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# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

September 2023

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# THINKING OF FINALLY FIXING YOUR SMILE?

## Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry is the place for you!

**H**ave you ever wished you had a better smile? You're not alone. Unfortunately, many of us were either born with a less than perfect smile, smile, or something has happened to us that makes our smile less than captivating. In fact, for some people it takes years and a lot of time in the dentist's chair to get the smile they desire.

Fortunately, it is never too late to get the perfect smile. No matter what you've been through, there is a solution. At Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry, we strive to get you the smile you long for. I recently talked with a patient of Park Dental to hear how Dr. Long and his team transformed the smile and confidence of one of his patients, Kim Knight. She had nothing but the highest praise for her experience.



When I called Kim my first question was what was she most excited about when talking about her Park experience. For the next half an hour, she excitedly told me about her latest procedure, but when I talked to Dr. Long, he revealed that the end result was actually a longer process than what Kim described. In fact, Dr. Long told me that the majority of the work involved the remaking and correcting of what had been done for Kim previously to improve both her functions and esthetics. He told me that when he first met Kim, she was extremely dissatisfied with her smile. "I have seen numerous patients who have made a huge financial investment in their smiles but ended up dissatisfied and quite unhappy with them. They were willing to have the work redone, and Kim was one of them."

Let's hear what Kim had to say about her end results.

**H&W Magazine:** Tell me a little about your dental history and what led you to Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

**Kim:** On the day I received my driver's license, I was in a car wreck that led me to a long and difficult dental journey. Over the past 50 years, I have had every dental procedure under the sun. I have had to have bridges done over and over, several root canals, implants, and just about every other thing you can think of. When I moved to Florida and started to search for a new dentist, a friend recommended Park Dental.



KIM AND HER BROTHER BRAD

**H&W Magazine:** I understand you've had veneers put on. Tell me about that experience. Was it a long and painful process?

**Kim:** First of all, I would comment that my experience was pain free. I don't mean that it was only slightly painful. I mean that it was completely pain free. After all I've been through with my mouth, which was a nice change for me! Also, I was a little worried about how it would all go since I have implants and bridges, but there were no complications. The whole process took two days and there was no downtime at all. Dr. Long knew exactly what to do and the result is gorgeous!

**H&W Magazine:** Are you satisfied with the results then?

**Kim:** On a scale of 1-10, I'd give my results an 11! Not long after having the procedure I was in a restaurant when an old friend walked in and told me that she noticed my gorgeous smile from across the room! In fact, I was so satisfied with my results that I recommended it to my brother, and he had his done too.

**H&W Magazine:** What about the rest of the staff at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry?

**Kim:** I have found the staff at Park to be excellent. Because of my long history of dental issues, I am a bit picky when it comes to who works on my teeth. I'd also give my hygienist, Steph Garcia, high marks! She's excellent too! And the positive and welcoming atmosphere makes you feel good. They even threw a small surprise party for me when my procedure was finished! I've been to a lot of dental offices and had a

lot of work done. I've really never had a terrible experience, but there is something special about this office and Dr. Long. He is the best dentist I've seen in my 50+ year journey.

### H&W Magazine:

Once I heard such high praise about Dr. Long and his staff, I called the office to find out a bit more about this special dentist. I learned that Dr. Long immigrated to the US from Vietnam. He graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina, earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Georgia State University, and received advanced training in General Dentistry from the University of Florida School of Dentistry. He is an accredited member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, a highly exclusive group of "rock star dentists", with only 486 total members in its history.

I also heard about Dr. Long's focus on trust and relationship building. He treats his staff and his patients with the highest care and works hard to earn their trust. He gets to know each person as an individual, not as a co-worker, employee, or patient. He even shares his passion for personal growth with them, giving away copies of books he has found helpful or sharing what he has learned.

Dr. Long and his wife, Dr. Mai Huynh-Le, own the practice. They have 3 children, Dawson, Daniel, and Katie.

### Dr. Long Huynh, DMD



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# OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS: Understanding the Silent Threat

By Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

**O**varian cancer, often referred to as the "silent killer," is a formidable adversary that affects thousands of women worldwide each year. With subtle symptoms and no widely available early detection test, it's crucial to raise awareness about this deadly disease. Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, observed in September, provides an opportunity to delve into the importance of early detection, risk factors, and the ongoing efforts to combat this elusive foe.

## The Silent Symptoms

One of the most insidious aspects of ovarian cancer is its tendency to present vague or subtle symptoms, often resembling common digestive or menstrual issues. Bloating, pelvic pain, frequent urination, and feeling full quickly are some of the warning signs that may be mistaken for other health problems. This is why understanding one's body and recognizing persistent changes is crucial, as these symptoms tend to persist and worsen over time.

## Early Detection Challenges

Unlike some other cancers that have widely recognized and effective screening methods, ovarian cancer lacks a routine early detection test. Mammograms for breast cancer and Pap smears for cervical cancer have revolutionized early intervention. But with ovarian cancer, there's no single test that can reliably detect it in its early stages. This is one of the reasons why ovarian cancer is often diagnosed at an advanced stage, reducing the chances of successful treatment.

## Risk Factors and Genetics

While ovarian cancer can affect anyone, certain factors can increase an individual's risk. These include a family history of ovarian or breast cancer, certain genetic mutations like BRCA1 and BRCA2, age (risk increases with age, particularly after menopause), and a history of endometriosis. Awareness of these risk factors is important for women to make informed decisions about their health and discuss potential screening options with their healthcare providers.

## Empowering Through Awareness

Raising awareness about ovarian cancer isn't just about sharing information—it's about empowering



women to take control of their health. By knowing the signs and risk factors, women can be proactive in seeking medical attention when necessary. Additionally, promoting awareness helps debunk the myth that ovarian cancer is rare or affects only older women. Younger women can also be affected, underscoring the importance of a proactive approach to one's health at any age.

## Research and Progress

Medical research continues to make strides in understanding ovarian cancer, its causes, and potential treatments. Scientists are investigating novel therapies, such as targeted therapies and immunotherapy, that hold promise for improving outcomes for patients. Early research suggests that detecting ovarian cancer through blood tests that measure specific biomarkers might be a potential avenue for early diagnosis, which could be a game-changer in the fight against this disease.

## Support and Advocacy

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month serves as a platform for advocacy and support. Many organizations, both national and international, work tirelessly to educate the public, provide resources for patients and their families, and raise funds for research. Their efforts not only contribute to finding better treatment options but also provide a network of support for those affected by the disease.

## Taking Action

Every individual can contribute to ovarian cancer awareness in meaningful ways. Sharing information on social media, participating in local awareness events, and engaging in conversations with friends and family can have a ripple effect. Moreover, contributing to organizations dedicated to ovarian cancer research and support can make a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted by the disease.

Ovarian cancer remains a formidable challenge, but through heightened awareness, early detection, and ongoing research, progress is being made. By understanding the risk factors, recognizing the symptoms, and supporting organizations dedicated to fighting this disease, we can collectively work towards a future where ovarian cancer is no longer a silent threat. Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month reminds us that our voices and actions can make a significant impact in the battle against this insidious disease.

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# DR. RONALD CAPUTO JOINS PHYSICIANS REGIONAL MEDICAL GROUP

**P**hysicians Regional Medical Group welcomes Ronald Caputo, M.D., FACC, and MSCAI, as the newest addition to the team. Dr. Caputo is board-certified in cardiovascular disease and interventional cardiology, and is passionate about heart conditions, as more than 84 million Americans currently suffer from cardiovascular disease.

“You may be experiencing symptoms of heart disease if you have chest pain, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, extreme fatigue or heart palpitations,” Dr. Caputo said. “Don’t ignore any unusual signs or be afraid to talk to your doctor immediately if something doesn’t feel right.”

At Physicians Regional, we can help with matters of the heart. Dr. Caputo has specialized in invasive, interventional and structural heart disease procedures that treat blocked blood vessels, replace damaged valves, repair leaky heart valves, close holes in the heart, and close off small pouches where blood can pool and form clots. He is the only specialist in Southwest Florida recognized as a Master Interventionalist by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions, a distinction awarded when a provider has demonstrated a history of excellence through heart treatments, patient care, teaching and publications.

Dr. Caputo received his degree from Georgetown University Medical School in Washington, D.C. He then completed his Internal Medicine Residency and was Chief Medical Resident at the University of Massachusetts in Worcester. Following that, Dr. Caputo was a Research and Clinical Fellow in Cardiology and Invasive Cardiology at Harvard Medical School and the Beth Israel Hospital, Boston. He continued his medical career as Chief of Cardiovascular Services at St Joseph’s Hospital in Syracuse, New York, before moving to Naples in 2020 to help establish a Structural Heart program at Physicians Regional Medical Group. Dr. Caputo was affiliated with Physicians Regional for 3 years before signing on as a new provider in Physicians Regional Medical Group.



The Structural Heart team at Physicians Regional has achieved immense success quickly, having performed over 200 minimally invasive aortic valve replacements (TAVRs) over the last two years. TAVR is a minimally invasive procedure that reduces physical and emotional stress on patients compared to open-heart surgery, and patients are often discharged the following day.

Our Pine Ridge and Collier Blvd. hospitals have also received full Chest Pain Center with Primary PCI Accreditations. They are the only locations with 24/7 on-site percutaneous coronary intervention, a non-surgical procedure that uses a balloon catheter into the artery to relieve any narrowing or blockage.

“I’m glad to be a part of the exceptional heart team at Physicians Regional. I’m even happier to contribute to the health and well-being of my patients,” Dr. Caputo said. “Healthcare providers often use the expression that every heartbeat tells a story. I want to help our patients keep that story going.”

Physicians Regional Medical Group is excited to welcome Dr. Caputo to their team.



**For more information, call 239-348-4120**  
**Physicians Regional - Pine Ridge**  
**6376 Pine Ridge Rd, Ste 200, Naples, FL 34119**



# UNRAVELING HOPE: The Crucial Role of Clinical Trials in Advancing Neurological Treatments

Clinical trials stand as a beacon of hope on the horizon of medical progress, particularly when it comes to the enigmatic realm of neurological disorders. These trials represent the bridge between scientific innovation and real-world impact, offering a path towards unraveling the mysteries of these complex conditions and bringing forth effective treatments. In an era where neurological disorders affect millions worldwide, understanding the significance of clinical trials is paramount.

Neurological disorders encompass a vast array of conditions, from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's to multiple sclerosis and epilepsy. What unites them is their intricate nature, often rooted in the intricate workings of the brain and nervous system. Conquering these disorders requires more than just theoretical knowledge; it demands rigorous testing on human subjects to translate theories into tangible breakthroughs.

Clinical trials serve as the crucible in which novel treatments are tested, providing scientists and researchers with invaluable insights into the safety, efficacy, and mechanisms of potential therapies. These trials progress through meticulously designed phases, each serving a distinct purpose. Phase 1 trials focus on assessing safety, phase 2 explores dosing and preliminary effectiveness, and phase 3 examines the treatment's efficacy in comparison to existing options. This systematic approach ensures that only the most promising treatments advance to widespread use.

One of the key advantages of clinical trials is their ability to generate objective data. This data not only guides medical decisions but also serves as a foundation for regulatory bodies to evaluate new treatments. As a result, patients can have confidence that the medications and interventions arising from these trials have undergone rigorous scrutiny and met stringent standards before reaching their hands.

Moreover, clinical trials foster a spirit of collaboration. Researchers, medical professionals, and participants all play pivotal roles in this collective endeavor. The amalgamation of diverse perspectives and expertise fuels a dynamic exchange of ideas, driving innovation forward. Patients who choose to



participate in these trials not only contribute to scientific progress but also potentially gain access to cutting-edge treatments before they become widely available.

While clinical trials offer immense promise, they also present challenges. Neurological disorders often exhibit a wide spectrum of symptoms, making patient recruitment and selection intricate processes. Maintaining participant adherence and accounting for potential side effects requires meticulous planning and close monitoring. However, these challenges underscore the necessity of clinical trials, pushing researchers to innovate and refine their approaches.

Consider the case of multiple sclerosis (MS). Decades of clinical trials have revolutionized MS treatment, from the advent of interferon-beta to more recent immunomodulatory therapies. These trials have not only expanded treatment options but have also deepened our understanding of the disease's underlying mechanisms. Such progress would have been inconceivable without the dedication of researchers and the willingness of patients to engage in clinical trials.

In the realm of neurological disorders, time is of the essence. Conditions like Alzheimer's and ALS can devastate lives, robbing individuals of their memories and abilities. Clinical trials offer a glimmer of hope, as they expedite the journey from lab bench to patient bedside. The urgency of addressing these disorders underscores the importance of expediting trial processes without compromising safety and reliability.

Looking ahead, technology stands poised to transform the landscape of clinical trials for neurological disorders. Remote monitoring, telemedicine, and wearable devices enable real-time data collection,

enhancing the accuracy of results while minimizing inconvenience for participants. Such innovations hold the potential to make clinical trials more accessible, attracting a broader range of participants and generating more representative data.

In conclusion, clinical trials represent the cornerstone of progress in the fight against neurological disorders. Through rigorous testing and systematic phases, these trials unlock the potential of innovative treatments, offering renewed hope to countless individuals and families. The collaborative nature of clinical trials, combined with their ability to produce objective data, ensures that breakthroughs are grounded in science and supported by evidence. As technology continues to reshape the landscape of medical research, the future holds even more promise for advancing our understanding and treatment of these enigmatic conditions.

**Aqualane Clinical Research** is a comprehensive clinical research group focusing on advancing medical therapies in a wide array of human disease states. We provide patients with the opportunity to participate in the discovery of treatments where none currently exist or where there is an unmet need for safety and more effectiveness. By collaborating with our patients, their care partners, and sponsors in the industry, we focus on the safe and ethical study of these emerging therapies.

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# Uterine Fibroid Embolization: A Minimally Invasive Approach for Effective Treatment

By Dr. Ashley Wood

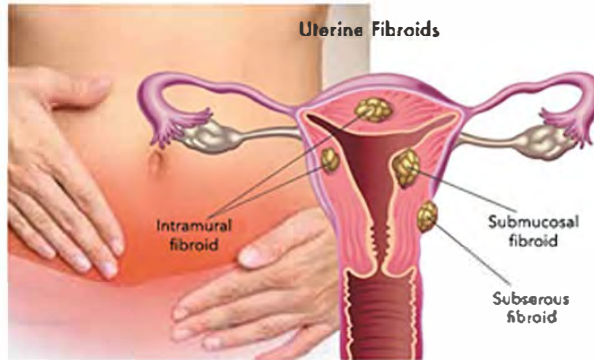
**U**terine fibroids are a common gynecological condition affecting a significant number of women worldwide. Traditionally, surgical interventions such as hysterectomy and myomectomy have been the primary treatment options. However, the emergence of uterine fibroid embolization (UFE) has revolutionized the management of this condition. UFE is a minimally invasive procedure that offers a safe and effective alternative to surgery, providing symptomatic relief and preserving fertility. This article aims to provide an overview of UFE, including its technique, efficacy, safety profile, and potential advantages over traditional surgical interventions.

**About:** Uterine fibroids, also known as leiomyomas, are benign tumors originating from the smooth muscle cells of the uterus. They can cause a range of symptoms, including heavy menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain, pressure/bulk symptoms, and reproductive dysfunction. UFE, also referred to as uterine artery embolization (UAE), involves the selective occlusion of the uterine arteries, leading to ischemic necrosis and subsequent shrinkage of fibroids.

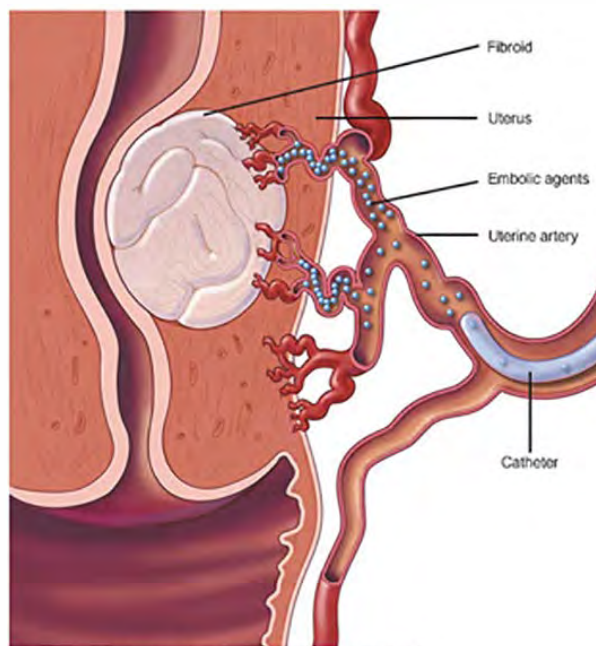
**Technique:** UFE is typically performed by an interventional radiologist under moderate sedation. Using fluoroscopic guidance, a catheter is inserted into the radial or femoral artery and advanced to the uterine arteries. Embolic agents, such as polyvinyl alcohol particles or microspheres, are then injected to block the blood supply to the fibroids, inducing their regression.

**Efficacy:** Numerous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of UFE in reducing fibroid-related symptoms. Clinical trials have reported significant improvements in menstrual bleeding, pelvic pain, bulk symptoms and quality of life following the procedure. Moreover, UFE has shown comparable outcomes to surgical interventions, with high rates of patient satisfaction and long-term symptom relief.

**Safety Profile:** UFE is generally considered a safe procedure, with a low risk of major complications. The most common adverse events include post-embolization syndrome, which consists of transient pain, fever, and fatigue. Serious complications, such as infection or uterine necrosis, are rare but can occur. Proper patient selection, meticulous technique, and close post-procedural monitoring are crucial to ensuring optimal safety outcomes.



**Advantages over Surgical Interventions:** Compared to traditional surgical interventions, UFE offers several advantages. It is a minimally invasive procedure that avoids the need for general anesthesia and large abdominal incisions. UFE also preserves the uterus, making it an attractive option for women desiring future fertility. Additionally, the shorter recovery time and reduced hospital stay associated with UFE contribute to improved patient satisfaction and cost-effectiveness.



**Conclusion:** Uterine fibroid embolization has emerged as a safe and effective alternative to surgical interventions for the management of symptomatic fibroids. With its minimally invasive nature, high efficacy, and potential advantages over traditional approaches, UFE has revolutionized the field of fibroid treatment.

## ABOUT ASHLEY WOOD, M.D.

Medical Education: West Virginia University School of Medicine

Internship: University of Pittsburgh - General Surgery  
Residency: Albany Medical Center - Diagnostic Radiology  
Fellowship: Miami Cardiac and Vascular Institute - Vascular & Interventional Radiology

Board Certifications: Diagnostic Radiology; Interventional Radiology

**Ashley Wood, M.D.** is board-certified in both diagnostic and interventional radiology. She completed her fellowship at the world renowned Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute under the guidance of interventional radiology pioneers Drs. Barry Katzen and James Benenati.

Dr. Wood relocated to Naples with her husband, Michael, and their three children. She is excited to join the most qualified Interventional Radiology team in Southwest Florida along with her partners Bruce Bordlee, M.D., Paul Hulsberg, M.D., and Scott Peterson, M.D.

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By Theresa Vergo, PA-C

# Exercise as Prescribed

Regular exercise stands as a formidable shield against the rising tide of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), underscoring its paramount importance in global health. These diseases, encompassing conditions like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disorders, exact a heavy toll on individuals and health-care systems alike. Exercise serves as a potent countermeasure, offering multifaceted benefits that extend beyond physical fitness. Engaging in regular physical activity helps maintain healthy body weight, regulate blood pressure, improve insulin sensitivity, and enhance cardiovascular health. By mitigating risk factors associated with NCDs, exercise emerges as a proactive strategy for disease prevention, reducing the burden on health-care resources and fostering a higher quality of life.

## The Science of Exercise and Health

Physical activity has been shown to offer a wide spectrum of benefits, ranging from cardiovascular health to mental well-being. Engaging in regular exercise boosts cardiovascular fitness, strengthens muscles, improves bone density, and enhances metabolic functions. Furthermore, exercise plays a pivotal role in weight management, reducing the risk of obesity-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

## Exercise for Mental Well-being

Beyond its physical advantages, exercise emerges as a potent catalyst for mental well-being. Exercising releases endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals, which contribute to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. Engaging in physical activity has been linked to enhanced cognitive function, improved sleep quality, and an overall boost in mood. As the modern world grapples with rising mental health concerns, exercise is a viable, non-pharmacological intervention that can positively impact mental health.

## Technological Integration and Monitoring

In the age of digital transformation, the fusion of exercise and technology has given rise to innovative solutions that facilitate health monitoring and motivation. There are many wearable devices, such as fitness trackers and smartwatches, that can empower individuals to monitor their activity levels,



heart rate, and even sleep patterns. This data-driven approach not only provides users with valuable insights into their health but also fosters a sense of accountability and motivation to maintain an active lifestyle.

## Personalized Fitness and Virtual Support

Advancements in technology have paved the way for personalized fitness experiences that cater to individual preferences and needs. Virtual fitness platforms and apps that offer tailored workout routines, nutritional guidance, and real-time feedback are becoming popular and have proven to be quite useful. This personalized approach eliminates many of the barriers that traditionally hinder individuals from engaging in regular exercise, making it more accessible and enjoyable.

## A Holistic Approach to Health

The importance of integrating exercise into a holistic approach to health is becoming clear. Emphasis on exercise should not be viewed as a standalone activity but rather as an integral component of a balanced lifestyle. When combined with a nutritious diet, adequate sleep, and stress management, regular physical activity contributes to a comprehensive strategy for disease prevention and overall well-being.

## Overcoming Barriers to Exercise

Recognizing that adopting an active lifestyle can be challenging, it is important to identify common barriers to exercise and provide strategies to overcome them. Time constraints, lack of motivation, and limited access to fitness facilities are hurdles that many individuals face. Practical solutions, such as incorporating short bouts of activity throughout the day, finding activities that align with personal interests, and exploring outdoor options to make exercise a sustainable habit.

## Empowering Change

In conclusion, as science, technology, and innovation converge, the integration of exercise into daily routines becomes more accessible and tailored than ever before. By embracing physical activity as a cornerstone of well-being and leveraging the tools provided by modern technology, individuals have the opportunity to take control of their health journey and unlock a future marked by vitality and resilience. Whether through a brisk walk, a virtual workout class, or a bike ride, each step taken in the direction of regular exercise is a stride towards a healthier, happier life.

*This article was written based on information found in the following medical review:*

*Tao, D. et al. (2023) Integration of exercise prescription into medical provision as a treatment for non-communicable diseases: A scoping review, Frontiers. Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1126244/full>*



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## Theresa Vergo, PA-C

*Theresa has been a board-certified Physician Assistant since 2011. She graduated with her master's in medical science from Nova Southeastern University. Since then, she has been working in medical oncology as an inpatient hematologist/oncology physician assistant.*

*She exercises 5-6 times weekly and knows the benefit of adding exercise to medical treatment. Theresa enjoys boating with her husband and two daughters in her spare time. When time allows, she enjoys training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.*

*She looks forward to supporting your efforts at Inspire Exercise Medicine.*

# AGING EYES: ALL ABOUT CATARACTS

By Jon R. Berlie, M.D.

