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October 2023

Collier Edition - Monthly

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CONTENTS OCTOBER 2023

- 6** A Better Smile Awaits You at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry
- 7** Empowering Lives: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- 8** Cardiologist Catherine Law, M.D., Says It's Never too Late to Improve Your Heart Health
- 9** Empowering Health: The Role of Physical Activity in Reducing Breast Cancer Risk, Recurrence, & Mortality
- 10** Breast Cancer Screening
- 11** Unmasking Parkinson's Disease: Recognizing Prevalence and Warning Signs
- 12** Contact Lens Safety: Do's & Don'ts
- 13** Health Insurance - Important Dates!
- 14** The Overlooked Dangers of Venous Insufficiency
- 15** All Women Recommended to Start Getting Regular Mammograms at Age 40
- 16** Treating Testosterone Deficiency A Functional Doctor's Perspective
- 17** Why Your Knee Hurts, and What to Do About it
- 18** Ketamine Health Centers: Helping Patients Begin Their Recovery Journey One Infusion at a Time
- 20** Come Celebrate with Growing In Health Florida
- 21** Naples Cancer Advisors: A Unique Approach to Concierge-Level Cancer Care
- 22** Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment Program for Retirees and Professionals
- 24** World Sight Day: Shining a Light on Global Vision Health
- 25** Revitalizing Your Appearance
- 26** No Need to Wait Until You Are Injured to See a Physical Therapist
- 27** Elevate Your Beach Life: The Transformative Power of Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy



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CONTACT US

OWNER / ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Cristan Gensing
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

OWNER / CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sonny Gensing
sonny@gwhizmarketing.com



Publishing • Advertising • Web Design • Graphic Design

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

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28 Emsella Chair: The Ultimate Baby Shower Gift for Postpartum Moms

29 Exosomes: New Anti-Aging Powerhouse!

30 Mental Health and Neurological Challenges

31 Stop Overlooking Signs of Incontinence

32 A Groundbreaking Implant to Alleviate Pain From Arthritic Conditions of The Big Toe

33 Medical Marijuana and Depression: A Ray of Hope

34 Back to School Safety: School Buses, Crosswalks, School Zones Oh My!

36 October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month... Genetic Testing is an Option for All!

37 The Game-Changer: Semaglutide Revolutionizes Weight Loss Treatment

43 Breast Cancer Facts: Understanding the Latest Insights and Developments

44 Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Is Preventable - October is National Audiology Awareness Month

45 Physical Therapy: Your First Choice for Optimal Health and Wellness

46 Celebrating a Professional Milestone

47 Unlocking Vitality: The Power of Physical Therapy for Older Adults

48 Hormonal Imbalance and Its Effect on Skin Health

50 Breathe Easy: Planning Your Oxygen Needs for a Stress-Free Holiday Season

52 Myths About Morphine in Hospice Care

54 Lumbar Spinal Stenosis: Understanding the Narrowing Pathway to Relief

55 Pickleball Injuries

56 The Secret to Fixing Pain Fast: Addressing Neurological Compensation

57 Bridging the Gap

58 Understanding Jimmy Buffet's Merkel Cell Carcinoma

59 Bidets: A Refreshing Approach to Colon Cancer Awareness

60 Custom Medications for Your Favorite Feline

61 November is National Diabetes Month

62 Taking the Emotions Out of Investing

63 Understanding Depression: Diagnosis and Expert Management

64 Is it Depression or Dementia?

65 Healing Crystal Tunnel - Natural Energy Healing Because

66 Can Breast Cancer Treatments Have Ocular Side Effects?

67 Steady Real Estate Market Resilience in Naples Amid Rising Interest Rates

68 Revolutionizing Intimacy

69 National Pet Wellness Month

70 Kidney Cancer: Are You at Risk?

71 Compounded Hormone Replacement Therapy

72 Liver Health & Therapeutic Agents

73 Spiritual Wellness: Hungry Heart

74 Remediation Complete... What Next?

75 How to Enjoy Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned



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A Better Smile Awaits You at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

In today's image-conscious world, a radiant smile has become more than just a facial feature; it's a powerful statement of confidence and self-assuredness. Fortunately, the realm of cosmetic dentistry has evolved by leaps and bounds, offering a myriad of innovative techniques and treatments that can transform your smile into a work of art. From teeth whitening and porcelain veneers to invisible braces and complete smile makeovers, the possibilities are as limitless as your imagination.



Alex King

Thank goodness 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, they strive to get you the smile you long for. I

recently talked with a patient at Park Dental to hear how Dr. Scopu and her team transformed the smile and confidence of one of her patients, Alex King. He had nothing but the highest praise for his experience.

Alex, what can you tell me about your dental journey at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry?

Alex: I would start by saying that my experience has been fantastic since day 1. I have always been a bit self-conscious about my smile. When I look back at old photos, I wasn't smiling. I lacked confidence in myself, and it was partly because of my smile.

What made you go to Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry?

Alex: Well, my mother, actually. She went to Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry and got Invisalign aligners, and the results were amazing. So, I talked with Dr. Scopu about my options, and we decided that Invisalign would work for me as well.

How long was the process?

Alex: In all, I wore Invisalign for two years. At first, I had to go in once a month for revisions and adjustments, then every 4-6 weeks, then only once a month. Now, I see my hygienist, Stephanie, twice a year for cleanings.

How were you treated by the staff at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry?

Alex: Fantastic. Dr. Scopu is kind, caring, and patient. She listens to her patients' needs and works to find the right solution for each individual. And Stephanie, my



hygienist, is phenomenal too. I have never had a bad experience at Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry. As soon as you walk in the door, you just know you're in the right place. The whole staff is great.

Wow, it sounds like Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry is the whole package. Thank you for sharing your experience with me, Alex!



So, who is this Dr. Scopu Alex praises so highly?

Dr. Scopu has been Invisalign Certified provider since 2006. She currently holds a Gold Provider status with Invisalign.

In 2014, Dr. Ana Scopu DDS, MSc was one of fewer than 20 general dentists in the United States to have completed a master's degree in Specialized Orthodontics at the prestigious International Medical College at Munster University in Germany.

In addition, Dr. Scopu has had previous orthodontic training with Progressive Orthodontic Seminars. In 2011, she received their two-year Comprehensive Orthodontic Training. In 2012, she followed it up with a one-year program in Advanced Orthodontics and holds a Certificate of Completion for both. Dr. Scopu graduated with a Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree from NYU College of Dentistry in 2007 and holds both Florida and New York state dental licenses. She completed her undergraduate training at Binghamton University NY, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Biology prior to attending dental school.

Since graduating NYUCD, she has completed a one-year general residency program at Wyckoff Heights Medical center in Brooklyn NY in 2008. The program was heavily oriented in Oral Surgery and Prosthodontics.

For twelve years Dr. Scopu worked alongside her husband Mr. Boban Milentijevic, Master Dental Technician in Function and Occlusion and National Board-Certified Dental Technician in Ceramics, creating beautiful smiles at their previous private practice in NY. For over 15 years, Dr. Scopu has completed numerous Continuing Education Courses in Function, Treatment Planning, Esthetic Dentistry, Orthodontics and Implantology. She thrives learning and implementing these new facets into everyday practice. She's frequently leading the industry in perfecting and using newer, more advanced techniques and equipment.

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Don't want to deal with visible metal brackets and wires?

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Invisalign takes a modern approach to straightening teeth by using a custom-made series of aligners created specifically for you. The aligners are made of smooth, comfortable plastic which will gradually and gently shift your teeth. Most people won't even notice you are straightening your teeth.

Dr. Scopu is hosting an Invisalign promotional day Saturday, October 28 at the office, limited spots available. Call today to reserve yours.

When you're ready to experience excellence in dentistry and begin the process of designing your perfect smile and positively impacting your overall health, contact us, or set up your appointment online. It's easier than you think - and you'll be surprised at how affordable it can be. Don't wait until it's too late - contact us today.

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EMPOWERING LIVES:

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Sharla Gayle Patterson, MD, MBA

Every year, October brings with it a vibrant sea of pink, reminding us of the crucial importance of breast health. National Breast Cancer

Awareness Month (NBCAM) is an annual campaign that aims to shed light on the significance of early detection, raise funds for research, and offer support to those affected by breast cancer. In this article, we will delve into the history, significance, and ongoing efforts surrounding NBCAM.

A Historical Perspective

The origins of NBCAM date back to 1985 when the American Cancer Society partnered with a pharmaceutical company to create a week-long campaign focused on promoting mammography as the most effective weapon against breast cancer. Over the years, this campaign grew into the month-long observance we recognize today. The primary goal has always been clear: to increase awareness about breast cancer and encourage women to take proactive steps in their breast health.

Raising Awareness through Pink

One of the most recognizable aspects of NBCAM is the color pink. The Pink Ribbon, now an international symbol of breast cancer awareness, was introduced in the early '90s. Today, pink ribbons and pink-themed events flood the world, unifying people in support of the cause. Beyond the symbolic color, NBCAM serves as a reminder for women to schedule mammograms, conduct self-examinations, and understand the risk factors associated with breast cancer.

The Impact of Early Detection

The significance of early detection cannot be overstated. Mammography, a simple and effective screening tool, can detect breast cancer at an early stage when it's most treatable. NBCAM emphasizes the importance of regular mammograms, particularly for women over 40, as they are at a higher risk. This emphasis on early detection has contributed to a significant reduction in breast cancer mortality rates over the past few decades.

Research and Progress

NBCAM also plays a vital role in funding research for breast cancer. Organizations like Susan G. Komen



and the National Breast Cancer Foundation channel donations towards groundbreaking research, exploring new treatments, and ultimately striving for a cure. Advances in genetics, targeted therapies, and personalized medicine have all been made possible, in part, through these fundraising efforts.

Support and Solidarity

Beyond education and fundraising, NBCAM provides a platform for those affected by breast cancer to share their stories and find support. The emotional and psychological toll of a breast cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and NBCAM ensures that individuals and their families don't face this journey alone. Support groups, survivor stories, and community events foster a sense of solidarity and hope.

Challenges and Ongoing Efforts

Despite remarkable progress, challenges persist. Health disparities, unequal access to screening and treatment, and the burden of metastatic breast cancer remain critical issues. NBCAM continues to address these challenges, advocating for equitable healthcare and amplifying the voices of those affected by breast cancer.

Your Role in NBCAM

As individuals, there are several ways we can actively participate in NBCAM:

- **Regular Screenings:** Schedule a mammogram if you're eligible, and encourage the women in your life to do the same.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about breast cancer risk factors, symptoms, and prevention strategies.
- **Donate and Volunteer:** Contribute to organizations supporting breast cancer research and support services.
- **Share Stories:** Share stories of hope, survival, and resilience to inspire and uplift others.
- **Wear Pink:** Show your support by wearing pink, the color of breast cancer awareness.

In conclusion, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a powerful reminder of the progress made in the fight against breast cancer and the work that still lies ahead. By raising awareness, promoting early detection, funding research, and providing support, NBCAM brings us closer to a world without breast cancer. Let's unite in the mission to empower lives and eradicate this devastating disease.

Magnolia Breast Center – The Trusted Choice for Breast Cancer Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment in Southwest Florida

Breast cancer is a serious, life-threatening disease that must be detected and treated as soon as possible. Whether you want to know your risk of developing cancer, get yourself checked for cancer, or get treated for cancer, the experts at Magnolia Breast Center can help you.

We have extensive experience in treating breast cancer patients – including highly complicated cases and patients with an advanced stage of cancer. We can determine the severity of your condition, take your unique needs and preferences into account, and devise a customized treatment plan to achieve a positive outcome.

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CARDIOLOGIST CATHERINE LAW, M.D., SAYS IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO IMPROVE YOUR HEART HEALTH

Every 33 seconds in the United States, a person dies from cardiovascular disease, making focusing on our heart health more important than ever.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a disease of the heart or blood vessels. Often, reduced blood flow to the heart, brain or body is caused by fatty deposits inside an artery, which hardens and narrows the passageway. CVD is the leading cause of death for men and women worldwide, killing an estimated 17.3 million people annually. CVD is also projected to remain the leading cause of death until 2030.

With heart health and disease prevention in mind, Physicians Regional Medical Group is excited to welcome Dr. Catherine Law, M.D., FACC.

"I find the heart fascinating—especially the mechanisms of how the heart functions and the pathology. Small aberrations in the mechanics and pathways within the heart can ultimately lead to significant physical changes throughout the body," says Law.

Dr. Law is board certified in cardiovascular disease and echocardiography, and she specializes in general cardiology, valvular heart disease, coronary artery disease, heart failure and arrhythmias and preventive medicine. Her specialty interests include women's health, cardiac imaging, coronary artery disease screening, and the evaluation of hypertension and lipid levels.

You may have never considered your heart health before, but Dr. Law says it's never too late to start. Some ways to lower your risk include limiting alcohol use (one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men) and getting 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of strenuous exercise weekly.

It's also important to monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, as well as your BMI. High blood pressure strains your heart and blood vessels, while excess weight, high cholesterol and elevated glucose levels can lead to inflammation



and plaque buildup in arteries. Together, these factors can raise the likelihood of heart attacks, strokes and other heart-related problems.

If you're worried about your cardiovascular disease risk factors, Dr. Law can help.

She received her medical degree from Wright State University's Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, OH, before completing her residency and fellowship at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

Before joining Physicians Regional Medical Group, Dr. Law was a non-invasive cardiologist at Lee Health and Florida Heart Associates. She wants her patients to know she is compassionate, an effective communicator and a patient-oriented physician.

"I like to empower my patients through teaching. Outcomes are better if patients understand their particular disease or structural defects. Knowledge equals power, and patients are encouraged and motivated to make better choices and lifestyle changes when they understand their particular condition," she says.

Dr. Law is accepting new patients at Physicians Regional Founders Square. For more information, call **239-348-4120** or schedule an appointment online.



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EMPOWERING HEALTH: The Role of Physical Activity in Reducing Breast Cancer Risk, Recurrence, and Mortality

By Theresa Vergo, PA-C

Breast cancer, a formidable adversary in the world of women's health, continues to affect millions of lives globally. While advancements in diagnosis and treatment have improved survival rates, the emphasis on prevention and lifestyle interventions remains paramount. Physical activity, long hailed for its multifaceted benefits, has emerged as a powerful ally in the fight against breast cancer. This article explores the compelling evidence that demonstrates how engaging in regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing breast cancer, decrease the likelihood of recurrence, and improve overall survival rates.

Breast Cancer: A Global Health Challenge

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, with approximately 2.3 million new cases diagnosed in 2020 alone (World Cancer Research Fund, 2020). It not only poses a substantial health burden but also exacts a significant emotional and economic toll on individuals, families, and health-care systems. Hence, strategies for prevention and improved outcomes are of paramount importance.

Reducing the Risk

Several comprehensive studies have investigated the relationship between physical activity and breast cancer risk. A meta-analysis published in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* in 2019, which included data from 63 studies, found compelling evidence that regular physical activity can lower the risk of breast cancer (Zheng et al., 2019). The analysis revealed that women with the highest levels of physical activity experienced a 12% reduced risk of breast cancer compared to those with the lowest levels of activity.

The mechanisms behind this risk reduction are multifaceted. Physical activity can help regulate hormonal profiles, including estrogen, which is known to influence breast cancer development. Additionally, regular exercise can enhance the body's immune function, reducing inflammation and oxidative stress, which are key factors in cancer development.

Preventing Recurrence

For those who have battled breast cancer and achieved remission, the fear of recurrence looms large. Encouragingly, research suggests that physical activity plays a pivotal role in reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

A landmark study published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* in 2005 followed 2,987 breast cancer survivors for an average of 91 months (Holmes et al., 2005). The study found that women who engaged in three to five hours of moderate-intensity physical activity per week had a 50% lower risk of breast cancer recurrence compared to those who were less active. Furthermore, the risk of death from any cause was also significantly reduced among physically active survivors.

The physiological benefits of exercise post-treatment are substantial. Physical activity can help control body weight, reduce insulin resistance, and improve cardiovascular health, all of which contribute to reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence. Furthermore, exercise has a positive impact on emotional well-being, which can be particularly vital for those in remission.

Enhancing Survival Rates

For those already diagnosed with breast cancer, the impact of physical activity extends beyond reducing recurrence risk; it can also improve survival rates. A study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in 2019 demonstrated that women diagnosed with breast cancer who engaged in higher levels of physical activity after diagnosis had a significantly lower risk of dying from breast cancer (Iyengar et al., 2019).

The study, which included data from over 6,000 women, found that those who engaged in at least 10 metabolic equivalent task (MET) hours per week of physical activity after diagnosis had a 27% lower risk of breast cancer-specific mortality compared to those who were less active. The association between physical activity and survival was particularly pronounced in women with hormone receptor-positive breast cancer.

The benefits of physical activity on survival extend beyond reducing the risk of cancer recurrence. Exercise helps maintain a healthy body weight, improve cardiovascular health, and enhance overall well-being, all of which contribute to better survival outcomes.

Conclusion

In the battle against breast cancer, prevention and lifestyle interventions are crucial components of a holistic approach to women's health. Regular physical activity has emerged as a powerful weapon in reducing breast cancer risk, decreasing the likelihood of recurrence, and improving survival rates. The evidence is clear: moving more and engaging in exercise not only promotes overall well-being but also plays a vital role in the fight against breast cancer.

