiving.

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As well as online services, independent pharmacies can also make your life easier through additional options. For example, we can deliver your medication right to your house. So, if it's hard for you to get to the pharmacy, you don't have to. Convenient packaging, including blister packs, will also make it easier to remember to take the right dosages of your medications.

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patients to take them on the go. Giving patients a safer, easier way to take their medications correctly is a convenience that helps them maintain their quality of life.

Your Local Pharmacy

You can always feel better about shopping at a locally owned and operated store. When shopping at big-box stores, your money increases a high-level executive's already immense salary. By shopping at a local business, your money will help put food on a family's table or send their kids to camp. In other words, your money is recycled into your own community.

At independent pharmacies, you'll gain all the benefits of getting to know your pharmacist, and your pharmacist getting to know you. We can always take the time to greet you by name, hear your story, and answer your questions. Having a dedicated pharmacist who knows you and your needs also means there's less chance of an error

occurring. At independent pharmacies, our main goal is to help you and make sure your visit to the pharmacy is a positive experience.

If you need to rush in, grab your medication and go, we understand, and with a simple phone call or notification through our online system, we can have your prescription ready for you. If you have questions or need us to go over your instructions once, or a few times, the pharmacists at independent pharmacies can give you as much time as you need. We understand that it's hard to remember how to take your medications sometimes and, to prevent taking them incorrectly, you need to have them properly explained to you.

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Protect Your Vision Now, Before It's Too Late

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

The American Academy of Ophthalmology published the following article on Being Pro-active about your vision.

As populations age and expand, we will see a significant number of vision problems increase.

Here are 10 ways to care for your eyes today so that you can enjoy healthy vision for years to come.

1. Know your family history: It plays a big role in your vision.

- Many eye conditions are inherited. You have a much higher chance of developing macular degeneration if a close family member is affected by this condition. Your risk of glaucoma is four to nine times higher than average if a family member has it.
- Ask family members about their eye conditions. This can help you and your ophthalmologist watch for conditions before they appear. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent vision loss.

2. Watch children's eyes carefully as they grow.

- In childhood, eyes grow and change quickly. Watch for problems like misaligned eyes – these can signal a serious eye condition.
- Keep young children away from cleaning products and sharp objects to prevent permanent eye damage.
- Balance screen time with time outdoors. Too much screen time can cause dry eye and eyestrain.

3. Eat well and exercise.

- Many studies have shown that exercise and a diet rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables can protect against blinding eye diseases, such as macular degeneration and glaucoma.
- Eating a diet rich in plant-based foods and low in saturated or animal fats is best for healthy eyes.
- Exercising moderately for 30 minutes a day, five times a week can help protect you from the same eye conditions.

4. Stop smoking.

- Smoking increases the risk for eye diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Tobacco smoke, including second-hand smoke, also makes dry eye.



- Smoking also raises the risk for cardiovascular diseases which can indirectly influence your eye health.

5. Keep other health conditions under control.

- Chronic health conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, if left untreated, can affect your vision. For example, diabetic eye disease is one of the most common causes of blindness.
- Follow your doctor's guidance carefully and attend all regular medical appointments. Do everything you can to remain in control of your health.

6. Wear sunglasses outdoors.

- Long-term exposure to UV radiation can damage the cornea and the lens and eventually lead to cataracts and eye cancers.
- Choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation and wear them even when it's cloudy outside.

7. Minimize eyestrain at work.

- If you work in an office, sit at least an arm's length away from the computer and use the 20-20-20 rule throughout the day to give your eyes a break.
- Wear protective goggles if you work in construction or with chemicals or enjoy home improvement projects. More than 90% of eye injuries can be avoided by wearing proper eye protection.

8. Care for your contact lenses.

- Make sure you are washing your hands, storing contacts properly, and using cleaning solution for disinfection.

Source:
<https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/healthy-lifestyle-now-good-vision-later>

- Sleeping, showering, and swimming in contact lenses increases your risk for a potentially blinding eye infection.

- If you develop redness, changes in vision or pain, stop wearing your lenses and reach out to your ophthalmologist immediately.

9. If you're 65 or older, pay close attention to vision changes.

- Starting at around age 40, you may notice blurry close-up vision. This is called presbyopia and it's fairly common. You may require reading glasses.

- Blurry vision sometimes signals a more serious eye condition such as macular degeneration. Pay close attention to worsening symptoms and get regular eye screenings by an ophthalmologist.

- If you take medications, such as prescription eye drops, be sure to follow the directions as instructed. Talk to your doctor if you are having trouble doing so.

10. Regular eye exams can help you catch problems before it's too late.

- An ophthalmologist is able to spot eye diseases early—when treatment is most effective—simply by looking into your eye.

Personalized Retina Care of Naples

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

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

Personalized Retina Care of Naples provides comprehensive diagnosis and treatment for retinal disorders. Dr. Taba also gives second opinions on retinal and general eye conditions. Dr. Taba is a Board-Certified Ophthalmologist and is Fellowship trained in surgical and medical retinal diseases.



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Back to School Separation Anxiety

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Going back-to-school is an exciting time for many children, and some parents. For some children however, it also stirs up stress and anxiety. Are they going to like their new teacher? Are they going to enjoy their new school? Are their friends going to be in their class? Do they have the cool new shoes, or did they pick the wrong ones? It is normal for children of all ages to experience anxiety when separating from parents or caregivers. If your child is changing schools, don't gloss over their feelings of anxiety and stress. Even changing from one building to another, like the change from an elementary school to a middle school, or the change from middle school to high school, even when most of your classmates are going to with you can be very stressful. Leaving high school for college, even if you will still be living at home is (hopefully) one of the most exciting and yet stressful events a young person will face for their age.

Dealing with stress and anxiety is part of parenting. It's common and necessary for people to talk with their children experiencing separation anxiety and life stage changes. When children experience more intense fears and anxieties that interfere with going to school or are over a prolonged period, or that interfere with how they function at school and/or how they interact with others, this is what psychiatrists call separation anxiety disorder. Separation anxiety disorder is the most common anxiety disorder in children under 12 years of age. Anxiety can affect even the happiest, most well-adjusted children.

Separation anxiety can unfold in different ways. Children may refuse to go to school or participate in new activities in the absence of their parent. They may also refuse to go to bed without their parent or sleep away from home. Some children experiencing separation anxiety have physical symptoms such as

stomach aches and nightmares, while others may experience headaches or a racing heartbeat. Others may have persistent thoughts that something bad is going to happen to themselves or to their parents. At this point it is advisable to seek professional help.

Strategies to help you and your child have a successful School Start

Whether you know your child has struggled significantly with anxiety before, or they seem worried or anxious about going back to school, we offer several strategies below to help you navigate these feelings with them.

- **Validate your child's fears and anxieties.** Feeling anxious about separating from the comfort of caregivers is a normal response to stressful events. When children express anxiety, let them know you hear them and understand. You can validate and normalize their feelings by saying: "I get that you feel worried. I bet many other kids are feeling that way too. Let's talk about it." Let your child lead the conversation. This may not be a onetime conversation. Feelings may come out in small doses. Always be ready to listen and validate.
- **Encourage positive self-talk.** Help children develop a growth mindset that includes positive and productive statements such as: "I am brave, I can do this." Positive self-talk has been linked to increased self-esteem in kids. Try practicing this at home well before the first trip to school. Make self-talk familiar and routine. Then it will be easier for kids to use these statements when they are separated from you or get anxious at school.
- **Plan to take small steps through the fall.** It is a lot to ask children to go from limited social interactions during the summer to extended social interactions in a small space at school. During the first few weeks of school, try to resist the temptation to fill the evening weekends with outings and events. Consider doing home-based


activities that children are familiar with to help provide some consistency in their environment. As your children get more comfortable with social interactions, start progressively adding more activities to their calendar as time permits.