As the years gracefully add to our age, our bodies go through various changes. Among these changes, our eyesight tends to be one of the most noticeable. One common issue that can arise with age is the development of cataracts. These cloudy patches that form within the lens of the eye can significantly impact our vision and overall quality of life. In this article, we will delve into the world of healthy aging and explore the intricacies of cataracts, shedding light on their causes, symptoms, prevention, and treatment.

## Understanding Healthy Aging

Aging is a natural part of life's journey, and taking care of our bodies becomes paramount as we grow older. This includes paying close attention to our eyes, which play a crucial role in how we perceive the world around us. Just like other parts of our body, our eyes go through changes as we age. While some decline in vision is considered normal, conditions like cataracts can amplify these changes and lead to more significant challenges.

## Cataracts Unveiled

Cataracts are a prevalent eye condition among the aging population. They occur when the proteins in the lens of the eye begin to clump together, causing cloudiness and opacity. This clouding obstructs the passage of light, leading to blurry and less vibrant vision. As cataracts progress, they can hinder daily activities such as reading, driving, and recognizing faces.

## Causes and Risk Factors

While aging is the primary contributor to cataracts, other factors can accelerate their development. Prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun, smoking, diabetes, and certain medications are some of the potential triggers. Genetics can also play a role; if cataracts run in your family, you may have a higher risk of developing them.

## Recognizing the Symptoms

Cataracts don't usually show up overnight. Their onset is gradual, and symptoms might not be immediately noticeable. Initially, you might experience increased glare from lights, difficulty seeing in low-light conditions, or the perception that colors are becoming dull. As the cataracts progress, your prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses might change more frequently, and you may find that you need brighter lighting to read.

## Prevention and Management

While cataracts are a natural part of aging, there are steps you can take to potentially delay their onset or manage their progression. Protecting your eyes from excessive UV exposure by wearing sunglasses with UV protection is a wise measure. Eating a balanced diet rich in antioxidants, like vitamins C and E, may also contribute to eye health. Additionally, quitting smoking and managing conditions like diabetes can play a significant role in preventing cataracts.

## Treatment Options

When cataracts begin to significantly impact your daily life and activities, surgical intervention might be necessary. Cataract surgery is one of the most common medical procedures performed worldwide and is generally safe and effective. During the surgery, the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens (IOL). This painless procedure takes only minutes per eye, and often results in improved vision, reduced dependence on glasses, and an enhanced quality of life.

## Premium IOL Options

Not only does cataract surgery restore visual clarity by removing the clouded lens, but it allows patients the opportunity to turn back time and upgrade their IOL option to select an intraocular lens that can reduce or even eliminate the need for glasses and contact lenses following surgery. These premium lenses are a great option for patients seeking to further improve their visual acuity following cataract surgery.

## Embracing Healthy Aging

As we age, it's essential to be proactive about our eye health. Regular eye examinations can help detect and manage conditions like cataracts early on. Moreover, adopting a healthy lifestyle that includes a balanced diet, regular exercise, and the avoidance of harmful habits can contribute to the well-being of our eyes and overall vitality.

In conclusion, aging eyes bring along various changes, and cataracts are a significant concern that can affect our vision and quality of life. Understanding the causes, symptoms, prevention, and treatment options for cataracts empowers us to take control of our eye health as we age. By embracing healthy habits and seeking timely medical advice, we can ensure that our eyes continue to serve us well throughout the journey of life.



## JON R. BERLIE, M.D.

LASIK, Cataract & Lens

Replacement Surgeon

Dr. Berlie is a board-certified ophthalmologist who specializes in LASIK and premium lens

cataract surgery. He has been serving the Naples community for over 20 years. Dr. Berlie achieves superior visual outcomes for his cataract patients by utilizing the latest lens technology combined with state of the art equipment. His expertise in this area has led the Center For Sight Naples office to be recognized as the "Best Eye Center" in Naples, FL for the past 15 years. In addition to laser cataract surgery, Dr. Berlie performs vision correction procedures including All Laser LASIK, Epi-LASEK, Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE) and Implantable Contact Lenses. He is also skilled in reconstructive and cosmetic eyelid surgery. He has been honored as one of America's "Top Doctors" by the prestigious Top Doctors list, published annually by Castle Connolly Medical, Ltd.

Dr. Berlie completed his undergraduate training at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada and the California State University of San Bernardino. He then attended Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska where he graduated Cum Laude, followed by an internship in Internal medicine.

Dr. Berlie continued his education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center where he completed his ophthalmology residency followed by a fellowship in Oculoplastic and Aesthetic Laser Surgery at Saint Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City.



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# Importance of PROSTATE EXAMS

**P**rostate cancer is a fairly serious blip on the male health radar as the third most common cancer in men over 70. Prostate cancer – and other prostate issues – can cause considerable discomfort, pain and even death, if they are left undiagnosed and untreated.

No man looks forward to dropping his pants for the annual check-up; but if you're smart, you'll bite the bullet and go anyway. Regular screenings cannot only save you a lot of pain and discomfort – they may just save your life.

## What is the prostate – and why does it need to be examined?

The prostate gland is a doughnut-shaped organ that is part of the male reproductive system. A healthy prostate in a younger man is only about the size of a walnut. The prostate sits just under the bladder and is wrapped around the beginning of the urethra. It is surrounded by nerves that control erections and its primary function is to produce a liquid that enriches and protects sperm.

Unfortunately, as men get older this little organ tends to act up. At times, some of the symptoms are simply a sign of aging; however, in many cases prostate trouble is an indication of a more serious problem. Prostate cancer is a primary concern, but other prostate disorders can be just as uncomfortable and a serious concern for male health.

So if you are experiencing symptoms like difficulty or discomfort while urinating, blood in your urine or semen, or painful ejaculation, it's important to have your prostate checked out. Even if you aren't experiencing any symptoms, it's still wise to be screened from time to time, as you can pre-empt and prevent problems before they crop up.

## What should I expect during a prostate screening exam?

A prostate screening exam can be done fairly quickly and easily. It might be a little awkward and uncomfortable, but it should be pain-free and over in just a few minutes.



The doctor will likely discuss the procedure with you before getting started. He will answer any questions you might have and he'll make sure you understand what's going to happen. As uncomfortable as you might be, the very best thing to do is to relax and remember it will only take a few minutes. Remember, the doctor is a professional and he very likely does prostate exams on a daily basis. Relaxing and discussing the process openly with your doctor can take a lot of the discomfort out of the procedure.

Regular screenings ensure that problems are caught quickly. Catching a prostate problem right at the start, means that it can be treated and cleared up with far less difficulty.

So men, don't wait around till you run into trouble. A little momentary discomfort is a worthwhile trade for a long, happy, healthy life surrounded by your family and friends. Do yourself a favor and get your prostate checked out.



**Jonathan Jay, M.D.**  
*Board Certified Urologist*  
Dr. Jonathan Jay is Board Certified in both Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS) and Urology, a Diplomat of the American Board of Urology and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.



**Rolando Rivera, M.D.**  
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Dr. Rolando Rivera leads the way with utilizing the latest technology for both urinary incontinence and vaginal prolapse. Improving the QOL for his patients with overactive bladders and pelvic floor disorder.



**Kristina Buscaino, DO**  
Dr. Buscaino is a Urologist practicing in our Naples and Ft. Myers Offices. She has completed a Fellowship in Sexual Medicine from the University of South Florida. Her specialties include Sexual Medicine and Urological Surgery.

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# Chronic Limb Ischemia: Educating Patients on This Disease is Critical

By Leandro Perez, MD, FACC, FSCAI, RPVI

**P**eripheral artery disease (PAD) is an epidemic that causes blood flow to diminish and puts patients at high risk for heart attacks and other cardiovascular events due to narrowing of the arteries, atherosclerosis (buildup of plaque), and the risk of plaque sloughing off and creating clots. The advanced stages of PAD, which occludes blood flow, especially in the tibia and foot arteries, causing ulcerations, gangrene, and tissue loss, is known as Chronic Limb Ischemia (CLI). CLI is an occlusive disease state that doesn't provide adequate perfusion to complete the metabolic demands of the body. The Global Burden of Disease study reported that 202 million adults worldwide have PAD and with that staggering number, CLI is increasing escalating. Few other diseases have as high of a mortality rate as CLI.

Approximately 2 million people in the U.S. have CLI, but that number is probably much higher as it often goes undiagnosed until the disease is severely advanced.

Many physicians resort to amputation to try and save their patient's lives, but it's unfortunately often performed unnecessarily, and it puts patients at a higher risk of death. Amputation severely reduces a person's survival rate. Because CLI is increasing in record numbers, patients' survival rates are much worse than that of many deadly cancers, yet there is no clear strategic protocol in place by the government to help patients survive and better prepare and mandate their physician's treatment plans.

In south Florida, we are seeing record numbers of people that were recommended amputation. In most of these cases, it is unfounded.

Patients with CLI almost always have comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, kidney disease, and extensive atherosclerosis throughout their bodies. Angiography is a critical tool to understand the patient's vascular health overall. Sadly, many patients with CLI are never offered any in-depth imaging studies. With the proper testing, physicians can decide how to best treat the patient and avoid amputation through revascularization procedures. Patients who undergo amputation have double the risk within the year of death.



Making sure we educate the public on their options with PAD and CLI is critical.

The most common symptoms with PAD are pain with exertion, most of the time, the pain is in the calf, but it can be anywhere in the extremity and sometimes in the buttocks. Pain can present as cramps or sharp and usually relieved by resting—most people complain of cold or numb feet or loss of hair, and some experience weak legs.

Diagnosis is confirmed by performing a detailed physical examination of the legs, checking for pulses, and corroborated using ultrasound and Doppler; with arterial disease; we also add an Ankle-Brachial Index or ABI, which measures the blood flow in your extremities. These tests are simple to perform and done in an office setting.

Once diagnosis is confirmed, then there are multiple treatment options and can be conservative or invasive; it all depends on the severity of the condition.

For more advanced conditions, invasive treatment is needed. Until recently, invasive treatments were mostly surgical, very traumatic with days of recovery in hospital post-surgery; however, in the last decade, the introduction of percutaneous non-surgical techniques procedures has shifted the treatments from surgery to catheter-based interventions that do not require blades or general anesthesia. The same techniques used to open arteries of the heart without surgeries using catheter-based therapy are now the method of choice for the treatment of venous or arterial disease of the legs.

The introduction of catheter-based techniques has now caused a shift from a surgical technique to a percutaneous technique that can be done in the comfort of an office without the need of hospitalization, all done under local anesthesia as an out-patient procedure.

You have options. Being educated on vascular conditions and the available treatment is to your advantage. We hope to spread the word on CLI and help patients avoid unnecessary amputation.

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Leandro Perez, MD, FACC, FSCAI, RPVI

Dr. Leandro Perez is a board-certified cardiac and endovascular specialist with extensive expertise in arterial disease and also an expert in the "wrist procedure" for heart catheterization and limb angiograms. His primary focus is limb amputation prevention and limb ischemia and leads NCEC in these efforts educating the community and health care providers in Southwest Florida on these conditions. He uses a non-surgical treatment of arterial disease to preserve the arteries of the leg, similar to the techniques he uses to treat the arteries of the heart. He is dedicated to combatting the epidemic of limb amputation using his skills and experience in helping these patients at risk for losing a toe, feet, or limbs due to poor circulation.

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# WHEN BUG BITES AND STINGS NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION

**S**ummertime brings sunshine, more hours outside and an increased risk of bug bites and stings. Insects like mosquitoes, ticks, bees and spiders are often harmless, but sometimes their bites and stings can spread disease or cause dangerous allergic reactions and infections.

An insect bite releases saliva and stings release venom that can cause skin to become red, swollen and itchy. When symptoms last longer than a few days, or they become worse, medical intervention may be required.

“If you spend time outside, getting bit or stung by an insect is nearly unavoidable, which is why it’s important to know when to get medical treatment,” says Dr. Timothy Martin, M.D. “Depending on the severity of a reaction to a bite or sting, a round of antibiotics or topical ointment may be prescribed.”

**Dr. Martin recommends seeking medical care if you experience the following:**

- **An allergic reaction:** Hives, rapid heartbeat, or swelling of the mouth, tongue and throat could indicate an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms of an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, which is life threatening, call 911 and administer epinephrine if it is available.

- **Cellulitis:** Swollen lymph nodes and oozing pus can be symptoms of cellulitis, a non-contagious skin infection that requires antibiotics. If left untreated, it could cause sepsis.

- **Bite from a disease carrier:** Ticks can carry Lyme disease and mosquitoes can spread viruses through their bites like West Nile and Zika. If bitten by a disease-carrying insect and you experience symptoms like fever, fatigue or red streaks surrounding the bite, seek medical attention.

- **Flu-like symptoms:** Go to the emergency room if symptoms like chills, headache, sore throat and fever last more than 48 hours after a bite or sting or if symptoms worsen rapidly.



- **Worsening redness:** Redness usually goes away after a few days, however, if the redness spreads or red lines from the bite site develop, it could be a sign of infection.

“To better protect yourself or your loved ones this summer, wear long sleeve shirts and pants, use insect repellents with DEET as an active ingredient and avoid bug-infested areas. Make it a point to check your skin when you go inside to find any insects that might have attached to you or bites needing treatment,” says Dr. Martin.

**Dr. Timothy Martin, M.D.**, is board certified in internal medicine and specializes in outpatient primary care for all adults. He treats multiple areas

including hypertension, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, anxiety/depression, rheumatoid processes, and endocrine ailments. Dr. Martin offers annual wellness visits, performs thorough physical examinations and offers pre-operative appointments.

*If you do experience an allergic or other serious reaction to a bug bite or sting, seek immediate care.*

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# CHRONIC ILLNESS AND STRESS

## A FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE PERSPECTIVE

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

**A** whopping 80% of adults over 65 years of age have one chronic disease. And a full 77% have at least 2! But it's not like we get the disease suddenly and out of the blue. We've been on the path our whole lives. Stress is one of the crucial factors which slowly but steadily works on our decline. It comes as no surprise to anyone that how we think and feel affects our health. The trouble is that we are unable to objectively scrutinize our own feelings. The people we trust will often not take the time to do it with us either. As the decorated researcher Dr. Candace Pert, PhD said once: "As our feelings change, this mixture of peptides travels throughout your body and your brain. And then they are literally changing the chemistry of every cell in your body." I would humbly add that it is not just what we think and feel but it is also how long those thoughts and feelings last that will yield the undesirable consequences.

The so called, 'Fight or Flight' stress response is protective in the context of short periods of stress. It was designed by Mother Nature to protect us against clear and present danger. However, the same inborn system can cause damage and illness in the setting of chronic/continuous stress, whether it is physical or psychological. Doctors call the state of chronically stressed autonomic nervous system – a sympathetic dominant state. Emotional stress increases catecholamine metabolism which increases oxidative stress by increasing production of free radicals.

It is important to note that stressful events in early childhood affect our sensitivity to subsequent stressful events. Thus, taking a very thorough history dating back to our early childhood, and sometimes even to the time preceding our birth, is of paramount importance in uncovering the triggers and antecedent mediators of the current illness and addressing them. For example, a 2010 study published in *Child Development* magazine found that increased maternal stress was significantly associated with infant temperamental difficulties from birth to 3 years

of age (period studied). Another 2004 study revealed that high levels of prenatal stress may negatively affect fetal brain development as evidenced by lower language and intellectual abilities in 5-year-old toddlers. In 2014 study scientists evaluated children born to mothers who lived in Montreal and were pregnant during the severe 2-week 1998 ice storm, that cut the power off in the large residential areas. The mothers experienced profound physical and psychological stress and their children born after the storm were found to be prone to asthma and autism. Stress damage can truly transcend generations. I am sure you all have your own examples of how the stress of World War I and World War II has affected the health of more than one generation in your own family.

If we treat the client's presenting chronic illness without addressing their stress-generating Mind-Body imbalance, we are then missing the entire point of functional healing, which recognizes the body's innate wisdom and the need to remove the disruptive stressors. A comprehensive study in the National Review of Immunology confirmed the chilling implications which stress can have on a person's health:

- Increased susceptibility to infection
- More severe illness
- Diminished response to vaccines
- Reactivated latent viral infections
- Delayed wound healing
- Increased production of pro-inflammatory cytokines which are associated with a spectrum of age-related diseases.
- Exacerbation of neurodegenerative disorders

To this I would add that chronic stress is associated with higher risk for developing hypertension and with preference for sugary and high fat foods. By making poor food choices, stressed people close the catch 22 loop by increasing the toxic burden for their bodies to deal with. A 2019 study in *Clinical Gastroenterology & Hepatology* found that chronic



stress can impact digestion, absorption, appetite and nutrient bioavailability, by affecting our microbiome. In fact, we all heard about the connection between chronic stress and development and severity of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms.

Functional Medicine utilizes Mind-Body therapies to create a shift from sympathetic dominant state into a healthy and safe, parasympathetic-dominant (relaxed) state. These types of therapies have been shown to decrease inflammation and improve brain function, related to attention, learning, and emotional self-regulation.



**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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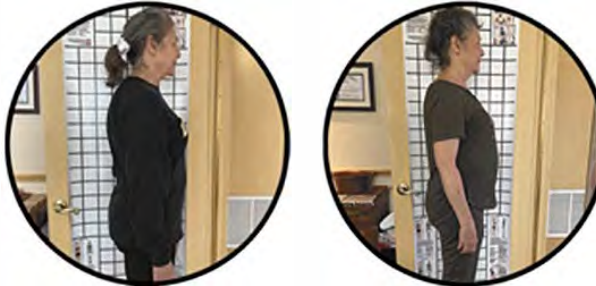
# Elevate Your Beach Life: The Transformative Power of Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy

By Deborah Korpi, BGS, LMT, MMP, BCTMB

Living at the beach offers an idyllic and relaxing lifestyle, but it's not without its challenges. Among the most overlooked but crucial issues that beach-dwellers face is poor posture. While the beach environment fosters a sense of serenity, it can inadvertently contribute to posture problems. Fortunately, Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy, based on her 40 years of ballet training and teaching, offers an innovative solution that allows you to improve your posture in the comfort and privacy of your own home with private and individual sessions on Zoom! This unique approach not only enhances your overall well-being and appearance but also brings the grace and elegance of ballet to your beach life.

## The Perils of Poor Posture at the Beach:

- 1. Muscle Strain and Fatigue:** Spending long hours lounging on the beach or carrying heavy beach gear can lead to muscle strain and fatigue, especially in the neck, shoulders, and back. Prolonged poor posture can exacerbate these issues, causing discomfort and affecting your beach experience.
- 2. Reduced Mobility:** Poor posture can restrict your range of motion, making it challenging to engage in beach activities such as swimming, surfing, or beach volleyball. Lack of mobility can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, further contributing to posture problems.
- 3. Spinal Misalignment:** Frequent slouching or hunching while sitting on the beach can gradually lead to spinal misalignment. This not only causes pain and discomfort but also affects your overall posture and physical appearance.
- 4. Breathing Difficulties:** Rounded shoulders and a forward head posture can compress your lungs, making it harder to breathe deeply. This can reduce your lung capacity and lead to feelings of fatigue and breathlessness.
- 5. Negative Self-Perception:** Poor posture can impact your self-confidence and body image. Feeling insecure about your appearance may prevent you from fully enjoying the beach lifestyle and social interactions.



BEFORE

AFTER

## The Benefits of Improved Posture:

- 1. Enhanced Physical Health:** Correcting poor posture can alleviate muscle strain, reduce fatigue, and improve overall mobility. Proper alignment also enhances blood circulation, promoting better cardiovascular health.
- 2. Increased Energy and Vitality:** By improving posture, you can experience increased energy levels, allowing you to participate in more beach activities with enthusiasm and vigor.
- 3. Improved Breathing:** Better posture allows for optimal lung expansion, enhancing oxygen intake and promoting better respiratory function, which contributes to increased energy and relaxation.
- 4. Enhanced Self-Confidence:** Improved posture leads to a more upright and confident appearance, positively impacting how others perceive you and boosting your self-esteem.
- 5. Reduced Pain and Discomfort:** Correcting posture imbalances can alleviate chronic pain caused by poor alignment, allowing you to fully enjoy the beach lifestyle without discomfort.

## Introducing Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy:

Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy is a unique and transformative solution that draws from her 40 years of ballet training and teaching, as well as her 20 years as a Massage Therapist and Medical Massage Therapist. Deborah has honed her understanding of body alignment, grace, and poise. She brings this expertise to her uniquely designed posture therapy, infusing it with the elegance and precision of ballet movements.

## The Benefits of Deborah's Approach:

- 1. Ballet-inspired Movements:** Deborah's therapy incorporates ballet-inspired exercises and stretches that not only improve posture but also add a touch of grace to your everyday movements.
- 2. Personalized Attention:** With Deborah's vast experience, she provides personalized attention and guidance, tailoring the therapy to suit your specific posture needs and goals.
- 3. Mind-Body Connection:** Deborah's approach emphasizes the mind-body connection, fostering awareness of your body's alignment and posture in everyday activities, including your time spent at the beach.
- 4. Posture Refinement:** Beyond just correcting poor posture, Deborah's therapy helps refine your posture, instilling an air of poise and elegance in your overall presence.

## Embrace the Benefits of Improved Posture with Deborah Korpi's Therapy:

With Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy, you have the opportunity to elevate your beach life experience to new heights. By addressing poor posture and achieving proper alignment with the grace of ballet, you'll not only feel physically better but also radiate confidence and vitality with every movement. Embrace the convenience of this innovative therapy, and soon everyone will be asking, "What have you been doing to look so good and taller?"

Improve your posture, embrace a healthier lifestyle, and infuse the elegance of ballet into your beach life with Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy. Enjoy your time at the beach with improved posture, and witness the positive impact it brings to every aspect of your life, guided by Deborah's expertise and passion for the art of ballet. With private and individual sessions on Zoom, you can now embark on this transformative journey from the comfort of your own home.

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# UNLOCKING VITALITY: The Crucial Role of Good Cholesterol in Your Health

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

**G**ood cholesterol, or high-density lipoprotein (HDL), often takes a backseat to its notorious counterpart, bad cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein or LDL), when discussions about heart health arise. However, understanding the pivotal role that good cholesterol plays in our well-being is essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and preventing cardiovascular diseases.

## The Balancing Act: Cholesterol Basics

Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the cells of our body and is vital for building cell membranes, producing hormones, and aiding digestion. It travels through the bloodstream, packaged within lipoproteins. LDL cholesterol is known as "bad" because when levels become excessive, it can accumulate in artery walls, leading to atherosclerosis and increasing the risk of heart disease. On the other hand, HDL cholesterol is referred to as "good" because it helps remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream and transport it to the liver for disposal.

## Guarding Against Heart Disease

The significance of good cholesterol becomes evident when considering its protective effects against heart disease. HDL cholesterol acts as a scavenger, picking up excess cholesterol from artery walls and delivering it to the liver for excretion. This process prevents the buildup of plaques that can narrow and harden arteries, reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Maintaining healthy levels of HDL cholesterol is thus a fundamental step in safeguarding cardiovascular health.