While scientific literature strongly supports the benefits of physical activity, it is essential to remember that every woman's health journey is unique. Consulting with healthcare professionals and tailoring an exercise regimen to individual needs and abilities is paramount. Empowering women with the knowledge and tools to incorporate regular physical activity into their lives is a critical step towards a brighter, healthier future in the ongoing fight against breast cancer.

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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.



Breast Cancer Screening

By Sergio Dromi, MD

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month, Proscan Women's Imaging at NCH would like to address some potential questions regarding breast cancer screening. Our goal is to provide comprehensive breast health imaging with exceptional patient care. We are excited to announce the addition of our state of the art imaging facility at 2320 Vanderbilt Beach Road scheduled to open in the month of October where we will be able to offer the same exemplary care in a beautiful new setting.

The Importance of Prior Mammogram Images

A question we often encounter from multiple new patients visiting our practice is why do we ask for prior images when they could easily just get a new mammogram without going through the arduous process of requesting images from another facility. Having the patient's prior mammogram imaging for comparison is paramount in providing the best patient care. To assist patients with the process, our facility will ask them to sign a release form at the end of their screening mammogram visit which will allow us to request their prior images from the previous imaging center and help the radiologist to interpret their mammogram when images are received.



SOME REASONS WHY HAVING A PATIENT'S PRIOR IMAGES ARE SO IMPORTANT:

Reduces unnecessary callbacks

Every patient has a unique distribution of fibroglandular tissue. Comparison with old mammograms allows radiologists to distinguish between normal fibroglandular breast tissue and breast cancer. Both of these can appear similar in mammography. To



ensure stability of tissue distribution is key while interpreting a mammogram to reduce the chances of call back.

Save costs from false-positive results

Having more than one mammogram due to new findings seen on a screening mammogram without comparison not only increases emotional distress and time demand but also costs. Obtaining prior images may help you cut back on expenses from additional images and possible biopsies.

Accuracy of results

Studies have shown that having prior mammograms available for comparison may help radiologists identify any new changes that may indicate early signs of cancer.

Questions about Family History

Our mammogram technologists inquire about patients' personal and family medical history to assess for any changes since their last visit to ensure we have the most updated information and therefore can make the most appropriate recommendations for their care based upon their individual risk for developing breast cancer. This data helps to assess the need for genetic counseling/testing or further breast imaging if necessary.

Paying for Screening Mammogram

Proscan Women's Imaging at NCH does not want cost to present a barrier in getting the appropriate breast cancer screening. If patients have a question about how to cover the cost of a screening mammogram, they are encouraged to inquire about our financial assistance options.



Sergio Dromi, MD

Director of Breast Imaging

Dr. Sergio Dromi worked at the Radiology Department of the National Institutes of Health for five years researching multiple mechanisms for improvement of medication delivery in cancer care. Dr. Dromi is board certified by the American College of Radiology, completing his residency at Georgetown University Hospital (Washington D.C.) as well as his fellowship in Women/Breast Imaging.

He has worked with the University of Maryland Medical Systems as Section Chief of Breast Imaging and Assistant Professor in the Diagnostic Radiology Department. Most recently, Dr. Dromi was the Director of Breast Imaging at Memorial Health Hospital/University of Mercer in Savannah, GA.

Dr. Dromi will lead our Women's Imaging services for ProScan/NCH. His interests include medical education, quality improvement and leading women's imaging in clinical, technological, and operational advancements to facilitate earlier diagnosis and detection.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 239-624-4443.

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UNMASKING PARKINSON'S DISEASE: Recognizing Prevalence and Warning Signs

Parkinson's disease, a complex and progressive neurological disorder, affects millions of people worldwide, with its impact extending far beyond the individuals diagnosed. Understanding its prevalence and recognizing the early warning signs is crucial for timely intervention and improved quality of life. In this article, we delve into the prevalence of Parkinson's disease and the subtle yet significant warning signs that often precede its diagnosis.

The Prevalence of Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's disease, affecting approximately 1% of the global population over the age of 60 (Pringsheim et al., 2014). Although it is more commonly associated with older adults, Parkinson's disease can strike at any age, even in rare cases during childhood.

The prevalence of Parkinson's disease varies by region and ethnicity, with some studies suggesting a higher incidence among Caucasians. Additionally, men are generally more susceptible to Parkinson's disease than women, although the reasons for this gender disparity remain unclear.

Warning Signs of Parkinson's Disease

Early detection of Parkinson's disease is essential for timely medical intervention and improved management of symptoms. While the disease's hallmark motor symptoms, such as tremors, bradykinesia (slowness of movement), and rigidity, are well-known, there are several subtle warning signs that can precede the onset of these characteristic motor impairments:

- **Micrographia:** Micrographia refers to a gradual decrease in handwriting size and legibility. People with Parkinson's disease may notice that their writing becomes progressively smaller and more cramped over time.
- **Loss of Sense of Smell:** Anosmia, or the loss of the sense of smell, can occur years before motor symptoms manifest. Individuals may struggle to detect familiar scents or find certain odors unpleasant.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Sleep disturbances, such as frequent awakenings, restless leg syndrome, or vivid dreams, can be early indicators of Parkinson's disease. These disturbances often disrupt restful sleep, leading to daytime fatigue.

- **Constipation:** Persistent constipation, often overlooked, can be a gastrointestinal symptom of Parkinson's disease. The condition results from the impact of the disease on the autonomic nervous system.

- **Depression and Anxiety:** Mood changes, including depression and anxiety, can occur in the early stages of Parkinson's disease. These emotional shifts may precede motor symptoms, making diagnosis challenging.

- **Reduced Arm Swing:** An alteration in arm swing while walking can be an early indicator of the disease. Some individuals may notice a lack of natural arm movement when walking, leading to a distinctive "stooped" posture.

- **Stooped Posture:** Individuals may develop a stooped posture, known as camptocormia, characterized by a forward-leaning stance that worsens with walking.

- **Voice Changes:** Changes in speech, including softening of the voice, slurring, or hesitations, can occur in the early stages of Parkinson's disease, making communication difficult.

- **Small, Shuffling Steps:** People may develop a shuffling gait with small, rapid steps and difficulty initiating or stopping movement. This can lead to balance issues and an increased risk of falls.

- **Mask-like Expression:** A loss of facial expression, also known as a "mask-like" face, can make individuals appear less expressive and emotional, even when experiencing different emotions.

Recognizing these warning signs and promptly seeking medical evaluation can lead to earlier diagnosis and better management of Parkinson's disease. While there is currently no cure, early intervention with medications and lifestyle modifications can help control symptoms, improve quality of life, and delay disease progression.

Conclusion

Parkinson's disease is a prevalent and challenging neurological disorder that affects individuals and their families on a profound level. Recognizing its prevalence and understanding the subtle warning signs that often precede its diagnosis is paramount to providing timely care and support.

While there is no cure for Parkinson's disease, early intervention can significantly improve the management of symptoms, enhance the quality of life, and offer hope to those affected. Regular check-ups, especially for individuals experiencing one or more of the mentioned warning signs, can aid in the early detection of Parkinson's disease and the initiation of appropriate treatment and support. Increased awareness of these signs is a vital step toward improving the lives of individuals living with Parkinson's disease and advancing research toward a cure.

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.

Aqualane Clinical Research has trials open for people with UNTREATED Parkinson's disease.

You may be eligible if:

- You have been diagnosed with but are not taking any anti-parkinsonian medication
- You are between 30-75 years of age
- You have no clinically significant Orthostatic hypotension

If you or a loved one are interested in this study, please contact Aqualane Clinical Research for more information.



239-529-6780

3200 Bailey Lane • Suite 180 • Naples, FL 34105

www.aqualaneresearch.com

CONTACT LENS SAFETY: DO'S AND DON'TS

By Hunter Vittone, OD

When it comes to vision correction, contact lenses offer a convenient and effective solution. They provide clear vision without the frames of glasses, but it's essential to prioritize safety while wearing them, especially during occasions like Halloween. In this article, we'll explore the do's and don'ts of contact lens safety, and why costume contacts should be a definite "no" during the spooky season.

DO'S FOR CONTACT LENS SAFETY

1. Consult an Eye Care Professional

Before you start wearing contact lenses, schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye care professional. They will assess your eye health, prescribe the right type of lenses, and teach you how to wear and care for them properly.

2. Wash Your Hands Thoroughly

Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling contact lenses. This simple step can prevent the transfer of dirt, oils, and bacteria to your eyes, reducing the risk of infection.

3. Follow the Recommended Wearing Schedule

Different types of contact lenses have varying wearing schedules. It's crucial to follow the guidelines provided by your eye care professional or the lens manufacturer. Overwearing lenses can lead to discomfort and eye problems.

4. Clean and Disinfect Your Lenses

Clean and disinfect your contact lenses as instructed. Use the recommended solutions and avoid using tap water, saliva, or homemade cleaning solutions, as they can lead to infections.

5. Replace Lenses as Directed

Don't exceed the recommended replacement schedule for your lenses. Using old or damaged lenses can harm your eyes and decrease vision quality.

6. Store Lenses Properly

Store your contact lenses in a clean, sterile case with fresh disinfecting solution. Replace your lens case regularly, typically every three months.

7. Remove Lenses if Irritated

If you experience discomfort, redness, or any unusual symptoms while wearing contact lenses, remove them immediately and consult your eye care professional.

DON'TS FOR CONTACT LENS SAFETY

1. Don't Share Lenses

Sharing contact lenses can transfer bacteria and increase the risk of eye infections. Always use your own prescribed lenses.

2. Don't Sleep in Lenses

Unless prescribed for extended wear, avoid sleeping in your contact lenses. Overnight wear can reduce oxygen flow to your corneas, increasing the risk of complications.

3. Don't Wear Lenses While Swimming

Water, whether in a pool, hot tub, or the ocean, can introduce harmful bacteria to your eyes. Remove your lenses before swimming.

4. Don't Use Costume Contacts

Halloween is a time for fun and creativity when people often seek to enhance their costumes with unique accessories. Costume contacts might seem like a fun idea, but they can pose significant risks to your eye health. These non-prescription decorative lenses are not regulated like regular contact lenses and can be of questionable quality.

Costume contacts are often purchased without a prescription or proper fitting, which can lead to discomfort and damage to your eyes. They may not allow your eyes to breathe properly and could potentially scratch the cornea or cause infections. In worst-case scenarios, using costume contacts irresponsibly can lead to permanent vision impairment.

To enjoy a safe and spooky Halloween, prioritize your eye health by avoiding costume contacts. If you want to incorporate special effects into your costume, consider using makeup or other accessories that don't compromise your vision or well-being.

In conclusion, contact lenses offer a convenient way to correct your vision, but it's crucial to follow the do's and don'ts of contact lens safety. Prioritize consultation with an eye care professional, proper hygiene, and adherence to recommended wearing and cleaning routines. This Halloween, remember that costume contacts are a definite "no" if you want to ensure your eyes stay healthy and happy while you celebrate the season.



Hunter Vittone, OD
Optometric Physician

Dr. Hunter Vittone is an optometrist at Center For Sight. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from The Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA, and his Doctor of Optometry degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry in Davie, FL.

Prior to joining Center For Sight, Dr. Vittone completed two optometric externships and earned certifications in CooperVision MiSight Orthokeratology, Paragon CRT Orthokeratology and MoonLens Orthokeratology.

At Center For Sight, Dr. Vittone provides comprehensive eye exams, ocular disease management, glaucoma treatment, dry eye care, as well as family eye care and contact lens fittings. He also provides pre- and post-operative care.

He is a member of the American Optometric Association and the Nova Optometry Practice Management Association.

In his spare time, Dr. Vittone enjoys golfing, fishing, tennis, and taking ski trips during the winter.

Dr. Vittone will be seeing patients in our Naples, FL office.



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700 Neapolitan Way, Naples, FL 34103



Health Insurance – Important Dates!

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

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 don't 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 – Annual Enrollment Period October 15-December 7th, 2023, for January 1st, 2024, effective. Medicare Advantage – Part C & Part D Prescription Plans

Most of the plans in your area have made many changes and things you might not notice, especially important, are your doctors still in network, what tier are your medications and maybe the tier changed, copays, coinsurance. What extras are the plans offering? Maybe you need extra dental, vision, hearing aids. Many plans include some wonderful extra benefits, but it is also particularly important to know how to use the benefit and if they work for you. If the insurance company, you are with comes up with a better plan they will NOT switch you to it automatically. Your insurance agent should be making you aware of a better option. It is illegal for a insurance person to call you regarding Medicare, do not talk to someone you have not given permission to call. Ask them for their National Producer number and report them to Medicare for a unsolicited call.

CMS has made many rules for 2024 Medicare season. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone, you need to agree to be recorded and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that authorizes us to talk to you about Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan it does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics. Many plans have decreased the cost of Insulin which will be a huge savings for so many

in 2024. Part D after you, the plan and the pharmaceutical company paid \$8,000 you no longer have a cost for your medications for the rest of the 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 guarantee issue you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6-month on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! ***Especially important:*** when you move you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

We offer Free Medicare Seminars in Lee & Collier County please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

MARKETPLACE - Obama Care/Affordable Care Act – open enrollment starts November 1st- December 15th for January 1st effective. December 16th to January 15th will have February 1st, 2024, effective. The website is HealthCare.gov, your local insurance agent can help you through the maze. The government also changes each year what how much you can earn to receive subsidy to help lower your cost for insurance. Many people are not aware that they do not need to forgo having health insurance and there are affordable options for them. Insurance is not just about the price of the premium but particularly important the network of doctors, hospital, etc. that you can have access to. Be careful carriers that are selling in your area might not have a good network, so the price might be right but if your hospital and your doctors are not in their network that is a problem. So always check the network!

Understanding deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, what applies to the deductible? Do I have to pay the deductible before the plan pays? This differs by each plan, Copays vs. coinsurance if you do not understand ask, become informed about what you are buying and how it works.

Individual/Family Health Insurance – Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government Market Place Guaranteed Issue Health Insurance. There is a lot to know about the differences, as well as the cost. The monthly premium should not be your only consideration. *You do not know what you do not know so ask the experts*, which do know about all of plans and can help educate and guide you thru the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans, most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the carriers, we are happy to help you through the maze. This is what we do daily, it is second nature to us. We offer virtual seminars, one on one WebEx, phone and in person appointments.

To learn more about your options call to schedule an appointment contact: Logical Insurance Solutions for all your insurance needs, we I am licensed in 30 states.

**Logical
Insurance
Solutions USA**

239.362.0855

**www.Logicalinsurance.com
info@Logicalinsurance.com**

The Overlooked Dangers of Venous Insufficiency

Various forms of venous issues affect 25 million Americans. Their legs are swollen, achy and they have a heavy sensation. When our veins are working properly, they pump blood back to the heart. Valves in the veins are made to open and close in one direction, if these valves or the wall of the veins are damaged, the blood is unable to work against gravity, and the result is a pooling of the blood in our legs. This pooling is called stasis and can present significant risks to our health.

Sometimes venous insufficiency is more of a cosmetic issue and poses little health concerns. This is usually noted in spider veins, which is when the tiny capillaries are damaged, but when the veins are damaged, this can cause varicose veins, which can lead to a much more severe health issues. Neither of these should be taken lightly. Many people walk around with obvious signs of vein disease while others hide it deeper inside the leg and have no clue of the problem escalating in the legs.

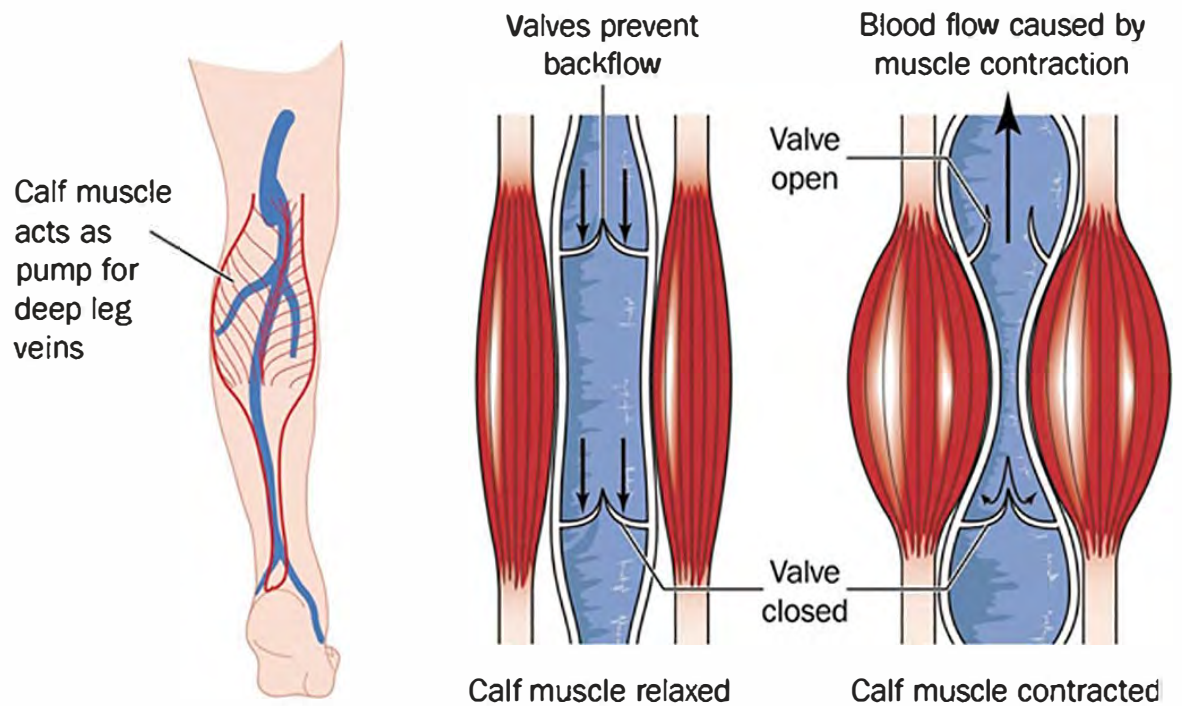
Symptoms of venous insufficiency:

- Swollen legs
- Discoloration on skin (brown or red)
- Tingling/burning/itching sensations
- Heaviness
- Aching
- Cramping

Although it can happen to anyone, the most common factors that put you at risk for vein issues is being a female over the age of 50, pregnancy, sitting for extended periods of time, a family history of varicose veins, smoking, being overweight, and a sedentary lifestyle.