- **Stick to routines.** The transition to a new school climate may feel unpredictable to children. This can result in increased anxiety. One way to reduce such anxiety is by having consistent routines at home. For example, stick to a consistent schedule when it comes to eating, bath time, screen time and bedtime. Research has found this has helped children experience more well-being during the pandemic. So, keep that momentum going!

- **Talk about the positive aspects of going to school and venturing out in new ways.** Children and adults can have a hard time seeing the positive aspects of anxiety-inducing situations. Parents can help children see the positive side of the back-to-school, including learning new things, time with friends or participating in extracurricular activities.

- **Model positive behaviors.** Children are not the only ones that have seen an increase in their anxiety these past two years. There have also been rises in parental anxiety as well. Even with respect to school, many parents may also be anxious about being separated from their child. When parents discuss their anxiety and stressors, children may internalize these worries. Try to avoid discussing your life stressors in front of your child. And for goodness sakes, avoid exposure to alarming media, which has been shown to increase children's anxiety. If you think the world news stresses you out, imagine what all that negativity can do to a child!

If you have questions about whether your child could benefit from additional support, you can consider reaching out for professional help, including talking to your family physician. 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.



Weathering the Storm: 5 Disaster Preparedness Tips for You, an Adult Child with a Senior Parent

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

Safeguard Your Aging Loved One During Storm Season

After Hurricane Ian last year, we introduced you to Stan and Mary. Stan and Mary lived in a high-rise in Florida when the hurricane hit. Although they were in an evacuation zone, everyone thought they would be safe because the staff in their building was top-notch, plus it was built to withstand hurricane-force winds. However, what they and most people did not consider is what would happen if the power went out for long periods of time? What would happen if staff could not make it to the building due to storm damage?

As an adult child, it is essential for you to proactively prepare for potential disasters like hurricanes, heat waves, flooding, and blizzards. This is especially true if you have recently noticed a parent or loved one displaying dementia-like symptoms. Here are five real-life situations for you to consider when preparing for any natural disaster.

Power Outages and Medical Equipment

Power outages can pose significant challenges for seniors who rely on medical equipment like scooters, lift chairs, CPAP machines, or even something simple like hearing aids, which use rechargeable batteries. Does your family member use electrical medical devices? Do they have alternative methods of using or charging their equipment? Do they actually know how to use alternative methods? Investing in a portable generator or a battery backup system is only good if they know where it is and how to use it.

Ensuring Food and Water Supply

After Hurricane Ian, I met Joan*, age 76, and her daughter Michelle* on the 13th floor of an over-55 community in Naples. When I met them, they had just begun the long trek from the fourteenth floor to the first floor via the stairs because the elevator was out. It was obvious the stress of the situation had overwhelmed them both. After one flight of stairs, Joan gave up. She had a broken foot (in a boot) and was tired and wanted to go back upstairs. Michelle knew they



needed to either go all the way to the first floor to get food and medical supplies or go back up one flight to wait it out. Her mom, who had undiagnosed cognitive decline, could not understand why Michelle was adamant they had to continue down more stairs.

Temperature Control and Electric Shutters

Susan's* home had electric storm shutters to protect her windows. They worked effectively during the storm. However, the building lost power, and the generator system was flooded. This meant there was no electricity, and she could not open any windows to get airflow into the apartment. Her lovely home with all its amenities became a hotbox, which could have easily caused heat exhaustion.

Assess Your Loved One's Cognitive Ability

If you have ever wondered if your loved one may be experiencing cognitive decline, now is the time to assess their cognitive level. Here are some simple things for you to consider and questions you can ask to determine if they are able to remain in their home. What would you do if there was a fire? Can your loved one tell you what they would do, and is it the right thing? Would they call 911? Would they leave the house? Can your loved one hear a fire alarm, or do they know what a fire alarm means? I had a client who lived alone, but his family decided to move him into a memory care community because his cognitive ability declined to the point where he did not know what a fire alarm sounded like. Do they ever confuse the telephone and the television remote control? In times of emergency,

this is a big problem. The last thing you would want is for your mom or dad to try to call for help using the television remote. Do they rely on medication support from someone who may not be able to get to them in a storm or emergency? If they have an automatic pill dispenser or an aide that provides medical care, what will happen if the aide is unable to get to their home? Would they know the right medication to take, and would they remember to do it?

Proactive Planning:

Proactive planning is key to ensuring your loved one's safety. Now is the time to create a comprehensive emergency plan with essential contact information for healthcare providers, emergency services, and neighbors who can offer assistance. Compile copies of important documents like medical records, insurance information, and identification papers in a secure location. Sharing them with appropriate people via Google Drive, One Drive, or Dropbox can make it much easier for everyone. Establish regular communication protocols and ensure your loved one understands the plan and their role in it.

If you do not think your loved one would know how to manage in an emergency situation, it is time for you to act. Information is always important. You can read this article to learn more about how Senior Living Providers plan for emergency situations:

<https://www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/elder-care-and-senior-living-blog/how-senior-living-communities-prepare-for-natural-disasters-1667516343701.html>

We find most families do not understand how communities prepare and all the work they do to make sure your loved one gets the best care possible. We are here to answer any questions you have and can help you create a disaster preparedness plan for you and your loved one. We can also help you after the disaster by finding short-term accommodations until things are back in order.

**Names have changed to protect our client's privacy.*



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FROM THINNING TO THRIVING: Dermatologists' Expert Guide to Vitamins for Hair Loss

By Vivian Wong, MD, PhD, FAAD

Hair loss is a common problem that affects millions of people around the world. Although there are several factors that contribute to hair loss, including genetics, aging, hormonal imbalances, and certain medical conditions, deficiencies in certain vitamins and minerals are also known to cause hair loss. Biotin, Vitamin D, and iron are three of the most recommended supplements for hair loss, but taking these supplements also comes with potential risks and benefits.

Biotin is a B-vitamin that is essential for healthy hair, skin, and nails. Biotin deficiency is rare, but it can cause hair loss, skin rashes, and brittle nails. Biotin supplements are commonly recommended for people experiencing hair loss, but there is limited evidence to support their effectiveness. Some studies suggest that biotin supplements can improve hair thickness and reduce hair loss, while others show no significant benefits.

One potential risk of taking biotin supplements is that they can interfere with certain laboratory tests, including thyroid function tests and tests for troponin, a marker of heart damage. This can lead to misdiagnosis and unnecessary medical procedures. Additionally, high doses of biotin supplements can cause skin rashes, acne, and gastrointestinal distress.

Vitamin D is another essential nutrient that plays a role in hair growth. Vitamin D deficiency is common, especially in people who live in areas with limited sun exposure. Studies

suggest that low levels of vitamin D are associated with hair loss, but it is unclear whether vitamin D supplements can reverse hair loss.