## Promoting Arterial Health

Good cholesterol doesn't just clear away excess cholesterol; it also exhibits anti-inflammatory properties that contribute to arterial health. Inflammation within blood vessel walls is a key factor in the development of atherosclerosis. HDL cholesterol counteracts this by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, fostering an environment that discourages plaque formation. By doing so, it helps maintain the elasticity and integrity of blood vessels, promoting efficient blood flow and lowering the risk of hypertension.



## The HDL-Lifestyle Connection

While genetics do play a role in determining HDL levels, lifestyle choices have a substantial impact. Engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding smoking can all raise HDL cholesterol levels. Exercise in particular has been shown to increase the production of HDL cholesterol, enhancing its beneficial effects on heart health.

## Dietary Considerations

Diet plays a significant role in influencing cholesterol levels, and certain foods can actively contribute to increasing HDL cholesterol. Consuming healthy fats, such as those found in olive oil, nuts, and fatty fish, can boost HDL levels. Additionally, incorporating sources of soluble fiber, like oats, beans, and fruits, can help enhance HDL function. Moderating the intake of saturated and trans fats is equally crucial for maintaining a healthy balance between good and bad cholesterol.

## Beyond Cardiovascular Health

The influence of good cholesterol extends beyond cardiovascular health. Emerging research suggests that HDL cholesterol may play a role in various other aspects of well-being. For instance, HDL has been associated with improved cognitive function and a reduced risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Furthermore, it has been found to have antioxidant properties that could contribute to overall immune system support.

## Strategies for Raising HDL Cholesterol

For individuals with low HDL cholesterol levels, several strategies can help raise these levels and

maximize their benefits. Alongside adopting a heart-healthy diet and engaging in regular exercise, limiting alcohol intake and managing stress can also contribute to increasing HDL cholesterol levels.

While much attention has been given to the dangers of bad cholesterol, it's essential not to underestimate the vital role of good cholesterol in maintaining optimal health. HDL cholesterol acts as a shield against heart disease, promoting arterial health and offering protection against inflammation. Embracing a lifestyle that supports healthy HDL levels through physical activity, a balanced diet, and other positive choices can contribute to a longer, healthier life. By recognizing the importance of good cholesterol, we empower ourselves to make informed decisions that nurture our cardiovascular and overall well-being.

## 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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# Enhancing COPD Management in Hot and Humid Climates:

## Optimizing Oxygen Systems for Florida Residents

**L**iving with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) can present unique challenges, especially in regions characterized by high heat and humidity levels, like Florida. The combination of these environmental factors and COPD can lead to increased discomfort, breathing difficulties, and a higher risk of exacerbations. However, by understanding the impact of heat and humidity on COPD and optimizing oxygen therapy systems, individuals in these areas can significantly improve their quality of life.

### The Challenge of Heat and Humidity for COPD Patients

COPD is a progressive lung disease that restricts airflow and makes breathing difficult. In hot and humid climates, COPD patients face additional challenges due to the way their respiratory system responds to these conditions. Heat and humidity can cause increased respiratory rates, leading to faster breathing and potential oxygen desaturation. Additionally, the body's natural response to heat, such as sweating, can lead to dehydration, which further exacerbates breathing difficulties.

### Understanding Oxygen Therapy

Oxygen therapy is a crucial treatment for COPD patients, especially those living in areas with challenging environmental conditions. Oxygen supplementation helps improve blood oxygen levels, alleviate shortness of breath, and enhance overall well-being. It is essential to ensure that oxygen therapy is tailored to individual needs and adapted for the specific climate and lifestyle of the patient.

### Selecting the Right Oxygen System

Choosing the appropriate oxygen delivery system is vital for COPD patients, particularly in regions like Florida. There are various options available, including:

- 1. Compressed Oxygen Tanks:** These portable tanks provide a finite supply of oxygen and are suitable for short outings. However, they can be heavy and cumbersome, limiting mobility.
- 2. Liquid Oxygen Systems:** These systems store oxygen in liquid form, offering more oxygen in a smaller, lightweight container. They are more portable



than compressed tanks and are ideal for those who need a higher flow of oxygen.

**3. Oxygen Concentrators:** These devices extract oxygen from the air and provide a continuous supply. They are suitable for home use and can be used with mobility aids for outdoor activities. Portable concentrators are also available for increased mobility.

**4. Portable Oxygen Concentrators:** These devices are designed for individuals who require oxygen on the go. They are lightweight, rechargeable, and can operate on battery power, making them perfect for navigating Florida's humid and hot conditions.

### Tips for Managing Oxygen Therapy in Hot and Humid Climates

- 1. Stay Hydrated:** Proper hydration is essential to prevent dehydration, which can worsen COPD symptoms. Consult a healthcare provider to determine the right amount of fluids to consume daily.
- 2. Regular Maintenance:** Maintain your oxygen equipment according to manufacturer guidelines to ensure consistent and efficient oxygen delivery.
- 3. Monitor Oxygen Levels:** Use a pulse oximeter to monitor oxygen saturation levels regularly. Adjust your oxygen flow rate as needed, especially when heat and humidity impact your breathing.

**4. Avoid Direct Sun Exposure:** Prolonged sun exposure can lead to overheating and fatigue. Use hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen, and stay in shaded areas when possible.

**5. Plan Outdoor Activities:** Schedule outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day, like early morning or late afternoon. This can help minimize the impact of heat and humidity on your breathing.

**6. Use Air Conditioning:** Keep indoor environments cool and well-ventilated. Air conditioning helps in reducing heat-related stress on your respiratory system.

### Consulting Healthcare Professionals

Contact your healthcare provider to develop a personalized oxygen therapy plan that addresses the challenges of living in a hot and humid climate. Regular check-ups and adjustments to treatment can ensure optimal management of COPD symptoms and improve the overall quality of life.

Living with COPD in hot and humid regions such as Florida requires careful consideration of the challenges posed by environmental conditions. Optimizing oxygen therapy systems, staying hydrated, and making lifestyle adjustments can significantly enhance the well-being of COPD patients. By working closely with healthcare professionals and selecting the right oxygen delivery system and the right settings, individuals can breathe easier and enjoy a better quality of life even in the face of challenging climates.

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# Understanding Arthritis and Its Impact: Arthritis Awareness Month

**T**his month we come together to raise awareness about a condition that affects millions of lives worldwide - arthritis. Arthritis Awareness Month is a time to shed light on this often misunderstood and underestimated condition, highlighting the challenges faced by those living with arthritis and promoting understanding, early detection, and management strategies.

## What is Arthritis?

Arthritis refers to a group of more than 100 different types of joint diseases that cause inflammation, pain, stiffness, and decreased range of motion in the affected joints. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, but there are many other forms, such as psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

## The Impact on Individuals and Society

Arthritis can affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. Contrary to popular belief, it is not limited to the elderly; many young adults and even children can develop various forms of arthritis. This condition can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, making everyday tasks like walking, climbing stairs, or even holding a cup of coffee painful and challenging.

The physical pain caused by arthritis is just one aspect of its impact. It can also lead to emotional distress, mental health issues, and social isolation. The chronic nature of arthritis means that those affected often have to adapt their lifestyles to accommodate the limitations it imposes, leading to frustration and a sense of helplessness.

From an economic standpoint, arthritis has a substantial societal impact. The costs associated with medical treatments, medications, lost productivity, and disability support place a significant burden on healthcare systems and economies around the world.

## Promoting Awareness and Education

Arthritis Awareness Month serves as a platform to educate the public about the different types of arthritis, their symptoms, risk factors, and available

treatment options. It also emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis and timely intervention. Knowledge is a powerful tool in combating the stigma and misconceptions that surround arthritis, helping individuals recognize symptoms and seek medical attention sooner.

## Advancements in Treatment

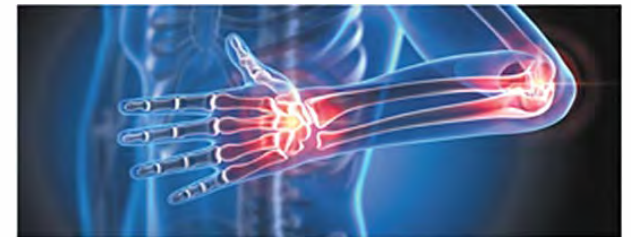
While there is currently no cure for most types of arthritis, there have been remarkable advancements in treatment options that can help manage symptoms and improve the quality of life for those affected. These include:

- **Medications:** Pain relievers, anti-inflammatory drugs, and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) can help manage pain and slow down the progression of the disease.
- **Physical Therapy:** Customized exercise and physical therapy regimens can improve joint function and mobility.
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, and adopting joint-friendly habits can help reduce the impact of arthritis.
- **Surgery:** In severe cases, joint replacement surgery might be recommended to alleviate pain and restore functionality.

## How Can You Get Involved?

Arthritis Awareness Month provides a great opportunity for individuals and communities to make a difference. Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- **Spread Awareness:** Use social media, community events, and conversations to share accurate information about arthritis and its impact.
- **Support Research:** Donate to organizations that fund research for better treatment options and, eventually, a cure.
- **Support Those Affected:** Reach out to friends, family members, or colleagues who have arthritis. Your empathy and understanding can go a long way in providing emotional support.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep yourself informed about the latest developments in arthritis research and treatment. The more you know, the better you can support those who are affected.



Arthritis is more than just aches and pains; it's a complex and often life-altering condition that deserves our attention and empathy. As we observe Arthritis Awareness Month, let's come together to raise our voices, challenge misconceptions, and pave the way for a brighter future for all those living with arthritis.

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Last year, we treated more than 4k arthritis patients companywide with Actemra, Avsola, Benlysta, Cimzia, Ilumya, Inflectra, Infiximab, IVIG, Orencia, Remicade, Renflexis, Rituxan, Rituximab, Ruxience, Simponi Aria, Solu Medrol and Truxima. Year-to-date we have treated nearly 3k patients with the same diagnosis and therapies, putting us on track to service more arthritis patients nationally.



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# Facing Prostate Cancer:

## A Journey of Resilience, Treatment, and Advocacy

Steve Abbott vividly remembers the day he first heard he might have prostate cancer. It was July 2nd, 2013, a Tuesday, and Steve had taken the rest of the week off to enjoy the July 4th holiday. First up was going to see Rush that evening, a rock band that Steve and his brother Brad had loved since childhood.

"It was going to be a great week off, starting with seeing one of my favorite bands ever, with my brother. Since I was off all day, I used it as an opportunity to get some long overdue medical appointments in. I had made an appointment with a urologist; not because I was having any problems, but because I had just turned 50 and my father had been diagnosed with prostate cancer a few years earlier. I never dreamed I would get the news I got that day," said Steve.

At that visit, Steve's urologist performed a procedure called a digital rectal exam (DRE), which is designed to identify irregularities in the prostate gland that can range from simple inflammation to a hard nodule signaling prostate cancer. "My doctor found a hard, palpable lump, and immediately referred me for a blood draw to assess my PSA level (PSA refers to prostate-specific antigen, a protein expressed by prostate cells). I received a call from him about a week later informing me that my PSA was 10.8 and telling me that he suspected that I had prostate cancer. He then referred me on for a biopsy, which confirmed his suspicion."

Although cancer is the second-leading cause of death in American men (only heart disease kills more American men), prostate cancer can often be successfully treated if not completely eradicated, especially in cases of early diagnosis. There are numerous treatment options that include surgical removal of the prostate gland and various forms of radiotherapy such as traditional external beam radiation, proton beam therapy, CyberKnife and even focal therapies such as laser ablation.

Steve's journey has, at times, been a tumultuous one. Surgical removal of his prostate gland, combined with radiotherapy, hormone therapy and chemotherapy have not been successful in curing him of prostate cancer. Steve's prostate cancer is considered advanced, meaning that prostate cancer



cells were able to escape their local environment and travel to distant parts of his body. Advanced prostate cancer is not currently curable, but continuous advancements in prostate cancer research are offering renewed hope for men with this disease.

Said Steve, "I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2013 based on an identifiable lump and a high PSA, but that told my doctors nothing about where the prostate cancer cells were located. With new imaging techniques such as the PSMA PET scan, my doctors can now identify where those cancer cells are congregating and target those specific cells with a new class of treatments. It's a whole new world."

Steve is currently being treated with Pluvicto, a "radioligand" treatment approved for use in prostate cancer in the U.S. in March 2022. Shortly following the FDA's approval of Pluvicto, supply shortages developed that compromised the ability of many men to access the treatment. "I was one of the lucky ones that had already been approved by the drug manufacturer to receive the treatment at the time that the shortages developed. But even then, it took many months and a whole lot of miles before I could find a treatment location and begin treatment," said Steve.

Pluvicto is typically administered over six treatments at six-week intervals. Steve is halfway through with his treatment and the initial results are encouraging. Steve's PSA has dropped from a pre-treatment high of 25 to just short of 5 since starting Pluvicto in April 2023.

Steve is the Executive Director of Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA), a consultative oncology practice offering case review, genetic counseling, and financial navigation services to Southwest Florida cancer patients. The idea for the office is the brainchild of Dr. William Barrett in Cincinnati, who started Cincinnati Cancer Advisors in Cincinnati in early 2020. All consultations and services are provided free of charge, thanks to the generosity of private donors. NCA's office in Naples opened in early 2023 and is under the direction of local resident Lana Uhrig, herself an oncology nurse and seasoned health care system administrator, previously serving as Executive Administrative Director of the University of Cincinnati Cancer Center and the Chief Nursing Officer of Emory Winship Cancer Institute in Atlanta.

Said Steve, "I remember people telling me years ago that I was lucky to have the "good" cancer. No cancer is good, but I do feel fortunate to have a cancer that often has a better outcome than many other cancers."

Steve now uses his experience to educate and advocate. He began a podcast known as the "Medical Minute" in late 2021, serves as a mentor to other cancer patients, lobbies Congress annually for additional cancer research funding, and serves as a consumer reviewer for the Prostate Cancer Research Program, a research arm of the U.S. Department of Defense that has developed some of the most consequential treatments for advanced prostate cancer in the last 25 years.



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# Too Much "Summer Lovin'" On Your Face?

## Reverse the sign of damage with IPL Treatments

Kathleen M. Marc, MD, Medical Director  
Board Certified by the American Board of OB/GYN

**D**olly Parton put it clearly and frankly in *Steel Magnolias* when she said to her friends, "Time marches on and, sooner or later, you realize it is marching across your face."

Who doesn't love summer and the change of pace it brings? We spend time outdoors soaking up the air and the sun and forget, if only for a brief moment, about the demands of life. Americans LOVE to "soak up the sun" and get that sun-kissed glow. However, those harsh UV rays can cause swelling, irregular pigmentation, wrinkles, leathery skin, and other signs of premature aging.

The skin is the largest organ of the human body. As we age, many of us see the effects of the years on our skin very clearly. In our early 30s we start to notice the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, dark spots, and just an uneven skin tone in general. This is due to the fact that at that age our body decreases its production of collagen and elastin and cell turnover begins to decrease. This makes it more difficult for skin to recover from inflammation and injury. Treatments with intense pulsed light (IPL) can be very effective in improving these concerns and others.

### WHAT IS INTENSE PULSED LIGHT (IPL)?

Intense pulsed light treatments are similar to laser treatments. The difference is that a laser focuses just one wavelength of light at your skin, while IPL releases light of many different wavelengths. IPL therapy is considered a non-ablative resurfacing technique, which means that it targets the lower layers of skin (dermis) without affecting the top layers of skin (epidermis). Pigment cells in your skin absorb the light energy, which is converted into heat. The heat destroys the unwanted pigment to clear up freckles and other spots. Or, when used to remove unwanted hair, it destroys the hair follicle to prevent the hair from growing again.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN IPL TREATMENT?

During the treatment, both the patient and the skincare professional will wear protective goggles. After cleansing the skin, the skincare professional will apply a thin coat of gel (used to cool the skin), then place the glass surface of a



handheld device directly onto the skin. The device pulses flashes of light, which continue until the desired area has been treated. The length of time and the intensity of the sensation will vary depending upon the severity and size of the damaged area. Once the treatment is finished, the gel is removed and a cold compress may be applied for several minutes. The final step includes a nourishing moisturizer and a broad-spectrum sunscreen.

Immediately post-treatment, the patient may notice some minor redness and swelling, similar to that of a sunburn. The level of redness depends on the type of treatment being received and the skin's sensitivity to the treatment. If treating freckles and sun spots, dryness and flaking around the treated area may occur. Generally speaking, most side effects will resolve themselves in less than a week. However, this may be prolonged for more intense treatments. The skincare professional may also recommend at-home skincare products that help complement results.

### WHO IS A CANDIDATE FOR IPL TREATMENTS?

Intense pulsed light treatments are ideal for individuals with light to medium complexions who wish to improve fine lines and wrinkles, discoloration, skin tone, sun damage, vascular lesions, or capillary inflammation. Because of the multiple wavelengths used during an IPL treatment, it can be adjusted for a spectrum of skin tones. However, fair skin that is relatively elastic and "freckle-prone" shows the greatest improvement.

Deeper skin tones have more melanin. They are more prone to blistering and post-inflammatory discoloration because melanin is one of the

primarily targets of an IPL treatment. Those with deeper tones may be a little more difficult to treat, but an experienced skin professional will still get good results.

### WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON USES OF IPL?

*You can use IPL to minimize or remove:*

- age spots
- sun damage
- freckles
- birthmarks
- broken blood vessels on your face
- rosacea
- hair on your face, neck, back, chest, legs, underarms, or bikini line

### WHERE SHOULD I GO FOR IPL TREATMENTS?

Although the range and wavelength of intense pulsed light can easily be controlled, the treatment is not risk-free and requires a knowledgeable, experienced skincare professional for the best results. If you've spent your summer getting the perfect tan, maybe now is the time to look at the damage those heavenly rays may have caused.

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## GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY: WHEN SHOULD PLASTIC SURGERY COME IN?

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

**A**s we get more mature our bodies change. Often, we feel younger than we look. It's OK to have some more wrinkles and a more aged appearance as we get older.

However, there's no reason why you can't do an update. Now days, there are a lot of ways to make someone look younger and more rejuvenated without the overdone-look, or looking too pulled, as seen in years past. Keep in mind that there are many options for plastic surgery. As we age, the choices for maintaining a youthful appearance or improving skin, can range from using the correct topical medication and creams, to minimally invasive procedures and surgery.

Often smaller procedures can be done in an office setting without the need of general anesthesia, which has some side effects.

It's important to have practical goals for a rejuvenation as we get more mature, so things look natural. Not change your appearance at all, but rather, understanding that improving upon it can "turn back the clock."

**The most common complaints by aging women:** sagging jowls; hooded baggy eyes; poor skin texture; fat settling in areas of the body; face drained of youthful fuller cheeks; flat buttocks; tummy pouch. These are just names a few.

**The most common complaints by aging men:** the "tire roll" around the belly; fullness in neck or double chin; sagging eyes; loose skin. **Yes thousands of men get plastic surgery!**

Common procedures in the aging population include **facelifts**, which I wrote about in last month's edition regarding the different approaches



4 treatments/no surgery

and levels of invasiveness. However, some additional minimally invasive face lift and skin rejuvenation can be done by means of laser therapy as well as chemical peels.\*

Often overlooked as we mature, is the maintenance of our skin for our *entire body*. As we can develop more "mature" spots, which may mean uneven skin color, spots and flaky, crepe skin on the body, arms, legs and trunk. These often can also be treated with a topical **body peel** which can improve your skin condition, texture and color without having any downtime. Combining this with the appropriate **laser treatment**, can make huge improvements.\*

Also, one of the most common procedures I do in my office is an **eye-lift, or Blepharoplasty**. This is done on many mature persons who have Ptosis (hooding of eye-lid over the visual field). This will help your vision, however, many patients come to me and we may need to do a canthopexy, which pulls up the droopy lower eyelid.

**Breast lifts** are done in a surgery center setting or in my surgery using tumescent anesthesia. Normally removing extra skin is involved and sometimes a smaller implant can be used.

**Gynecomastia**, or removing fatty tissue on the male chest area is another popular choice. This is done in my office with liposuction and J-plasma for skin tightening.

**Botox** is an extremely popular treatment that can be quickly done. I published an initial study 22 years ago looking at the distribution of the motor endplate units, the site of action of botox, within the muscle around the eye, which was very instrumental in knowing where to give Botox around the eye area. Botox can be administered in several areas of the face to reduce wrinkles and around lips to create a nicer "cupids bow." In addition, I often recommend fillers and/or dermal stimulants to be injected in areas of the face for a youthful, more hydrated look and fuller cheeks. Restoring volume to the face is a procedure that can be done in my office, within minutes. Knowing where and how to do it is very important. Dermal stimulants are injectables that cause your own body create collagen. Some of these injectable procedures need to be done again in 6 months, some in a few years.

It's important to find a qualified Plastic Surgeon who is willing to listen to your desires and help you reach your goals, as they can give you the best possible options and offer the full spectrum of procedures with the most comprehensive understanding.

*\* Its pertinent that these skin complaints are viewed by a boarded Plastic Surgeon or Dermatologist. It is not recommended that patients seek out laser treatments and skin peels through beauty clinics without the oversight of a Plastic Surgeon boarded by the American Board of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeons, or reviewed by a Boarded Dermatologist!*

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**Gunnar Bergqvist, MD**  
Practice Made Perfect

# Enhancing Your Quality of Life with Arthritis: STRATEGIES FOR EVERYDAY COMFORT

By James M. Ray, MD

**A**rthritis, a condition characterized by joint inflammation, affects millions of people around the world. While it can bring challenges to daily life, there are numerous ways to improve your quality of life and manage the symptoms effectively. By implementing various strategies and making lifestyle adjustments, individuals with arthritis can find relief and enhance their overall well-being.

## Understanding Arthritis

Arthritis encompasses a range of conditions that lead to joint pain, stiffness, and swelling. The two most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis occurs due to the wear and tear of joint cartilage over time, while rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that causes the immune system to attack the joints.

## Stay Physically Active

Engaging in regular physical activity is crucial for managing arthritis. Low-impact exercises such as walking, swimming, and cycling can help maintain joint flexibility, strengthen muscles, and improve overall mobility. Consult with a healthcare professional or physical therapist to create a tailored exercise plan that suits your condition.

## Maintain a Healthy Weight

Excess weight places additional stress on joints, exacerbating arthritis symptoms. By adopting a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight, you can reduce strain on your joints and potentially slow down the progression of arthritis.

## Pain Management Techniques

Various pain management techniques can provide relief from arthritis discomfort. Over-the-counter pain medications, topical creams, and prescribed medications can help alleviate pain and inflammation. Additionally, techniques like heat and cold therapy, as well as acupuncture, have shown positive results in managing arthritis symptoms.

## Adaptive Devices and Assistive Technology

Using adaptive devices such as canes, splints, braces, and ergonomic tools can make everyday tasks easier



and less painful. Assistive technology like jar openers, reachers, and specialized utensils can help individuals with arthritis maintain their independence and perform daily activities with greater ease.

## Balanced Diet with Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Consuming a diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods can help manage arthritis symptoms. Include foods high in omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish like salmon), colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. These foods can potentially reduce inflammation and contribute to overall joint health.

## Manage Stress and Mental Health

Chronic pain from arthritis can lead to increased stress and emotional strain. Engage in relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to manage stress and improve mental well-being. Seeking support from friends, family, or support groups can also provide a positive impact.