Some people develop ulcerations, or sores on the lower legs and ankles, due to the low level of oxygen in the veins and the uptake of white blood cells. These ulcers and other vein signs can be painLESS or extremely painFUL, resistant to healing and can make one more susceptible for infection and cellulitis

Because the veins and arteries balance each other, when a person has chronic signs and symptoms they most likely can have arterial problems as well. Together, the leg circulation begin to fail exponentially.



Both chronic and acute symptoms could be a sign or lead to a DVT (deep vein thrombosis). DVTs are life-threatening and should be treated immediately. Deep vein thrombosis is a blood clot in the veins that are formed deep in within the legs. Vascular malformations, pelvic tumors or sitting for long periods of time are some of the risk factors that go along with DVTs.

Celebrity and Pro Tennis player Serena Williams suffered a DVT, which led to a pulmonary embolism. Thankfully she had a successful emergency surgery that saved her life. Shortly after having heart surgery, television host, Regis Philbin, also suffered from a DVT. He developed pain in his calf, and after further investigation, the clot was discovered. Fortunately, he too was treated and had a successful outcome.

Every year, over 2 million people are affected by deep vein thrombosis, and sadly over 200,000 of these cases end in death. These are grim statistics since the treatment is minimal and so readily available to patients. Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center feels a more proactive approach, than a reactive one, could save more lives. Speaking to your medical provider is critical if you or a loved one has any of the above mentions signs or symptoms.

Treatment Options for Venous Insufficiency

- Compression Stockings
- Gradient Compression Devices
- Increased Exercise
- Medications
- Surgery (non invasive thermal and chemical ablation performed in the office)

You have options. Being educated on vascular conditions and the available treatment is to your advantage. At the Naples Cardiac & Endovascular Center we deliver comprehensive heart and vascular care tailored to you.



Julian Javier, MD Leandro Perez, MD Tracy Roth, MD

**To Schedule your appointment with
Naples Cardiac and Endovascular Center,
please call (239) 300-0586.**

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1168 Goodlette-Frank Rd N Naples, FL 34102

ALL WOMEN RECOMMENDED TO START GETTING REGULAR MAMMOGRAMS AT AGE 40

Early Detection and Treatment for Breast Cancer Starts with Screenings

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force now recommends women who are at average risk for breast cancer get screening mammograms every two years starting at age 40. The recommendation is in response to the increase in breast cancer diagnoses in younger women and high mortality rates in Black women.

Women with strong family histories of breast cancer, African Americans and those of Ashkenazi Jewish descent should have a risk assessment at age 30 to see if a screening mammogram is needed before they are 40. Women who were previously diagnosed with breast cancer are recommended to be screened with magnetic resonance imaging, an MRI.

“The best chance for survival of any cancer is early diagnosis and treatment,” said Dr. Lisa Hendricks. “Mammograms can detect cancer before any symptoms, such as a lump, or spreading of the disease occurs, which can increase the likelihood of recovery.”

Mammography is an X-ray exam of the breasts used to screen for or diagnose breast cancer. Physicians Regional Healthcare System offers digital imaging technology for mammograms. With digital technology, radiologists can zoom in on particular areas or change brightness or contrast for even greater visibility, and results can be read immediately. It offers numerous benefits to women, including:

- Improved accuracy of screening exams, especially for women with dense breast tissue.
- Less radiation exposure.
- Greater image quality, reducing the need for repeat exams.

Here in Florida, 17,874 new female breast cancer cases were reported in 2020, the most recent year data is available. Cancer is the second leading cause



of death in the United States, exceeded only by heart disease. One of every five deaths in the United States is due to cancer.

Early Detection Saves Lives

While mortality from breast cancer has declined in recent years, it remains the second most common cancer causing death in women. Lung cancer is the most common.

Fortunately, a screening mammogram can help detect breast cancer in its earliest and most treatable stages. Physicians Regional is encouraging women to schedule their screening now, because when breast cancer is detected early, life-saving treatment can begin right away.

Nearly all breast cancers can be treated successfully if found early. The most effective way to detect breast cancer at an early, treatable stage is to have regular mammograms. Since mammography became widely used in the 1980s, the U.S. breast cancer death rate in women has dropped 43 percent through 2020.



To schedule a mammogram, call 239-304-4888. Or, to find a primary care doctor or OB/GYN, visit www.physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com/doctors-providers

Treating Testosterone Deficiency

A Functional Doctor's Perspective

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

The topic of sexual health and low testosterone often causes patients to lower their eyes, shy away from the questions, feel demoralized, and too embarrassed to verbalize their concerns. I see this much more commonly in older men, especially those with hypertension, diabetes, or obesity. There is a lot of evidence in the research literature too, which prompts a close preventive look at the testosterone levels in men. For example, a European male aging study found that a Body Mass Index (BMI) of over 30 kg/meter squared, triples the risk of developing low testosterone with sexual symptoms. Here is the mechanism of obesity driving the decrease in the testosterone: An enzyme called aromatase, which is located within adipose (fat) tissue -increases conversion of testosterone into estrogen. This creates a negative feedback loop to a person's pituitary gland, which starts producing less of the Luteinizing Hormone (LH) -which in turn leads to a decreased production of testosterone hormone by the Leydig cells in the patient's testes.

A large VA study of men over the age of 40, who were monitored over a 5-year period, revealed that mortality in men with normal testosterone was 20.1%, while mortality in men with low testosterone was 34.9%. Other studies have found that men with normal testosterone levels generally have less cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and osteoporosis. Testosterone levels were also found to be lower in men with Alzheimer's disease compared with controls, and some studies suggest that low free testosterone levels may precede AD onset. Lastly, low testosterone is associated with increased all-cause mortality in men > 50 years old compared to controls in observational studies.

In patients with decreased sexual libido and weak or absent erections, a thorough functional physical exam can help pick up on the signs of low testosterone. Some of these signs are:

- Decreased body hair
- Central obesity
- Severe loss of muscle mass
- Breast enlargement or tenderness
- Decreased size and consistency of the testicles
- Anosmia (lack of normal sense of smell)
- Loss of temporal visual fields
- Increased skin pigmentation (possibly consistent with hemochromatosis), or dark patches in axillary folds, called Acanthosis Nigricans

Another opportunity for a functional primary care doctor to pick up on the underlying root causes of the low testosterone level is a through history. Here are some of the common predisposing scenarios I get from the history:

- Patient does not sleep well or has sleep apnea.
- Leads a very sedentary lifestyle and does not exercise adequately.
- Is exposed to chronic ongoing stress levels.
- Uses too much alcohol, opiates, or marijuana.
- Eats SAD (Standard American Diet) low in essential vitamins and minerals.
- Suffers from chronic inflammation.

If the physical exam and a history sound suggestive, I would be prompted to check the following markers in the blood to help in the diagnosis of inadequate testosterone: total and free testosterone, DHEA, pregnenolone, sex hormone binding globulin, Thyroid function hormones, PSA, liver enzymes, estrogen, LH, FSH, inflammatory markers, and insulin sensitivity with HbA1C. In addition to these basic tests, some patients require additional functional tests to address the genetic, gastro-intestinal, environmental, or stress-related root causes of their testosterone imbalance.



And here is what I love about functional medicine: It does not treat people as something broken that needs to be fixed with an additional prescription medication. Instead, functional medicine philosophy believes in the body's innate and infinite wisdom. The job of the functional doctor is to remove the obstacles which are compromising the body's ability to heal itself. So, the approach to low testosterone involves guiding the patient towards profound improvements in their nutrition, lifestyle, and emotional balance, as well as using the temporary vitamins and supplements, targeted to support the pathways involved in body's achieving its optimal testosterone levels.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

The author of 'Diet Slove 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 Core Practice is focused on prevention and holistic approach to illness, and longevity.

720 Fifth Ave S, Unit 209, Naples, FL 34102

Phone: (239) 676-6883

www.customlongevity.com



WHY YOUR KNEE HURTS, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

REGENERATIVE MEDICINE FOR CARTILAGE WEAR OR TEAR

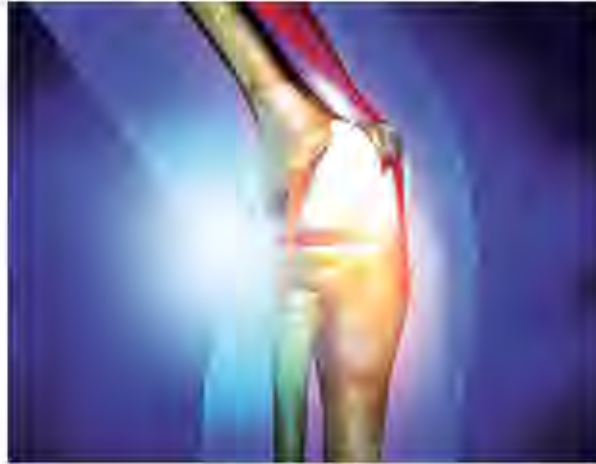
Due to injuries, mechanical issues, or overuse and aging, cartilage may be damaged or lost. Resulting in pain.

Stem cell allograft - In times of injury the body recruits its own stem cells for repair and healing. As we age our own stem cells become less efficient. The addition of millions of young potent stem cells from an allograft helps to body to heal like it did when it was younger and more capable. Allograft is a tissue donation and transplant from one person to another. Connective tissue from one source containing live mesenchymal stem cells may help with inflammation and regeneration of cells in a recipient. Umbilical cord stem cells from Wharton's jelly is considered a connective tissue. The Allograft has nothing to do with the baby. It comes from the umbilical cord from a healthy birth. The umbilical tissue could either be discarded or preserved for medical benefits. The tissue contains no antigens so there is no rejection and no matching required for the recipient. The allograft is administered with a simple injection and there is no downtime after the procedure.

Placental and amniotic fluid allograft - While Wharton's jelly contains 7% by volume mesenchymal stem cells and 93% other growth factors, the placental allograft contains no live stem cells but 100% growth factors. While this application doesn't work quite as well as the live cells combined with the growth factors, if it is done more than once similar results and outcomes can be obtained.

Platelet rich plasma PRP - Platelets from your own blood draw are concentrated and injected into the site of needed repair. Your own platelets release growth factors in the area to also assist in regenerative healing. There are many different techniques for concentrating the platelets. Also, the younger and healthier the patient the healthier the platelets will be, and better outcomes can be expected.

Prolozone Therapy - a proliferative mix of vitamins, natural sugars, and ozone are combined to cause a reduction in inflammation and stimulate tissue repair.



Viscosupplementation - using hyaluronic acid molecules. There are many hyaluronic acid products available that are commonly used to cushion and lubricate the joints. The natural fluid within the knee joint space is normally high in hyaluronic acid molecules. As we age the concentration of these molecules is less therefore the addition of these products can help the joint move better and feel better for a period of time. Examples of these products are Genvisc, Hymovis, Hyalgan, and Synvisc. These products will do nothing to regenerate or repair the joint and the results are temporary.

Mechanical issues - There are 13 muscles which cross the knee joint. These muscles must work in unison to properly move the joint. Some muscles may become too tight and other muscles may become weak over time. The imbalance of tightness or weakness accelerates wear and tear on the joint. There are very few practitioners which are skilled in diagnosing then lengthening the tight muscles and strengthening the weak muscles. To complicate matters further, there are 12 muscles that cross the ankle and 16 muscles that move the hip. When walking these muscles also play a role in the mechanics of the knee joint and must also be considered.

Four nerves from the low back innervate the muscles that move the knee. Nerve function and back function therefore must also be considered in a complete knee rehab regimen.

Alignment - Many patients with knee pain may have worn out only the inside or only the outside of the knee joint. This happens due to the muscle function and the actual alignment of the joint space. The lower bone or shinbone (tibia) may rotate inward or outward or straight back. The malalignment of the joint causes excessive stress and accelerates degeneration and damage unevenly through the joint. The key is early detection before the malalignment becomes permanent.

Even if patients have already had joint replacements, and all medical options have been tried; often correcting the muscle mechanics and alignment can give a good amount of relief.

Although our orthopedic surgeons are brilliant when it comes to joint replacements and other surgeries, they are not usually knowledgeable and would probably even be skeptical of these natural corrective procedures.

We also offer a vast array of physical therapies: light therapies, electrical therapies, laser, shock-wave/acoustic wave, as well as Ozone and Peptide therapy.

Feel Amazing Institute proudly serves the Naples area with comprehensive physical medicine, regenerative medicine, and chiropractic services since 1998. Our office strives for excellence. Whether you suffer from chronic pain, are recovering from an injury, or seeking overall improved health and performance, we have the skills and experience to help you work toward your goals.

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



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239.330.1000

3031 Airport Pulling Rd N
Naples, FL 34105

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Ketamine Health Centers: Helping Patients Begin Their Recovery Journey One Infusion at a Time

Innovation and research continuously provide new tools and therapies to address complex medical conditions in modern medicine. Ketamine, once primarily recognized as an anesthetic agent, has recently gained recognition for its versatile applications in treating various psychiatric and chronic pain disorders. Ketamine infusions, administered under medical supervision, have emerged as a promising and transformative treatment option.

Dr. Jennifer Sandadi, medical director at Ketamine Health Centers, states, "As an anesthesiologist, I have clinically seen the effects of ketamine in the operating room. Ketamine therapy can also help to treat multiple mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, addiction, and chronic pain. As a physician, I felt my responsibility was to extend these benefits to as many people in our community as possible. We opened our center to help those in need and will continue to reach out to the community as long as possible. I am fortunate to say that we have an amazing team of individuals here to help."

Ketamine: Beyond Anesthesia

Ketamine, initially developed in the 1960s as an anesthetic, has found a new purpose in the medical world. Its unique properties make it an invaluable asset in treating previously challenging conditions to manage effectively.

- **Treatment-Resistant Depression (TRD):** Ketamine infusions have shown remarkable success in alleviating symptoms of TRD, a condition where individuals do not respond to conventional antidepressants. The fast-acting nature of ketamine can provide rapid relief, sometimes within hours of administration, offering newfound hope to those suffering from severe depression.

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** PTSD can profoundly impact an individual's life. Ketamine infusions have demonstrated promise in reducing the severity of PTSD symptoms, including intrusive thoughts and nightmares, allowing patients to regain a sense of control and normalcy.

- **Bipolar Disorder:** For individuals with bipolar depression, ketamine infusions can help stabilize mood and minimize depressive episodes. This therapy complements existing treatments and enhances overall quality of life.

- **Chronic Pain Management:** Chronic pain conditions like complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) and fibromyalgia can be debilitating. Ketamine infusions, often in higher doses than for psychiatric conditions, can provide relief by modulating pain signals in the brain and spinal cord.

- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** OCD is characterized by distressing obsessions and compulsive behaviors. Ketamine therapy can offer relief from these symptoms, providing patients with a chance to regain control over their lives.

- **Suicidal Ideation:** Ketamine's rapid antidepressant effects make it a valuable tool in emergency situations, such as when individuals are experiencing acute suicidal ideation. Administered under careful medical supervision, ketamine can stabilize mood and prevent immediate harm.

- **Substance Use Disorders:** Ketamine is being explored as a treatment for addiction. It may help individuals gain insights into their behaviors and motivations, potentially facilitating a smoother recovery process.

The Administration of Ketamine Infusions

Ketamine infusions are administered in a controlled medical setting to ensure patient safety and optimize therapeutic outcomes. The dosage, frequency, and duration of ketamine therapy vary based on the specific condition being treated, the individual's response, and the healthcare provider's recommendations. Patients typically remain awake as they receive the medication intravenously (IV).



Ketamine infusions have transcended their role as an anesthetic agent, offering newfound hope and healing for individuals battling treatment-resistant psychiatric conditions and chronic pain disorders. Their rapid onset of action and efficacy have revolutionized treatment approaches, especially for those who have exhausted conventional therapies.