In addition to its potential benefits for hair growth, vitamin D is also important for bone health, immune function, and mood regulation. However, excessive intake of vitamin D can lead to toxic levels in the body, which can cause nausea, vomiting, weakness, and even kidney damage.

Iron is a mineral that is essential to produce hemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen in the blood. Iron deficiency anemia is a common cause of hair loss, especially in women. Iron supplements are often recommended for people with low iron levels, but they can also cause side effects, including constipation, nausea, and stomach pain.

It is important to note that taking supplements is not a substitute for a healthy diet and lifestyle. Eating a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutrient-rich foods is the best way to ensure that your body is getting the vitamins and minerals it needs for healthy hair growth. Supplements should only be taken under the guidance of a healthcare provider, and it is important to follow the recommended dosages to avoid potential side effects.

In conclusion, biotin, Vitamin D, and iron supplements are commonly recommended for hair loss, but their effectiveness varies, and taking these supplements also comes with potential risks. It is important to consult with a board-certified dermatologist at Skin Wellness Physicians before starting any supplement regimen and to prioritize a healthy diet and lifestyle for optimal hair and overall health.

MEET VIVIAN WONG, MD, PHD, FAAD

Dr. Wong is a board-certified dermatologist with a dual M.D. and Ph.D. She joins Skin Wellness Physicians after a career as a faculty member and core teaching faculty at the Department of Dermatology at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. She completed her dermatology residency and served as the chief resident at Brown University. She is a renowned researcher with collaborators in North America, Europe and Asia. She has authored over 250 articles and textbook chapters to date on important topics such as eczema/atopic dermatitis, melanoma and basal cell carcinoma. She has been interviewed as a dermatology expert by the Boston Magazine, Boston25 News and QuantiaMD. She has spoken and presented at more than 50 international and domestic conferences and received more than 40 awards and research grants for her scientific and clinical endeavors. She also serves as a consultant to medical diagnostic, therapeutic and technology companies.



Dr. Wong is a leader in adult and pediatric dermatology, as well as cosmetic dermatology, offering procedures including Botox, cosmetic fillers, Kybella, chemical peels, lasers, and scalp injections for hair health. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and cooking.

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Mold & Back to School

By Julie S. Hurst-Nicoll, MBA, CMI, CMR - President, American Mold Experts



It's back to school time. Most parents look forward to the school routine but not the times your child comes home ill. Often we count our child's illness as exposure to all those "kid germs". But could it be mold in the school? It's not surprising that our government through the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) puts out *Guidelines for Mold & Indoor air quality in School or How to reduce Mold Growth in School*.¹ As our kids get back in school this fall, many may be exposed to high mold levels.

Why Might Our Schools Have Mold?

- High humidity plagues many months of the year.
- Schools in an effort to save energy costs during the summer months turn up the thermostats to save energy so the HVAC runs less time. Let us remember the #2 job of HVAC is to dehumidify.
- While the kids are off for summer break, carpet & entry mat cleaning can create excess humidity.
- Rainy season can lead to indoor leaks, roof, plumbing, condensation that might not be caught as quickly as during the school year.
- Indoor humidity rises above 60%.

What to look for:

- musty smells
- condensation
- water stains on ceilings, walls, floors and window sills
- any obvious mold
- something that looks like dust on the underside of book shelves, desks, behind book cases or furniture up against a wall. Remember dust is

a particulate and follows gravity to the tops of surfaces or on the floor. It does not settle on the underneath side of furniture/desks, that is typically what I call the invisible mold.

But keep in mind that the most common molds don't require a water leak or direct water source but simply flourish in high humidity and often looks like dust!! Mold colonies in as little as two weeks produce a byproduct called mycotoxins. Mold toxins are absorbed into our respiratory and digestive tracks as well as your skin. These mycotoxins can cause fatigue, brain fog, poor mood, lethargy, chronic sinus issues and difficulty with learning and memory.

Boston Children's Hospital reports health effects of hypersensitivity reactions like asthma, allergic rhinitis and hypersensitivity pneumonitis, airway & conjunctival irritations, acute toxicity syndromes, infections and nonspecific symptoms such as eye irritation, coughing, sore throat, headaches and difficulty concentrating.²

Dr. Rick Sponaugle of Oldsmar, Florida states the longer the mold is present the worse the symptoms become. He explains mycotoxins from mold are made of fatty acids and find themselves in the body, being lipophilic and embedding into the fatty tissues of the body, particularly the brain, which is comprised mainly of adipose tissue. Once in the brain, these toxins can kill or damage neurons, impairing brain function and thus developing neurological symptoms and conditions.³

Mold exposure can also lead to behavior issues. *Mental Health of Connecticut reports mold can present itself in a psychiatric way too. This included brain fog, anxiety, trouble concentrating and see people seeking and receiving treatment for a mental illness that only exists because of their exposure to mold. Further they remind us that research has found that 25% are more vulnerable to mold toxicity due to a genetic predisposition. This can result in a family living in the same home (or classroom) and only one person presents with symptoms which can be physical or mental or both.*⁴

If your children exhibit new symptoms after starting school, you may want to consider mold as an issue. And when you visit the school be on the lookout for signs of water damage, discolored ceiling tiles or a musty smell. And keep in mind your child may be the one in four that has a genetic predisposition to mold toxicity.

How to search out help? Most functional medical doctors can diagnose mold toxicity or a few lab allow testing without a doctors order. One such lab is Real Time Labs in Texas who will mail you a kit for a urine specimen. Note allergy doctors look for allergy to mold, not mold toxicity, so if you suspect mold look for a specialty doctor who has experience with mold toxicity.

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Boosting Your Immune System with IV Vitamin Infusions

As students gear up to return to school, maintaining a robust immune system becomes paramount in protecting against illnesses. One emerging trend that has garnered attention is the use of intravenous (IV) vitamin infusions to bolster the body's defenses. While there is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of this method, proponents claim that IV vitamin infusions can provide a direct and potent boost to the immune system. In this article, we will explore what IV vitamin infusions are, how they work, and their potential benefits and considerations in preparation for the back-to-school season.

Understanding IV Vitamin Infusions

IV vitamin infusions involve the delivery of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients directly into the bloodstream. This bypasses the digestive system, allowing for rapid absorption and higher concentrations of essential nutrients in the body. The concoctions may include vitamins such as vitamin C, B-complex, and minerals like magnesium, zinc, and calcium. They are administered through a small needle placed in the vein, typically in the arm.

How IV Vitamin Infusions Can Boost Your Immune System

Proponents of IV vitamin infusions argue that the direct delivery of nutrients can provide a more significant immune system boost compared to oral supplements. For instance, vitamin C, a potent antioxidant, is believed to help support immune function and protect against viral infections. By receiving higher doses of vitamin C intravenously, it is suggested that the body can better utilize this essential nutrient to combat pathogens.



Moreover, other vitamins and minerals in the IV infusion may complement one another, further enhancing the immune-boosting effects. For example, vitamin D is vital for immune system regulation, while zinc plays a crucial role in immune cell function.

Considerations and Potential Benefits

While IV vitamin infusions hold promise, there are several important considerations:

- 1. Consult a Healthcare Professional:** Before considering IV vitamin infusions, it is crucial to consult with a healthcare professional to assess individual needs and determine the appropriate nutrient mix.
- 2. Potential Short-term Boost:** IV infusions may offer a temporary immune system boost. However, the long-term benefits and overall impact on immune health are still subject to ongoing research.
- 3. Complementing a Healthy Lifestyle:** IV vitamin infusions should not be seen as a replacement for a balanced diet, exercise, and other lifestyle factors that contribute to a healthy immune system.