## Prioritize Joint Protection

Learning proper techniques for joint protection during daily activities can minimize strain on your joints. Simple adjustments like using larger joints for lifting and pushing, avoiding repetitive motions, and taking breaks can make a significant difference in managing arthritis pain.

## Physical and Occupational Therapy

Working with physical and occupational therapists can provide valuable guidance on exercises, joint protection techniques, and adaptive strategies tailored to your specific needs. These professionals can help improve your mobility and teach you how to perform daily tasks more efficiently.

## Stay Informed and Engaged

Educate yourself about your specific type of arthritis and the latest treatment options. Staying informed

empowers you to make informed decisions about your care and collaborate effectively with your healthcare provider.

In conclusion, while living with arthritis presents challenges, it is possible to significantly improve your quality of life by adopting various strategies. By staying physically active, managing pain, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and seeking support, individuals with arthritis can enjoy a fulfilling and comfortable life. Remember, every person's journey with arthritis is unique, so work closely with your healthcare team to develop a personalized approach that addresses your individual needs and goals.



## 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 Ortho-

pedic 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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# EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF WEIGHT LOSS AND CHOLESTEROL MANAGEMENT WITH SEMAGLUTIDE DRUGS

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

In recent years, the quest for effective weight loss solutions and cholesterol management has gained significant attention due to their impact on overall health and well-being. One emerging player in this arena is the class of drugs known as semaglutides. These drugs, initially developed to treat type 2 diabetes, have shown remarkable potential in aiding weight loss and positively influencing cholesterol levels. This article delves into the mechanisms, benefits, and considerations surrounding the use of semaglutide drugs in the context of weight loss and cholesterol management.

## Understanding Semaglutide Drugs

Semaglutide drugs belong to the glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonist (GLP-1 RA) class. Originally designed to lower blood sugar levels in individuals with diabetes, they work by mimicking the action of a naturally occurring hormone called GLP-1. This hormone helps regulate blood sugar by stimulating insulin production, slowing down digestion, and reducing appetite. This latter effect has paved the way for the exploration of semaglutide drugs as weight loss agents.

## Mechanism of Action for Weight Loss

The weight loss potential of semaglutide drugs stems from their impact on appetite regulation and food intake. By binding to GLP-1 receptors in the brain, these drugs induce a feeling of fullness and reduce cravings, ultimately leading to decreased calorie consumption. This mechanism, combined with a potential increase in energy expenditure, contributes to sustainable weight loss.

## Clinical Trials and Findings

Recent clinical trials have shed light on the effectiveness of semaglutide drugs in promoting weight loss. In a study called STEP 1, participants with obesity who took semaglutide achieved a significantly greater weight loss compared to those on a placebo. The results were impressive, with an average weight loss of around 15% in the semaglutide group. Subsequent trials, such as STEP 2 and STEP 3, further confirmed these findings, emphasizing the consistent and substantial weight loss benefits of the drug.

## Impact on Cholesterol Levels

Beyond its effects on weight, semaglutide drugs have also shown promise in managing cholesterol



levels. High levels of LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) and triglycerides are risk factors for cardiovascular diseases. Semaglutide's influence on fat metabolism and insulin sensitivity can contribute to the reduction of LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This dual action on weight loss and cholesterol management presents a comprehensive approach to improving cardiovascular health.

## Considerations and Potential Side Effects

While semaglutide drugs offer promising benefits, they are not without potential side effects. Gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea and vomiting, are commonly reported, especially during the initial stages of treatment. These side effects tend to diminish over time but can still pose challenges for some individuals. As with any medication, consulting a healthcare professional before starting treatment is essential to determine its suitability and address any concerns.

## Integration into Lifestyle Changes

It's important to note that semaglutide drugs are most effective when used in conjunction with lifestyle changes. Incorporating a balanced diet and regular physical activity can amplify the weight loss and cholesterol-lowering effects of the drug. Moreover, adopting healthy habits can contribute to long-term weight maintenance and cardiovascular health.

## Future Directions and Implications

The emergence of semaglutide drugs as dual-action agents for weight loss and cholesterol management marks a significant step forward in preventive medicine. As further research unfolds, these drugs could become integral components of comprehensive strategies to combat obesity and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases. However, ongoing research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects, safety, and optimal usage of semaglutide drugs in diverse populations.

## Conclusion

Semaglutide drugs are paving the way for a new approach to weight loss and cholesterol management. Their ability to target both weight and cardiovascular health offers a promising avenue for individuals seeking comprehensive improvements in their overall well-being. As research and clinical experience continue to accumulate, semaglutide drugs could play a pivotal role in reshaping how we approach these interconnected health concerns. As always, consultation with a medical professional is crucial before embarking on any treatment journey involving these drugs.

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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# THE HIDDEN PERIL OF WIDESPREAD THC IMPOSTER PRODUCTS

In recent years, the landscape of cannabis consumption has evolved dramatically, with the legalization of both medical and recreational marijuana in many parts of the country. As the cannabis industry expands, so too does the market for THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) related products, which are responsible for the psychoactive effects associated with marijuana use. However, along with this growth, a concerning trend has emerged - the proliferation of THC imposter products. These fake or synthetic alternatives pose significant dangers to both public health and the credibility of the legitimate cannabis industry. You can find these products online in addition to gas stations, convenience stores, and some smoke shops.

## Understanding THC and Its Effects

THC, the primary psychoactive compound found in cannabis, interacts with the endocannabinoid system in the human body, leading to various physiological and psychological effects. These effects can include relaxation, reduced inflammation and pain, euphoria, and decreased insomnia.

## The Rise of THC Imposter Products

THC imposter products are designed to mimic the effects of THC without being derived from natural cannabis plants. These products synthesized in a lab, are structurally similar to THC, but their effects can vary widely and are often unpredictable. Some imposter products might be marketed as legal alternatives to THC, exploiting regulatory loopholes or misinformation about their contents.

Not all THC products are unnatural, some like Delta-8 or Delta-9; are found in the hemp plant and can be safely extracted. They are almost always converted from cannabidiol (CBD) in a lab to THC or other desired molecules due to the low cost of production. If done in a responsible laboratory, this synthesis can be performed safely, but there is little to no oversight and no mandate on final product testing.

## The Dangers They Pose

One of the most significant dangers of THC-synthesized products is the lack of oversight and regulation. Unlike natural THC products found at regulated MMTC's or dispensaries, the composition of these products is often uncertain and may contain harmful chemicals that can lead to serious health consequences. Additives are required for chemical synthesis and to change the clarity and color of the



finished product. Short-term effects can range from anxiety, panic attacks, agitation, and hallucinations to increased heart rate and paranoia.

## Legal and Ethical Concerns

The widespread availability of THC products that have not been naturally extracted threatens to undermine the progress made in legalizing and regulating cannabis. These products often exploit regulatory gaps in the farm bill, leading to confusion among consumers and law enforcement. This situation could potentially erode public trust in legitimate medical cannabis products and hinder the responsible growth of the industry. Since the grey market of these products has expanded, ER visits and calls to the nation's poison control centers have increased due to inaccurate dosing leading to exponential intake of THC and related cannabinoids. These products can be particularly appealing to youth and individuals seeking alternatives to medical cannabis consumption methods.

## Hemp Flower

A particular synthesized THC product to avoid is infused or sprayed hemp flower. To legally sell smokeable flower that will medicate or provide a psychoactive effect, proprietors purchase bulk hemp flower and spray hemp-derived or converted, distillate of Delta-8, Delta-9, or Delta-10 onto the flower. They may also use HHC, THC-O, or other unregulated and untested cannabinoids.

This is the only legal way to sell "flower" that will provide the high without using a legitimate medical card and purchasing from a regulated MMTC. Spraying hemp flower solely benefits those who sell it, and the result is a very sketchy product.

Although you can find safe products that contain Delta-8 and Delta-9, that have been professionally extracted or converted and batch tested after, it is almost impossible to guarantee the authenticity of the end product.

## Addressing the Issue

To tackle the dangers posed by THC imposter products, several key steps can be considered. Governments and regulatory bodies need to establish clear guidelines and regulations for cannabis and cannabinoid-related products. This includes strict testing and transparent labeling requirements to ensure consumer safety. This occurs in the current medical cannabis market but does not extend to unregulated hemp-based sales.

The danger of widespread THC imposter products is not one to be taken lightly. Unpredictable effects, potential health risks, and the threat they pose to the credibility of the cannabis industry all underscore the need for action. Regulatory agencies should collaborate to address this issue head-on, ensuring that cannabis consumers have access to safe and authentic products while safeguarding public health and the progress made in cannabis legalization. Through regulation, education, and enforcement, the dangers posed by THC imposter products can be minimized, allowing individuals to make informed choices about their consumption.



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# Innovative Treatment Improves Quality of Life

## LASENE REDUCES COMPLICATIONS OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE, EARLY STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S, AND BRAIN TRAUMA

**T**he human brain is a marvel of nature, possessing incredible abilities that continue to astound scientists and researchers. Its remarkable complexity and versatility enables us to perceive, think, reason, remember, and create. Despite the casual use of words like "awesome" and "amazing" by some, they are entirely appropriate when discussing the brain. Its true wonder lies in its capacity to regulate and coordinate countless physiological and cognitive processes in our bodies.

"Most of the medical society would tell you we know very little about the inner brain," stated Charles Lindsey McAlpine, CEO and COO of LASENE, Naples. "It's only through recent technological advances that we can look to ways of helping the brain achieve even its simplest needs of sleep and memory."

The company, LASENE, provides laser technology and proprietary advanced treatments for fostering functional improvement in patient's living with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, brain trauma, and other neurological degenerative ailments. They bridge the gap between the world's finest laser technology and advanced treatment protocols to improve quality-of-life by reducing the many complications of these diseases.

"In coming years, we will all live longer, which is great, but the HOW we live is just as important." McAlpine said. No one really wants to live long and not properly function, do they? So being involved with a therapy that allows for the best quality of life, and clearer thinking is very exciting.

"I went through my original program over a year ago. I recently went to my neurologist and my Doctor continues to see the improvement I saw throughout my treatment and after. I would highly recommend LASENE to anyone seeking a better quality of life." -Patient Karen



The company's mission is to bring the best of technologies and protocols together for the sole purpose of reducing the suffering associated with neurodegenerative and neuromusculoskeletal conditions, and to bring people back to a more active and productive life.

"I have found a treatment that has really helped me, LASENE. They have improved my Quality of Life and I am back to doing what I love....I highly recommend it, go do it."

— Patient Judy

Watching the aging process with my own father, who suffered with dementia and early stages of Alzheimer's, was sad to witness. It was tough seeing a bright, happy, articulate person lose those functions," McAlpine said. Being involved with the solutions that LASENE offers would have certainly benefited him, but now the ability to share those positive results with others is a gift.

LASENE does not promise a cure for degenerative complications. However, over a typically six-month care program, the company can provide laser technology and methodology to rehabilitate areas of nerve, muscle and skeletal systems that are affected

by these neurological ailments. Through the company's proprietary methodology, a patient can experience a significant reduction or remission in a variety of quality of life symptoms specific to their condition.

"Results are what the overwhelming majority of the patients who come to LASENE experience," McAlpine said. "We see hugely positive results that quickly resonate into all parts of their lives. The individual therapy itself is noninvasive, painless, and brief. Most patients say 'I had some initial fear, but wow I wish I'd have done this sooner.'

"I was diagnosed with advanced symptoms of Parkinson's disease in 2015. Symptoms included shuffling gait, severe forward posture, muscle rigidity, loss of voice projection and volume, tongue and mouth tremors, whole body tremors, right hand severe tremors, constipation, insomnia, nightmares, low energy, decreased libido and erectile dysfunction, and brain fog. I began Lasene in June 2022. Light changes began to surface during the first 30 days. Now I have normal gait and posture, no mouth tremors, no body shaking, only a slight right-hand tremor that occurs a couple of times a day, restored sleep, no nightmares, normal bowel movements, restored libido and sexual function, voice projection restored, no more brain fog." Dr. DL

"Sleep is the most impressive and consistent progress patients report. Their sleep patterns and quality of sleep. We measure this both objectively through sleep tracking devices and subjectively through interviews and medical observation." We have many patients that also see a reduction in their tremors, an improvement in their walk/gait, and an improvement to their mood and cognitive ability.

Working with the amazing and awesome human brain brings rewards to those at LASENE and the patients they work with.



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# Hospice and Hurricanes: Protecting Patients from the Storm

Caring for a terminally ill loved one can be rewarding but challenging work. In hurricane-prone states such as Florida, family caregivers must also take on the role of disaster preparedness managers, planning whether they will shelter in place or evacuate should a storm threaten their area. In Collier County, Avow Hospice helps families develop their plans for hurricane season and has its own comprehensive protocols for caring for the patients in its inpatient facility.

“Part of the admission process for our hospice patients is to help their families develop an emergency response plan,” says Christine Croce, senior clinical director for Avow. “Some patients and families prefer to leave the county in the event of a tropical storm; others choose to shelter in place or rely on county-run emergency shelters if needed. Our team supports them, whatever they decide.”

Avow works closely with Collier County Emergency Management, implementing its plan in coordination with county guidance. When the plan is activated, Avow team members call every homecare patient to review their emergency plan. For patients staying in their homes, Avow delivers two weeks’ worth of medicines, oxygen, and disposable supplies like gloves and pads. Team members also talk with families about the realities of sheltering in-place.

“We remind families that they may be without electricity or water for some time, so they need to think about how they will care for their family member in those conditions,” says Croce. “We also have the difficult conversations with families whose loved ones may be very close to death when a storm is predicted to arrive. We review funeral plans and talk about what families should do if their loved one passes during a storm and a funeral home cannot immediately respond. Just having that conversation can help families feel prepared for whatever might happen.”

Patients with complex care needs and/or dependency on powered medical equipment may choose to evacuate to the special needs shelter Collier County operates. Evacuating to the shelter, Croce



says, takes planning from families. “We remind families that the special needs shelter is not a hotel – families must bring their own food, water, bedding, patient care items, and personal care items. Families must also continue their caregiving duties in the shelter as there are no medical professionals to take over for them. Avow social workers register patients for the shelter and coordinate their transportation to the school via Collier County bus. When the storm has passed, we make sure every patient is accounted for, whether they left the area, stayed at home, or evacuated to the special needs shelter.”

The 16-bed Georgeson hospice house inpatient unit on Avow’s campus is powered by a generator capable of running the facility at full capacity for up to seven days in the event of a power outage. Avow can continue to care for patients in the facility in up to Category Three storms. “Patients in our hospice house are already fragile, so if we can keep them there, we do,” says Dawn Kolderman, senior clinical director. “We do not, however, move in patients whose families wish to evacuate or avoid the special needs shelter. Team members scheduled to work during the storm arrive as early as they need to be able to travel safely on the roads, and they stay until the county determines it is safe for them to leave. We invite staff members working during the storm to bring their family members and pets to the campus if they like. Pets are kept in a concrete building adjacent to the hospice house, and we can accommodate families in other hardened, generator-powered buildings on the Avow campus.

Families bring their own linens, beds, food and supplies. They appreciate being in close contact with their family member who is working during the storm.”

When a Category 4 or 5 storm is expected, Kolderman says, Avow evacuates patients in Georgeson hospice house to Physicians Regional Hospital – Pine Ridge for care. They return to Georgeson or to home when the storm has passed.

“Tropical storms are a reality of living in Florida, and they can be scary events in the best of circumstances,” says Kolderman. “Our mission at Avow is to create peace of mind for those who need us, in whatever circumstances they face. Our emergency management plan helps us protect our patients, their families, and our staff during times of great uncertainty. We might not be able to control the storms, but we can control our reactions to them. Our emergency plans guide us in keeping our patients safe through whatever they face.”

For more information about Avow’s nonprofit hospice, palliative care, or grief support programs, visit [www.avowcares.org](http://www.avowcares.org) or call 239-280-2288.



239.280.2288  
[www.avowcares.org](http://www.avowcares.org)



# ASK THE EXPERT

## Common Causes of Hearing Loss in Adults

Dr. Sarah Sessler, Au.D

There are many causes of hearing loss in adults and you can prevent some but not all causes. Audiologists can help. You can inherit hearing loss from your family, but it is also common for hearing loss to happen as you get older. There are other causes described below. Hearing loss may happen by itself or with tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Some causes of hearing loss in adults include:

- **Acoustic Neuroma:** A tumor that can cause hearing loss, ringing in the ears, and a feeling of ear fullness.
- **Autoimmune Disorder:** Fast-acting, requiring immediate medical intervention.
- **Congenital:** Resulting from a family history or predisposition to hearing loss.
- **Meniere's Disease:** Inner ear disease, the cause of which is unknown. Patients typically have sensorineural hearing loss, dizziness and/or ringing in the ears.
- **Noise-Induced:** Painless and usually happens over time.
- **Otosclerosis:** A middle ear disease that makes it difficult for the tiny bones in the middle ear to move, causing conductive hearing loss.
- **Ototoxicity:** There are more than 200 ototoxic prescription and OTC medications.
- **Physical Injury:** A TBI, perforated eardrum, and/or damage to the ear.

People with low-frequency hearing loss are considered at risk for cardiovascular events.<sup>8</sup>

People with mild hearing loss are **3x more likely** to have a history of falling.<sup>9</sup>

**Older adults** with impaired hearing may have a shorter lifespan than their peers without hearing problems.<sup>10</sup>

**Over 360 million** of the world's population have disabling hearing loss.<sup>11</sup>

**90-95%** of people with hearing loss can be treated with hearing aids.<sup>12</sup>

**Adults with untreated hearing loss** were more likely to report depression, anxiety and paranoia than peers who wore hearing aids.<sup>13</sup>

There is a significant association between **high blood pressure** and untreated hearing loss.<sup>14</sup>

- **Presbycusis:** Age-related hearing loss that happens as you get older.
- **Selective Hearing Loss:** The inability of husbands to hear their wives during football games and other sporting or entertainment-related events.

Anyone over the age of 55 should have a routine baseline hearing test performed by an audiologist. It's free, quick, and you can get the answers you need to move on with your life.

### - DID YOU KNOW?

## Your hearing health and overall health and well-being are intertwined

#### Tinnitus

Up to 90% of people with tinnitus have some level of noise-induced hearing loss.



#### Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis can adversely affect the three tiny bones in the middle ear, which can lead to hearing loss.

#### Eye Health

Vision helps you identify where a sound is coming from.



#### Heart Health

A healthy cardiovascular system has a positive effect on hearing.



#### Hypertension

High blood pressure can be an accelerating factor of hearing loss in adults.

#### Obesity

Higher body mass index (BMI) and larger waist circumference are associated with increased risk of hearing loss in women.



#### Safety/Balance

People with mild hearing loss are 3x more likely to have a history of falling than people with normal hearing.



#### Cognitive Decline

Adults with hearing loss experience a 30-40% faster decline in cognitive abilities than their peers with normal hearing.

\*75 years and older



#### Depression

In a recent survey, adults with untreated hearing loss were more likely to report depression, anxiety and paranoia than peers who wore hearing aids.

\*50 years and older



#### Isolation

Untreated hearing loss can contribute to social isolation, anxiety, depression and cognitive decline.

#### Diabetes

Hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes as their peers without.



#### Smoking

Current smokers have a 70% higher risk of having hearing loss than nonsmokers.



#### Ototoxicity

Ototoxicity is a common cause of hearing loss.

Over 200 medications, including aspirin, certain antibiotics and some anti-cancer drugs, are known to be ototoxic (which literally means "poisonous to the ears").



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# Estate Planning Considerations for Your Growing Family

By Anthony J. Dimoro, Estate Planning Attorney

In addition to sending their children off to school, the end of summer is often a time when parents welcome new children into their homes. July through October are the busiest months for births; and, according to Parents.com, the five most common birthdays are all in September.

While this can be a busy time of year—and while you have lots to do if you are a new parent—it is important not to neglect your estate planning needs during this time. Estate planning is important for lots of reasons, and making sure you have a solid plan in place provides peace of mind while also providing protections for you, your spouse or partner, your children, and your extended family.

## 5 Important Estate Planning Considerations for New Parents in Florida

What are some of the reasons why growing families should have an estate plan? Here are five important estate planning considerations for new parents in Florida:

### 1. It's Never Too Early to Have an Estate Plan

There is a common misconception that preparing an estate plan is something you do later in life. While it is true that many people put off preparing an estate plan, estate planning is important for people of all ages—and especially for parents.

### 2. There is More to Estate Planning than Preparing for Your Passing

One reason why it is important to have an estate plan as a new parent is that there is more to estate planning than preparing for your passing. From healthcare decision-making to planning for temporary or permanent incapacity, your estate planning documents can come into play in various other circumstances as well.

### 3. Estate Planning Allows You to Protect Your Children No Matter What

Of course, acknowledging the possibility that we can die at any time is an important part of estate planning. When you prepare an estate plan, you can designate the person (or people) who will raise your children should you no longer be around to do so.



### 4. If You Don't Have an Estate Plan, Florida Law Will Determine What Happens to Your Children (and Your Property)

If you don't make decisions about healthcare, childcare, and distribution of your property in an estate plan, Florida law will make these decisions for you. Unfortunately, what the law requires rarely (if ever) aligns with parents' personal wishes.

### 5. Estate Planning Isn't as Time-Consuming, Stressful or Expensive as Most People Think

While many people seem to think that preparing an estate plan is a time-consuming, stressful and expensive process, this isn't actually the case. Working with an experienced estate planning attorney is a straightforward process, and your attorney can guide you through the process step-by-step. When the process is over, you can feel good knowing that you have taken an important step to protect your entire family, and you can continue to focus on caring for and raising your new child.

### Schedule an Initial Estate Planning Consultation Today

We provide comprehensive estate planning services to individuals and families in Southwest Florida.

To schedule an appointment with an attorney at our offices in Naples or on Marco Island, please call 239-394-5161 or contact us online today.

### About the Author

Attorney Anthony J. Dimora is a partner at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. managing the Marco Island Location. He provides estate planning legal services in both Marco Island and in Naples. He focuses his law practice on estate planning, wills and trusts, guardianship, probate and trust administration, litigation, business law, and residential and commercial real estate transactions. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Anthony is licensed to practice law in both Florida and Ohio and is a proud graduate of The Ohio State University and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.



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# SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES OFFER SELF-CARE OPPORTUNITIES

By Jenny Bradley

It's National Self-Care Awareness Month, designed to spread awareness of the importance of regular self-care and prioritizing physical and mental health. Amid responsibilities like supporting spouses and caring for grandchildren, older adults frequently overlook their own needs. With September ushering in a sense of renewal, this month presents an ideal opportunity to consider a revitalizing change, and transitioning to a senior living community could mark an empowering initial move.

*Here are a few self-care tips:*

**Social Care:** Research by the National Institutes of Health found social isolation and loneliness affect up to one-half of older adults and can negatively impact physical and mental health. Social care is an essential aspect of self-care and is the intentional and proactive practice of nurturing and maintaining healthy social relationships and connections. Senior living communities offer a wealth of opportunities to expand social circles. At The Carlisle Naples, social care can begin even before moving to the active retirement community. Numerous social events are held monthly, encouraging prospective residents to sample the lifestyle and meet new friends. An upcoming Fall Open House on September 15th from 2-5 p.m., for example, offers live music, classes, tours of the newly remodeled residences and an opportunity to mix and mingle with residents.