The first step is awareness, the second step is reaching out....

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In addition to ketamine infusion therapy, our centers have multiple treatment options designed to help you regain control and start living again. Considering your health, our practical and minimally invasive therapies are available for various conditions.

At **Ketamine Health Centers**, our goal is for our patients to succeed. We want to help you to improve functioning and quality of life. Our mission is to provide individualized treatment for each person, in order that they may regain balance in their lives.

With years of medical experience, knowledge, and prior ketamine application, our team of qualified medical experts can provide patients with life-changing, holistic treatments.

Check out our YouTube channel to see what we have to offer and how we can help you.

<https://www.youtube.com/@ketaminehealthcenters9672>

We invite you to stop by the Lee County Civic Center on Saturday, October 14 between 10am and 2pm, to talk with us at the LEE COUNTY SENIOR EXPO. We look forward to seeing you there!

In an effort to address the whole person, Ketamine Health Centers powered by Irwin Naturals Emergence also offers supreme quality nutraceuticals to address the mind-body connection.



Dr. Jennifer Sandadi, MD, Medical Director

Dr. Sandadi, Medical Director, Bonita Springs Ketamine Health Center

Dr. Jennifer Sandadi completed her residency in Anesthesiology at Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, after graduating from the University of MD and the University of Miami School of Medicine. She is

double Board Certified in Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine by the American Board of Anesthesiology. Dr. Sandadi completed her Fellowship Training in Cardiothoracic and Surgical Critical Care Medicine at Columbia University, NY Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Sandadi has served as Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at Cornell University, NY Presbyterian Hospital. She is currently an anesthesiologist in Ft. Myers, FL and serves as the medical director for an outpatient surgery center as well as the Bonita Springs Ketamine Health Center.



Dale Alice Block, LMFT

Dale Alice Block, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Director of Ketamine Health Centers

After graduating from the University of Rhode Island with a masters in MFT, Ms. Block completed three years of post-graduate study in clinical supervision and management, culminating in the AAMFT Qualified Supervisor

designation. Her clinical experience and supervision of other professionals spans 30+ years. She has established and supervised multiple programs, both inpatient and outpatient, including trauma focused care programs, addiction facilities, loss and bereavement programs, neurodiverse support programming, spiritual healing programs, general counseling and currently all clinical aspects of the counseling and alternative services at Ketamine Health Centers across the state.

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Growing in Health Florida is celebrating our **One-Year Anniversary** on Wednesday November 1st. There will be an all-day open house with prizes and giveaways. Everyone is welcome to attend.

In the Evening from 5PM-8PM we will be hosting an educational health and wellness fair. Special guests like Dawn Condor, The Face Natural-ist, will be showing you Facial Yoga and the ancient anti-wrinkle Gua Sha technique. Healthy Heidi is a plant pusher. She loves fresh food choices, talking fresh foods and has a very cool "Tower Garden" that will be on display too.

There will be live entertainment provided by singer Trista Lane Goodman. She's a local favorite singing all those feel good tunes from the 80's & 90's. Food to be provided by LAKOTA by Chef Court. So many more; Five Elements, Happy Healthy, Ryanne Curnow, Studio 431, Kbombcandles, Kris Organics, Yoga on the Beach with Sylvia...

Please mark your calendar and
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We are all looking for new ways to connect with our community members. We want to be healthier and live longer, naturally! This event will bring all those elements together in one place and...

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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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Naples Cancer Advisors:

A Unique Approach to Concierge-Level Cancer Care

Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) is a new type of oncology practice. Opening in early 2023 and following the lead of its very successful counterpart in Cincinnati, Ohio – Cincinnati Cancer Advisors (CCA) – NCA provides consultative oncology services such as secondary case review, care coordination, referrals, clinical trial navigation, financial navigation, and precision oncology services such as genetic testing and counseling. However, there are three striking differences between how NCA delivers services to its patients compared to what they might be used to in the more traditional healthcare setting:

- 1. All NCA services are provided free of charge to patients and their insurance companies are never billed. As such, there are no barriers to each patient receiving concierge-level cancer care.**
- 2. NCA does not administer treatment to patients, instead leaving this to each patient's treating oncologist. NCA has no financial incentive to assume a patient's treatment regimen. Therefore, its only incentive is to work with the treating physician to help optimize each patient's outcome.**
- 3. NCA's consultations are thorough and immersive, lasting up to several hours at a time and affording each patient ample opportunity to understand their diagnosis and treatment options. Again, all at no charge to the patient.**



It was this “NCA Difference” that caused **Robin Zon, MD, FASCO, FACP**, to join NCA and CCA as its Director of Breast Oncology. An expert in building best-in-class telehealth practices, Dr. Zon is

helping refine and build NCA's telehealth practice, which will better serve patients who cannot easily visit, while also providing a pathway to future growth for the practice.

NCA believes that great care begins with a great plan which, in turn, helps to reduce the feelings of chaos that often accompany a cancer diagnosis. NCA accomplishes this through its team-oriented, mission-driven approach to making these services



not only more accessible, but available at **NO COST** to the patient - thanks to the generosity of private donors and foundations.

In addition to its investment in state-of-the-art telehealth equipment, the Naples office benefits from the knowledge, talents and considerable expertise of the oncology team in the Cincinnati office. Telehealth visits also allow NCA to employ world-class specialists, even if they don't reside in Naples or near the Cincinnati Cancer Advisors sister office.

Dr. Zon is considered one of the leaders in the use of telehealth in oncology, having made several recent presentations for the world's most revered clinical oncology society – the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) - particularly pertaining to standards and practice. She was honored with ASCO's Distinguished Achievement Award in 2020 and began serving as the organization's first female President Elect beginning in early 2023 (her full term as President begins in June 2024).

Dr. Zon is an active volunteer for ASCO, most recently being awarded ASCO's Advocate of the Year for her significant advocacy work on behalf of individuals living with cancer and their cancer care teams. Dr. Zon is a Past Chair of ASCO's Government Relations Committee, where she provided distinguished leadership in the society's advocacy efforts. She also served on the Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013, along with participating in many other ASCO-related responsibilities.

Dr. Zon also practices as Physician Emeritus at Michiana Hematology Oncology in Mishawaka, Indiana, where she served as Past-President. She formerly served as Medical Director of Oncology

Research at Memorial Hospital and NCI CCOP Associate and then Principal Investigator until 2013 for the Northern Indiana Cancer Research Consortium, the only NCI-designated Community Cancer Oncology Program in the state of Indiana.

When asked about the importance of telehealth, Dr. Zon stated:

“We learned during COVID-19, and even prior to COVID-19, that telehealth is certainly an adjunct to the care of patients, both with and without cancer. Specifically for patients with cancer, telehealth visits can help allow patients to seek second opinions – as in the case of the NCA – without having to travel distances and spend money and time to do so. I personally hope tele-oncology will be able to help address some of the equity issues related to patient access to care. Tele-oncology is not meant to replace face-to-face visits, but to enhance the care of patients. I look forward to being able to use tele-oncology with NCA to help patients and their families as they deal with their cancer diagnosis and treatments.”

The addition of Dr. Zon brings more than 25 years of oncology experience and a sub specialization in breast cancer which, despite groundbreaking advancements in cancer care and treatment, is still the second leading cause of cancer deaths in U.S. women each year.

Southwest Florida residents with a current or past cancer diagnosis are eligible for a no-cost consultation at Naples Cancer Advisors. The world-class team of experts works directly with your treating physician to help improve your outcome. For more information, call 239.846.2273 (CARE) or visit NaplesCancerAdvisors.org.



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ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR RETIREES AND PROFESSIONALS

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

Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services located at 704 Goodlette Frank Rd. Naples FL 34102, has developed a unique treatment program designed for retirees and professionals who recognize their excessive drinking or drug use, and seek to make an improvement in their lives. In the arena of health and wellness, addiction is a challenge, transcending age and circumstance. For many retired professionals who are grappling with addiction, this battle often unfolds in confounding secrecy, hidden behind a cloak of defensiveness and denial. Within the family, reactions range from concern to exasperation, anger and resentment. The emotional toll exacted by addiction for the individual and the family further complicates the situation, as those affected grapple with feelings of shame, stigma, denial, and isolation. In this fragile emotional ecosystem, hopelessness casts doubt on the possibility of ever breaking free from the relentless cycle of addiction.

Crossroads Intensive Outpatient (IOP) recovery program provides a more supportive, confidential, and tailored environment for individuals who have unique needs and concerns related to their professional lives. By providing a specialized program for retirees and professionals, individuals in recovery can increase their likelihood of successfully overcoming addiction and maintaining their sobriety over the long term. Crossroads offers a balance between the flexibility of outpatient treatment and the structured support of inpatient treatment.

The Rise of Substance Abuse among Seniors:

Until a few years ago, even as the opioid epidemic raged, health providers and researchers paid limited attention to drug use by older adults; concerns focused on the younger, working-age victims who were hardest hit. But as baby boomers have turned 65, the age at which they typically qualify for Medicare, substance use disorders among the older population have climbed steeply.

Evidence of a growing problem has been stacking up. A 2020 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services study of opioid use disorder in people over 65 enrolled in traditional Medicare showed a threefold increase in just five years — to 15.7 cases per 1,000 in 2018 from 4.6 cases per 1,000 in 2013. Furthermore, the study indicated that the stigma of drug use, lead people to underreport it, so the true rate of the disorder is significantly higher.

Upward Trends in Alcohol Abuse in Older Adults:

Alcohol use in older adults has been trending upward over the years, particularly among women. One epidemiologic survey determined that in the United States between 2001 and 2013, among people 65 and older, the rate of alcohol use disorder increased 107%. The University of Michigan's 2021 National Poll on Healthy Aging found that there was a significant growing subset of older adults exceeding the recommended guidelines for alcohol use. In particular, 20% of respondents drank alcohol four or more times per week; 27% reported having six or more drinks on at least one occasion in the past year; and 7% reported alcohol-related blackouts.

Negative Effects of Alcohol Use in Older Adults:

Drinking too much alcohol has negative physical and mental health consequences, including heart and liver problems, memory issues, mood disorders, as well as an increased risk of cancer and a weakened immune system. In addition, age-related changes in the body place older adults who drink alcohol at additional risk. Older adults have increased sensitivity to the effects of alcohol because they typically metabolize alcohol more slowly. Lean body mass also declines with age, and with less muscle to absorb alcohol, older adults feel the effects of alcohol more quickly, even with consumption of lower amounts of alcohol than when they were younger. **Older women are at higher risk** of these effects compared with older men. Combined with other physical changes in the body due to age, older adults who drink alcohol are susceptible to falls, bone fractures, and other unintentional injuries. Given that many older adults are taking multiple prescription medications, another important concern for this age group is the dangerous and sometimes fatal consequence of mixing medications with alcohol.

The Rising Number of Retirees and Professionals Suffering from Drug Addiction and Alcoholism is a Complex Issue With Various Contributing Factors:

1. Stress and Pressure: Professionals often face high levels of stress and pressure in their careers. The demands of the job, long working hours, and the constant need to perform can lead to mental health issues. To cope with these pressures, individuals may turn to drugs or alcohol as a means of escape or relaxation.

2. Retirement Transition: Retirees often experience a sense of loss of purpose and identity when they leave their careers. This transition can be challenging, and some retirees turn to increased alcohol consumption and substance abuse as a way to fill the void or deal with feelings of boredom and isolation.

3. Accessibility: Accessibility to drugs and alcohol plays a significant role. Retirees and professionals typically have the financial means to afford drugs or alcohol, and they may be exposed to social settings where substance use is normalized.

4. Mental Health: Underlying mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, or trauma, can contribute to drug addiction and alcoholism. Numerous studies have shown that people self-medicate with substances to alleviate their emotional pain.

5. Prescription Medications: Both retirees and professionals often develop addiction issues due to the misuse of prescription medications, particularly opioids and benzodiazepines, which may have been initially prescribed for pain management or anxiety.

6. Lack of Support: Stigma surrounding addiction and mental health issues can deter retirees and professionals from seeking help. The fear of professional repercussions or social isolation prevents individuals from reaching out for assistance.

7. Peer Pressure: Often in retirement as well as in certain professions, there is often a culture of alcohol and substance use, making it difficult for individuals to abstain or seek help when they see their peers engaging in similar behaviors.

Addressing the rising number of retirees and professionals suffering from drug addiction and alcoholism requires a multifaceted approach. Crossroads has addressed this alarming trend and developed a separate intensive outpatient program (IOP) addiction recovery program for retirees and professionals that has proven to be successful and important for several reasons:

1. Confidentiality: Retirees and professionals in high-profile positions are often hesitant to seek treatment for addiction in traditional rehab or outpatient



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programs due to concerns about confidentiality. A separate program specifically designed for these individuals provides a more discreet and confidential environment, which increases the likelihood that they will seek and receive treatment.

2. Unique Needs: Retirees and professionals have unique needs and challenges in addiction recovery, such as concerns about their careers or the impact of addiction on their reputations. A separate program can address these needs and provide specialized support and resources for their long-term recovery.

3. Supportive Environment: Crossroads provides a supportive environment with other clients who are facing 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: Crossroads professional track IOP programs provide tailored treatment that addresses the specific needs and challenges of retirees and professionals in recovery. The program includes components such as stress management, grief counseling, and relapse prevention strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of each individual.

Key features of Crossroads Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Alcohol Dependency and Substance Abuse:

1. 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.

2. Group Therapy: Interactive group therapy is a fundamental component that allows participants to share their experiences, learn from others, receive peer support, and practice interpersonal skills in a supportive environment.

3. Individual Counseling: Individual therapy sessions provide a one-on-one setting for clients to work with their therapist on specific personal issues, triggers and coping strategies

4. Family Involvement: The incorporation of family therapy sessions to address family dynamics, educate loved ones about addiction, and provide a platform for communication and healing within the family system.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Continuum of Care: Utilization of 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.

8. Holistic Approach: Incorporation of 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.

9. 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.

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WORLD SIGHT DAY: SHINING A LIGHT ON GLOBAL VISION HEALTH

Every year on the second Thursday of October, World Sight Day is celebrated worldwide to raise awareness about vision-related issues and advocate for better eye care. This global event serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving our sight and addressing the challenges that millions of people face due to vision impairment and blindness. In this article, we will delve into the significance of World Sight Day, its goals, and the urgent need to prioritize vision health on a global scale.

The Significance of World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an annual event organized by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) in collaboration with various eye care organizations, NGOs, governments, and healthcare professionals around the world. This day serves as a platform to highlight the following key issues:

- **Raising Awareness:** World Sight Day plays a crucial role in increasing public awareness about eye health, the prevention of blindness, and the importance of regular eye check-ups.
- **Advocacy:** It provides an opportunity for individuals and organizations to advocate for better access to eye care services, particularly in underserved communities.
- **Collaboration:** World Sight Day fosters collaboration among governments, healthcare providers, and advocacy groups to address vision health disparities and implement effective strategies for prevention and treatment.
- **Education:** It promotes education about common eye conditions, the significance of early diagnosis, and the role of a healthy lifestyle in maintaining good vision.

Global Vision Challenges

While significant progress has been made in improving eye health worldwide, numerous challenges persist, affecting millions of people, particularly in low and middle-income countries:

- **Uncorrected Refractive Errors:** Refractive errors such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism remain a widespread issue, preventing

people from accessing proper vision correction and hindering their daily activities.

- **Cataracts:** Cataracts, a clouding of the eye's lens, are a leading cause of blindness globally. However, cataract surgery is a highly effective treatment that can restore vision.
- **Glaucoma:** Glaucoma, often referred to as the "silent thief of sight," is a progressive eye disease that can lead to irreversible blindness if not detected and treated early.
- **Diabetic Retinopathy:** As diabetes rates continue to rise, so does the prevalence of diabetic retinopathy, a condition that can lead to vision loss if not managed appropriately.
- **Access to Eye Care:** Many individuals, particularly in rural and remote areas, still lack access to essential eye care services, including eye examinations and surgeries.

The Goals of World Sight Day

World Sight Day has specific goals that are aligned with its mission to promote global vision health:

- **Raise Awareness:** The primary goal is to raise awareness about avoidable blindness and vision impairment, emphasizing the importance of regular eye examinations.
- **Advocate for Equity:** World Sight Day calls for action to reduce vision health disparities by ensuring equitable access to eye care services for all.
- **Mobilize Resources:** It aims to mobilize resources and support for eye health programs and initiatives, including research, treatment, and prevention.

- **Promote Collaboration:** World Sight Day encourages collaboration among governments, healthcare providers, NGOs, and communities to work together in addressing vision health challenges.

What You Can Do on World Sight Day

Participating in World Sight Day can be as simple as spreading awareness and supporting eye health initiatives. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- **Schedule an Eye Examination:** If you haven't had an eye check-up recently, World Sight Day is an excellent opportunity to prioritize your vision health.
- **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about common eye conditions, the importance of early detection, and share this knowledge with friends and family.
- **Support Vision Charities:** Consider donating to organizations that provide eye care services and vision correction to underserved communities.
- **Advocate for Eye Health:** Use your voice to advocate for better access to eye care services in your community and beyond.