4. Addressing Nutritional Deficiencies: IV infusions can be beneficial for individuals with specific nutrient deficiencies that hinder immune function. Correcting these deficiencies can help improve overall well-being.

Back-to-School Preparation with IV Vitamin Infusions

As the back-to-school season approaches, parents may consider IV vitamin infusions as part of their preparation to support their children's immune systems. Ensuring children have proper nutrition, adequate rest, and hygiene practices are essential. IV infusions may be considered for students who have a history of nutrient deficiencies or those who may be at higher risk of infections.

As the world continues to navigate through various health challenges, boosting the immune system is of paramount importance, especially during the back-to-school season. IV vitamin infusions offer a potential avenue to provide a direct and potent dose of essential nutrients to support the immune system. While promising, it is crucial to approach this method with careful consideration and consult healthcare professionals to ensure its suitability and effectiveness for individual needs. Coupled with a healthy lifestyle, IV vitamin infusions may contribute to a robust immune system that helps students thrive in the academic setting.

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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

If the past few months have given you more time for introspection, use it to improve your financial plan in a big-picture way. Even for the privileged among us who still have our jobs, are not on the front lines with the pandemic, and have not had anyone close to us felled by COVID-19, the current crisis has brought hardships big and small.

Parents have confronted the daily struggle of trying to do their jobs while also home-schooling. Adult children have not been able to visit their elderly parents. Graduations, weddings, and even funerals have been put on hold or “Zoomified.” Yet as difficult as it has been, there have been a few silver linings too, especially for those of us lucky enough to not be touched directly by the crisis. One of the most valuable is that pressing pause on our usual routines has given many of us the opportunity to take a step back, get out of our ruts, and take stock. What do we really value? What do we really miss? What can we not wait to do when this is all over? What “necessity” of our past lives, whether the daily purchased latte or frequent meals in restaurants, are we finding that we are quite happily doing without?

Travel may be someone’s greatest longing, while others miss cooking and entertaining big groups of family and friends. Talking about how the pandemic has changed our thinking on a topic, or made us want to do more of something else, can help us feel like we are using the present situation productively. The current sense of isolation will not be for naught, because it is shaping how we intend to use our lives in the future, when we once again have a full set of choices before us.

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

It can be argued that now is a good time to put a fresh set of eyes on your financial plan, taking a similarly expansive view of it that you might not have been able to do when you were busy and mired in your day-to-day activities. Too often, one expert opined, financial plans (and planners) move straight to the “solution” phase, without stopping to ask some basic questions about what someone is trying to achieve and what their real problems are.

“Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things.”

What will constitute “success” for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

Whether you are well into retirement or early in your career, it can be easy to backburner questions like these and move straight to logistics, determining your asset allocation and minimizing taxes, for example. Those are all worthy pursuits, but if you find yourself with a bit of extra time to think a bit more broadly and introspectively about your financial plan, here are some of the key questions to ask yourself.

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

As most investors know, the biggest determinant of whether you achieve financial success is how much you spend versus how much you save. But as important as it is to make sure your intake exceeds your outgo, budgeting can seem like sheer drudgery. Here is a different way to think about budgeting. Simply begin to take note of how various discretionary expenditures make you feel. It can be incredibly illuminating. Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things. Many would also argue that many of life’s most memorable experiences cost very little.

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

Investors should strive to make smart allocations of financial capital across opportunity sets, not just saving versus spending but also debt pay down versus investing in the market, how much to allocate to retirement savings versus college, and so on. These are crucial topics worthy of significant analysis and introspection. Ultimately, the right answers are a matter of math (expected return on “investment”) and personal preference.

Many of us pay much less attention to how we allocate an even more scarce resource, our time, even though that allocation will ultimately have an even greater impact on whether we feel like we have met our goals. Of course, some of our time expenditures are pre-ordained, the time we spend working or caring for children, for example. Even within those allocations it seems worthwhile to be more mindful, to help ensure that your allocation of time in a given day, week, or year aligns with your goals and vision for that period. An audit of how you are allocating your time currently is a good starting point. Technology tools can help you determine how much time you waste (uh, spend) on social media and other activities that could be detracting from your productivity and happiness.

What Is Your Definition of “Enough”?

Many of us are operating with an incredibly vague notion of how much we really need to save in order to achieve our financial goals and find security. Even financial planners might rely on rules of thumb when setting your retirement savings target. For example, they might assume that you will need 80% of your working income in retirement and extrapolate the rest of your plan from there.

As humans, we often have a natural tendency to reach for more more more, regardless of whether that “more” is actually bringing more happiness and security. Trying to keep up with the people around us, in terms of possessions and outward signs of success, can get exhausting and may not get us any closer to our life’s goals. That is why, in this period of limited activity, spending, and social contact, it is worthwhile to think through your own definition of enough, both now and for the future.

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

When taking a strictly financial and estate-planning perspective, leaving a “legacy” is one of those topics that can seem overly narrow. It is about leaving assets behind for children, grandchildren, and other loved ones, as well as charity if we so choose. It is about making sure we do not burden the people we care about. Those are crucial considerations and they are why everyone needs an estate plan that includes wills, powers of attorney, and beneficiary designations, among other key documents.

While you are at it, why not think big picture about your legacy, too? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? What life philosophy or pieces of wisdom do you hope that your loved ones will always associate with you? If you find yourself with a bit of extra time for introspection, write down a few ideas along these lines. And no, you are not too young to start thinking about this. You can find templates for creating a “personal legacy” online, but some good advice is not to overthink it. Balance more serious ideas with more lighthearted ones. We all have credos that we live by; make sure your loved ones know yours.

*Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments,
Wintrust Wealth Management.*

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PET CARE WHILE TRAVELING

HURRICANE AWARENESS AND HEALTH TIPS

Pet owners often face the challenge of balancing their love for travel with the responsibility of caring for their furry companions. As much as we enjoy exploring new places, it's essential to prioritize our pets' well-being while on the move. Moreover, for those living in hurricane-prone areas, taking care of pets during natural disasters like hurricanes requires special attention. This article explores valuable tips for pet care while traveling and essential hurricane awareness health tips to ensure the safety and happiness of our beloved animals.

PET CARE WHILE TRAVELING

1. Plan Ahead: Before embarking on any journey, it's crucial to plan for your pet's comfort and safety. Research pet-friendly accommodations, check pet policies of airlines or other transportation options, and make sure your pet is up-to-date on vaccinations.

2. Crate Training: If your pet isn't accustomed to traveling, crate training can help ease their anxiety during the journey. Gradually introduce them to the crate and make it a safe and positive space.

3. Pack Essentials: Bring along your pet's necessities, including food, water, medications, grooming tools, favorite toys, and a leash. Familiar items can provide comfort and maintain a sense of routine.

4. Frequent Breaks: During road trips, plan for regular breaks to allow your pet to stretch, exercise, and relieve themselves. Always keep them on a leash and ensure their safety at rest stops.



5. Pet Identification: Ensure your pet has a collar with an updated ID tag that includes your contact information. Additionally, consider microchipping your pet for added security, as it increases the chances of a reunion if they get lost.