**Physical Care:** Physical care is a crucial component of self-care for older adults, encompassing a range of activities and practices that promote the well-being and optimal functioning of the body. Prioritizing physical care is not only about addressing immediate health concerns but also about maintaining a high quality of life and independence as one ages. Senior communities such as The Carlisle provide robust monthly calendars jam-packed with classes promoting physical wellness. Whether Carlisle residents prefer a low-impact workout like Tai Chi or a more vigorous exercise such as Spinning, there is a class for every fitness level. Plus, tions, and making a positive impact together. The

Carlisle's in-house amenities like EmpowerMe Wellness, an onsite rehabilitation center, and MyCare Clinic, a convenient concierge doctor's visit service, are available to keep residents feeling their best.

**Emotional Care:** Emotional self-care involves recognizing and acknowledging one's feelings and taking steps to nurture emotional health. This can include journaling, mindfulness or engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation. Senior living communities recognize the emotional challenges older adults may face and may offer support through a variety of programs. At The Carlisle, for example, the American Veterans Group meets weekly and provides a forum for community veterans to connect in a supportive environment and work on meaningful service projects. Members enjoy sharing experiences, creating lasting connections, and making a positive impact together.

**Spiritual Care:** Spiritual self-care encompasses activities that foster a sense of purpose, connection and inner peace. This could involve practicing a religion, meditation, spending time in nature or engaging in activities that align with one's spiritual beliefs. Many senior living communities host onsite religious services or provide transportation to local temples and synagogues. The Carlisle also offers onsite mid-week Bible Study and non-denominational services. Meandering walking paths and a tranquil setting also provide the perfect backdrop for nature enthusiasts.

**Intellectual Care:** Intellectual self-care involves continuous learning and personal growth. Engaging in activities that challenge the mind, attending workshops, pursuing hobbies, and seeking new knowledge contribute to intellectual stimulation. The activity director at a retirement community is charged with creating an engaging monthly calendar, including opportunities for educational pursuits. At The Carlisle, an ongoing partnership with One Day University offers college-level courses taught by renowned professors from around the globe. Residents can also learn a new language, take an art class, discover a new author and reignite a passion for a hobby. There is no shortage of ways to indulge in intellectual self-care.

"We take a holistic approach to wellness, appealing to residents' mind, body and soul through our Zest programming," said The Carlisle's Executive Director Bill Diamond. "Self-care isn't a moment; it's a way of life that continues to unfold, empowering our residents to live with vitality, purpose and fulfillment. We encourage and foster self-care year-round by providing a tapestry of opportunities that enrich every facet of their lives. From invigorating physical activities and thought-provoking intellectual pursuits to nurturing emotional connections and moments of tranquility, our community is designed as a canvas for self-care."

*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](http://www.TheCarlisleNaples.com).*



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# Sexual Health & Medical Marijuana

By Hans Doherty - Growing in Health Florida



**F**or many people a good life includes some good sex too. Sexual pleasure is one of the best ways to relieve stress. Stimulation and ultimate climax release a myriad of healthy endocannabinoids and endorphins that enhance our life existence and enjoyment.

Sexual health has been on the decline for many years in America. Obesity, endocrine deficiencies, diet, medications are having a negative impact on desire and the ability to perform satisfactorily. Pornography, erectile dysfunction and other factors that are keeping people on the sidelines.

Medical Marijuana might be able turn that frown upside down... 😊

Tetrahydro-cannabidiol or THC is the psychoactive part of the cannabis plant. With proper dosing, it can help lower our inhibition or reduce

the fear factor. THC has also been recognized as a neuro-stimulant. That means your sensitivity level is increased. **Better feeling = better sex.** Of Course, this isn't the case for everyone. Some report it makes them sleepy and less focused.

The purpose of this article is to show that this might be an alternative to other sexual enhancement products available on the market. When it comes to your overall health there is not a magic bullet that will cure all that ails you. It's a balance of good diet, exercise, sleep, and personal involvement. Most seek to be included in something. Our family, our friends and community make that a reality.

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For more information, please message me at [info@growinginhealthflorida.org](mailto: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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# Can Anyone Please Help My Painful Feet?

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

Every year more than a million patients visit their doctor due to heel pain! The most common foot and heel discomfort is caused by an excruciating disorder known as plantar fasciitis.

## What is plantar fasciitis?

The foot is comprised of many different bones, joints, tendons, and ligaments; these include the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a band of ligament tissue. It stretches from the heel of your foot to the middle, and it is responsible for reinforcing and supporting your arch. When this area becomes inflamed due to extreme tension on the ligament, pain erupts every time you take a step, and if left untreated, many people will even experience discomfort while at rest.

Because plantar fasciitis is one of the most common foot issues; one in ten people will experience it at some time in their life. Usually, the pain is concentrated in the heel area, and it is generally caused by small injuries that occur over an extended period of time. It's quite common for heel spurs, which are bony protrusions under the heel bone to coincide with plantar fasciitis.

There are many treatment options that you can do at home with the guidance of your podiatrist to try and alleviate the painful symptoms of plantar fasciitis. But, because of weight bearing, this area of the foot, in particular, is challenging to heal on its own, The key to getting your foot health back to normal, and you free from pain is to have medically based procedures provided by your podiatrist.

## What are my options?

### Laser Treatment

Laser therapy is one of the top methods to reduce your pain and inflammation. Deep tissue laser therapy uses a process called photobiomodulation, which penetrates deep into the muscles tissues using photon energy. This therapy increases cellular metabolism while decreasing inflammation and pain.



Collier podiatry sees great results in their patient's foot health with this treatment option. The best part is that there are no side effects, no harmful medications and more importantly, long lasting results.

### Stabilization

The second of the two mentioned treatment options is Stabilization. This option is achieved through a device such as a brace or foot support, which technically is an ankle-foot-orthosis or AFO.

### Ultrasound- Guided Corticosteroid Injections

This is an innovative treatment available from Collier podiatry. It allows the podiatrist to view the precise placement of the cortisone injectable via an advanced ultrasound machine to make certain that all of the pain and tension relieving material is placed accurately.

### Surgery

There is, of course, a more permanent stabilization option, which includes surgery of the foot and ankle, but not all patients need this. If your symptoms and pain are unbearable and not responded to traditional therapies within the specified amount of time, surgery is the most logical choice to get you back on your feet again.



The procedure is minimally invasive and requires cutting of the ligament to release the tension in the plantar fasciitis. It can be performed endoscopically with two small incisions on either side of the heel bone.

### At Home Care

There are many medical ancillary options that your podiatrists can prescribe, such as ankle braces, high top orthotic shoes, lace up supports and shoes made with a medial-lateral supportive base. It's important to be examined by an experienced podiatric professional if you're experiencing any foot pain.

Along with these treatment options, Collier Podiatry will provide you with personalized instructions on the necessary amount of rest, stretching exercises and home care to get you back to doing what you love.

Dr. Michael Petrocelli is available to answer your questions and make your appointment. Please visit their website at [www.collierpodiatry.com](http://www.collierpodiatry.com), or call them at (239) 775-0019.



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**Michael J. Petrocelli**  
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# Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month

## Shining a Light on Hope and Progress

**L**eukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month, observed every September, serves as a poignant reminder of the battles fought and the progress made against two of the most prevalent types of blood cancers. This dedicated month is not only an opportunity to raise awareness about these diseases but also a time to highlight the advancements in research, treatment, and support that continue to transform the lives of patients and their families.

### Understanding Leukemia and Lymphoma

Leukemia and lymphoma are both types of blood cancers that originate in the bone marrow and lymphatic system, respectively. Leukemia affects the blood and bone marrow, leading to an overproduction of abnormal white blood cells. Lymphoma, on the other hand, involves the lymphatic system and is characterized by the abnormal growth of lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell.

### The Impact and Importance of Awareness

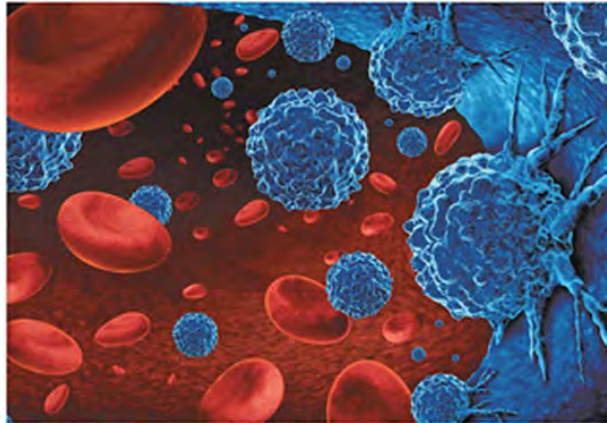
Leukemia and lymphoma collectively affect millions of people worldwide, touching the lives of patients, caregivers, and communities. Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month plays a crucial role in increasing public knowledge about these diseases, helping to dispel myths and misconceptions, and encouraging early detection and diagnosis. When caught early, the chances of successful treatment increase significantly, underscoring the importance of spreading awareness.

### Advancements in Research and Treatment

Over the years, groundbreaking research has led to remarkable progress in understanding the underlying causes of leukemia and lymphoma. This has paved the way for the development of targeted therapies and precision medicine approaches. These innovative treatments focus on attacking cancer cells while minimizing damage to healthy cells, leading to more effective and less debilitating outcomes for patients.

### The Power of Support

Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month not only raises awareness but also emphasizes the significance of providing emotional and practical support



to those affected by these cancers. Patient support groups, advocacy organizations, and healthcare providers play a vital role in helping patients navigate their journey, offering resources, guidance, and a sense of community. Additionally, the awareness month serves as a reminder that everyone can contribute by offering their understanding, empathy, and encouragement to those battling these diseases.

### Inspiring Stories of Resilience

One of the most inspiring aspects of Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month is the opportunity to showcase the stories of individuals who have triumphed over these cancers. These stories highlight the strength, resilience, and determination of patients who have faced unimaginable challenges. By sharing their experiences, survivors offer hope to others while also shedding light on the importance of continued research and support.

### Spreading Awareness

In an increasingly interconnected world, raising awareness about leukemia and lymphoma has become more accessible than ever. Social media platforms, community events, educational campaigns, and fundraisers all contribute to the amplification of the message. Individuals, organizations, and healthcare professionals come together during this month to ensure that the stories of those affected are heard and that the message of hope and progress reaches far and wide.

### Looking Ahead

As Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month continues to evolve, it serves as a beacon of hope for the future. Advances in research and treatment

continue to improve the lives of patients, with ongoing efforts to develop new therapies and refine existing ones. However, challenges persist, including the need for greater awareness, funding, and continued support.

In conclusion, Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month shines a light on the journey of those affected by these blood cancers, showcasing the strides made in research, treatment, and support. It is a time to honor the stories of survivors, remember those who have lost their lives, and commit to a future where leukemia and lymphoma are no longer a threat. Through awareness, education, and action, we can collectively make a difference in the lives of individuals and families facing these challenges, bringing hope and progress to the forefront of our efforts.

**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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# LEARN HOW YOU CAN FIND RELIEF FROM THE DEBILITATING PAIN OF PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY WITHOUT ADDICTIVE DRUGS

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Over 116 million people suffer from various types of chronic pain disorders, and 20 million of those individuals have peripheral neuropathy; that number is speculated to be much higher due to patients not getting a proper diagnosis. Peripheral nerves run from the spinal cord to the arms, hands, legs and feet.

## UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Peripheral Neuropathy is a complex condition, but nerve damage and signaling are the issue, finding the root cause is how a comprehensive plan is customized to regenerate a patients nerves, cells and tissues. Having high blood sugar levels, along with low blood oxygen supply, nutrient deficiency, high toxicity and inflammation damages the nerves throughout the body. This damage generally 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, you may feel nerve damage sensations in your upper extremities as well.

## PERIPHERAL 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

## STOP MASKING SYMPTOMS AND PAIN

The most common treatment for nerve pain and numbness is to mask it with narcotic prescription pain medications. Narcotics like Opioids are highly addictive, and our state is currently leading the country in abusing the drug and overdose episodes.

**There are better alternatives to Peripheral Neuropathy that do not include addictive drugs.**



Physical medicine provides alternative therapeutic and rehabilitating procedures can significantly improve the condition, offer pain relief and limit drug dependency.

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- Red LED and Low Level Infrared Light Therapy help to heal and regenerate the small nerve endings that are damaged in peripheral neuropathy
- Gentle electrical stimulation therapy improves nerve function, reduces pain, and improves movement.
- Stem Cell Allografts Biologics
- Platelet Rich Plasma
- Spinal Decompression Therapy
- Ozone Therapy
- Peptide Therapy
- Therapeutic Shockwave/Soundwave
- Natural supplementation to regenerate myelin sheath

## WHAT KINDS OF EFFECTS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE NEUROPATHY TREATMENT AT FEEL AMAZING INSTITUTE?

Clinical studies show that 88% of the people who undergo the treatment experience excellent results with one or more of the following: Reduced pain and cramps, reduced tingling and numbness, ability to experience normal touch without pain, reduced cold or burning sensations, improved balance and coordination, lowered dependency on medications, improved sleep, reduced sensation of restlessness in

the legs. Several people also experience reduced local swelling and inflammation, increased range of motion, increased blood flow to the extremities, decreased tension, and decreased muscle spasm.

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

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- Restless Leg Syndrome
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- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

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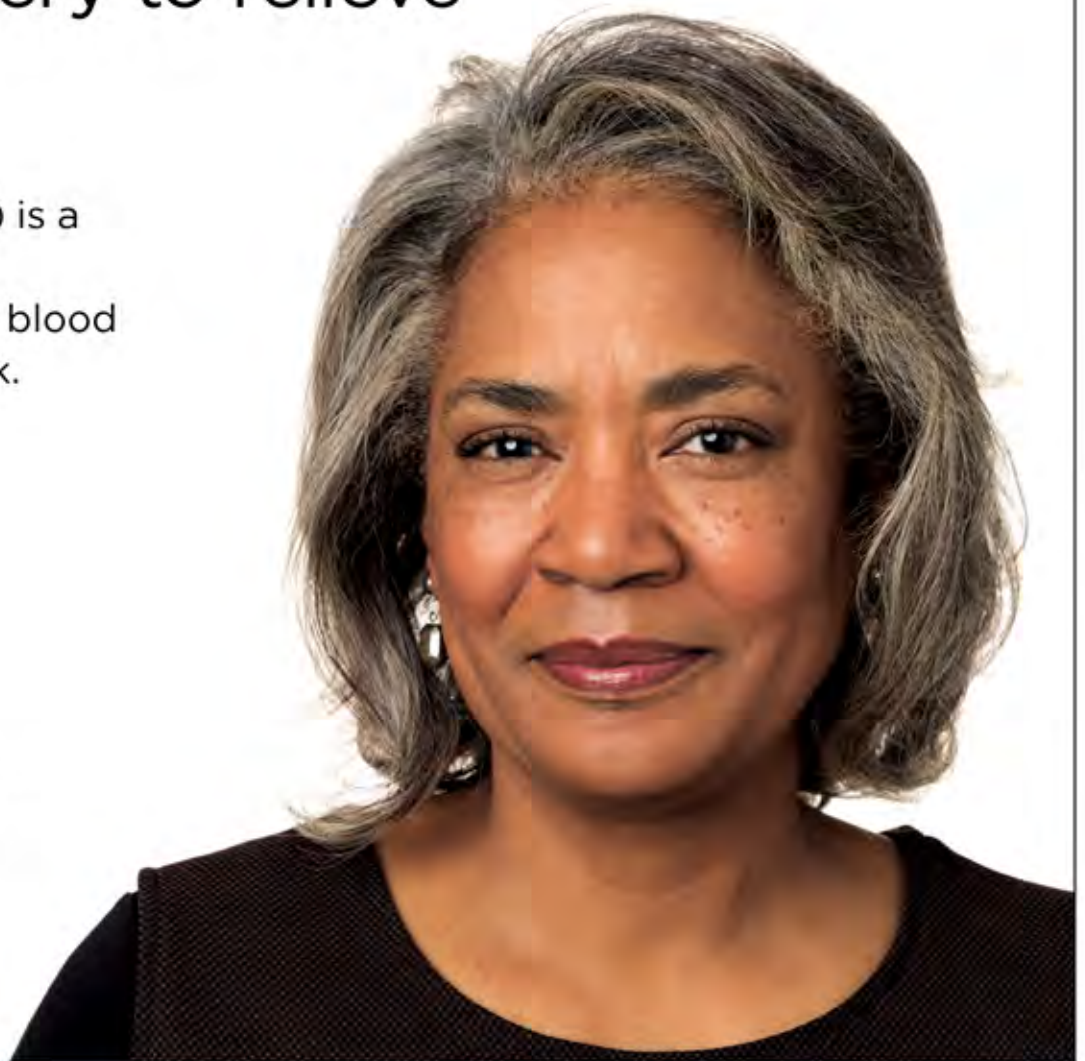
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# Shopping for the Best Incontinence Underwear?

There Might be a Better Solution

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

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

## What is Overactive Bladder?

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

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

You may be suffering from overactive bladder if:

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

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

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

## What is Axonics Therapy?

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

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

## What are the benefits of Axonics Therapy?

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

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

**Clinically proven results:**

- **93%** of treated patients achieved clinically significant improvements\* at 2-years<sup>3</sup>
- **94%** of patients were satisfied with their therapy<sup>3</sup>

Important Safety Information: Implantation and use of the Axonics System incurs risk beyond those normally associated with surgery, some of which may necessitate surgical intervention. Results and experiences may vary and are unique to each patient. No promise or guarantee is made about specific results or experiences. For more information about safety and potential risks, go to: [www.axonics.com/isi](http://www.axonics.com/isi). Caution: Federal law (USA) restricts this device to sale and use by, or on the order of, a physician.  
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\*50% or greater reduction in symptoms

References:

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# HARNESSING THE HEALING POWER OF WATER:

## Exploring Aquatic Physical Therapy for Pain Management

Living with chronic pain can be a daunting challenge that affects every aspect of a person's life. Traditional pain management approaches often rely heavily on medication, which does not always provide long-term relief and can come with unwanted side effects, such as addiction. Fortunately, physical therapy offers a wide range of solutions to holistically manage and alleviate pain. In recent years, aquatic physical therapy has gained prominence as a unique and highly beneficial method for pain management. Let's dive into the world of aquatic physical therapy and explore how it can provide a soothing path towards pain relief.

### The Science Behind Aquatic Physical Therapy

Aquatic physical therapy takes the principles of physical therapy a step further by harnessing the therapeutic properties of water. Water provides a buoyant and supportive environment that reduces the impact on joints and minimizes the gravitational forces that can exacerbate pain during land-based exercises. Additionally, water's natural resistance allows for gentle yet effective muscle strengthening without putting undue stress on the body.

The warm temperature of the water used in aquatic therapy sessions also plays a vital role. Warm water helps to relax muscles, increase blood circulation, and reduce muscle spasms, all of which contribute to pain reduction and improved range of motion. Moreover, the hydrostatic pressure of the water aids in reducing swelling and inflammation, making it an ideal environment for individuals with conditions like osteoarthritis or fibromyalgia.

### Benefits of Aquatic Physical Therapy for Pain Management

**1. Low-Impact Exercise:** The buoyancy of water significantly decreases the impact on joints and bones, making it an excellent option for individuals with arthritis or those recovering from joint surgeries.

**2. Enhanced Flexibility and Range of Motion:** Water's natural resistance allows for smooth and controlled movements, facilitating increased joint mobility and flexibility.



**3. Muscle Strengthening:** Water's resistance provides gentle resistance in all directions, allowing for effective muscle strengthening without the risk of overexertion or injury.

**4. Pain Reduction:** The warm water and hydrostatic pressure promote relaxation, reduce muscle tension, and alleviate pain, providing a soothing experience for participants.

**5. Improved Balance and Coordination:** The supportive nature of water enables individuals to work on balance and coordination without the fear of falling.

### Conditions that Benefit from Aquatic Physical Therapy Include, but not Limited to:

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Fibromyalgia
- Back Pain
- Joint Replacements
- Sports Injuries
- Neurological Conditions (multiple sclerosis, stroke)
- Chronic Pain Syndromes

### Why Choose Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL?

When considering options for aquatic physical therapy, Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL stands

out as a premier choice for several compelling reasons. With a steadfast commitment to holistic healing and patient-centric care, they combine the therapeutic benefits of water with a team of highly trained therapists that deliver above national average patient outcomes. Absolute is also equipped with other advanced technologies that can cater to a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions, allowing for gentle and effective treatment. What truly sets them apart is their personalized approach; every patient receives a tailored treatment plan designed to address their unique needs and goals, ensuring a rewarding therapy journey. By choosing Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL for aquatic physical therapy, patients are making a choice for top-tier care, innovation, and a pathway to restored health and vitality.

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# UNMASKING TESTOSTERONE

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

**T**estosterone replacement therapy, a vital treatment for restoring balance to declining hormone levels, is being vastly underused. Besides the stigma surrounding hormone replacement therapy, one of the primary reasons for this is that many people have undiagnosed low testosterone levels because their doctors fail to run all the important tests.

The traditional method for detecting testosterone levels measures the total testosterone in the blood. However, this provides only a portion of the information about testosterone and, therefore, provides only a tiny snippet of information about someone's health.

In order to fully understand someone's hormone levels, it's important to look deeper than the total testosterone level, especially if their symptoms suggest there's something that you're missing.

## Total Testosterone Vs. Free Testosterone

Your total testosterone levels are the amount of testosterone found in the blood. However, this can be broken up further.

Around 98% of testosterone is bound to albumin or sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG), and these are called "bound testosterone."

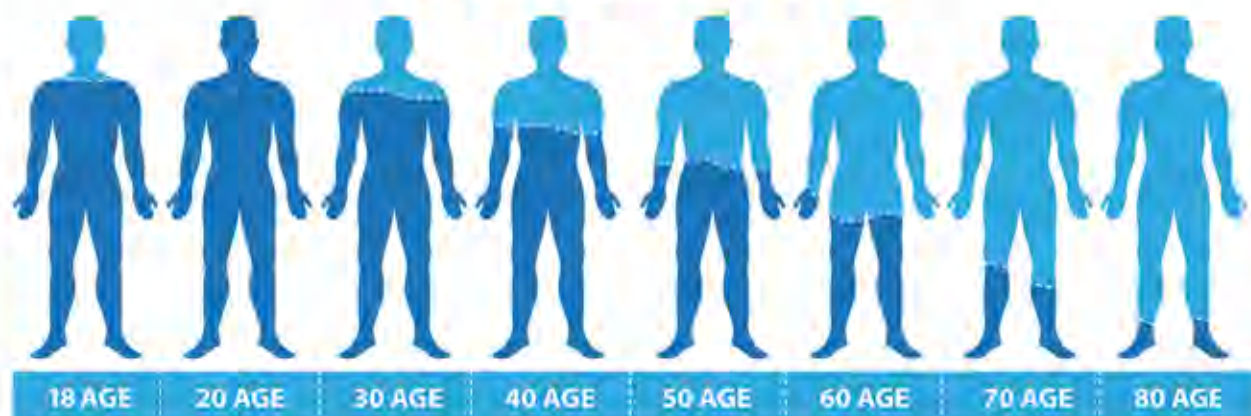
The remaining 2% of testosterone is referred to as "free testosterone" because it is unbound. It is this free testosterone that is responsible for many of the actions we associate with testosterone, including secondary sex characteristics like a deep voice and body hair.