World Sight Day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of vision health on a global scale. It highlights the progress made in eye care and the significant challenges that still need to be addressed. By coming together on this day, we can raise awareness, advocate for change, and work towards a world where preventable blindness and vision impairment are no longer barriers to living healthy, fulfilling lives. Let us commit to preserving our sight and ensuring that everyone, everywhere, has the opportunity to enjoy the gift of vision.

At Paragon Healthcare, we treat patients with diseases affecting the eye including Thyroid Eye Disease, Exophthalmos, Scleritis, Interstitial Keratitis, Vogt-Koyanagi syndrome, Cyclitis, Retinopathy, Uveitis, Optic Papillitis, and Optic Neuropathy. Nationwide, we have served nearly 1k patients with Inflectra, Remicade, Rituxan, Simponi Aria, steroids, and Tepezza for diseases affecting the eye.

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Our story began in 2002 with a heart to serve people. We strive to make the healthcare process easier for patients and physicians just like you. Our compassionate team of nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and customer service representatives are dedicated to serving each person who joins our family. Each patient receives exceptional and customized care focused on maximizing their quality of life. We specialize in providing life-saving and life-giving infusible and injectable drug therapies through our specialty pharmacies, our infusion centers, and the home setting.



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REVITALIZING YOUR APPEARANCE

Say Goodbye to Jowls with Cutting-Edge Plastic Surgery Techniques

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

Jowls, those pesky sagging skin folds that can make us appear older than we feel, have long been a concern for individuals seeking facial rejuvenation. Fortunately, modern plastic surgery offers a variety of solutions to address jowls, catering to different preferences and needs. In this article, we will explore five effective methods to combat jowls, ranging from non-invasive to more comprehensive surgical approaches.



Non-Invasive Ultherapy

Ultherapy is a remarkable non-invasive procedure that uses focused ultrasound energy to stimulate collagen production deep within the skin. By doing so, it tightens and lifts loose facial tissues, including jowls, without the need for incisions or downtime. Many patients appreciate Ultherapy for its natural-looking results and convenience.



Thread Lift - Minimally Invasive

Thread lifts are a minimally invasive solution to combat jowls. During this procedure, dissolvable threads are strategically placed under the skin, creating an instant lifting effect. Over time, these threads also stimulate collagen production, contributing to long-lasting improvements in skin elasticity.



Ponytail Lift - In-Office Small Surgery

The Ponytail Lift is an innovative in-office surgical technique designed to address jowls and sagging neck skin. This minimally invasive procedure involves creating a discreet incision behind the ear, allowing for the repositioning of facial tissues and the removal of excess skin. The result? A tighter, more youthful jawline without the need for a full facelift.

Liposuction with Renuvion Skin Tightening - In Office

Liposuction, combined with Renuvion skin tightening technology, offers a powerful approach to tackle jowls and redefine your facial contours. Liposuction removes excess fat deposits, while Renuvion's radiofrequency energy tightens and rejuvenates the skin. This dual-action procedure can achieve significant improvements with minimal scarring and downtime.



Full Deep Plane Facelift - In Private Surgical Suite

For individuals seeking a comprehensive solution to jowls and overall facial aging, the Full Deep Plane Facelift may be the ideal choice. This advanced surgical technique involves repositioning deep facial tissues to provide substantial and long-lasting lifting effects. It is typically performed in a private surgical suite, ensuring optimal patient comfort and personalized care.

In conclusion, saying goodbye to jowls and achieving a more youthful appearance is now more attainable than ever. Whether you prefer a non-invasive option like Ultherapy or opt for a more comprehensive solution such as the Full Deep Plane Facelift, the world of plastic surgery offers a range of treatments to cater to your unique needs and goals. Consult with a qualified plastic surgeon to determine which approach is right for you and embark on your journey to a rejuvenated, confident you.

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NO NEED TO WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE INJURED TO SEE A PHYSICAL THERAPIST

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

Many people believe that physical therapy is only needed when recovering from an injury. Makes sense, right?

However, that's not always the case. As we get older, physical therapy can play just as much of a role in preventing injuries as it does in helping us successfully through our recovery. That's why it's important as we age to be proactive about high-risk injuries such as those that result from falling.

Falls are a worldwide public health concern, especially for seniors. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 37.3 million falls that are severe enough to require medical attention occur each year. Additionally, the WHO noted that falls are also the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide. Strategies to prevent these falls from occurring should include additional education, training, and safer environments according to the WHO.

So, what proactive measures can you take to prevent these potentially life-threatening falls? This is when physical therapy can come into play. A physical therapist evaluates and assess the patient for risk of falls, and develops fall prevention strategies and interventions for seniors based on select tests and measures that are designed to gauge the patient's strength, agility, and balance. For example, physical therapists conduct tests such as the Functional Reach Test and the Timed Up & Go Test (TUG) as ways to better understand a patient's fall risk and recovery potential. Physical therapists can then assign and assist in exercises with senior patients to properly counteract these risks.

The Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago, Illinois explains the Functional Reach Test as an exercise that is administered while a patient is standing next to, but not touching a wall. The patient is then instructed to, with the arm that is closer the wall, "reach as far as you can forward without taking a step." Three trials are done, and the final score of the test comes out to the average score of the second two trials.

The other test, the TUG Test, begins with a patient sitting in a chair with their back against the chair's backrest and arms on the chair's arm rests. From



that position, the patient is then timed while standing up, walking three meters, turning around, and returning to their original resting position in the chair. Test results from these quick and easy evaluations help provide a reliable foundation for physical therapists to measure a patient's fall risk and conduct the necessary preventative training.

As a patient, or to perhaps avoid becoming one, taking care of your body through the proper preventative measures before an injury happens is just as important as the recovery process after an injury has already occurred. That's why we often see professionals in fields that require a lot physically constantly training in attempts to get ahead of potential injuries. But you don't have to be a professional athlete, bodybuilder, or manual laborer to take the important steps necessary to take care of your body. That's why when working with a patient, injured or not, it's vital for physical therapists to understand the full scope of their patients' strengths and limitations to assign the correct interventions to prevent any injuries in the future. Workouts and testing exercises such as these are a significant part of a physical therapist's training and responsibilities in the field.

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Robert D. Swift, D.O., Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon, is a national leader in sports medicine and orthopedic joint care with over 20 years of experience in:

- Shoulder, rotator cuff injuries, dislocations, replacement, fractures, and regenerative treatments
- Knee, meniscal tears, ACL, ligament injuries, replacement, and fractures regenerative treatments
- Elbow, tennis elbow, golfer's elbow, ligament injuries, impingement and arthritis
- Hip, tendon injuries, bursitis, sports hip injuries, replacement and regenerative treatments
- Ankle, tendon and ligament injuries, sports injuries, sprains, fractures, regenerative treatments

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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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EMSELLA CHAIR

The Ultimate Baby Shower Gift for Postpartum Moms

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Welcoming a new baby into the world is undoubtedly a joyous occasion, and celebrating it with thoughtful gifts is a cherished tradition. But what do you get for a seasoned mom who has all the baby essentials like cribs and strollers? Look no further than the Emsella Chair, a revolutionary magnetic chair designed to help women regain their pelvic floor strength after childbirth. In this article, we'll explore the benefits of this remarkable device and why it makes the perfect baby shower gift for moms who have been through it all.

The Postpartum Pelvic Challenge

Childbirth is a beautiful and transformative experience, but it can take a toll on a woman's body, particularly the pelvic floor muscles. These muscles play a crucial role in supporting the bladder, uterus, and rectum. After giving birth, they often become weakened, leading to issues such as pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence later in life.

The Emsella Chair Solution

Enter the Emsella Chair – a game-changer in postpartum recovery. This innovative chair employs electromagnetic technology that, with each session, simulates the effect of 11,000 Kegel exercises. A full treatment typically consists of six sessions, and the results are nothing short of astonishing.

How It Works

The Emsella Chair utilizes High-Intensity Focused Electromagnetic (HIFEM®) technology to stimulate the pelvic floor muscles. When a patient sits in the chair, electromagnetic waves penetrate deep into the muscles, causing rapid contractions. These contractions are involuntary, mimicking the natural process of Kegel exercises but with much greater intensity.

The Benefits

Efficiency: One of the most remarkable aspects of the Emsella Chair is its efficiency. Busy moms don't always have the time or energy for traditional exercises, but a 30-minute session in the chair is equivalent to hours of manual Kegel exercises.



Non-Invasive: Unlike surgical procedures, the Emsella Chair is non-invasive. There are no incisions, anesthesia, or recovery time required. Moms can return to their daily activities immediately after a session.

Effective Results: The chair's ability to rapidly strengthen the pelvic floor muscles can help prevent and alleviate issues like urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse, common concerns for women who have given birth.

When to Start

Dr. Gauta, a renowned expert in women's health, recommends waiting for approximately three months after childbirth before beginning Emsella Chair treatment. This allows the body time to heal and ensures the best results.

The Perfect Baby Shower Gift

Now, you may be wondering why the Emsella Chair makes such an ideal baby shower gift. Well, consider this: while cribs and strollers are undoubtedly essential, the gift of postpartum recovery is equally invaluable. Helping a mom regain her pelvic floor strength contributes to her overall well-being and quality of life.

In a time when self-care is crucial, the Emsella Chair is a thoughtful and forward-thinking gift. It shows that you care not only about the new addition to the family but also about the health and happiness of the remarkable woman who brought that new life into the world.

When pondering the perfect baby shower gift for a mom who's seen it all, think beyond the onesies and baby blankets. Consider gifting the Emsella Chair, a remarkable device that can help her reclaim her strength and confidence postpartum. With its non-invasive approach and impressive results, it's a thoughtful gesture that speaks volumes about your care and consideration for her well-being. Give the gift of a stronger, healthier pelvic floor – a gift that keeps on giving for years to come.



Some comments from local users:

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

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



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Rosemarie Dobrydney, APRN


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EXOSOMES

New Anti-Aging Powerhouse!

By Kathleen M. Marc, MD, FACOG

Over the past few years, exosomes have made a name in the field of rejuvenation and antiaging. Based on the available data, it seems that exosomes will be an integral part of rejuvenation therapy, especially in people interested in stem cell therapy.

Unsurprisingly, many people have never heard of exosomes. So, what exactly are exosomes? How would they help with aging?

Exosomes, which are extracellular vesicles secreted by stem cells, are a powerful addition to regenerative medicine and restoration of skin health. They target the root causes of skin aging and can be used in both hair restoration and skin rejuvenation.

Stem cells, derived from adipose tissue of young adults, secrete cell-free vesicles called exosomes, which are active in cell-to-cell communication. They carry growth factors, peptides and protein-signaling molecules that facilitate cell growth. They are attracted to cells with inflammation and are absorbed. There, they release their cargo, which then works to speed up the regenerative process.

We stop producing elastin by age 18. Collagen production significantly slows by age 25. Exosomes have benefits that surpass PRP, platelet-rich plasma. Exosomes contain over 50 growth factors, compared to 8-10 growth factors in young/healthy adult PRP. It promotes skin cell proliferation by 80%.

Exosomes are indicated for topical use to improve the health of skin and hair. This regenerative complex can be combined with energy devices used in aesthetic procedures for amazing results. When Benev Exosomes are combined with any treatment that causes a wound healing response, they have been clinically proven to produce 300% more elastin and 600% more collagen than controls! The addition of these exosomes has also been shown to cut recovery time in half.



Exosomes can be used with micro-needling, after laser procedures, intense pulsed light (IPL) procedures, after chemical peels and after radiofrequency procedures (RF). They can be used in hair restoration with micro-needling of the scalp.

Exosome therapy for skin rejuvenation

As we age, our skin becomes prone to age-related deterioration, such as wrinkles. Primarily, these issues originate when you can't regenerate the lost components of your skin.

When applied to the skin, this treatment is highly effective for signs of aging, a dull and dehydrated complexion, calming sensitive skin, reducing lesions and scars (such as acne scars), creating a more even texture, and for shrinking enlarged pores.

Exosomes assist directly with increasing skin elasticity and collagen to promote firmness and smoothness. They carry the necessary information to the resident cells to trigger the repair of fine lines, wrinkles and areas of damaged texture. Patients should expect to see a reduction in skin irritation, redness, fine lines, age spots, dullness, and dryness.

Exosome therapy has been shown to improve acne, sagging skin, enlarged pores, scarring, uneven tone and have often been shown to increase volume in hollowed portions of the face due to aging.¹

Exosome therapy for hair loss

Exosome therapy for hair loss uses natural growth factors from the human body to help regenerate and regrow hair in both men and women. Exosome Therapy is particularly effective at restoring hair growth in the earlier stages of hair loss.

Exosomes are introduced around existing hair follicles to strengthen and upregulate them. This type of therapy can also stimulate the growth of new hair follicles in patients with hair thinning, balding and excessive shedding. The causes for this hair loss could be attributed to a host of reasons such as metabolic disorders, stress hormones, hormonal imbalances, free radical damage and genetics in both men and women.

Exosomes will cause natural hair growth in as little as two to three months, continuing throughout the year. The most noticeable results will be fully apparent after about six months.

Aesthetic Treatment Centers

As a leader in the industry, ATC always offers the latest technology in skin and body care. By combining their expertise through industry leaders, innovative procedures, and cutting-edge products, you will always receive remarkable results within the serene, inviting atmosphere of Aesthetic Treatment Centers.

References:

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Kathleen M Marc, MD, FACOG

Medical Director

Clinical Instructor Harvard Medical School
Associate Professor Tufts University School of Medicine



720 Goodlette-Frank Road, Suite 300
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Mental Health and Neurological Challenges

When living with neurological deficits, mental health is often negatively impacted. Lasene offers a positive and unique approach to improving an individual's quality of life.

What happens when you are diagnosed with a neurological disorder? Some research indicates that 1 out of 3 individuals diagnosed with a neurological disorder will experience depression. Among individuals with neurological diseases, depression is associated with greater cognitive deficits, more significant impairments in activities of daily living, and a lower quality of life.

Lasene's goals are to reduce the complications of Parkinson's disease, brain trauma, and other neurological disorders while improving the QoL (Quality of Life) for each individual who participates in the Lasene program.

The human brain is amazing! It is truly inspiring that science and research continue to learn about the brain and how it works, as well as what causes difficulties in life. It is through recent technological advances that we can find ways to help the brain achieve much-needed functions such as sleep and memory.

Lasene is a company that provides advanced technology and treatments for fostering functional improvement for those individuals living with neurological conditions such as Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, and other conditions. Lasene offers the chance not only to achieve a better quality of life but also to address clearer thinking to manage additional complications such as depression.

As an example, if you are feeling depressed following a diagnosis and/or living with Parkinson's, wouldn't you want to try to find help in improving your quality of life while continuing to address your neurological difficulties through treatment? Lasene does not promise a cure for degenerative complications; however, typically over a six-month program, Lasene can provide advanced technology to rehabilitate areas of the nerve, muscle, and skeletal systems that are affected by neurological ailments.



Lasene's programs have resulted in an overwhelming majority of patients treated seeing hugely positive results that resonate in all parts of their lives. Improvements in life functions from individuals who have been through the Lasene program include:

- Improved memory, thought processes, word search
- Improved posture, gait, balance
- Improved sleep, mood, digestion

Are you or someone you know living with neurological deficits, such as Parkinson's, Early Alzheimer's, or Brain Injury? Are you experiencing chronic pain or difficulty sleeping? Lasene Neural Therapeutics – Improve your Quality of Life, experience the power of restorative care in multiple areas.



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About Us

Lasene is bridging the gap between the world's finest Therapeutic Light Treatments technology and proprietary advanced treatment protocols for rapid management of chronic pain and functional restoration of quality-of-life metrics for our patients living with Parkinson's, sleep disorders, deterioration of executive function, and other neurological degenerative ailments.

Lasene is part of a series of research-based protocols focusing on the world of pain management and neurological restoration. From our discoveries, we pioneer the strategies to deliver safe, affordable, and effective care to assist those in need.

As the founders of Lasene, our 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 our patients back to a more active and productive life.



Stop Overlooking Signs of Incontinence

By Rolando Rivera, MD, FACS

Urinary incontinence is a common medical condition that affects over 40 million Americans, yet it often goes untreated or unrecognized. The reason for this trend is multifactorial, spanning from embarrassment to speak about this topic to dealing with more acute or morbid conditions that require focused attention.

Nevertheless, it is a treatable condition that frequently affects the quality of life of patients. Incontinence is classified as stress, urge, mixed and overflow.

In this article we will address some particular issues about urge incontinence.

Urinary urge incontinence (UUI) is defined as a sudden uncontrollable urge to urinate with or without frequent urination and associated leakage of urine. With urge incontinence, the bladder contracts and squeezes out urine involuntarily. Accidental urination can be triggered by

- sudden change in position or activity
- hearing or touching running water
- drinking a small amount of liquid

Patients with overactive bladder symptoms, such as urinary urgency, frequency and nocturia, may have associated incontinence over 60% of the time. Though more common in women than men overall, after the age of 70 the prevalence in both sexes is about equal.

There are two bladder abnormalities that are associated to UUI: neurogenic overactivity and detrusor overactivity (DO).