HURRICANE AWARENESS HEALTH TIPS

1. Early Preparations: As hurricane season approaches, create an emergency plan that includes your pets. Know local evacuation routes and pet-friendly shelters in case you need to evacuate.

2. Stock Up on Supplies: Have a hurricane-ready pet kit that includes essential supplies such as pet food, water, medications, first aid items, a leash, and their comfort items like blankets or toys.

3. Keep Your Pet Indoors: As the hurricane approaches, keep your pet indoors to prevent them from getting frightened or lost. Secure all windows and doors to minimize risks.

4. Comfort and Reassurance: Pets can get anxious during storms, so provide a safe space for them to retreat. Comfort and reassure them during the turbulent weather to help reduce stress.

5. Post-Storm Care: After the hurricane passes, inspect your surroundings for potential hazards before allowing your pet outside. Debris and contaminated water can pose risks.

As responsible pet owners, it's our duty to ensure our furry friends are well-cared for, whether we're traveling or facing the challenges of hurricane season. By planning ahead, providing comfort and reassurance, and staying informed about hurricane awareness health tips, we can make the journey enjoyable and safe for our pets. Remember, the key is to prioritize their well-being and create a positive experience for them, even during challenging times. With these tips in mind, you can embark on new adventures or navigate hurricane season with your pet by your side, knowing that you've taken every precaution to keep them happy and healthy.

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Taking into account that in the human organism each of the organ systems, each organ, tissue, and each cell. Have their own vibrational frequencies who in turn are in tune with the vibration of the colors. So each color or set of them directly or indirectly affects certain organs, tissues and cells, alteration positively or negatively their energetic vibrations.

In the Healing Crystal Tunnel, the color frequencies are amplified by the energy net that José created, which circulates internally in the tunnel as a result of the crystal placement along with the energy alignment of the crystals original structure. This enables balancing, altering energies to



start or continue the process of removing energy blockages allowing the body to continue or start the healing process.

In addition, emotional issues are managed by the vibration of colors from deep subatomic levels where the vibration starts.

Here are some benefits each color can bring:

RED

Represents vigor, love, and strength. Associated with energy, usually to motivate and encourage people to do things. This stimulus not only affects the spirit, but also activating the mind, increasing blood circulation and nutrients helping to reach the heart and the rest of our organs more quickly.

ORANGE

Commonly linked to the representation of the sun, is considered the most effective hue for treating tiredness and sad moods. It brings optimism and vibrancy to people and fills them with a feeling of cordiality.

YELLOW

Brings happiness, wisdom, joy, vitality, imagination. Places the mind and body on alert, thus activating the nervous system. This encourages the mind, favoring learning and making you more open to everything that surrounds you.

GREEN

Green is a healing color providing balance, and hope. This color is highly recommended for hyperactive or nervous people, as it regulates heart and respiratory rates by creating a harmonious and calm environment.

BLUE

This tone transmits peace, calmness, tranquility, gradually relaxing whoever is exposed to it, helps to fall asleep more easily. A variation is Turquoise which assists to reduce mental fatigue and eliminate feelings of loneliness.

VIOLET

Represents intuition and enhances spiritual evolution. This invites one to meditate and imagine. These actions help to combat anxiety as they encourage the mind disconnect from the world.

BLACK

Related to occult knowledge, isolating negative energies.

WHITE

The sum of all colors is presented as purity, spirituality, strength, paranormality and spiritual healing.

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- STRESS REDUCTION
- REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PAIN
- HORMONAL BALANCE
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- ELEVATE MOOD
- DEEP RELAXATION
- EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL DISTRESS
- IMPROVE SELF-ESTEEM
- PINEAL GLAND AND PITUITARY ACTIVATION
- REACTIVATE AND ALIGN CHAKRAS
- SERENITY AND PEACE
- BALANCE YOUR EMOTIONAL BODY
- ENERGETIC EXPANSION
- BROADEN CONSCIOUSNESS
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Bidets and Japanese Culture: Revolutionizing Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is an integral part of our daily routine, and various cultures worldwide have developed unique practices to ensure cleanliness and comfort. One such practice that has gained global attention is the use of bidets. Originating in Japan, bidets have become an essential aspect of personal hygiene and offer a fascinating glimpse into Japanese culture. In this editorial, we will delve into the personal hygiene practices in Japan, explore the origins of bidets in Japanese society, analyze their popularity over time, and examine their translation into American culture.

Personal Hygiene in Japan

Japanese culture places great emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene. From bathing rituals to meticulous hand-washing traditions, the Japanese have long recognized the importance of maintaining a high standard of personal hygiene. This cultural inclination towards cleanliness is deeply ingrained in everyday life, and it is no surprise that Japan is at the forefront of innovative hygiene practices.

Origins of Bidets in Japan

The use of bidets in Japan can be traced back to ancient times. Historically, Japan had a strong tradition of communal bathing, with public bathhouses serving as social gathering places. Personal hygiene in these bathhouses involved using a small vessel to pour water for cleansing after using the toilet. Over time, this practice evolved into the modern bidet, offering a more efficient and hygienic solution.

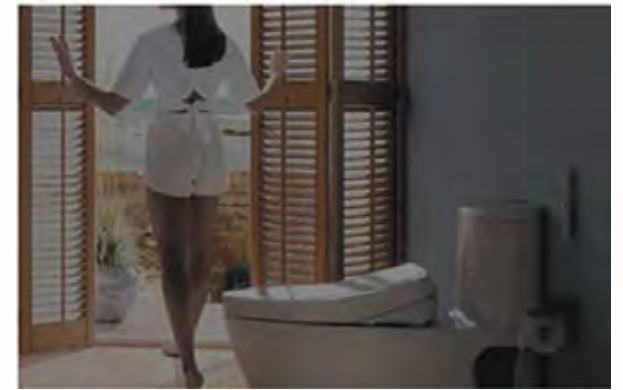
The Popularity of Bidets in Japan Over Time

In recent decades, bidets have become ubiquitous in Japanese households and public restrooms. The rise in popularity can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, bidets provide a more thorough and comfortable cleaning experience than traditional toilet paper. Additionally, bidets are considered more environmentally friendly, as they reduce paper waste. The health benefits of bidets, such as preventing skin irritation and reducing the risk of infections, have also contributed to their widespread adoption.

Translation to American Culture

While bidets have a long-established presence in Japan, their adoption in Western countries, particularly in America, has been relatively slower. However, in recent years, bidets have started gaining traction and popularity in American households. This can be attributed to increased awareness of the hygiene benefits, eco-consciousness, and a desire for a more comfortable and refreshing cleansing experience.

Despite initial reservations, American consumers are gradually recognizing the advantages of bidets. As a result, bidet attachments and standalone bidet fixtures are becoming more readily available in the market. Major bathroom fixture manufacturers have also started incorporating bidet features into their designs, catering to the growing demand.



The bidet revolution, deeply rooted in Japanese culture, is making global waves. Japan's emphasis on personal hygiene has led to the development and widespread adoption of bidets, transforming how individuals maintain cleanliness. Integrating bidets into American culture is a testament to their undeniable benefits. As more people recognize the advantages of bidets, they will likely become commonplace in bathrooms worldwide, improving personal hygiene standards and revolutionizing how we approach cleanliness and well-being.