Free testosterone is also what enters specific cells and promotes reproduction, such as in the muscles and bones.

## The Problem with Total Testosterone

Most providers will use a total testosterone test to gauge testosterone levels in the body, but this doesn't consider that only the free testosterone is what contributes to the symptoms commonly associated with low testosterone. Those with excessive bondage to albumin or SHBG may show normal total testosterone levels, but low free testosterone.

## TESTOSTERONE LEVEL



For example, a young male patient with total testosterone levels of 300-500 may be brushed aside since their testosterone levels fall within the normal range. Yet, a closer investigation shows that their free testosterone is below 10 when most men thrive on levels well into the double digits.

The same is shown with women, who have normal total testosterone of 20, but may have free testosterone as low as 0.01.

When doctors fail to listen to their patient's symptoms and further explore their hormone levels, patients continue struggling to accomplish their everyday tasks.

It comes as no surprise that sleep problems, anxiety, depression, low energy, low libido, brain fog/difficulty concentrating, weight gain, and mood changes are becoming more common. These symptoms result from hormone imbalances, and too many doctors are not adequately measuring hormone levels.

## A Rise in Symptoms

As doctors continue to avoid addressing hormone levels, there has been an understandable rise in preventable symptoms.

Just looking at testosterone, low levels have been reported with symptoms such as:

- anger
- anxiety
- hostility
- overall irritability
- depression

Low testosterone can also increase stress levels, which then impacts cardiovascular health.

These symptoms make it challenging to enjoy daily life, vastly decreasing someone's quality of life.

By remedying low testosterone levels, we not only improve those characteristics that we typically associate with testosterone, such as libido, muscle mass, and bone mass, but we also have a way to improve the well-being of patients that are mentally suffering because their body cannot produce enough of the hormones that they need to be happy and calm.

These patients may find that they don't need anti-depressants or anti-anxiety drugs, but instead, an evaluation of their hormone levels to see if there are any imbalances.

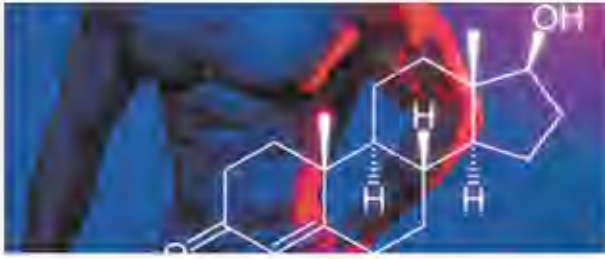
## Using Testosterone to Monitor Overall Health

Testosterone levels can also provide valuable insight into a patient's health.

For example, testosterone levels can decrease for many reasons, not just age. In fact, in many cases, it might not be age itself that causes testosterone to decline, but the changes in health that occur with age.

Some whole-body factors that can cause a decrease in testosterone include:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol levels
- using illegal drugs
- being overweight or obese
- using anabolic steroids
- drinking excessive amounts of alcohol



By detecting low testosterone levels, a doctor may then be able to determine if it is caused by any of these conditions and what the patient can do to address it and improve their overall health. Hormones are interrelated with many body processes, and properly measuring hormones is the only way to take full advantage of this connection.

### Hormone Therapy: Getting to the Root of The Problem

Hormone therapy is typically passed aside in favor of other medications.

However, patients may be prescribed multiple medications to address their symptoms, but they only act as a band-aid. To truly find relief and get off these unnecessary medications, it is necessary to address the root of the problem, which in many cases is hormonal.

Additionally, gaining control over someone's hormones can help to prevent other health conditions from occurring. For example, having low testosterone increases the risk of type 2 diabetes. By balancing testosterone levels, the risk of developing this disease will lessen.

It's important to look even further, too. A patient has low free testosterone, but why? Is it genetic, or is there an underlying medical condition? Asking these questions offers a way to determine what might be affecting someone's hormone levels and can result in a solution that actually fixes the problem instead of mitigating symptoms.

### An Individualized Approach

Your hormones are the most important players in regulating body processes, yet society has created a stigma surrounding hormone replacement therapy that labels it as dangerous and risky.

The problem isn't hormone replacement therapy; the problem is the "one size fits all" mentality that has been applied to it.

Testosterone replacement therapy is becoming more popular but is also too "cookie cutter"; most people who are prescribed it are given similar dosages and treatments. However, hormones are not the same as antibiotics, they are much more individualized to the patient, and these treatments should reflect that.

When you give every patient similar hormone dosages, it's understandable why some of these adverse side effects are happening. Doctors and scientists are trying to find a standard dosage amount, but there is nothing standard about the hormone levels in a patient's body or how their body uses these hormones.

Some people might need more hormone therapy, while others need very little. Some patients' bodies may quickly accept the hormone therapy, while others may not, requiring a higher dose or other intervention. As doctors, these are the considerations that must be made, yet too many are stuck on a one-path mind.

### Addressing the Risks

For many doctors and patients, HRT is often seen as a risky and unfavorable option because of the adverse side effects that can occur, so let's address this.

One of the most cited risks of HRT is the increased risk of cancer. However, research shows that this is not always the case, and for some patients, testosterone replacement therapy actually reduces cancer risk.

For example, in a 2019 study on trans men undergoing testosterone therapy, their risk of breast cancer was lower than the risk of breast cancer in cisgender women.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in males, and in the past, research suggested that testosterone therapy increased the risk of prostate cancer. However, new research is showing that this relationship is more complex.

Studies have shown that a male's baseline testosterone level can relate to the risk of prostate cancer, with some studies reporting that higher testosterone levels lead to higher risk and other studies saying the opposite. In short, other factors are likely at play here besides just testosterone levels.

Several trials regarding men on testosterone therapy also showed no higher risk of prostate cancer, and this was seen in studies that had follow-up times of 3 months, 3 years, and 20 years.

Even more, several studies have reported success in using testosterone replacement therapy as a treatment after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. They have shown no difference in recurrences between those on testosterone therapy and those without it.

This idea that HRT is a dangerous treatment that can cause cancer is an antiquated view that recent studies do not support. It is time to stop avoiding a treatment that can provide genuine benefits to patients because of outdated resources.

Even more, in studies where HRT may have increased cancer risk, the authors report that the increased risk is often very minimal, and the benefits offered by treatment far outweigh this slightly increased risk.

### Making The Most of Testosterone

Considering how vital our hormones are for our body, they are often overlooked in regard to treatment. Testosterone, in particular, is a sex hormone that many do not realize plays a much larger role in both the male and female body, and its supplementation can help address many of the problems someone might be experiencing.

Not only that, but taking the time to fully understand a patient's testosterone levels and going beyond "total testosterone" provides a clearer picture of their health. By ignoring a patient's symptoms because the first blood test shows that everything is normal, the doctor is doing a disservice to their patient's well-being.

Each patient is different, and because of this, their hormone levels (and what level produces certain side effects) are going to differ. It's time that we stop chasing "normal" numbers because patients are more than a number, and they need doctors that look beyond the result of one test.

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# PICKLEBALL

By Robert Swift, D.O.

Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine



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

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

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

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

## Associated Injuries

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

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

## Acute Injuries

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the event of any related Pickleball injury we are available to take care of you and get you back on the court.



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# Stress Management

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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# WHY INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT TREATMENT (IOP) IS OFTEN THE BEST CHOICE FOR ADDRESSING ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES

By Robert C. Gibson— Managing Director Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group

**I**ntensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP) for alcohol dependency and drug abuse is a structured and comprehensive approach to rehabilitation that provides individuals with a higher level of care than traditional outpatient treatment but does not require them to reside in a treatment facility. Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services located at 704 Goodlette Frank Rd. Naples FL 34102, offer a balance between the flexibility of outpatient treatment and the structured support of inpatient treatment. Crossroad IOP is designed for individuals who need more intensive treatment than regular outpatient sessions but do not require 24/7 supervision and care.

Crossroads has developed a proprietary curriculum that helps individuals seeking long term sobriety and provides assistance in reaching their goals and dreams. We offer several programs and various levels of care that enable a more individualized treatment program.

**Crossroads Tier 1 IOP treatment program** is designed for individuals new to recovery. Its primary focus is maintaining long term sobriety. We identify each individual's potential relapse triggers and develop alternative relapse skills. Our core beliefs are examined and broken down into fact or opinion. We set specific measurable goals for every client. Clients focus on identifying career goals and work with their therapist and counselor to find a pathway to reach their obtainable dreams. Additionally, we address housing, which is a current crisis in SWFL. Crossroads assist our graduates to team together and seek sober living housing, allowing individuals in early recovery to pool their resources and support each other in their road to recovery.

**Crossroads Tier 2 IOP treatment program** is designed specifically for professionals or retirees who recognize that their drinking or drug use is or is getting "out of control" and want to make a change in their lives. Unfortunately, many of these individuals continue to suffer because they fear the stigma of recovery and may also feel they are too old, or far along in their careers to set aside the time for a 30-60 day in house residential rehab program. At Crossroads we fully understand these concerns and apprehensions. A separate intensive outpatient program (IOP) addiction recovery program for professionals is important for several reasons:

**1. Confidentiality:** Professionals may be hesitant to seek treatment for addiction in traditional rehab or outpatient programs due to concerns about confidentiality. Our program, specifically designed for professionals, provides a more discreet and confidential environment, which increases the likelihood that they will seek and receive treatment.

**2. Unique Needs:** Professionals often have unique needs and challenges in addiction recovery, such as concerns about their careers or the impact of addiction on their professional reputations. Crossroads Tier 2 is a separate program that addresses these needs and provides specialized support and resources for professionals in recovery.

**3. Supportive Environment:** Crossroads outpatient program provides a supportive environment with others who face similar challenges and experiences. This helps individuals in recovery feel less isolated and increases their motivation to engage in treatment and maintain their sobriety.

**4. Tailored Treatment:** Our IOP program provides tailored treatment that addresses the specific needs and challenges of professionals in recovery. For example, our program includes components such as stress management, career counseling, or relapse prevention strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of professionals.

Crossroads IOP recovery program for professionals provides a more supportive, confidential, and tailored environment for individuals in recovery who have unique needs and concerns related to their professional lives. By offering a specialized program for professionals, these individuals in recovery increase their likelihood of successfully overcoming addiction and maintaining their sobriety over the long term.

**Crossroads Tier 3 IOP treatment program** is specifically oriented towards those individuals suffering from dual diagnosis. Dual diagnosis treatment, which refers to the treatment of co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, can be challenging in addiction recovery for several reasons:

**1. Complexity:** Dual diagnosis cases are often more complex than cases of substance abuse alone, as the presence of a mental health disorder can complicate treatment and recovery efforts.

**2. Misdiagnosis:** It is often difficult to accurately diagnose both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder, as symptoms of one disorder can mimic the symptoms of the other. This can result in misdiagnosis and a delay in appropriate treatment.

**3. Treatment resistance:** Individuals with dual diagnosis may be resistant to treatment or may struggle to engage in treatment due to the presence of anxiety, depression, or psychosis.

**4. Stigma:** There is often a stigma associated with both mental health disorders and substance abuse, which can make it challenging for individuals to seek and receive treatment for both conditions.

Despite these challenges, effective treatment for dual diagnosis is achievable. Crossroads integrated treatment addresses both mental health disorder and substance use disorder which is effective in managing symptoms and promoting recovery. Our dual diagnosis program involves medication management, behavioral therapy, and support groups. In addition, our individualized treatment plans that address each person's unique needs and challenges improve the likelihood of success in recovery from dual diagnosis.



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**Key features of Crossroads intensive outpatient treatment for alcohol dependency and substance abuse:**

**Structured Schedule:** Our IOP programs involve attending multiple therapy sessions per week, typically ranging from three to five sessions. These sessions can include individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, psychoeducation, and skill-building workshops.

**Therapeutic Approach:** Crossroads IOP programs offer a variety of evidence-based therapies, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), motivational interviewing, and relapse prevention techniques. The specific therapies used depend on the individual's needs and the program's approach.

**Group Therapy:** Group therapy is a fundamental component of Crossroads IOP. Our interactive groups allow participants to share their experiences, learn from others, receive peer support, and practice interpersonal skills in a supportive environment.

**Individual Counseling:** Crossroads IOP includes individual therapy sessions that provide a one-on-one setting for clients to work with their therapist on specific personal issues, triggers, and coping strategies.

**Family Involvement:** Crossroads IOP program incorporates family therapy sessions to address family dynamics, educate loved ones about addiction, and provide a platform for communication and healing within the family system.

**Education and Skill Building:** Crossroads IOP programs utilize educational sessions to help individuals understand addiction, its impact on their lives, and the tools needed for recovery. These sessions can cover topics like stress management, communication skills, and healthy coping mechanisms.

**Holistic Approach:** At Crossroads, our IOP programs incorporate holistic therapies such as yoga, meditation, art therapy, and mindfulness practices to support overall well-being. Additionally, we feel that IOP treatment is a pleasurable experience, as we host boating and beach group sessions for our clients.

**Continuum of Care:** Crossroads IOP programs are part of a broader continuum of care, which includes stepping up from regular outpatient treatment or stepping down from more intensive levels of care like inpatient or residential treatment.

**Drug Testing:** At Crossroads we feel that our clients are present to improve their lives and break away from the grip of addiction. Nevertheless, we do conduct regular drug and alcohol testing to monitor participants' progress and hold them accountable for their sobriety.

**Individualized Treatment Plans:** Each participant's treatment plan at Crossroads is tailored to their specific needs, challenges, and goals. This individualized approach ensures that the program addresses their unique circumstances.

Crossroads IOP treatment programs are effective for individuals who require more support than traditional outpatient care but do not need the 24-hour supervision provided by inpatient treatment. Our multi-tier treatment programs allow clients to receive appropriate individualized care while still maintaining their responsibilities and connections in their everyday lives.

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# Managing Arthritis Pain and Discomfort: WHY MITOCHONDRIAL HEALTH MATTERS

By Dr. Eric Pearson, Chief Medical Officer, Vetirus Pharmaceuticals

**O**steoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis, a chronic disease of aging. Effective and safe long-term treatment for most OA patients is not available, creating a large unmet medical need. It is estimated that more than 150 million people globally suffer from OA. Many of the symptoms of OA are often overlooked or shrugged off as merely “getting old”. The truth is that Osteo Arthritis of the knee affects roughly 12% of all people 60 years or older, and this is just the tip of the iceberg in both undiagnosed and diagnosed arthritic conditions. As the population ages, the number of people with arthritis is projected to grow substantially. The Center for Disease Control is estimating that by 2030, in the U.S. alone, more than 67 million people will have physician diagnosed arthritis. The majority of these people will have OA.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a chronic degenerative joint disease that causes progressive pain, loss of function, and in many cases, variable levels of disability. It mainly affects individuals over 60. Notable symptoms of OA include the degradation of cartilage, formation of bone spurs and cysts, loss of joint fluid and local and systemic inflammation. The destruction of cartilage plays the most important role in the course of OA. Articular cartilage is comprised of chondrocytes and extracellular matrix. Preventing these chondrocytes from damage is a key factor to the integrity of articular cartilage. Studies have regarded inflammatory response to be the primary cause of chondrocytes injuries and there is growing evidence regarding the role of mitochondrial dysfunction in OA and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Joint dysfunction and pain are the most common characteristics of all forms of arthritis. Mitochondria are both targets and sources of inflammation-associated injury in the synovial membrane, hence injury and death of synovocytes trigger the release of pro-inflammatory mediators and the activation of inflammatory cells.

While OA has been viewed as a disease of increased joint stress due to heavy load bearing (excessive weight and obesity), recent scientific progress is pointing towards chronic inflammation as the driving factor in OA disease progression. As many healthy, younger patients are developing OA years after acute sports-related injuries, it became evident that more than simple overweight issues contribute to disease pathobiology.

Current treatments for OA include anti-inflammatories such as corticosteroids; non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) including Celebrex, ibuprofen (Motrin), and Naproxen (Aleve); pain relievers including acetaminophen (Tylenol) and opioids (Tramadol). While short-term partial relief is achieved with steroidal treatments, diminished long-term benefits and significant adverse events prevent long term dosing. Likewise, currently available NSAIDs offer anti-inflammatory action but have

unacceptable long-term adverse side effects including risks of bleeding, gastric ulcers, liver and kidney damage and cardiovascular events. Pain relievers such as acetaminophen have risks of liver toxicity and opioids, of course, are not suitable for long term administration. Ultimately, effective treatment of OA requires a safer, multi-faceted anti-inflammatory molecule able to affect a multitude of OA-related mechanisms with minimal or no adverse effects when used over long time periods. Astaxanthin (ASTX) is that molecule.

ASTX localizes into the mitochondria significantly decreasing oxidative stress while stabilizing the mitochondrial membranes. This stabilizing effect on the mitochondrial membranes has been shown using electron microscopy. (Dr. Mason Preston of Harvard University discovered this). This leads to decreased pro-apoptotic (cell death) mediators and increased anti-apoptotic (cell death) Stabilization of mitochondria and inhibition of these pathways will prolong cell life and contribute to joint matrix maintenance. Likewise, ASTX has been shown to upregulate PGC-1 $\alpha$ , a master regulator of mitochondrial biogenesis, as well as critical metabolic regulators such as CPT-1. All this scientific evidence, in both humans and animal models, highlight the capacity of ASTX to affect important mechanisms critical to osteoarthritis in humans (oxidative stress, inflammation) and underscores the enormous ability of ASTX to slow disease progression and improve symptoms of arthritis.

Vetirus Pharmaceuticals has developed a Natural Biologic compound to bring the benefits of all of this in one easy to use single dose formula named MitoPak™. In summary, it has the below properties:

- 1. Potent Antioxidant Properties:** Mitopak is a powerful antioxidant, which helps protect joints from oxidative stress and inflammation that can lead to joint pain and degradation.
- 2. Anti-inflammatory Effects:** Mitopak has demonstrated anti-inflammatory properties, which can help reduce joint pain and improve overall joint health by decreasing the production of inflammatory mediators.
- 3. Cartilage Protection:** Mitopak has been shown to protect cartilage from degradation by inhibiting the activity of enzymes responsible for breaking down cartilage, such as matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs).
- 4. Reduction of Joint Pain Symptoms:** Studies have reported that Mitopak supplementation can help reduce joint pain symptoms, such as stiffness and discomfort, in people suffering from conditions like osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

**5. Improved Joint Mobility:** Mitopak can improve joint mobility by reducing inflammation and promoting the health of joint tissues, making it easier for individuals to move and maintain an active lifestyle.

**6. Enhanced Synovial Fluid Production:** Mitopak has been found to enhance the production of synovial fluid, which lubricates and nourishes the joints, promoting overall joint health.

**7. Supports Collagen Synthesis:** Mitopak can support collagen synthesis, which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of joint structures such as tendons, ligaments, and cartilage.

**8. Slows Age-Related Joint Degeneration:** Mitopak's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties can slow down the age-related degeneration of joints, helping to maintain joint health and function in older individuals.

**9. Complementary to Conventional Treatments:** Mitopak can be used as a complementary treatment to conventional therapies for joint pain and inflammation, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or corticosteroids, potentially enhancing their effectiveness or reducing side effects.

**10. Sports Performance and Recovery:** Athletes and active individuals can benefit from Mitopak supplementation, as it may help to reduce exercise-induced joint pain and reduces inflammation, and speeds up muscle recovery while supporting muscle strength, and improve overall sports performance.

All inflammation starts in your mitochondria. MitoPak™ stops the inflammation where it starts. Over 1200 scientific studies have concluded the safety of the active ingredients and they have a long history of use in both Humans and animals. MitoPak™ fights inflammation without harmful side effects found in NSAIDs. It supercharges your mitochondrial energy production, and its unique proprietary formula contains the most powerful known antioxidant allowing your body to function at peak performance,

MitoPAK™ is nature's most potent anti-inflammatory and is:

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- 6000x stronger than Vitamin C

and has grown in popularity as more medical evidence supports its benefits. Regardless of your age, MitoPak™ positively influences mitochondrial function and preserves membrane structure while scavenging radicals. It is a natural therapeutic that reduces inflammation and speeds up muscle recovery without compromising muscle strength.

*Vetirus Pharmaceuticals is based in Naples, Florida and London, England and ore focused on searching the world for developing Natural Biologics to advance their mission of changing the way we age in both human and veterinary medicine with purity and precision.*

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# ARTHRITIS AFFECTS THE MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

## Medications aren't the only way to treat arthritis anymore.

Dr. Alik can relieve arthritis pain with his expertise and signature Acu-Healing treatments he has perfected over the last 30 years.

### What is arthritis?

*"Arthritis isn't a single disease; the term refers to joint pain or joint disease, and there are more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions."*<sup>1</sup>

That's the technical term, but those with arthritis understand it's much more than a joint disease; it's a chronic condition that impacts your social life. Going to a friend's house has become impossible if you can't get off their dining room chair.

It impacts how you feel about yourself, creating stress that then turns around and exacerbates the arthritis.

It can keep you from your favorite physical activities; those casual strolls through your favorite shop or along the beach sound tedious and painful.

So, how do you treat your arthritis?

### Medication alone isn't the best anymore

Recent studies have concluded that medication alone isn't the only solution to treat arthritis.<sup>2</sup>

Combining Eastern and Western techniques creates a more substantial, positive impact on your healing.

This is where Dr. Alik comes in. His signature Acu-Healing Therapy combines multiple techniques and treatments, from acupuncture to medical massage and energy healing to cold laser therapy.

### But, which treatment comes first?

When you arrive for a session, Dr. Alik will use multiple techniques to alleviate your pain, relax the body, and bring peace to your mind. A whole-body approach is paramount to continuous pain relief.

### Acu-Healing starts with Acupuncture.

Combining acupuncture with qi gong and energy healing brings a more holistic solution to arthritic pain. These techniques used simultaneously provide a greater impact on a patient's recovery and care.

Acupuncture strongly reduces inflammation within the body, the opposite of what arthritis is trying to do.<sup>3</sup>

When inserted, the needle stimulates specific nerve fibers along the spinal cord, sending signals to the brain, which may trigger a release of endorphins. Endorphins are known as "feel good" hormones. This correlation leads scientists to believe this helps reduce pain!<sup>4</sup>

If you can alleviate the pain, you can help the body relax, easing the mind into a calm state of being.

### Add in Qi Gong, Energy Healing, and Massage

Qigong is very ancient; Qi, meaning light, and Gong, meaning working with light, was developed in China and India around 5,000 years ago.

Our bodies emit biophotons, often called ultra-weak photon emissions (UPEs), that can be detected and measured by several techniques.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1923, Russian researcher Alexander Gurwitsch discovered that living tissue gave off photons, which he termed "mitogenic rays." He demonstrated that these ultraviolet rays (photons) stimulated cell reproduction.

Studies have shown that patients treated with Qigong reported significantly reduced pain and negative moods.<sup>6</sup>

Energy Healing, like Reiki, encourages relaxation and alleviates stress and anxiety by employing gentle touch.