Neurogenic bladder occurs when there is interruption in the normal nerve conduction from the brain or spinal cord above the sacrum to the bladder, and results in loss of bladder sensation and motor control. Conditions associated with neurogenic bladder include the following:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Intervertebral disk disease
- Cerebrovascular events
- Diabetes
- Traumatic brain or upper spinal cord injury
- Brain or spinal cord tumors



DO can occur due to multiple conditions, and many times as a sequelae of others; frequently, it may be idiopathic. Dysfunctions of the detrusor muscle or nerve pathways are the culprits for the bladder over-activity. Conditions that can lead to DO include:

- Bladder polyps and tumors
- Urinary tract infections
- Bladder calculi
- Bladder outlet obstruction from BPH or stricture disease

Medications, such as diuretics, increase the urgency and frequency of urination in some people, especially the elderly and bedridden. Dosage modification may ameliorate the bothersome symptoms. Dietary habits may lead to significant voiding symptoms. Caffeine (e.g., in coffee, tea, chocolate), carbonated beverages, spicy foods and tomato-based foods can irritate the bladder and cause detrusor instability, resulting in urge incontinence.

The treatment and management of urge incontinence includes nonsurgical and surgical modalities. An important factor, however, is identifying the potentially morbid or life-threatening conditions that may lead to incontinence, such as bladder cancer, recurrent UTI or neurogenic disorders.

Anticholinergics have been shown to be very effective in the treatment of both neurogenic and idiopathic cause of UUI. As a class, side effects include confusion, dry mouth, constipation, dizziness, visual changes and urinary retention to name a few. Beyond medications there are simple yet effective treatments.

Advanced treatment modalities for refractory patients to conservative therapy and anticholinergics are available in the urologic armamentarium. Urological evaluation of these patients will most likely

include a cystoscopy, urine cultures and urine cytology to rule out bladder pathology and bladder malignancies. As well, a detailed, computerized assessment study of bladder function called urodynamics may help the clinician in establishing the best treatment option.

Neuromodulation, either via sacral nerve pathways (Interstim) or peripheral nerve pathways (Urgent PC), have been shown to be very effective in the treatment of UUI in patients with refractory disease. These modalities are safe, FDA approved, minimally invasive and provide, through neural pathways, improvement in bladder function. Urgent PC is an outpatient, office-based, nonsurgical therapy that affects the sacral nerve plexus through retrograde pathways (posterior tibial nerve). Interstim utilizes the sacral nerve S3 to provide parasympathetic inhibition, thereby decreasing bladder over-activity. It is based on pacemaker technology, and effective in about 70% of refractory patients.

Injection of botulinum toxin (Botox) into the bladder muscle (intravesical injection) is an experimental treatment for refractory urge incontinence. This treatment has been shown to successfully reduce the instability that leads to urgency in both idiopathic and neurogenic patients.

Surgical urinary diversion is an invasive therapy used mostly for severe patients refractory to all other therapies.

Urinary incontinence is a common but overlooked problem. Urologic evaluation is warranted in refractory patients, or in patients in whom underlying bladder pathology or anatomic abnormalities, such as prolapsed, need to be addressed as well. Intervention beyond medications will significantly improve the quality of life of these patients.



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A Groundbreaking Implant to Alleviate Pain From Arthritic Conditions of The Big Toe

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

Bunions are a form of arthritis and can cause painful, red, bony growths; consequently, bunions can also be hereditary and run in families, especially in females. More women than men experience the painful bony growth on their big toe, known as a bunion, or Hallux Valgus. More often than not, bunions hurt more when wearing shoes. Wearing shoes causes pressure on your toe joint, which in turn starts to ache, become fluid filled and can have bony growths. We all need to wear shoes, so is there anything that really works to heal bunions?

Non-Surgical, Conservative Approach

For a conservative approach, many individuals will start out trying to alleviate their pain by wearing more comfortable shoes, or by wearing gel toe inserts that help keep the toes in the proper alignment. Icing the foot can help to tamp down inflammations, as well as taking NSAID's (ibuprofen) as needed to lessen the discomfort. However, this is usually not beneficial. **Because most bunions fail to heal on their own, surgery is usually recommended.**

In traditional bunion surgery, the toe bone is cut in half, and part of the bone is removed. In many cases, there is a need to relieve tension on surrounding ligaments and tendons to try and realign the joint and bones. The total recovery can take a few months, but initially, you will be in a protective boot or cast for the first two to four weeks.

A groundbreaking Hallux Joint Implant can alleviate arthritic pain from bone on bone friction. It allows pain free movement of the joint.

There is a Cutting Edge Procedure called CARTIVA® SCI

Joint resurfacing with CARTIVA® SCI is simple, does not require significant removal of healthy tissue, and typically results in nominal surgical trauma and rapid recovery. It's minimally invasive and uses unique instruments to deliver the synthetic cartilage to the damaged joint.



The CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) device is comprised of an organic hydrogel polymer made of polyvinyl alcohol and saline. CARTIVA® SCI has a high water content, and its elastic and compressive mechanical properties are similar to articular cartilage. The device is intended to replace focal areas of painful damaged cartilage thereby reducing pain and maintaining range of motion in the first metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint.

CARTIVA® SCI is the first implant that behaves like the natural cartilage of your joint to relieve pain and improve mobility for patients suffering from big toe arthritis. **WHY CARTIVA® SCI?** Unlike fusion surgery, CARTIVA® SCI reduces joint pain without sacrificing your foot's natural movement

Your big toe joint is uniquely designed for movement and provides most of the force needed for walking and running. Unlike fusion surgery, which locks the joint in place, CARTIVA® Synthetic Cartilage Implant (SCI) reduces pain while also allowing your joint to move how it's supposed to.

Quick Procedure & Quick Recovery

Implanting CARTIVA® SCI is 40% faster than the alternative fusion surgery. There are no casts or crutches required. Patients can typically bear weight immediately after receiving CARTIVA® SCI.

Long Term Results

CARTIVA® SCI is proven to provide long-term pain reduction and increased foot mobility, with 97% reduction in pain demonstrated at almost six years post-procedure.

Collier Podiatry

Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 20 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. If you are experiencing any foot pain or foot conditions, please contact Collier Podiatry. Their kind and well-trained staff are ready to answer your questions and concerns and get you back on your feet again.

Contact Collier Podiatry to make your appointment. Please visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com, or call them at (239) 775-0019.

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www.collierpodiatry.com

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1715 Heritage Trail, Suite 204
Naples, FL 34112
Phone: (239) 775-0019
Fax: (239) 775-0219

MEDICAL MARIJUANA AND DEPRESSION: A RAY OF HOPE

Depression is a common mental health disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It can have a debilitating impact on one's life, making even daily activities seem overwhelming with little enjoyment. Traditional treatments, such as therapy and antidepressant medications, work well for many individuals, but there are cases where these approaches may be ineffective or cause unpleasant side effects. In recent years, medical marijuana has gained attention as a potential alternative treatment for depression for those who are looking for an alternative approach to traditional pharmaceuticals. This article explores the relationship between medical marijuana and depression, discussing its potential benefits and considerations for its use.

Understanding Depression

Depression is a complex mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, low energy, and a sense of worthlessness. It can significantly affect a person's ability to function in daily life, impacting relationships, work, and overall well-being. Depression can be triggered by various factors, including biological, genetic, environmental, and psychological elements. According to the WHO, 3.8% of the population experience depression. Depression is more common in women and adults over 60 years old.

Medical Marijuana and its Components

Medical marijuana refers to the use of cannabis or cannabinoids for medical purposes. Cannabis contains more than 100 different compounds, known as cannabinoids, with the two most studied being tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is psychoactive and responsible for the "high" associated with marijuana, while CBD is non-psychoactive and has potential therapeutic effects. CBC, CBG, and CBN have also been shown in studies to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR DEPRESSION

Mood Regulation:

Medical marijuana, particularly CBD, has shown promise in mood regulation. CBD interacts with the endocannabinoid system in the brain, which plays a role in mood regulation. Some studies suggest that CBD may help alleviate symptoms of depression by influencing serotonin receptors.



Stress Reduction:

Chronic stress often accompanies depression. Certain strains of medical marijuana, particularly those high in CBD, may help reduce stress levels and induce a sense of relaxation. This can be beneficial for individuals struggling with anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Appetite Stimulation:

Depression can lead to a loss of appetite and subsequent weight loss. Medical marijuana, especially strains high in THC, can stimulate appetite, potentially aiding individuals in regaining lost weight and improving overall nutrition.

Sleep Improvement:

Sleep is absolutely vital to one's physical health and wellbeing. Insomnia and disrupted sleep patterns are common in individuals with depression. Certain strains of medical marijuana, particularly indica strains, may have sedative effects, helping individuals achieve better sleep and rest. This can include both falling asleep faster and staying asleep longer.

Pain Relief:

Chronic pain often coexists with depression. Medical marijuana, particularly strains with a balanced ratio of THC and CBD, can provide pain relief, enhancing the overall well-being of individuals struggling with both depression and chronic pain. Cannabinoids in medical cannabis also have strong anti-inflammatory properties that work particularly well for those whose pain may stem from inflammation, such as arthritis.

CONSIDERATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

Consultation with a Medical Professional:

Before considering medical marijuana as a treatment for depression, it's essential to consult a healthcare professional, especially one with expertise in medical marijuana. They can provide guidance based on an individual's medical history, current medications, and specific circumstances.

Strain Selection:

The choice of marijuana strain is crucial. Strains high in CBD and low in THC are often recommended for individuals seeking therapeutic effects without the psychoactive "high" associated with THC. With 100's of licensed dispensaries in Florida, there are countless strains and product lines that have been engineered for specific symptoms and condition.

Dosage and Administration:

Determining the appropriate dosage and method of administration is essential. Starting with a low dose and gradually increasing it under medical supervision can help manage potential side effects and achieve the desired therapeutic effect.

Awareness of Potential Side Effects:

Like any medication, medical marijuana can have side effects, including dry mouth, increased heart rate, impaired memory, and altered judgment. Being aware of these potential side effects is important for informed decision-making and working with a licensed marijuana practitioner will help you properly balance the benefits vs any undesirable effects.

Conclusion

Medical marijuana holds promise as an alternative treatment for depression, offering potential mood regulation, stress reduction, appetite stimulation, improved sleep, and pain relief. However, it's crucial to consult with a medical professional and understand the appropriate strain, dosage, and administration methods. Further research and clinical trials are necessary to fully comprehend the efficacy of medical marijuana for depression, but its potential as a complementary or alternative treatment offers hope to those seeking relief from this debilitating condition.



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Back to School Safety: School Buses, Crosswalks, School Zones – Oh My!

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

It's back to school season in Florida. As school buses and students hit the roads, it is important that all Floridians have a clear understanding of the role they play in keeping students safe during this busy time of year.

Florida has adopted safety laws that apply specifically to school buses, crosswalks, and school zones. While drivers who violate these laws can get tickets that carry fines and points, they can also put students' lives in jeopardy. As a result, all drivers need to know – and follow – these laws, as well as obeying the speeding, distracted driving and other traffic safety laws that always apply.

Florida's School Bus, Crosswalk and School Zone Laws: An Overview

So, what are Florida's school bus, crosswalk, and school zone laws? Here's an overview of what drivers and parents need to know:

1. Florida's School Bus Laws

Drivers in Florida are required to stop when approaching a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing and "STOP" sign extended in most cases. This applies to drivers traveling in both directions. The only time when drivers aren't required to stop is when they are traveling the opposite direction on a divided highway—and the law still requires them to drive with caution in this scenario.

Illegally passing a school bus minimally carries a \$200 fine. Drivers who pass on the side of the bus where children enter, and exit, can be fined a minimum of \$400. If a driver hits a student while passing a school bus illegally, the penalties are far more substantial—and the driver can face liability in a personal injury lawsuit as well.

2. Florida's Crosswalk Laws

In Florida, "[a] vehicle approaching a pedestrian legally crossing the street at an intersection must yield or stop to allow the person walking to cross."



This applies at all crosswalks, regardless of whether they are controlled by signals. As the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) goes on to explain, "If motorists fail to yield, they face a minimum citation of \$164 and three points on their driver license. Worse, they can severely injur[e] someone – even taking their life."

3. Florida's School Zone Laws

School zones typically have low speed limits – between 15 and 20 mph – and with good reason. Drivers must obey these speed limits (and Florida's school bus and crosswalk laws) while also diligently watching for students who may be entering the road unexpectedly. Speeding in a school zone carries fines ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars; and, tragically, too often it has other serious consequences as well.

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cases throughout Southwest Florida. If your child has been injured in an accident involving a school bus, crosswalk, or school zone, call 239-649-6555 for a free consultation today.

About the Author

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

Scott is a military veteran, having served on active duty in the United States Air Force between 1989 and 1993. He is a native of Naples, Florida. Scott received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Jacksonville University in 1996 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2004. He is a member of The Florida Bar, and is admitted to practice in the U.S. Middle District and U.S. Northern District of Florida.



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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month... Genetic Testing is an Option for All!

Breast cancer death rates declined 40% from 1989 to 2016 among women. The progress is attributed to improvements in early detection. *Source: American Cancer Society*

Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the tissues of the breast. Facts from the National Breast Cancer Foundation:

- In 2023, an estimated 297,790 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the U.S., as well as 55,720 new cases of non-invasive (in situ) breast cancer.
- 64% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed at a localized stage (there is no sign that cancer has spread outside of the breast), for which the 5-year relative survival rate is 99%.
- This year, an estimated 43,700 women will die from breast cancer in the U.S.
- Although rare, men get breast cancer too. In 2023, an estimated 2,800 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in the U.S. and approximately 530 men will die from breast cancer.
- 1 in 8 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in American women, except for skin cancers. In 2022, approximately 30% of all new women's cancer diagnoses will be breast cancer.
- There are over 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States.
- On average, every 2 minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.

Genetic Testing for Breast Cancer

Who Should Be Tested For BRCA?

While BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations may increase your odds of developing breast cancer, your odds of having either mutation are small. An estimated 0.25% of the general population carries a mutated BRCA gene or about one out of every 400 people. For some people, though, the chances of having a BRCA gene mutation are much higher. Genes are inherited, which is why knowing your family history is important when determining breast



cancer risks. If one of your parents has a BRCA mutation, you have a 50% chance of inheriting the mutated gene. Odds can also vary depending on a person's ethnicity. For example, people of Ashkenazi Jewish descent have a 2.5% chance of inheriting a BRCA mutation, or about 10 times the rate of the general population.

Because the overall odds are so low, most experts recommend that only people with a heightened risk get tested for BRCA mutations. Likewise, insurance companies often only cover genetic counseling and testing for individuals who are at high risk. A person could be considered at high risk for BRCA mutations if they have a family history of breast cancer. There are also other gene mutations besides BRCA that could increase the risk of breast cancer. The most prominent of these is PALB2. As with BRCA1 and BRCA2, testing for other genetic mutations is recommended only if you are at high risk for that gene.

Genetic counseling is recommended for those who are interested in being tested for breast cancer gene mutations. You can talk to a doctor about getting a referral to a genetic counselor, who can help determine whether genetic testing would make sense based on family history and risk factors. Since many genetic tests only look for one specific gene mutation, the counselor can often help determine

which mutations to test for. The genetic test itself simply involves taking a small sample of blood or saliva, which is sent to a lab for analysis. Results can take several weeks or months.



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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THE GAME-CHANGER:

Semaglutide Revolutionizes Weight Loss Treatment

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

In the constant battle against obesity, a groundbreaking treatment has emerged that offers hope for those struggling with excessive weight. Semaglutide, originally developed to treat type 2 diabetes, has now gained attention for its remarkable effectiveness in promoting weight loss. With its unique mechanism of action, Semaglutide has shown promising results in clinical trials, leading to its recent approval as a weight loss medication. This article explores the remarkable potential of Semaglutide as a game-changer in the field of weight management, offering new possibilities for individuals seeking to shed those stubborn pounds.

Understanding Semaglutide and its Mechanism of Action

Semaglutide belongs to a class of medications called glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs). Originally used to help regulate blood sugar levels in patients with type 2 diabetes, Semaglutide has shown an unexpected secondary benefit: significant weight loss. It works by mimicking the action of the hormone GLP-1, which helps control appetite and regulate glucose metabolism. By activating the GLP-1 receptors in the brain, Semaglutide reduces hunger and increases feelings of fullness, ultimately leading to reduced calorie intake.

Promising Results from Clinical Trials

Clinical trials evaluating the efficacy of Semaglutide for weight loss have yielded highly encouraging results. In a landmark study involving over 2,000 participants, individuals treated with Semaglutide achieved an average weight loss of 15-20% of their body weight over the course of one year. These outcomes far exceeded those achieved through conventional weight loss interventions, such as diet and exercise alone. Furthermore, Semaglutide was found to improve various markers of cardiometabolic health, including blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar control.

Benefits and Safety Considerations

The potential benefits of Semaglutide as a weight loss treatment extend beyond its impressive efficacy. The medication is administered once weekly via subcutaneous injection, making it convenient and user-friendly. Additionally, Semaglutide has shown promise in helping individuals maintain their weight



loss over an extended period, minimizing the risk of weight regain. However, like any medication, Semaglutide does come with potential side effects, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and, rarely, pancreatitis. Close monitoring by healthcare professionals is necessary to ensure patient safety.