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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

In this article we focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

The possibility of losing our cognitive abilities can be even scarier than the loss of physical abilities as we age. There are an estimated 5.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's, affecting millions more people caregiving for loved ones affected by the devastating disease, with no cure at the present moment. Therefore, many seniors and their families are wondering what they can do to be proactive and prevent the onset of Alzheimer's.

For the purposes of this article, we're going to focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

The name MIND diet surprisingly isn't in reference to the diet's supposed ability to improve cognitive functioning. Rather, it stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. The MIND diet meal plan is essentially a combination of two popular diets, the Mediterranean and DASH, with an emphasis on brain foods shown to improve cognitive functioning.

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

Dr. Martha Clare Morris, an expert in nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, introduced the MIND diet meal plan in 2015. Her studies on the diet tested and compared the effects

of the Mediterranean, DASH, and MIND diets in adults aged 58-98 years. The study found that diligently sticking to all three diets was associated with a reduced risk for Alzheimer's disease, but only the MIND diet showed lower risk even with moderate adherence. Another study showed that participants who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk for Alzheimer's by 54%. In addition to the MIND diet's effect on Alzheimer's prevention, Dr. Morris and her colleagues recently studied the diet's effect on the cognitive decline of stroke survivors.

Those in the study who were highly adherent to the MIND diet had substantially slower rates of cognitive decline than people who didn't follow the diet.

Given the newness of the MIND diet meal plan and relatively few scientific studies conducted, scientists still need to do more research, but the early results are certainly very promising. Some have even coined the phrase "Alzheimer's diet" when referencing the MIND diet meal plan, and US News and World Report ranked the MIND diet #5 in its list of Best Diets in 2018.

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

If you choose to follow the MIND diet for yourself or integrate it into the meal plan of a senior loved one, here are the brain foods you'll want to emphasize and recommended number of servings/week:

Leafy greens (spinach, mixed greens, kale): aim for at least 6 servings of leafy greens per week. In addition to cognitive benefits, leafy greens are high in vitamin K and many other essential nutrients.

Other veggies: in addition to leafy greens, try to eat one additional serving of vegetables per day.

Berries: aim for two or more servings a week. Smoothies are great for seniors to get their weekly servings of berries.

Nuts: at least five servings per week. Nuts are also a great source of protein and healthy fats.

Wholegrains: three or more servings a day. Common wholegrains include brown rice and whole-wheat pasta.

Oliveoil: replace butter with olive oil, and use it as your primary oil for cooking. Keep in mind that when sautéing, it's better to use standard olive oil than extra virgin olive oil.

Wine: a glass of wine, particularly red, a day has been proven to have cognitive benefits.

Fish: at least one serving per week. Salmon is especially beneficial and is loaded with Omega-3 fatty acids.

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

Red meat: aim for less than four servings per week, and choose leaner cuts. Think tenderloin, not rib eye.

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

Added sugar: avoid or limit unhealthy desserts, no more than five servings per week. Instead of pastries and ice cream, try dark chocolate.

Fast food: it's best to eliminate fast food altogether because it's typically loaded with sugar and sodium.

One of the big benefits of the MIND diet meal plan is that it's not a "fad diet" and doesn't require you to eliminate lots of foods from your diet. Rather, it calls for moderation of unhealthy foods and emphasizing healthy brain foods. This makes the MIND diet easier to follow for seniors than more extreme nutrition plans like the Paleo diet or Vegan diet.

For any questions, please contact your local Chefs For Seniors Office:

Phone: 239-776-1758

Email: bill.springer@chefsforseniors.com



AT LEAST THREE SERVINGS OF WHOLE GRAINS EACH DAY		
AT LEAST ONE DARK GREEN SALAD AND ONE OTHER VEGETABLE EACH DAY	BERRIES AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK	
AT LEAST A ONE-OUNCE SERVING OF NUTS EACH DAY		
BEANS OR LEGUMES AT LEAST EVERY OTHER DAY	POULTRY AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK	FISH AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK <p><i>If you don't drink alcohol, purple grape juice provides many of the same benefits.</i></p>
A FIVE-OUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY		
NO MORE THAN ONE TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE OLIVE OIL INSTEAD	CHEESE, FRIED FOOD AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	
PASTRIES AND SWEETS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES A WEEK		

DEMAND FOR HOMES IN NAPLES REMAIN STRONG

By Robert Nardi, Broker/Owner

A slight reduction in overall median closed price and fewer new listings during May indicate a window of opportunity for buyers and sellers in the next few months. According to the May 2023 Market Report by the Naples Area Board of REALTORS® (NABOR®), which tracks home listings and sales within Collier County (excluding Marco Island), the overall median closed price decreased 1.2 percent to \$600,000 from \$607,500 in May 2022. There were also 1,045 price decreases and a 31.2 percent decrease in new listings reported during the month.

The May report shows a 3.8 percent decrease in the percent of list price received to 96.3 percent compared to 100.1 percent reported in May 2022. The report showed no month-over-month median closed price decrease for condominiums in May, only a 6.5 percent decrease (month-over-month) in the single-family home market. New listings decreased 31.2 percent to 990 from 1,438 new listings in May 2022. Fewer new listings are putting a strain on the overall inventory of homes, which is still recovering from frenzied buying during the pandemic.

Inventory has increased slowly over the last year, averaging 100 new homes monthly. Overall inventory increased 27.6 percent for May to 2,749 homes from 2,155 homes in May 2022. Pending and closed sales during May decreased 4.4 percent and 20 percent, respectively, compared

to last year. The report also showed that we were 150 closed sales short of what sold in May 2019 but with half the inventory.

The NABOR® May 2023 Market Report compares single-family home and condominium sales (via the Southwest Florida MLS), price ranges, and geographic segmentation and includes an overall market summary. NABOR® sales statistics are in a chart format. If you wish to receive a copy, please send an e-mail to Robert@NardiRealty.com.

What does this all mean?

Demand for homes in Naples has remained strong; however, we are still in a very tight market. Our inventory is increasing but at a prolonged rate. Potential Buyers are waiting for prices to drop, but they are not falling. Sometimes we see a big price drop in properties by \$50,000 to \$100,000, but that is because the properties were priced too high. Some owners were reaching for the sky, but the market dictates where that price should be. For example, the development Park Shore in Naples, FL, currently has single-family homes that are active on the market and are priced from \$2.1M to \$25M and have had nine closed sales from April 8th to July 8th, 2023. Those sales ranged from \$1.85M to \$4.90. Six sales were below \$2.275M, and four were between \$2.89M and \$4.9M. Many homes priced out of these ranges have a high "Days on Market," which indicates that they are still priced higher than they should be. So, you will see prices dropping, but that is because they were priced higher than the market is dictating.

I currently have buyers that want to be near the water and are ready to pounce on new listings once they appear on the Multi-Listing Service (MLS). I look for new daily listings that fit their criteria and set up automated MLS searches. As you know, "The early bird catches the worm." Since our inventory is still tight, you want to act quickly on new listings that appear. Most of these buyers are not here, so I, as their real estate agent, must do a "face time" with them and tour the home. If they like what they see, we could put an offer in. Yes, "just from a face time," but the market still dictates this approach.

Interestingly, homes priced at \$500,000 to \$800,000 are moving slower than higher-end homes. Why? Because of the higher mortgage rates. The higher interest rates are preventing potential Buyers from moving. Why give up a 2.75% to 3.25% interest rate for a 6.8% interest rate? Their mortgage payment would increase 100% to 150 percent. It just knocks potential Buyers out of the market.