In the practice of Reiki, practitioners employ their hands to transmit energy to your body, enhancing the flow and equilibrium of your energy to facilitate the healing process.

Relaxing the mind and body creates a positive state of mind, an essential facet of healing.

Knee osteoarthritis pain, in particular, benefits from manual massage to encourage the muscles to relax.

### Finally, cold laser therapy

Cold laser therapy is called cold because the low light levels aren't enough to heat your body's tissue.

The condition and type of your arthritis determine whether or not Dr. Alik believes you would benefit from cold laser therapy.

## It's time to restore peace to your mind and your well-being.

Particularly when your body is trying to do the opposite!

A study conducted in 2020 found that pain catastrophizing, thinking about the pain in a negative way, and telling yourself that it's going to be bad, get worse, or keep you from doing things actually leads to worse outcomes and leaves people feeling helpless.

To combat this self-destructive behavior, Dr. Alik employs the above techniques to create a mind, body, and spiritual experience for his clients.

Healing requires focusing on the whole person, not just the problem area.

**Call 239.322.3817 to schedule your free initial consultation with Dr. Alik.**

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# The Surprising Connection Between Alzheimer's and Cholesterol

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

September is National Cholesterol Education Month and at Senior Care Authority we are especially interested in cholesterol because of its emerging connection to Alzheimer's. In the health and wellness world, cholesterol has long been a topic of concern due to its association with cardiovascular diseases. However, recent research has unveiled a fascinating and complex connection between cholesterol and another formidable adversary: Alzheimer's disease. Because of our ongoing work providing support to our clients who have a loved one with Alzheimer's or who have Alzheimer's themselves, we want you to be aware of the intricate interplay between cholesterol and Alzheimer's. We will highlight findings from peer-reviewed research and offer valuable tips on how lowering your cholesterol may reap cognitive benefits.

## Cholesterol and Brain Health: Beyond the Stereotype

Cholesterol is often unfairly vilified as a health villain, but it serves essential functions in the body. Beyond its role in maintaining cell membranes and hormone production, cholesterol plays a critical role in brain health. Nerve cells in the brain require cholesterol to build and maintain their cell membranes, ensuring efficient communication between neurons. Furthermore, cholesterol is vital for the formation of synapses, the microscopic connections that facilitate neural signaling. Cholesterol is also involved in the function of neurotransmitter receptors in the cell membrane. These receptors are essential for receiving and processing neurotransmitter signals, which play a critical role in various brain functions, including mood regulation and cognition.

## The Amyloid Beta Puzzle

A hallmark of Alzheimer's disease is the accumulation of amyloid beta plaques in the brain, contributing to neurodegeneration and cognitive decline. Emerging research suggests that cholesterol metabolism may influence the production and clearance of amyloid beta. A study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* (doi: 10.3233/JAD-170838) indicates that cholesterol

levels impact the activity of enzymes involved in amyloid beta production. High levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, commonly referred to as "bad" cholesterol, could potentially exacerbate the buildup of amyloid beta plaques, a pivotal step in Alzheimer's progression.

## The Blood-Brain Barrier and Beyond

The blood-brain barrier is a protective shield that regulates the passage of molecules from the bloodstream into the brain. Cholesterol plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of this barrier. However, disruptions in the blood-brain barrier have been implicated in neurodegenerative processes, including Alzheimer's disease. Elevated cholesterol levels may compromise the blood-brain barrier, permitting harmful molecules to enter the brain and trigger inflammation and neuronal damage.

## The APOE Gene Connection

The apolipoprotein E (APOE) gene, which influences cholesterol transport and metabolism, has gained significant attention in Alzheimer's research. Notably, the APOE  $\epsilon$ 4 allele is associated with a heightened risk of Alzheimer's disease. A peer-reviewed study published in *JAMA Neurology* (doi:10.1001/jama-neurol.2013.607) found that individuals carrying the APOE  $\epsilon$ 4 allele exhibited higher cholesterol levels and an increased susceptibility to Alzheimer's. This gene variant not only influences cholesterol but also affects the metabolism of amyloid beta, contributing to disease progression.

## Strategies to Lower Cholesterol for Cognitive Well-Being

The evolving understanding of the cholesterol-Alzheimer's link highlights the importance of managing cholesterol levels for potential cognitive benefits. We know you have heard a lot of this before, but remember, your goal is to have healthy levels of cholesterol to improve your cognitive function. Here are practical tips to help lower cholesterol:

- **Healthy Diet:** Adopt a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Reduce saturated and trans fats, often found in fried and processed foods.

- **Physical Activity:** Engage in regular aerobic exercises such as walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling. Exercise helps increase high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) and supports overall cardiovascular health.

- **Quit Smoking:** Smoking is detrimental to both cardiovascular health and brain function. Quitting smoking can improve cholesterol levels and promote overall well-being.

- **Medication Management:** In some cases, lifestyle modifications may not be sufficient to lower cholesterol. Consult a healthcare professional to determine if cholesterol-lowering medications, such as statins, are appropriate.

The intricate connection between cholesterol and Alzheimer's disease reveals a multifaceted relationship that extends beyond cardiovascular health. While ongoing research strives to unveil the exact mechanisms at play, there is growing evidence suggesting that managing cholesterol levels has cognitive benefits.

If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about Alzheimer's or how to prepare for the future care of someone with Alzheimer's, we are here to help. Our advisors have supported our own loved ones with Alzheimer's or dementia and we know how hard it is. Planning as early as possible is as critical as keeping cholesterol levels in optimal ranges. We can be your trusted Alzheimer's resource. (239) 330-2133 or [info@scanyfl.com](mailto:info@scanyfl.com).



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# NAVIGATING RETIN A AND RETINOL: EXPERT ADVICE FROM A DERMATOLOGIST

By Dr. Anita Grassi

**R**etin A is the brand name for prescription topical tretinoin or all-trans retinoic acid, a vitamin A derivative that was first FDA-approved in the 1970's for the treatment of acne. Since its introduction tretinoin has become a first-line agent in the treatment of both acne and photodamage. Retinol, a non-prescription form of retinoic acid, is converted to tretinoin in the body and produces similar beneficial effects but is considered not as strong as its prescription counterpart.

Tretinoin improves acne by binding to specific skin receptors that increase cell turnover and decrease cohesiveness, resulting in exfoliation and reduced follicular plugging. It also reduces sebaceous gland production, decreasing oily skin. In addition, tretinoin promotes collagen formation and reduces pigmentation making it an effective tool for the treatment of photodamaged skin. Tretinoin is one of the best studied anti-aging ingredients and has multiple double-blind controlled clinical trials which demonstrate improvement of fine wrinkling and brown discoloration.

Despite its multiple benefits, the use of tretinoin cream and to a lesser degree retinol may be limited by the side effect of skin irritation. Patients with sensitive skin may not tolerate the potential redness, dryness, and flaking it causes. This is especially true at the start of treatment since the side effects tend to lessen as the skin adapts over time. Several strengths and formulations including creams,

gels and lotions are available to tailor the product to specific skin types. Newer emollient creams and microencapsulated versions may increase tolerability. Both tretinoin and retinol also cause sun-sensitivity and are degraded by sunlight so should be applied at night followed by routine sunscreen use during the day.

Follow the guidelines below to help minimize tretinoin side effects and obtain the best results:

- At bedtime, wash your face with a gentle cleanser and pat dry. Application of tretinoin to wet skin may increase absorption and hence side effects. Some formulations suggest waiting 15 mins after washing before applying. Remember that other products such as toners and benzoyl peroxide cleansers may worsen the dryness so are best stopped altogether or at least delayed until morning.
- Apply a thin layer to your face and avoid sensitive areas such as the corners of the mouth. Avoid eyelids altogether.
- Start slowly. Your dermatologist will likely prescribe a lower concentration of tretinoin at first and may suggest reduced frequency such as 2-3 times per week initially. As your skin adjusts with time, gradually increase use to every night at bedtime.
- Moisturize and apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher every morning. Applying moisturizer

with tretinoin at night helps lessen potential irritation but also may dilute the concentration.

- Be patient. Acne often looks worse at first and can take 2-3 months to clear. Expect 4-6 months to see visible improvement in photodamaged skin.

If you are still unable to tolerate tretinoin, then non-prescription retinol cream may be a better choice. Talk to your dermatologist about a regimen that will best suit your skin type and achieve your goals.

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Board Certified Dermatologist



*Dr. Anita Grassi is a board-certified dermatologist who joins Skin Wellness Physicians after a long career in both academic and private practice in the Boston area. She spent 30 years in practice at the Derma-*

*tology Laser and Cosmetic Center at xpert for Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA, where she gained experience in cutting-edge laser treatments of skin disorders. She also served on the faculty of Harvard Medical School as an assistant professor and was instrumental in training many residents and fellows in medical dermatology, laser, and cosmetic procedures. Furthermore, she co-founded a private practice in Watertown, MA, bringing the same level of skillful dermatologic care into the community setting.*

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# Why Your Future Health and Wellness Matter Now

Provided by Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments, Wintrust Wealth Management

**W**hat if I told you I can see you in the future: needing healthcare but unable to make the decisions necessary to attain it.

I have many friends who, for the life of them, refuse to talk about a dreaded day where they may become incapacitated—let alone give up decision-making to someone else.

Enough about my friends though, I will be the martyr for the sake of this story. Imagine I just got off of a delayed flight and managed to hustle my way through a foreign airport to get into a rental car. It has been a hectic and rainy morning. An impending meeting with a client and potential buyers of her business in an hour keeps me preoccupied making my plans for the day. I don't realize I'm in danger until I'm already hit. Later, I find out that someone hydroplaned on the wet road and ran into me, rendering me unconscious. In an instant, this great advocate cannot advocate for anyone—let alone herself.

If I am unable to advocate for my own healthcare wishes due to an illness or injury, how can I be sure I get the care I want? Continuing this hypothetical, I am hospitalized and, much to my chagrin, they track down my ex-husband, because I never got around to updating my daughter as my healthcare proxy.

Luckily, I survive this catastrophe. However, what if my injuries had been serious enough to warrant my placement into a long-term rehabilitation care facility? My ex-husband certainly would not have had my best interests at heart when making this decision. In this scenario, I was safe, but a mentor of mine always said, "leave nothing to chance."

**A healthcare power of attorney, living will, and visitation directive can make life smoother for you and your loved ones.** A healthcare power of attorney or healthcare proxy allows you to choose someone you trust to make healthcare decisions for you if you are not able. This document is especially important if the person you choose as your agent is not your legal spouse.

First, think of whom this person may be. Then, discuss your wishes with them so that they have solid direction and feel comfortable being your agent in an emergency situation.



Next, let it be known! Especially if your agent is not your spouse or family member, you do not want this to come as a surprise to them or your family while they are under duress.

Don't worry if you have more than one person in mind as you will want a backup (otherwise known as a successor) should your primary appointed agent be unable to act in this role. In addition, don't forget to list who can request and receive medical information about you from your healthcare providers.

## The Importance of a Living Will

Whoever your trusted legal counsel may be, they will bring up the subject of a living will. A living will is as its name embodies a document of your will (choices) while you are alive so that your wishes are known even once you are unable to communicate them. Your living will could include instructions related to resuscitation, feeding or breathing tubes, and pain medication. It is crucial to make the decisions now to keep your future self safe.

My mother-in-law originally made a verbal decision that her son and daughter would make the choice together about what would happen to her if she were to be on life support. Her daughter said she would continue treatment and pray for a miracle, whereas her son said he would make the difficult decision to "pull the plug."

When she saw the disagreement her children had in the present day, she realized that drafting a living will could put an end to their disagreement and hopefully not mar their relationship in the future.

After you make your decision and draft your "living will" document, you should share your wishes with

loved ones to help release potential angst. It will also give you the opportunity to discuss your choices with anyone that may raise objections.

**Don't let other important documents slip through the cracks**

- **Visitation Directives:** Who do you want as a visitor in your healthcare facility, and who do you prefer to stay away? I bet you didn't know that you and your attorney can draft a visitation directive that puts in writing who can visit you and, if you are so inclined, add in who you prefer stays away. According to federal law, no hospital or long-term care facility can deny your wishes regarding who can visit you—this doesn't mean you won't encounter resistance, but a document like this can serve as the final say.

- **Burial Instructions:** Your burial is your last chance to have a say in your life, and you can create a document regarding who has the authority to give burial instructions on your behalf. Your attorney should check your state's laws to define what documentation is appropriate.

Once you have your healthcare documents in order and feel great about your decisions, make sure that you have copies with you and leave a few with key people in case of an emergency. In today's world, digital files will also suffice.

**You can have control, but only if you take it now**  
The most important things left unattended will fail to serve you, so consider (and reconsider) your life circumstances and review your documents on a regular basis. Update them as needed. Keep your documents current so you can stay in control of your health, your wishes, and live your best life all the way through!

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# When One Drink is One Too Many:

## Understanding and Diagnosing Problematic Alcohol Use

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

**E**xcessive alcohol consumption can often be dismissed as mere social activity, but for many individuals, it becomes a serious health concern. When one drink becomes one too many, it could be a sign of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), a condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of problematic alcohol use is crucial for early intervention and effective treatment.

### Understanding Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol Use Disorder, commonly referred to as alcoholism, is a chronic medical condition characterized by an inability to control alcohol consumption, preoccupation with drinking, increased tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms when alcohol use is reduced or stopped. AUD exists on a spectrum, ranging from mild to severe, and its impact can be both physical and psychological.

### Signs and Symptoms of Problematic Alcohol Use

- 1. Loss of Control:** One of the hallmark signs of AUD is the inability to limit the amount of alcohol consumed. Individuals with AUD may repeatedly try and fail to cut down or control their drinking.
- 2. Neglecting Responsibilities:** People with AUD may neglect their responsibilities at work, school, or home due to excessive drinking or hangovers.
- 3. Craving and Preoccupation:** A strong desire or craving to drink, coupled with spending a significant

amount of time thinking about obtaining or consuming alcohol, can indicate a problem.

- 4. Increased Tolerance:** Over time, individuals with AUD may need more alcohol to achieve the desired effect, leading to increased consumption.
- 5. Withdrawal Symptoms:** When attempting to reduce or stop drinking, individuals with AUD may experience withdrawal symptoms like nausea, sweating, tremors, anxiety, and even seizures.
- 6. Social Isolation:** A person's social life may be negatively impacted as they choose alcohol over spending time with friends and family.
- 7. Risky Behavior:** Engaging in risky activities, such as drinking and driving, while intoxicated can be a red flag for problematic alcohol use.
- 8. Continued Use Despite Consequences:** Using alcohol even when it leads to negative consequences like health problems, relationship issues, or legal troubles is a sign of AUD.
- 9. Loss of Interest:** Hobbies and activities that were once enjoyable may lose their appeal, with drinking taking precedence.
- 10. Failed Attempts to Quit:** Repeated unsuccessful attempts to quit or cut down on alcohol consumption indicate a lack of control.

### Diagnosing Alcohol Use Disorder

Diagnosing AUD involves a comprehensive assessment by a healthcare professional. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) outlines specific criteria for diagnosing AUD. These criteria include evaluating the frequency and severity of symptoms like those mentioned above. The severity of AUD is categorized as mild, moderate, or severe based on the number of symptoms present.

Early intervention and treatment are essential for managing AUD. Effective treatments may include behavioral therapies, counseling, support groups, and, in some cases, medications that help reduce cravings or manage withdrawal symptoms. Family and friends play a crucial role in supporting individuals seeking treatment.

In conclusion, it's important to recognize that when one drink is one too many, it might be a signal of Alcohol Use Disorder. Understanding the signs and symptoms of problematic alcohol use is key to identifying the issue early and seeking appropriate help. AUD is a treatable condition, and with the right support and interventions, individuals can regain control of their lives and achieve lasting recovery.

*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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**RICHARD J. CAPIOLA, MD**  
**239.649.7494**  
704 Goodlette Frank Road North  
Suite 222  
Naples, Florida 34102

# How Orchidia Medical Group Can Help You IMPROVE YOUR SEXUAL PERFORMANCE

By Dr. Carolina Young

**H**aving 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

**At Orchidia Medical, we offer four different treatments to address erectile dysfunction.**

• **GAINSWave®** is a therapy utilizing low-intensity extracorporeal shockwave therapy to optimize men's sexual health and performance. Shockwave therapy is an acoustic wave that, when applied to the soft tissue of the male genitals, results in the repair of existing blood vessels and the growth of new blood vessels. This protocol allows the penis to accept more blood, leading to better quality erections.

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.

#### Orchidia Medical Group

Our mission is to utilize the latest in medical science and apply this with the simple understanding that you want to look, feel, and live better. Let us help you realize your potential well-being and become the individual that you have long desired. Your well-being is worth it!

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# Bidets Gaining Popularity in the USA for Better Hygiene and Eco-Consciousness

In recent years, a quiet revolution has been underway in American bathrooms. Bidets, once considered a luxury item found mainly in upscale hotels or international homes, are now gaining significant popularity across the United States. This surge in interest can be attributed to two major factors: the pursuit of better personal hygiene and a growing eco-consciousness.

For decades, Americans have relied primarily on toilet paper for their post-bathroom hygiene routine. However, as awareness about the limitations of toilet paper has grown, many individuals are seeking more effective and gentle alternatives. Bidets, which use water to cleanse, provide a more thorough and hygienic clean compared to wiping with paper. This shift towards better hygiene practices is also supported by medical experts who highlight the potential benefits of reducing irritation, infections, and discomfort associated with toilet paper use.

Additionally, the bidet's role in supporting environmental sustainability has caught the attention of eco-conscious consumers. The environmental toll of toilet paper production is staggering, with millions of trees being felled and enormous amounts of water and energy being used in the manufacturing process. Bidets, on the other hand, significantly reduce the reliance on toilet paper, offering a more sustainable option for maintaining personal hygiene.

The bidet's water-saving feature is a particularly appealing aspect for those who are mindful of their ecological footprint. Unlike the production of toilet paper, bidets use a relatively small amount of water per use, making them a more environmentally responsible choice. Some modern bidet models even come equipped with adjustable settings, allowing users to control the water pressure and temperature, further optimizing the experience while minimizing water consumption.

Cultural factors and changing perceptions have also contributed to the bidet's growing acceptance in the US. While bidets were once regarded with skepticism or embarrassment due to their association with foreign practices, attitudes are evolving. As international travel becomes more common and global perspectives are embraced, the bidet's benefits are being recognized and embraced by a wider audience.

Manufacturers and innovators in the bathroom technology industry are capitalizing on this trend by introducing a diverse range of bidet products to cater to varying preferences and budgets. Bidet attachments, which can be easily installed on existing toilets, have made the transition convenient and cost-effective. High-tech bidet seats, boasting features like heated seats, warm water jets, and air drying functionalities, provide a luxurious and customizable experience.

In conclusion, bidets are experiencing a well-deserved renaissance in the United States driven by a dual focus on personal hygiene and environmental consciousness. As Americans seek more effective and sustainable alternatives to traditional toilet paper, bidets are stepping up to provide a solution that aligns with modern values. This surge in popularity signifies not only a change in bathroom habits but also a shift towards a more informed and responsible approach to everyday choices. Whether motivated by better hygiene practices or a commitment to preserving the planet, bidets are proving that innovation in the bathroom can lead to a cleaner, greener future.

#### House of Bidets

Founded in 2022, House of Bidets is a small business based in Tampa, Florida. Given the scarcity of toilet paper in recent history, we reevaluated why toilet paper is used at all in the bathroom. It is wasteful, dirty, and plain ineffective compared to the cleaning you receive from a bidet.

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# IS YOUR INDOOR ENVIRONMENT MAKING YOUR PET SICK?

By DR. MATT PRATT-HYATT, REAL TIME LAB & JULIE NICOLL, AMERICAN MOLD EXPERTS SUMMER 2023

**T**oday, let's dive into the question, "Is your indoor environment making your pet sick?" We love our pets, and most of us do whatever it takes to make our pets' lives enjoyable and healthy. We provide them with toys, walks, and the best food to keep them healthy. If they get sick, we take them to the vet to determine the cause and help them feel better. In today's article, I will delve into the issue of how our homes can make our pets sick. When we are talking about the indoor environment and drivers of illness, we need to consider three primary toxin sources: mold, toxins (mycotoxins), and volatile chemicals (VOCs).

Toxins are defined as poisonous substances that are specific to the metabolic activities of a living organism. A common saying in toxicology is that "the dose makes the poison," meaning that anything is toxic if you are given enough of it. However, it is equally important to understand that everyone detoxifies at different rates, and what affects one person may not affect another similarly. Humans, cats, and dogs detoxify at vastly different rates. Since mycotoxins and VOCs are detoxified mainly through binders, this can sometimes be problematic.<sup>1</sup>

Mold and their toxins (mycotoxins) are present in many different environments. These molecules are toxic secondary metabolites produced by fungi in the *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium*, *Fusarium*, and *Stachybotrys genera*.<sup>2</sup> These toxins have a wide range of harmful effects, including immunotoxin (adverse effects on the immune system), nephrotoxic (deterioration of kidney function), hepatotoxic (liver injury), and carcinogenic (can cause cancer).<sup>3</sup> Because of these harmful aspects of mycotoxins, millions of dollars are spent yearly on monitoring food supplies. Strict limits have been imposed on the amounts of different mycotoxins present in foods across the European Union and the United States. However, even with these safeguards, acute poisoning and deaths of dogs fed with food containing maize infested with toxin-producing fungi were reported in 1951, 1998, 2005, and 2020 in the United States.<sup>4,5</sup> **Still, one source of mycotoxin exposure that is starting to be identified in the scientific community is the exposure of fungi and mycotoxins in water damaged buildings (WDBs).** One of the earliest studies was from Tuomi et al.



in 2000. This study showed high levels of mycotoxins in buildings damaged by water.<sup>6</sup> This study has been backed up by multiple other studies including one from Andersen et al. in 2011.<sup>7</sup> A recent test shows dogs seemed to suffer from many of the same symptoms that we see in humans such as lack of energy, tremors, hormone issues, and tumors.

Another reason mold and mycotoxins can be problematic for our pets is their size and closeness to the ground where spores can land. Their body size can make a small dose of mold more impactful. Like humans, any compromised immunity or elderly pets are more susceptible to mold exposure. And since they spend much of their time close to the floor, mold and mycotoxins can be more easily absorbed through the skin or inhaled.

Suppose you are concerned that mold and or mycotoxins might be an issue. In that case, we suggest having a home mold assessment that includes a building history, observations including looking for "invisible" mold that often looks like dust, evaluation of your HVAC, and testing. At all times, make sure your home's humidity remains below 60%.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

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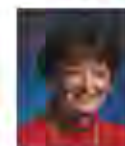
**American Mold Experts** commits to addressing your concerns with experience and professionalism. Knowing the possible effects of short-term and long-term exposure, we work very hard to ensure a healthy & and safe environment after we leave your home or business. Our inspectors are certified by the Professional Mold Inspection Institute (PMII) to perform inspection and remediation services for residential and commercial properties.