A New Paradigm in Weight Management

The approval of Semaglutide as a weight loss medication marks a significant milestone in the fight against obesity. Traditional approaches to weight management, such as diet and exercise, often fall short due to the complex nature of obesity. Semaglutide offers a promising alternative for individuals struggling with excessive weight, providing an additional tool in the comprehensive treatment arsenal. Its effectiveness in reducing weight, improving cardiometabolic health, and maintaining long-term results sets it apart from previous interventions.

What To Expect During My Consultation?

- Physical assessment
- Lab review
- Weight and body measurement
- Discussion of supplemental medication options
- Goal establishment
- Lifestyle dietary changes

Semaglutide represents a groundbreaking advancement in weight loss treatment. With its unique mechanism of action and remarkable efficacy, it has the potential to transform the lives of millions of individuals battling obesity. The approval of Semaglutide as a weight loss medication opens up new possibilities for achieving sustainable weight loss and improved overall health. However, it is crucial to recognize that Semaglutide is not a magic pill and should be used in conjunction with lifestyle changes and under the guidance of healthcare professionals. As further research unfolds, Semaglutide may continue to reshape the landscape of weight management, offering hope for a healthier future.

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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Breast Cancer Facts: Understanding the Latest Insights and Developments

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

Breast cancer continues to be a major health concern for women worldwide, with 2023 bringing forth new insights and developments in its diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. In this article, we delve into the latest facts and findings surrounding breast cancer to provide you with a comprehensive overview of the current landscape.

UNDERSTANDING BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer remains the most common cancer among women globally. In 2023, it is estimated that over 2.3 million new cases will be diagnosed, making it imperative to stay informed about its facts and statistics.

1. Incidence and Mortality Rates

The incidence of breast cancer varies around the world, with higher rates in developed countries. Despite this, advances in early detection and treatment have led to a decline in mortality rates. It's important to note that early detection through regular screening plays a pivotal role in improving survival rates.

2. Age and Risk

While breast cancer can affect women of all ages, the risk increases with age. In 2023, it's projected that the majority of new breast cancer cases will be diagnosed in women over 50. Regular mammograms are recommended for women in this age group to catch cancer in its early stages.

3. Genetics and Family History

A small percentage of breast cancer cases are hereditary. If you have a family history of breast cancer or carry certain genetic mutations (e.g., BRCA1 or BRCA2), your risk is higher. Genetic testing and counseling can provide valuable information for prevention and early detection.

ADVANCES IN DIAGNOSIS

1. 3D Mammography

Digital breast tomosynthesis, also known as 3D mammography, is becoming more widely available. It offers improved detection of small tumors and reduces the chances of false positives, providing greater accuracy in diagnosis.



2. Liquid Biopsies

Researchers are exploring liquid biopsies as a non-invasive method to detect breast cancer. These tests analyze blood samples for genetic markers and circulating tumor cells, potentially revolutionizing early detection.

TREATMENT INNOVATIONS

1. Targeted Therapies

In 2023, targeted therapies continue to be a game-changer in breast cancer treatment. They aim at specific molecules involved in cancer growth, minimizing side effects and improving outcomes.

2. Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy is being studied for its potential in breast cancer treatment. It harnesses the body's immune system to target and destroy cancer cells. Early results are promising, offering new hope for patients.

BREAST CANCER PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

1. Lifestyle Factors

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle by staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, and avoiding smoking can lower your risk of breast cancer.

2. Early Detection Saves Lives

Regular breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, and mammograms are essential for early detection. Early-stage breast cancer is often more treatable and associated with better outcomes.

3. Pink Ribbon Campaigns

Breast Cancer Awareness Month, celebrated in October, continues to promote awareness and support for breast cancer patients and survivors. Participating in these campaigns and events can make a difference.

As we move into 2023, breast cancer remains a formidable challenge, but progress is being made. Increased awareness, advances in early detection, and cutting-edge treatments are improving the prognosis for breast cancer patients. By staying informed and proactive about our health, we can contribute to a future where breast cancer is more preventable and manageable.

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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NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS IS PREVENTABLE

October is National Audiology Awareness Month

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

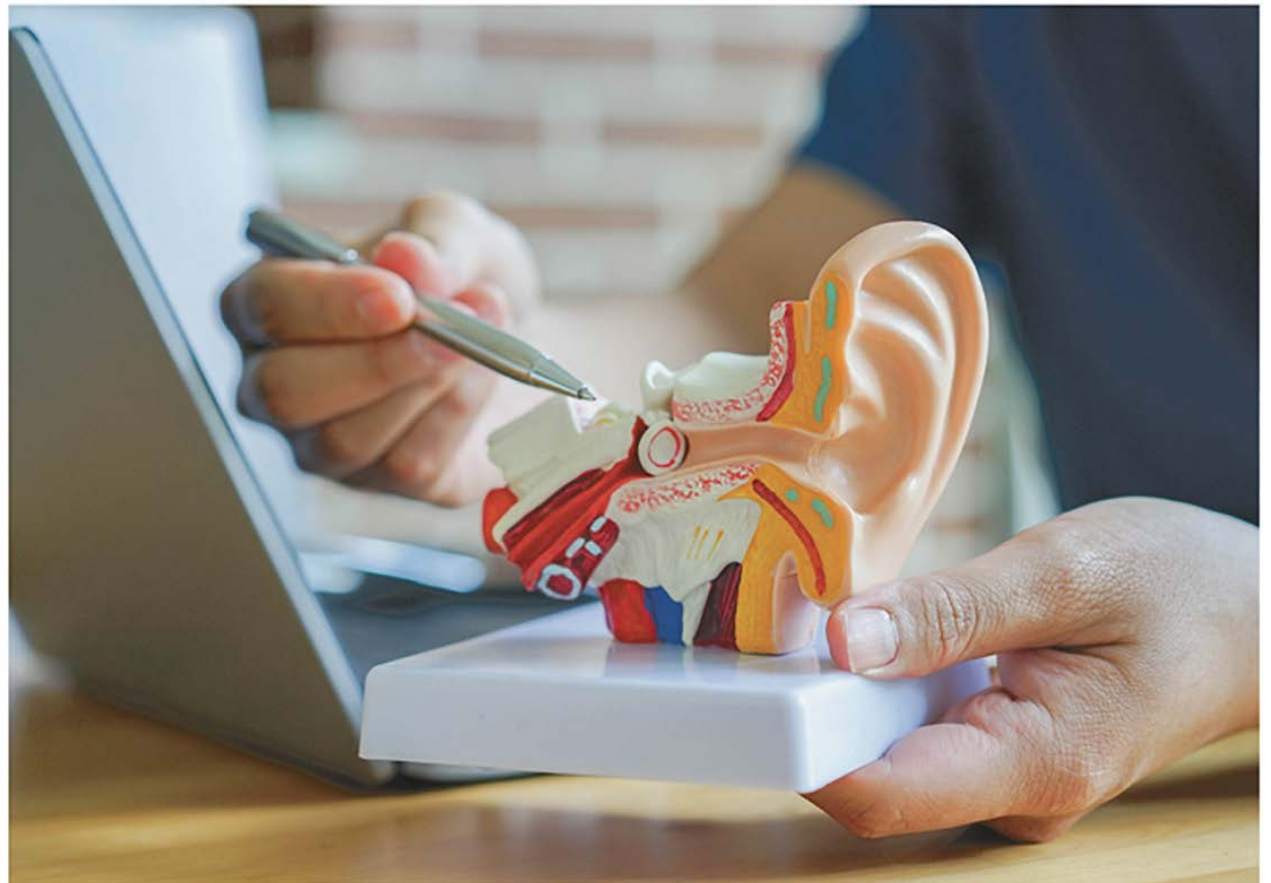
Sounds can damage your hearing when they are too loud, even for a brief time, or loud and long-lasting. Sometimes the damage is permanent.

Noise exposure is common at many workplaces, but many home—and leisure-based activities can also harm your hearing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 40 million adults ages 20 to 69 have hearing loss from noise, but more than half of them report no on-the-job exposure to loud noise.

People at every stage of life—from young children to older adults—can be at risk for noise-induced hearing loss. Common threats to hearing include sirens, lawn equipment, and listening to loud music, whether live or through headphones or earbuds. In fact, the World Report on Hearing, released in March 2021 by the World Health Organization (WHO), estimates that more than 50 percent of people ages 12 to 35 use smartphones/personal audio devices at volumes that pose a risk to their hearing. Nearly 40% of those who frequently visit entertainment venues are at risk for hearing loss, according to WHO.

Hearing loss from noise can happen instantly—when a loud sound happens very close to your ears—or it can occur gradually. It can affect one or both ears. The louder the sound, the more damage it can cause to the sensitive structures of your inner ear, and the faster this damage can happen. If your hearing loss occurs gradually (from noise or other causes), you may not recognize it at first. You may have hearing loss if:

- Words sound muffled or difficult to hear or comprehend.
- You have trouble hearing high-pitched sounds.
- You have difficulty hearing in noisy places and social settings, such as restaurants and family gatherings.
- You have trouble understanding speech over the phone.



The good news is that noise-induced hearing loss is preventable. Follow these tips to protect your hearing:

- Lower the volume.
- Move away from the noise when possible.
- Wear hearing protectors, such as earplugs or protective earmuffs.

A routine hearing test can give you a baseline measurement of how you are hearing and is quick, easy, and free at any Decibels Audiology location. Audiology is a rare specialty and testing should only be done by a university-trained licensed audiologist. Schedule your free hearing test and get the peace of mind you need to move on with your life.

Dr. Rachel Spencer

Dr. Rachel Spencer, AuD, joined Decibels Audiology in the summer of 2019. Rachel is a Tennessee native and received her Bachelor of Science in Audiology

and Speech Pathology from the University of Tennessee in 2016 (Go Vols!). She graduated with her Doctorate of Audiology from Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Rachel has been loving enjoying the Florida sun and escaping the frigid cold of the north-east. Rachel is passionate about forming positive relationships with patients and improving their overall quality of life through hearing health care.

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Your First Choice for Optimal Health and Wellness

October is National Physical Therapy Month, a time to recognize the vital role that physical therapy plays in enhancing our physical health and overall well-being. Physical therapy should be your first choice when it comes to addressing a wide range of musculoskeletal and movement-related issues. Whether you're recovering from an injury, managing a chronic condition, or simply seeking to improve your physical performance, physical therapy offers a holistic and effective approach to care.

In this article, we will explore the positive impact of physical therapy and the benefits of choosing Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL as your premier physical therapy destination.

THE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

At Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL, we believe in the transformative impact of our services. Here's how our physical therapy services can make a positive difference in your life:

- 1. Restored Independence:** Our physical therapy programs are designed to empower individuals, enabling them to regain their independence and resume daily activities that may have been hindered by injury or illness.
- 2. Avoiding Surgery:** We take pride in the fact that, in many cases, our effective physical therapy services can eliminate the necessity for surgical procedures. This not only reduces healthcare expenses but also minimizes the inherent risks associated with surgery.
- 3. Enhanced Sports Performance:** Athletes trust our expertise to help them recover from injuries, enhance their performance, and implement injury prevention strategies. Whether you are an athlete or simply enjoy an active lifestyle, our tailored programs can keep you in top shape.
- 4. Improved Quality of Life:** For those grappling with chronic pain or enduring long-term medical conditions, our physical therapy can significantly enhance their quality of life. We're committed to helping individuals lead more fulfilling lives by managing and mitigating their physical challenges.



5. Economic Benefits: Our focus on facilitating swifter recovery and reducing the reliance on costly medical procedures not only benefits your health but also saves money.

BENEFITS OF CHOOSING ABSOLUTE PHYSICAL THERAPY

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- **Above National Average Patient Outcomes:** By integrating patient outcomes into our practice and using them as a catalyst for continuous improvement, we can fine-tune our services to meet the unique needs of each patient. This approach has been instrumental in not only maintaining 100% patient satisfaction but consistently achieving above-average national outcomes, demonstrating our commitment to excellence in patient care.
- **Specialized Services:** Absolute Physical Therapy offers a wide range of specialized services to meet the diverse needs of our patients. Among these comprehensive offerings, we are best known for our Aquatic Therapy, Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation, and Orthopedic Physical Therapy services.

- **Strong Emphasis on Patient Education:** Understanding your condition and the rationale behind your treatment plan is vital for a successful recovery. At our clinic, our therapists take the time to explain your diagnosis, plan of care, and expected outcomes. This knowledge empowers you to take an active role in your therapy journey, fostering a sense of control and confidence in your recovery.

As we celebrate National Physical Therapy Month, it's essential to recognize the tremendous benefit that physical therapy offers. From personalized care to pain management, injury rehabilitation, and preventive measures, physical therapy should be your first choice for maintaining and optimizing your physical health. So, this October, consider making Absolute Physical Therapy of SWFL your top choice for better physical health and wellness.

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CELEBRATING A PROFESSIONAL MILESTONE

Paving the Way for Eastern and Western Medicine Integration in Naples

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

April of 2023 felt like a fresh start as I had just graduated from Pacific College of Health and Science with a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine degree.

Revamping myself and my passion while ushering a broader vision to my practice at I Am Designed to Heal felt refreshing.

I want to share how this will benefit my patients as I continue to study and expand my knowledge.

Integration brings greater benefits to patients.

I specialize in various areas, from chronic pain and surgical recovery to neurological disorders and Alzheimer's care. In an effort to help patients discover an improved quality of life, I strive to work in tandem with Western medicine because current studies show that integrative therapeutics may offer complementary options to patients interested in such modalities.¹

Another study highlighting the benefits of complementary and integrative medicine states that "although advances have been made in treatments for chronic pain, it remains inadequately controlled for many people. CIM [complementary and integrative medicine] offers a multimodality treatment approach that can tackle the multidimensional nature of pain with fewer or no serious adverse effects."²

The best way for me to integrate Eastern and Western medicines in a professional and ethical way was to obtain a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese medicine degree in addition to my recognized Diplomate of Acupuncture by NCCAOM.

Standards in this field matter

You wouldn't see just any oncologist for breast cancer. Why would you see just anybody who says they offer complementary medicine?

Short answer: you shouldn't!

Standards are necessary when it comes to practicing medicine; they're there to protect both parties.

I am a National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine [NCCAOM] Board-Certified Acupuncturist and a Florida State Medical Association [FSOMA] member because I believe in the quality of care I provide.

These organizations are a boon to my field as they uphold professionals like myself to highly qualified and ethical standards.

With my previous education and accreditations at the Maryland University of Integrative Health, the American Institute of Alternative Medicine, and the LesGaft National State University of Physical Education in Russia, I can bring validity to my practice and integrate holistic options for patients into established Western healthcare through research-based and FDA-approved therapies.

Combining my previous education with the new allows my practice to enhance our services and options for my patients.

Expanded services enhance your experience.

I enjoy my field, and obtaining this new degree has given me greater freedom to meet patients in more ways that benefit them.

This degree also expands my services to include hospital rights in the state of Florida as well as the ability to perform Primary Care physician duties based on my scope of practice.

No longer are you confined to limited options to schedule in-office visits only. I can meet you or your loved one in or outside the clinic, in a hospital, assisted living, nursing home, and hospice facilities!

I want to bring new choices and solutions for all of my patients that are backed by scientific research as well as traditional approaches. I also want to work hand in hand to help a patient experience the best of both western medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine by offering collaborative medical testing, medical history review, and even inter-disciplinary consultations with a patient's established medical team.

Experience something different, something better.

I am excited to bring a level of care that integrates into Western medicine while maintaining holistic roots and benefits that will improve a patient's recovery.

From my days in the Russian hospital system as a physical therapist to providing massage therapy in a five-star resort setting, I have learned that people with severe and chronic conditions often have little recourse and, as a result, seek out alternative therapies to complement their Western medicine.

My passion is to help people live the best they can with minimal impacts from their condition(s).

Finally, complementary and integrative medicines, like acupuncture, have been given a platform in the Western medical community to work harmoniously to provide pain relief options, other than opioids, to patients!

A chance to work together to provide health benefits to those suffering from Alzheimer's, recovering from surgeries, or those suffering from mobility issues!

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Please call us for more information or to schedule an initial appointment at (239) 322-3817.

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UNLOCKING VITALITY: THE POWER OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR OLDER ADULTS

By Jenny Bradley

As we embrace National Physical Therapy Month this October, it's the perfect time to shine a spotlight on the incredible benefits that physical therapy offers, especially for older adults. Physical therapy isn't just about rehabilitation; it's a pathway to improved quality of life, enhanced mobility and a more active, pain-free existence.

Here are five tips for making the most of physical therapy:

1. Embrace Preventive Care

Don't wait until an injury occurs or mobility declines before seeking the help of a physical therapist. Incorporate preventive physical therapy into your routine to identify and address potential issues before they become major concerns. Regular check-ins with a physical therapist can help you maintain optimal physical function and prevent future health problems.