On the other hand, higher-end homes are moving because Buyers who can afford to pay cash are doing so. Moreover, the only people moving are those going through a life event; death, marriage, divorce, new job, and the need to move to a senior facility. Seniors are in the best position to move. Many have owned their homes for years and have built up a large amount of equity. They can now put that equity in a bank/financial institution and earn 5% interest on their monies with no risk. The new senior facilities offer different programs, from a small deposit and rent to a large investment and a monthly maintenance fee. The transition for seniors can be seamless.

Any questions?

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DECODING HEPATITIS C MEDICATIONS: Effective Treatments and Their Costs

Hepatitis C is a viral infection affecting millions of people worldwide, causing liver inflammation and potentially leading to severe complications. Fortunately, significant advancements in medical research have brought forth groundbreaking medications that offer hope for patients diagnosed with Hepatitis C. In this article, we will explore the most notable medications available to combat this condition and delve into their costs to understand how accessible these treatments are for affected individuals.

Direct-Acting Antivirals (DAAs)

Direct-acting antivirals have revolutionized Hepatitis C treatment, providing a highly effective and well-tolerated approach to cure the infection. These medications directly target the virus, hindering its ability to replicate and spread in the body.

- **Sofosbuvir:** Sofosbuvir was among the first DAAs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is an oral medication and is typically used in combination with other drugs like ledipasvir or velpatasvir. The total treatment duration varies based on the Hepatitis C genotype and patient's response, but it generally lasts for 8 to 12 weeks.
- **Ledipasvir/Sofosbuvir (Harvoni):** This combination drug is a one-pill-a-day regimen, making it highly convenient for patients. It effectively targets both genotypes 1 and 4 of Hepatitis C and requires 8 to 12 weeks of treatment.
- **Glecaprevir/Pibrentasvir (Mavyret):** Mavyret stands out for its broad-spectrum coverage, capable of treating all major Hepatitis C genotypes. It is taken as three pills daily for eight weeks for most patients, making it an attractive option for those seeking a shorter treatment course.

Costs of Hepatitis C Medications

It is essential to consider the costs of these life-changing medications, as accessibility remains a critical concern for patients seeking treatment.



The prices of Hepatitis C medications have undergone significant changes over the years. Initially, the high cost of DAAs raised considerable controversy and barriers to access. However, as patents have expired and competition has increased, generic versions of some medications have become available, leading to a notable reduction in costs.

- **Brand-Name Medications:** Brand-name Hepatitis C medications like Harvoni and Epclusa can still be expensive, with treatment courses ranging from \$40,000 to \$100,000 or even higher, depending on the duration and the specific drug combination prescribed.
- **Generic Medications:** The availability of generic versions has significantly lowered the cost of Hepatitis C treatment. Generic versions of drugs like sofosbuvir and ledipasvir/sofosbuvir can now be found at a fraction of the cost of their brand-name counterparts, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 for a full treatment course.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Most health insurance plans cover Hepatitis C medications to some extent. However, the extent of coverage varies widely, and patients should review their insurance policies to understand the out-of-pocket costs they may incur.

The advent of direct-acting antivirals has transformed the landscape of Hepatitis C treatment, offering patients a realistic chance of a cure and a healthier future. Although the costs of brand-name

medications remain a concern for many, the availability of generic alternatives and increasing insurance coverage has improved accessibility to treatment. Collaborative efforts by governments, organizations, and pharmaceutical companies are essential to ensure that these life-saving medications reach all individuals affected by Hepatitis C, regardless of their economic background. With continued research and advocacy, we can aspire to eradicate Hepatitis C and improve the lives of millions worldwide.

Retail costs of Hep C medications verses the same medication received through Prescription Hope.

Drug Name	Retail Cost	Prescription Hope	Total Savings
Mavyret	\$12,000.00	\$50.00	\$11,950.00
Harvoni	\$4,978.00	\$50.00	\$4,928.00
Sovaldi	\$28,904.00	\$50.00	\$28,854.00
Epclusa	\$3,322.00	\$50.00	\$3,272.00
Vosevi	\$25,725.00	\$50.00	\$25,675.00

Prescription Hope is a national prescription drug benefit program that offers 1,500 Brand-Name medications at \$50 per medication per month no matter the retail cost.

For the set price of \$50 per month per medication, our advocates order, manage, track, and refill your prescription medications through patient assistance programs for those who qualify. We manage your enrollment with these programs throughout the year, working with over 180 pharmaceutical manufacturers and their pharmacy. There are no other costs, fees, or charges associated with your medication or our program.



Visit, www.PrescriptionHope.com today, to see if you qualify.



How to Enjoy Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

Your house is a mess. You have no free time. You hate to clean. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Over 100 million people in the US and Canada feel the same way. As you plan to hire house cleaning services, here are some tips that will make your experience even better.

Remember that you're hiring human beings

If you plan on every speck of dust being gone after your clean, you're most likely setting yourself up for disappointment. You'll enjoy your service more if you are realistic about what you're getting. While professional house cleaners are exceptional at what they do, they are not super human. They can't clean your master bathroom in 5 minutes. Humans also make mistakes. If something isn't done well, relax, call the house cleaning service at the office, and let them know. Depending on the type of issue, most professional house cleaning companies will send someone out to re-clean the area and make sure to correct the situation.

Leave your home while it's being cleaned

Do you like when someone looks over your shoulder while you work? Neither do housecleaners. Relax. Professional house cleaning services screen their employees, conduct background checks, and are bonded and insured. Get the most out of your cleaning service by getting out of your house during the cleaning process. Not only will you enjoy the great feeling of walking into a clean

home, but the cleaning staff will be better able to focus on their job. While leaving isn't a requirement, you just might find out how great it feels to abandon all thoughts of cleaning!

Leave a tip

Tipping service professionals is nothing new. Everyone tips their server at a restaurant, the bellboy, the valet. Tipping your cleaning professional is a good thing. Think about this; a professional cleaner is in your home, touching virtually all of your possessions. Cleaning is a physically demanding job. House cleaners are constantly bending down, scrubbing, walking up and down stairs, reaching up high, and moving heavy things around. And if hard work isn't enough, remember that they're dealing with all your dirty stuff! It's well worth a few extra dollars to say thank you. And who doesn't love a tip? Remember, a happy cleaner is a great cleaner.

To clean or not to clean

It's a question most people grapple with. Should I clean my house before the cleaning person comes? This is really up to you and there is no right answer. If you have hired a cleaning person for a set amount of time, the cleaner will be able to provide a deeper clean if your home is very tidy before their arrival. But, some people don't like even tidying up. If that's you, then letting the house cleaner do that might be well worth it. In the end, you have to decide how you want the house cleaner spending their time.

I clean my home in 1 hour... they should too

People always think a professional house cleaner should be able to clean their home faster than they clean it themselves. This is a misconception. When most homeowners clean their homes, they clean very differently than someone they hire. Homeowners know what areas they can skip and usually don't clean all the areas that professionals do. For example, many homeowners may skip the toilet when cleaning the bathrooms, only wiping down the counter and mirror. And even if they do tackle the toilet, they usually don't get the floor behind it. Professional home cleaners must clean everything, which, in the end, usually takes longer.