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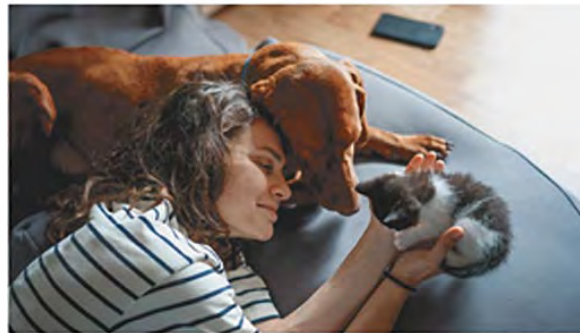
# Shining a Light on Animal Pain Awareness Month

**E**very year, the month of September brings with it a powerful reminder of our responsibility towards the creatures that share our planet. It's a time when we collectively turn our attention to the often silent suffering experienced by animals – a topic brought to the forefront during Animal Pain Awareness Month.

Animal Pain Awareness Month, observed annually in September, serves as a poignant reminder that animals, just like humans, experience pain and discomfort. This month-long campaign aims to educate and sensitize people about the physical and emotional pain that animals can undergo due to various factors, such as illness, injury, and even human activities.

While animals cannot express their pain through words, their behavior often provides us with significant clues. Changes in appetite, restlessness, withdrawal from social interactions, altered gait, and even vocalizations can indicate their suffering. Recognizing these signs is the first step towards addressing their pain.

One of the primary goals of Animal Pain Awareness Month is to foster empathy and understanding. Animals, from pets to wildlife, are an integral part of our world. By recognizing and respecting their capacity to feel pain, we take a significant stride towards more compassionate treatment. This awareness prompts us to make ethical choices, whether it's providing appropriate veterinary care, supporting animal welfare initiatives, or promoting responsible wildlife conservation efforts.



This month also serves as an opportunity to shed light on some alarming practices that cause undue pain to animals. Activities such as factory farming, animal testing, and habitat destruction can lead to immense suffering. By highlighting these issues, the campaign encourages individuals to make informed choices about their consumption habits and lifestyle, contributing to the overall well-being of animals.

In addition to raising awareness, Animal Pain Awareness Month offers a platform for researchers, veterinarians, and animal welfare organizations to share their knowledge and advancements. Scientific research has progressed significantly in understanding animal cognition and emotions, enabling us to better comprehend their pain experiences. This growing body of knowledge contributes to the development of more effective pain management strategies in veterinary care.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards animals. Schools, community organizations, and online platforms take advantage of Animal Pain Awareness Month to impart

knowledge about animal pain, promoting responsible pet ownership, wildlife preservation, and ethical considerations. By starting conversations about these topics, we pave the way for a future where animals' pain is acknowledged and addressed.

In conclusion, Animal Pain Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of our shared responsibility towards the well-being of animals. It calls on us to recognize their capacity to experience pain, prompting us to make compassionate choices in our interactions with them. By raising awareness, fostering empathy, and promoting education, this month-long campaign contributes to a world where animals are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. As we observe this important month, let us remember that compassion knows no bounds – it extends to all living beings that call our planet home.

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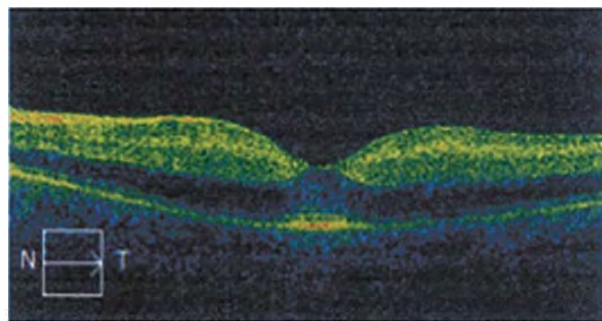


# Early Signs of Heart Disease Appear in the Eyes

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

**E**ye doctors may be able to detect signs of heart disease during a comprehensive eye exam, experts say. A new study from UC San Diego finds that people with heart disease tend to have retinas marked by evidence of eye stroke.

Eye strokes happen when the eye is deprived of blood flow and oxygen, causing cells to die. This creates a mark, called a retinal ischemic perivascular lesion (RIPLs). These marks can be spotted when ophthalmologists use an imaging tool called optical coherence tomography, or OCT, to take a close look at the retina.



OCT scans of the retina (such as the one pictured above) are valuable ways to detect disease and dysfunction in all parts of the body — not just the eyes. There are new technology in those eye scans that could detect signs of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other underlying health conditions.

## How eye exams can detect heart disease

The eye is the only place in the body where a doctor can see the live action of blood vessels, nerves and connecting tissue without relying on an invasive procedure. That is why eye doctors are often the first to detect health conditions including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke and more. While the marks left behind by eye strokes may be present in low numbers in healthy people, those with heart disease tend to have a far greater number. Researchers at UC San Diego arrived at these results by reviewing the medical records of 84 people with known heart disease and 76 healthy people, all of whom had received a retinal OCT scan. According to the researchers, the higher number of RIPLs in the eye, the higher the risk for cardiovascular disease.

"The only place we can visualize the smallest blood vessels in the body without invasive procedure is in the eye. The retina in particular provides important evidence of the adverse effects of cardiovascular issues, such as high blood pressure," said Anthony DeMaria, MD, cardiologist at UC San Diego Health. "It's my hope that the presence of RIPLs in the eye will serve as a marker for cardiovascular disease when patients are undergoing assessment of risk factors for heart disease, or when patients are undergoing evaluation for the suspected presence of heart disease." DeMaria said detection of RIPLs could result in identification of cardiovascular disease that would enable early therapy and preventative measures, and potentially reduce numbers of heart attacks or strokes.

A person's risk for cardiovascular disease is determined by the atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) risk score calculator, the national guideline developed by the American College of Cardiology. The guideline is considered the gold standard for assessing a patient's 10-year risk of experiencing a cardiovascular event, such as heart attack or stroke. In the study, researchers found a correlation between the number of RIPLs in a patient's eye and their ASCVD risk score.

"Globally, cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death and unfortunately many people are unaware they may have heart issues," said Bakhom, MD, PhD, an ophthalmologist at UC San Diego Health. "The key in preventing this is early detection and treatment. It's our hope that by identifying RIPLs as a marker for cardiovascular disease providers will be able to identify heart issues before a catastrophic event, such as a heart attack or a stroke, occurs."

## Catching heart disease early can save lives

"The eyes are a window into our health, and many diseases can manifest in the eye; cardiovascular disease is no exception".

This new study adds to the list of health conditions an eye exam may help detect.

Source:  
<https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/news/eye-stroke-heart-disease-vision-exam-retina-oct>



*Subconjunctival hemorrhages are not a manifestation of cardiovascular disease. Often these sudden onset hemorrhages are concerning to patients but they are rarely of clinical significance.*

"Your ophthalmologist may be able to take an image of your eye to help find cardiovascular disease earlier than before." For people with heart disease — the number one cause of death worldwide — early diagnosis and treatment could help stave off a heart attack or stroke.

## 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.

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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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Every organism in equilibrium (homeostasis) regulates the genetic and metabolism of every one of its cells, through the cellular intelligence. The cellular intelligence at the same time generates the autoimmune intelligence (protecting the cellular system), and the biochemistry and genetics, allowing the communication and nutrition of the cellular system. Natural Energy Healing works with the original amplification, organized and directed energy, able to recognize at a certain specific moment the alterations of the frequencies in conflict. Giving or transmitting the specific amount of energy to the cells now suffering imbalance, resetting their functionality gradually. Natural Energy Healing always is looking for energy body blockages in order to start removing them until finding the root of the issues, during



the process, the Energetic Fields subjected to cleaning will be compensated with wellness reprogramming, generating calm and more lucidity in the patient.

This is the work conducted through José's hands. José has a knowing of how to heal in this way, product of knowledge acquired during his path through lives on the universe and his direct contact with the mother nature on each evolution cycle. He provides the exact amount of energy to the point or points required, through the use of his hands and fingertips, looking for re-establishing the natural flow of the electromagnetic fields, allowing each cell to re-program its wellness information. José has been doing this kind of work since almost 7 years old.

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# Value Based Care Healthcare Model

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

**T**here are more and more Health Clinics opening in SWFL, many are Values Based Care (I can't mention names). They should:

1. Identify patient population and needs...
2. Design appropriate care solutions...
3. Build integrated knowledge teams...
4. Quantify health outcomes and costs metrics...
5. Develop partnerships with technology and healthcare providers...
6. Educate providers and patients...
7. Measure and improve...

How they work is the company is paid a lump sum to manage your care. The doctor will be your primary care provider and will collaborate with their internal team to help manage your care. The goal is to be seen every 3 months, sometime more often depending on your medical condition. They will coordinate your care and services within their network. They work with specific insurance companies, and it varies by company. They often offer a lot of attractive benefits. If there are certain provider's you want to see make sure you can do so. Some do NOT accept Original Medicare and require you to have a Medicare Advantage Plan. Be careful if you change you may NOT be able to get your Medicare Supplement back, plus you are now older and your premium could increase.

**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 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?

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# SUMMER TRENDS IN NAPLES REAL ESTATE

## Cooling Sales Amidst Rising Inventory and Economic Concerns

By Robert Nardi, Broker/Owner

**B**roker analysts reviewing the June 2023 Market Report by the Naples Area Board of REALTORS® (NABOR®), which tracks home listings and sales within Collier County (excluding Marco Island), believe a surge in summer travel contributed to the reduction in home sales in Naples during June. The report showed a 13.6 percent decrease in overall closed sales for the month to 837 closed sales from 969 closed sales in June 2022. Though the dip in closed sales appears temporary and may not linger into July's closed sales data, overall pending sales (homes under contract) in June increased 0.8 percent to 800 pending sales from 794 pending sales. June's showings increased slightly from showings reported in June 2022. Fortunately, slow sales in June did not impact home prices as the median closed price reported in June increased 0.4 percent to \$602,494 from \$600,000 in June 2022.

Overall inventory continues to rise compared to 2022 levels. June had an 8.2 percent increase in comprehensive inventory to 2,659 homes from 2,457 homes. This increase was due to low monthly sales and not because of new listings, which decreased 28.2 percent to 860 new listings from 1,198 new listings in June 2022.

For those of you who would like to look at all the data, please send your request to Robert@NardiRealty.com. I could provide you with the June 2023 statistical chart.



### What does this mean?

Interest rates going up so quickly has made some buyers skittish about entering the market. In addition, they are worried about increasing property taxes and insurance costs. Lastly, they were concerned about inflation and the possibility of a recession. Therefore, the need to purchase ASAP is on the back burner for now. Some good news is that inflation is at a 3% low, and no recession exists. Lastly, another piece of good news is that property values are not crashing and burning. The median and average closed prices continue to hold steady.

Some buyers who are watching the market insist that values are decreasing, but the only values that are going down are overpriced properties; usually, they start with an exaggerated price. Sellers were trying to get as much as they could. However, with all the accessible data, buyers have become much more sophisticated. They see the numbers. Also, potential buyers are using REALTORS® in a consulting capacity to dig deeper into more comps not readily available to the public.

### How about renting for next season?

If you are considering renting for next season, we have some charming rentals available.

If you wish to rent for next season, January through April 2024, please contact my Rental Administrator, Sheri Martin, at 239-571-6189 or email her at sheri@teamonesource.com. Remember property is one of your biggest assets, so I would leverage it as much as you can so you can get a return on your investment.

### Are you thinking about selling or buying?

Please remember that Nardi Realty is a concierge real estate firm where "we treat every customer like our only customer." We could perform a free Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) and provide a listing price if you are considering selling. We could even put together a "Sellers' Net." This Sellers' Net will allow you to see your bottom line after all expenses. The Sellers' Net is a powerful tool because it can provide information to you that could assist you with your decision to sell or not.

If you are thinking about buying, please contact me directly at 239-293-3592, via email at Robert@NardiRealty.com, or perform your own search at [www.BuyNaples.net](http://www.BuyNaples.net). We are an established "red carpet" real estate firm that sells property all the way up to Sarasota and in this market, you need a firm with years of experience and vast knowledge of Southwest Florida and beyond. We can be your resource for finding mortgage companies/banks, insurance agents/brokers, property inspectors, and contractors.

Please enjoy the rest of this hot and "sticky" summer! Hopefully, I will see you in the fall!

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# LIVING WITH DIABETES: Adherence and Advocacy are Essential

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

**D**iabetes is a chronic condition that affects how the body uses energy consumption (glucose) for metabolic processes (energy). If uncontrolled, the disorder can lead to a number of health problems, including heart disease, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure. People with diabetes need to take care of their health by managing their blood sugar levels, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and in most cases, taking medication. Successful diabetes management requires the patient to adhere to the treatment plan and become their own health advocate.

## Most Patients Don't Intentionally Ignore Their Treatment Plan

Too many healthcare providers come up with a treatment plan and then rely on the patient to successfully implement that plan. With diabetes and many chronic diseases, it's just not that simple. Unfortunately, when patients do fall short or fail to implement the plan successfully, the provider's reaction is to label the patient as "non-compliant." This takes the blame off of the healthcare provider and places it on the patient. The word represents a derogatory view of patient self-care and implies patients are intentionally ignoring their provider's advice. This is almost never the reality.

As someone who has lived with diabetes for 43 years and practiced endocrinology for 26 years, I can tell you that almost all patients want to follow the treatment plan. However, some don't fully understand the plan, have difficulties with insulin and other medications prescribed, or encounter financial difficulties or other life events that prevent them from fully following such advice.

## Successful Diabetes Management Requires a Team-based Approach

Instead of "non-compliance" I much prefer the term "non-adherence." This term doesn't blame the patient as someone who deliberately refuses to follow medical advice. Managing diabetes properly requires a huge amount of energy, determination and self advocacy. And, it is a learning process, with setbacks along the way. While the patient is in charge of their disease management,



a focus on "adherence" to a treatment plan focuses more on a team approach between doctor and patient that will result in a more successful outcome.

Behavioral health experts break down the 5 categories of helping patients improve adherence to a treatment plan to the following steps: **Assess, Advise, Agree, Arrange and Assist.**

**1. Assess:** The provider needs to properly assess the patient in terms of where they are in their disease state, how long the disease has been present and what complications exist. People with diabetes need to identify a provider that is well-versed in treating this complicated disease.

**2. Advise:** The provider will advise patients on a proper treatment plan. Patients must identify a provider that they trust. If there is apprehension from the patient regarding the qualifications and/or experience of the provider, then advice may not be considered the gospel.

**3. Agree:** The treatment plan should then be an agreement between doctor and patient taking into account the patient's medical condition, socio-economic factors, lifestyle and goals of treatment. For example, a patient who is 85 years old should not be treated with the same protocol as that of a 35 year old. Many factors should be considered in developing the doctor/patient agreement.

**4. Arrange:** There are several items that should be arranged when the agreement is made. Common considerations are: who will administer the insulin? Who prepares meals and what do they consist of? Will the patient's insurance cover a continuous glucose monitor or blood sugar testing strips? Are dietary recommendations achievable? Is the exercise plan realistic?

**5. Assist:** The last item to be considered in the adherence plan is how the healthcare provider assists the patient. Do prior authorizations need to be done in order to allow the best meds to be covered by insurance companies? How will the patient learn to give insulin? Will family members need to be educated? How will the patient learn to consume a proper diet? Does the patient need to see other specialists such as an ophthalmologist, a nephrologist, a cardiologist, a podiatrist, a dietician, a certified diabetes educator? Does the patient or family have questions that need to be addressed between visits?

I believe a focus on "adherence" will result in much more "compliance" with a treatment plan that is mutually agreed upon by both doctor and patient. At the same time, it is especially important for people with diabetes to be their own health advocates. This means taking an active role in care and speaking up for one's needs. Asking questions and providing input to your provider on your current lifestyle, healthcare goals and challenges that you anticipate will help your provider determine a reasonable and realistic treatment plan. Allow for a continuous, fluid conversation with your provider concerning your challenges, successes and barriers to your diabetes care regimen. For the doctor/patient relationship to be successful long term, remember that YOU are the most important participant in your health care journey. Cheers to good health!

*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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Bio-identical hormones are equal to our body's natural hormones on a molecular level. The difference between synthetic and identical hormones is that synthetic hormones do not match human hormones on a biological level. For example, a very popular synthetic estrogen cream that many physicians prescribe is made from a pregnant horse's urine. Most people can see why the body would not fully accept this substance.



Bio-identical hormones are made from plant sources and are easily received by the body as natural and normal. They are much more therapeutic and effective than synthetic hormonal substances.

Bio-identical progesterone will provide the most efficient way to mesh with the body's natural progesterone receptors. This is critical because body receptors are structure specific. A few of the benefits from bio-identical progesterone are proper embryo development and survival, increase in bone health, protection against breast cancer and endometrial growth, an antidepressant effect, controlling blood clotting and an increased sex drive. The side effects are fatigue and lack of energy or drowsiness.

On the contrary, Progestin (synthetic) doesn't have quite as many benefits. In fact, it has more negative effects, like, miscarriages, weight gain, decreased sex drive, increased risk of breast cancer, high risk of fractures and osteoporosis, increased blood clotting risks, anxiety, depression, migraine headaches and other health related disorders.

Opposite of what some uninformed physicians believe, women that have had a hysterectomy see just as many benefits with progesterone therapy. It's has been widely studied and proven that bio-identical, hormone replacement is just as important and beneficial for their health, even though they no longer have a uterus. For women, progesterone is essential for all of life's stages, and it provides beneficial results outside of the uterus because progesterone receptors are embedded in almost every cell in the body. Women without a uterus still need progesterone therapy.

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# Your Cleaning Service May Be Sweeping More Than Just Dirt Under The Rug



**Pop quiz:** How much do you really know about the people you hire to work in and around your home? Through casual conversations you may know where they live, their children's names and ages. You might know someone for whom they've done work or have a friend or acquaintance in common (that's probably how you found out about them in the first place).

But, what do you really know about your landscaper, electrician, painter, plumber, the cable guy, the guy who fixes your appliances, or the person who cleans your home each week (and to whom you have given a key!)? Are they financially responsible? Have they ever fallen into legal trouble or veered over the line into petty criminal behavior? And what do you really know about the people your service providers employ or how they go about hiring them?

Statistically speaking, there is a high probability that all of the service providers who come into your home are upstanding, law-abiding citizens. They work, right? And perhaps everyone should be forgiven the minor transgressions of their teenage years. But, while you don't need to be paranoid, you can at least be sensible. As a homeowner and customer, it is always your right to inquire about your service provider's hiring and other business practices that if not executed properly and consistently can create financial liability, even danger, for you and your family.

## Five critical sets of questions to ask:

- **Hiring practices.** How and where do you source new employees? Do you check personal references? Do you conduct criminal background checks? Do you verify your employees are legal to work in the U.S.? And do you use credible sources for background checks?
- **Tax practices.** Do you have a federal employer's tax ID number? Are all of your employees of the W-2 variety? Do you pay all FICA, social security, unemployment insurance, and other required tax withholding for yourself and for your employees?
- **Bonding and insurance practices.** Are your employees bonded and insured to cover any damage to or theft of my property? Are you and your employees covered by workers' compensation insurance in the event someone gets injured while working on my property?
- **Certification and training practices.** Do your employees have all the required professional training and certifications to conduct the work I am hiring them to do? And if there is no required certification, do you offer employees training to ensure the protection of my assets?
- **Security practices** (for instances where service providers require unsupervised access to your home). How will you store my key? Who will know that you have it and where it is kept? How will my key be marked? And how susceptible will it be to loss, duplication, or theft?

## Do not be afraid to ask these questions!

If a home service provider is not paying their taxes or insuring their employees properly, you can be financially liable for back taxes, penalties, interest, and for loss or damage to your own property. Also, when you show you are savvy in the hiring process, your service provider is more likely to treat you with respect in other areas, for example, in assessing the work you need done or in quoting you fair rates.

Something else to consider: Best business and employment practices cost business owners money. In order to cut costs, many independent businesses or individuals skip the necessary precautionary measures of running criminal and personal background checks on their employees, thus attracting less than reputable employees to these smaller shop businesses. The benefits and job security provided by a more reputable company tend to attract and retain reputable employees that are keen to their stature in the employment screening process. If a home service provider quotes you a rate that is substantially below market or below their competitors, the difference is likely to be in their operating costs. So, don't just take 'yes' for an answer to the above questions. Ask for documentation! If a potential service provider gets offended or tells you it is none of your business, they could be getting ready to sweep THEIR dirt under YOUR rug.



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# Hope and Optimism

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

**H**ope is confidence in God...not wishful thinking. To have hope is to trust in God to meet our needs...even in the midst of difficult times. When we do go through tough times our confidence in God can get a little rattled, as the Old Testament figure Job experienced. In the midst of his pain and heartache he cried out, "Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?" (Job. 17:15)

Ultimately, hope comes from God. The Scriptures say, "May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13) Hope is an essential element of the Christian's life. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul included hope as one of the top three qualities of a person's life: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13)

As followers of Christ, we are called to be dispensers of hope. We should exude a confidence and trust in God that demonstrates that we have hope. Yet I pose the question, "Can a person be filled with hope without being filled with optimism?" According to the encyclopedia, optimism is "to anticipate the best possible outcome." Can we demonstrate hope in God without anticipating the best possible outcomes of the situations we face?

I believe we can. In fact, I think hope is best exemplified when it is demonstrated in the face of negative circumstances. There are many times when hope and optimism go hand in hand. David had both when he faced Goliath. He had confidence in God and he expected the best possible outcomes...Goliath's defeat and an Israelite victory over the Philistines. And yet, there are many examples of people who had hope in God but did not anticipate the best possible outcomes.

Simon Peter is a good example. He and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They had worked so hard and yet still had nothing to show for their labors. And then Jesus tells them to cast out the net one more time. Simon did not expect to catch any fish. He was pessimistic. But, he had confidence in Jesus, so he cast the net. Though the circumstances did not look promising, his hope in God made up for his lack of optimism.

Esther is another good example. She had confidence that God would ultimately provide deliverance for the Jews but as she prepared to go before the King she said, "...I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16) She demonstrated hope but not necessarily optimism.

The point is this: hope and optimism are not the same thing. You can still be hopeful even if you are not optimistic. You can still be a dispenser of hope even if you think you are going to face hard times ahead because you know that God will meet your needs.

Jesus didn't sound very optimistic when he said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (a rather pessimistic view); but be of good cheer (maintain your hope), I have overcome the world (which is the basis of our hope)." (John 16:33)

Hope doesn't mean that the best possible situations will always occur, but it does mean that in some way God will bring something good or useful out of the situation. As we look into the future, we may not always be filled with optimism, but we must always be filled with hope...God is still in control!



Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church in Naples, Florida. Venture Church meets on the campus of FSW State College on Lely Cultural Blvd. in East Naples. For times and directions, visit [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com).

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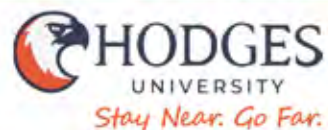
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#### Symptoms that may indicate PAD:

- \* *Weak or tired legs.*
- \* *Difficulty walking or balancing.*
- \* *Some people have atypical symptoms.*

#### PAD pain may feel like:

- \* *Tight, aching, or squeezing pain in the calf, foot, thigh, or buttock that occurs during exercise.*
- \* *The pain usually gets worse during exercise and goes away when you rest.*

#### Advanced PAD stages may cause:

- \* *Leg pain at rest.*
- \* *Skin ulcerations.*
- \* *Gangrene.*

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