If you're realistic about your house cleaning service, you'll be much happier. And if there is something you're not happy with, simply call the office. You'll be much better off working through a few small issues than constantly jumping from one cleaning service to the next. Once you and the professional company get it right, having your home professionally cleaned is on.



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EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS TO ALLEVIATE MOTION SICKNESS

By Amy Hoffmann Schenk, RN, BSN, MS Ed, Community Engagement Lead Neuropsychiatric Research Center of SW Florida

Motion sickness, also known as travel sickness, is a common condition that affects many individuals when exposed to certain types of motion. Whether you're traveling by car, boat, plane, or even on a roller coaster, the uneasy feeling of nausea, dizziness, and discomfort can quickly spoil your journey. According to the CDC, motion sickness happens when the movement you see is different from what your inner ear senses.

Understanding Motion Sickness

As noted above, motion sickness occurs when there is a disconnect between the sensory inputs perceived by the eyes, inner ear, and other motion-sensing body parts. The brain receives conflicting signals about motion and balance, leading to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sweating, and fatigue. While some people are more prone to motion sickness than others, it can affect anyone, regardless of age or experience. You may not experience motion sickness every time you travel. You may be fine riding in the car, but when you look at your phone or try to read, motion sickness can come back full force.

Over-the-Counter Medications

There are several over-the-counter medications that can help manage motion sickness symptoms. Antihistamines, such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Bonine), are commonly used to alleviate nausea and dizziness. These medications work by blocking specific signals in the brain that trigger motion sickness symptoms. It's important to follow the recommended dosage instructions and always consult a healthcare professional if you have any underlying medical conditions or are taking other medications.

Prescription Medications

For individuals with severe motion sickness or those who frequently travel long distances, prescription medications may be recommended. Scopolamine patches, applied behind the ear, deliver a steady dose of the medication to help prevent motion sickness for several days. Other prescription options include medications like promethazine and

ondansetron. It's crucial to consult a healthcare provider for a proper diagnosis and guidance on prescription medication use. And while some of these approaches may be helpful, unfortunately, not every approach is successful.

Natural Remedies

Many natural remedies can help alleviate motion sickness symptoms. Ginger, in various forms such as capsules, tea, or ginger candy, has shown promising results in reducing nausea and vomiting. Peppermint and chamomile teas are also known for their soothing effects on the stomach. Acupressure wristbands, which apply pressure to specific points on the wrists, have gained popularity and may provide relief for some individuals. Additionally, maintaining good airflow, avoiding strong odors, and focusing on a fixed point in the distance can help reduce the sensations of motion sickness.

Preventive Strategies

Prevention is key in managing motion sickness. Sitting in the front seat of a car or in the middle of a boat can help minimize symptoms by reducing the perception of motion. Avoiding heavy meals or spicy, greasy foods before traveling can also help prevent nausea. It's important to stay hydrated and avoid alcohol, smoking and excessive caffeine, as they can exacerbate symptoms. Proper ventilation and fresh air circulation can alleviate discomfort, especially in enclosed spaces. Taking regular breaks, focusing on the horizon, and engaging in distractions like listening to music or engaging in conversation can also divert attention from motion-related sensations.

Motion sickness can be a challenging condition to navigate, but there are effective treatments and strategies available to alleviate its symptoms. Over-the-counter and prescription medications, along with natural remedies, can provide relief for different individuals. Additionally, preventive measures such as choosing seating positions, managing diet, and employing various distraction techniques can help minimize motion sickness. By exploring these options and finding what works best for you, you can conquer motion sickness and enjoy your travels with greater comfort and confidence.

DO YOU (OR YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS) DEAL WITH MOTION SICKNESS?

You may have tried some of all of the suggested approaches and still may have some symptoms of motion sickness. Here at the Neuropsychiatric Research Center (NPRC) we are offering a new clinical trial focusing on helping people deal with motion sickness effectively.

Here is the link to the study
<https://mymotionstudy.com/>

It is free, and all you need to do is put in your contact information and a short description of your symptoms. In a day or so, a representative will contact you and ask you a few more questions, which takes about 5 to 10 minutes. This screening call will evaluate your symptoms to see if you potentially qualify for the study. If you do qualify, one of our team at NPRC will be in touch to schedule an in person meeting.

The in-person meetings will likely be less than an hour and visits will continue over the course of the one-year study. There are five (5) total visits. You may be eligible for some compensation for your time and trouble as well. The study is open to individuals between the ages of 18 and 75.

If you have questions please contact NPRC at 239-939-7777. As a reminder, we are offering free memory screens in August. They are being conducted August 8th and 9th in our office at 14271 Metropolis Avenue.

To schedule your free screening you can register at <https://joinaresearchstudy.com/ftmyers-memory-screening-initiative/>.



You can also contact us at 239 939 7777 for assistance.

Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

On Father's Day in 2005 my dad came to my office to visit and talk about how things were going. In the course of our discussion he mentioned that he experienced a terrible night's sleep because his back was causing him so much pain. I told him that it was time to go to the ER and get checked out to find out what was causing all of his pain. He did, and that started a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. My dad fought an incredible fight with this terrible cancer but passed away in August of 2007.

Many people have faced the pain of having to bury a loved one. The question is, "How do I deal with the pain?" We may have confidence that our loved one is in a better place, but do we do with the pain that we still feel?

As you read this, maybe your pain is not in the loss associated with death, but rather you have faced the end of a relationship, or perhaps have received bad news regarding your own health. The question still remains, "what are we to do with these painful situations?"

As we turn through the pages of Scripture, we find that the thoughts and writings of the Psalmist David bring comfort and hope to those in pain. David understood painful situations for he faced many of them in his own life. He too, buried many loved ones and faced enormous family problems. How did he get through these challenges? He turned to God for help.

David tells us in the book of Psalms, ¹⁸ *The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalms 34:18*

You are never closer to God than when you are hurting. David knew that from personal experience. David took his pain and his problems to the Lord and asked for His help. In Psalm 142:1-2 David wrote, *"I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble."*

Our natural tendency is to suffer in silence. We put on a smile and pretend that everything is fine in our lives. Yet in reality, we know that ignoring our pain does not bring relief. We hope that time will heal all wounds but we know it does not. In fact, time often makes matters even worse.

Pain is our body's way of letting us know that we need to deal with something. Whether it is physical, emotional, or relational, pain should not be ignored. And yet still, we try to run from it.

It is human nature to run from painful situations. By law, all doors in public buildings swing out. When people panic, they run. They try to escape. When we face pain, loss and hurt, we look for ways to escape. We dream



of running away from reality in hopes of finding peace and comfort over the next rainbow. Sometimes people try to escape by turning to alcohol, drugs, food, or even inappropriate relationships. Running from your problems never brings resolution.

David went on to say in Psalm 142:3 that ³ *"When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who knows my way..."* God knows the pain we feel and He wants us to run to Him with our troubles.

As you read his Psalms, you will quickly notice that David was very open about what he was going through. And yet, through it all, he learned to trust and depend on God.

When dealing with the pressures and strains of life and the emotional challenges we face, we can learn much from David's example. Stop pretending that you can handle everything in your own strength and turn to God who loves you and cares about you. He specializes in mending broken hearts.

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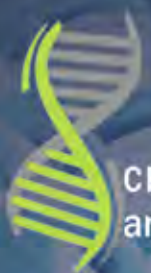
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