At The Carlisle Naples, an active retirement community, residents have access to EmpowerMe Wellness, an integrated healthcare provider specializing in senior living communities, to provide onsite physical, occupational and speech therapies. "EmpowerMe offers our residents many screenings to prevent or mitigate problems," said Executive Director Bill Diamond. "The EmpowerMe team is entrenched in our community and gets to know our residents. This relationship enables them to recommend proactive measures to prevent potential declines in residents' health."

2. Prioritize Mobility

Maintaining mobility is the key to independence as we age. Physical therapy can help you regain lost mobility or improve your current level of function. Your therapist will design a personalized exercise program focusing on flexibility, strength, and balance, helping you stay agile and confident in your daily activities.

EmpowerMe offers a variety of wellness programs designed to help Carlisle residents lead an active and more engaged lifestyle. An aquatics class, for example, is offered weekly and has been shown to improve flexibility, range of motion and stability as well as reduce fall risks.

"We strive to infuse our workouts with a sense of exhilaration and fun," said EmpowerMe's Christopher Dietz. "We transform the pool exercises into a lively dance or an invigorating game of beach volleyball. It builds excitement and boosts morale."

3. Pain Management

Chronic pain can significantly impact the quality of life for older adults. Physical therapy offers non-invasive techniques to manage and alleviate pain. Therapists use a variety of methods, including manual therapy, modalities like heat and cold, and tailored exercise programs to reduce pain and improve comfort.

EmpowerMe offers Carlisle residents comprehensive therapy and wellness programs personalized to address residents' specific health requirements. Access to onsite therapy services prescribed by residents' doctors is available on a fee-for-service basis.

4. Fall Prevention

Falls can have severe consequences for seniors, often leading to injuries and loss of independence. Physical therapists are experts in fall prevention strategies. They can assess your risk factors, teach you balance exercises, and recommend modifications to minimize fall hazards. Taking proactive steps now can help you stay on your feet and avoid accidents.

Research shows exercise is one of the most important things older adults can do to reduce the risk of falls and minimize injuries from a fall. In addition to the wealth of screenings EmpowerMe offers, including balance checks, The Carlisle offers 10 weekly opportunities for physical fitness. Residents can participate in low-impact exercises such as stretching to more robust workouts like Cardio Fitness.

5. Stay Active and Engaged

Physical therapy helps older adults stay active and engaged in life. Many providers may offer complimentary classes at senior living communities or senior centers. Consider participating in wellness programs and activities tailored to your needs.

"We have so many success stories here at The Carlisle," added Dietz. "Our goal is to help residents continue doing the activities they enjoy and love doing."

Physical therapy can be a valuable ally on your journey to healthy aging, whether you're looking to prevent health issues, manage pain, or enhance your mobility. Don't hesitate to consult with a physical therapist to create a personalized plan that supports your well-being and helps you lead a fulfilling life.

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



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Hormonal Imbalance and Its Effect on Skin Health

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

The skin is no unsubstantial organ. In fact, it's the body's largest and a significant defender from outside contagions. Beyond the protection it offers your body, the skin also offers a unique ability for you to gauge your internal health purely by looking at it.

However, with an organ so large, many things can affect it, one of which is your hormones or, more accurately, an imbalance in them.

Hormonal Imbalance

Much as the name suggests, a hormonal imbalance occurs when your hormones are no longer balanced, either because a hormone is secreted too much or too little.

Hormonal imbalance can be disastrous for your well-being because your hormones regulate many different processes in the body, including your development, metabolism, and reproduction. So, if you're producing too much or too little hormones, it can also affect these processes.

Some of the impacts of hormonal imbalance include primary ovarian insufficiency, early menopause, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in women, and prostate cancer in men.

Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance

While the symptoms of hormonal imbalance can vary based on the hormone out of balance, some of the general symptoms of hormonal imbalance include:

- increased stomach issues
- sudden weight loss/gain
- weakness
- skin dryness
- fatigue
- body aches
- increased urination
- persistent thirst
- anxiety
- mood swings
- changes in appetite
- hair loss
- infertility

If you notice any of these symptoms, it's best to visit a doctor specializing in hormones to pinpoint the cause of the imbalance and correct it. Often, hormonal imbalance can be an indicator of an even bigger issue, and choosing to ignore the symptoms may cause life-threatening risks, which is why it is always recommended to address hormonal imbalances as soon as you notice them.

Luckily, hormonal imbalance can often manifest on your skin, helping you see if something is unbalanced internally. If you're aware of what to look for, and what skin conditions may be due to hormonal imbalances, you have the advantage of knowing when there is a need to look more closely into your hormone levels.

How Hormonal Imbalance Affects Your Skin

As we know, the skin is the largest organ in your body, so its health relies on many things. However, one of the most important components of your skin comes from the sebaceous glands under your skin that produce sebum, a natural oil secreted through the pores of your skin.

Sebum helps protect the skin from UV radiation, locks in moisture, and transports fat-soluble antioxidants to the surface of the skin, which can then help prevent oxidative skin damage.

However, as with all things, too much can be a problem. In fact, too much sebum production is often the cause of various skin issues like inflammation and acne. One reason for excess sebum production? An imbalance of androgen, or male sex hormones that are present in those of both genders.

Sebum is not the only important part of the skin, either. Your skin is composed of the protein collagen, which is a building block of your skin. It is collagen that helps to give your skin a youthful appearance, and when your collagen production is down, your skin may start to sag.

Estrogen, a female sex hormone, is crucial in producing collagen and helps keep your skin thick and hydrated. If your estrogen levels are low, such as the case with older women entering menopause, skin can become thinner and more sensitive.



It's not just those entering menopause who see these results of low estrogen, though. A survey found that 2 out of 5 women still getting a period each month report unusually sensitive skin before and during their menstruation, which is generally the time when estrogen levels drop. Many women also notice an increase in sebum production before and during their menstrual cycle, which can contribute to acne.

When we look at the effects of hormonal changes on the body, it's clear that hormonal imbalance can manifest in changes to your skin.

Hormonal Imbalance as Skin Manifestations

Let's take a look at the different skin imperfections that can result from hormonal imbalances.

Under Eye Dark Circles

The constant companion for college students staying up all night to study, under eye dark circles are a skin problem resulting most often from adrenal fatigue.

When you experience more stress, your body produces more of the stress hormone cortisol. However, excess cortisol production can cause poor sleep at night because it tends to make people feel restless. If you continually suffer from poor sleep, dark circles can appear around your eyes.

Furthermore, if you're suffering from low estrogen levels, the skin under your eyes can become thinner, which can make the darkness even more prominent.

Dry Skin

While common during the dry and cold winter months, dry skin can also occur to those with hormonal imbalances, specifically if hormones such as estrogen decline. This is because a reduction in estrogen can cause a decrease in sebum production. Sebum is essential for retaining moisture in your skin, so if your body is not producing enough sebum, it will not stay hydrated enough and can experience dryness, roughness, and flakiness.

In addition to estrogen, thyroid hormones also stimulate the oil glands, but instead of increasing sebum production, they reduce it. So, if you suffer from hyperthyroidism, or an overproduction of thyroid hormones, you may experience dry skin.

Acne

It can be frustrating to experience acne in your 20s and 30s, with most people assuming it is an affliction only for teenagers. However, hormones can significantly influence your body's sebum production, leading to acne, regardless of age.

For women, estrogen and progesterone, which are key players in your menstrual cycle, can increase the amount of sebum produced, clogging your skin's pores and leading to acne. As for men, an excessive amount of testosterone can also produce excess sebum.

For those experiencing acne due to hormonal imbalance, they most often appear on the chin, forehead, and nose.

Skin Tags

Skin tags are small skin-colored growths on the skin of your neck or eyelids, resulting from a compromise in your insulin and glucose hormonal balance. When these hormones start changing, estrogen can dramatically reduce, which affects your skin's elasticity and can cause overlapping in your skin layers. When these skin layers experience constant friction, skin tags can occur.

In general, skin tags are most often associated with metabolic syndrome, PCOS, and diabetes.

Pale or Yellow Skin

Hormonal imbalance can affect your blood vessels, making your skin appear pale and waxy. However, hormonal imbalance is not the only cause of this appearance, with liver failure also lending itself to pale or yellow skin. If you notice that your skin or eyes appear yellow, check in with a doctor to determine the cause.

Balancing Hormones and Regulating Skin Health

If your skin is suffering from imbalanced hormones in the form of dry, thin, sensitive, or pale skin, correcting the hormonal imbalance is the best way to address the root of the problem and see improvements in your skin as a result.

The following are some of the possibilities for correcting a hormonal imbalance:

Oral Contraceptives

Oral contraceptives can help correct hormonal imbalance in women and, in some cases, are prescribed to treat acne. Oral contraceptives help to target the hormones that peak at ovulation, which is generally when those experiencing hormonal acne may see an increase in breakouts. Oral contraceptives keep hormone levels more even, lessening breakouts.

However, oral contraceptives are not for everyone, with those with a history of breast cancer, high blood pressure, or blood clots potentially unfit for this treatment. Talk to your doctor to determine if this is an adequate treatment for your skin and hormonal needs.

Anti-Androgen Drugs

As discussed, high levels of androgens, such as testosterone, can increase sebum production in some people, increasing the odds of clogged pores and acne breakouts. Anti-androgen drugs help to keep androgens from rising too high, which can help manage skin issues.

Testosterone Replacement

On the opposite end of the spectrum are medications that help address low testosterone, including testosterone gels and patches. These therapies help to fight the decline in testosterone production seen in some men.

Check Your Lifestyle

While medications and therapies can help with hormonal imbalance, it is also best to ensure your lifestyle reflects healthy habits aimed at keeping your hormones balanced. Some of these habits include:

- exercising regularly
- getting enough sleep each day
- having a balanced diet
- drinking enough water
- managing stress levels
- reducing alcohol consumption
- avoiding smoking

These habits help keep your hormone levels regular while also supporting healthy skin.

The Influence of Hormones on Your Skin

Hormones are chemical messengers used throughout your body, and one area they can impact is your skin. Stress hormones such as cortisol and sex hormones like estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone can all cause unwanted skin reactions if unbalanced, such as acne, dry skin, sagging skin, or increased sensitivity.

If you're noticing skin problems and can't determine their cause, it might be something more internal. Reach out to a hormone specialist to get a reading on your hormone levels, see if there is an imbalance, and devise a treatment plan to help restore the equilibrium that your entire body, including your skin, will benefit from.

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BREATHE EASY: PLANNING YOUR OXYGEN NEEDS FOR A STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY SEASON

As the holiday season approaches, it's essential to prepare for every aspect of the festivities, including your oxygen therapy needs. With increased traffic, busy schedules, and dining out becoming more common, planning ahead is crucial to ensure a seamless and enjoyable holiday experience.

Oxygen therapy is a lifeline for many individuals with respiratory conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or pulmonary fibrosis. It provides the necessary oxygen levels to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. However, when the holiday season arrives, the usual routine can be disrupted. Here's how to plan your oxygen needs effectively to make the most of this joyous time:

Consult Your Healthcare Provider Early

Start by scheduling an appointment with your healthcare provider well in advance of the holiday season. Discuss your travel plans, including any long drives or flights, and ask for their advice on adjusting your oxygen therapy accordingly.

Check Your Equipment

Ensure that your oxygen concentrator or other equipment is in good working condition. Replace any worn-out tubing or filters and have spare batteries on hand if you use a portable oxygen concentrator.

Order Supplies in Advance

The holiday season can cause delays in medical supply deliveries. To avoid running out of essential oxygen-related items like nasal cannulas or oxygen tanks, order extra supplies ahead of time.

Travel Planning

If you plan to travel during the holidays, coordinate with your oxygen supplier to arrange for oxygen deliveries at your destination. Airlines and other transportation providers have policies for traveling with oxygen, so familiarize yourself with their requirements and make necessary arrangements.

Notify Your Accommodations

If you're staying in a hotel or vacation rental, inform them of your oxygen therapy needs. They can assist with setting up your equipment and ensuring a safe and comfortable stay.



Plan Rest Stops

If driving long distances, plan regular rest stops to take breaks and check your oxygen levels. Carry your portable oxygen concentrator with you, and ensure it's fully charged.

Dining Out

Dining at restaurants is a common holiday activity, but it's essential to consider your oxygen needs. Choose restaurants that are oxygen-friendly, where staff are knowledgeable about accommodating oxygen therapy users.

Stay Hydrated

The dry winter air can worsen respiratory symptoms. Stay well-hydrated by drinking plenty of water to keep your airways moist and aid in oxygen absorption.

Monitor Your Oxygen Levels

Throughout the holiday season, regularly monitor your oxygen levels using a pulse oximeter. This small device can alert you to any potential issues and ensure you receive the oxygen levels your body requires.

Share Your Plan

Inform your travel companions and family members about your oxygen needs and emergency procedures. Having a support system in place can provide peace of mind during the holiday season.

By planning your oxygen needs ahead of time, you can minimize disruptions and enjoy a stress-free holiday season filled with cherished moments. Remember that taking care of your health is the most precious gift you can give yourself, allowing you to fully savor the joys of this special time of year.

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Myths About Morphine in Hospice Care

Many Americans are uncomfortable talking about death, and even fewer are eager to care for a terminally ill loved one. Hospices, which specialize in the care of the dying, work to dispel fears and misunderstandings that patients and their families may have about the dying process. This includes educating them about options for pain control and the benefits and side effects of each medication and other treatment tools.

One of the medications commonly associated with end-of-life care is morphine. Unfortunately, this helpful drug has unfairly earned a negative reputation. Some people mistakenly believe that hospices administer excess doses of the drug to keep patients quiet or to purposely hasten their deaths. Dr. Cynthia Nehrkorn, Vice President of Medical Services for Avow Hospice in Collier County, who also holds a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy, dispels these myths about morphine and other medications and how they're used at the end of life.

"There are many misunderstandings about hospice care, but the one that saddens hospice professionals most is that we quicken the dying process for patients. This is simply not true," Dr. Nehrkorn says. "The heart of the hospice philosophy is that death is a natural transition that we must neither slow nor advance. Our role is to support patients with comfort measures that allow them to die naturally, in peace, and to educate and console their family members.

"Morphine is just one tool hospices have to provide that peace," Dr. Nehrkorn continues. "It eases shortness of breath, relieves pain, and helps patients feel calm and comfortable. Despite its reputation as being overused in hospice, morphine is not always the most effective drug for terminally ill patients. It's not the strongest medication we have, and its side effects – usually drowsiness or confusion – may be uncomfortable for patients and their families. That's why we have a hierarchy of medication options to address each patient's pain levels, allergies, preferences, and tolerance of side effects. Some patients, for example, don't do well on long-acting medicines, but do feel better with drugs that are administered more frequently, in smaller doses, or subcutaneously instead of orally. The commitment of the hospice team is always to respect the desires of the patient and family, and to prioritize creating peace of mind for them, however they define that peace."



Hospice team members are trained to recognize non-verbal signals from patients that indicate their pain requires additional relief. Family caregivers may be confused by these signs, believing that the patient is simply 'not being herself' that day or is otherwise out of sorts. "Patients may grimace, moan, or stiffen their arms or legs when their pain escalates," explains Dr. Nehrkorn, board-certified in internal medicine and hospice and palliative care medicine. "We talk with family members about achieving a balance of pain control that also supports the level of interaction the family and patient want. Some caregivers are distressed that a particular medication makes the patient drowsy and less able to converse, and they wonder if the patient is 'over-medicated' or being improperly treated. We understand that family members need our guidance, so we spend a lot of time educating them about the various tools we can use to make their loved one comfortable. That information makes the patient's dying process far less frightening for families – and it can relieve or prevent any unnecessary guilt they may have about decisions they make as caregivers."

In addition to prescription medicines, hospices like Avow can also bring pain relief and peace to patients through massage therapy, manual lymph drainage to reduce swelling, music therapy, and

Reiki energy work. For spiritual and social concerns, hospices offer the support of a non-denominational chaplain and a social worker to work with both the family and patient. This full circle of support, says Dr. Nehrkorn, eases the transition of death for the entire family.

"Our culture doesn't normalize, let alone hold sacred, the natural ending of life," Dr. Nehrkorn reflects. "When we face something unknown, it's easy to feel frightened or overwhelmed, and to believe untruths or misunderstandings that justify our fears. The greatest gift hospices can give their patients and families is nonjudgmental support – and the information every party needs to feel at ease. That is what great hospice programs provide: peace of mind for everyone, in the ways and at the times they need it most."

For more information about Avow's nonprofit hospice, palliative care, or grief support programs, visit www.avowcares.org or call 239-280-2288.



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LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS: Understanding the Narrowing Pathway to Relief

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

Key Takeaways:

- Lumbar spinal stenosis is a condition characterized by the narrowing of the spinal canal in the lower back, leading to nerve compression.
- The prevalence of moderate and severe acquired lumbar stenosis increases with age to 47.2% and 19.4%, respectively, in the 60–69 year-old age group.
- Common symptoms include back pain, leg pain, and numbness, which usually worsen while standing or walking.
- Diagnosis is usually confirmed through an MRI scan after an initial physical examination.
- Treatment options vary from conservative measures like medication and physical therapy to surgical interventions like laminectomy.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve quality of life and may prevent medical and neurological complications.

What is Lumbar Spinal Stenosis?

Lumbar spinal stenosis is a degenerative condition affecting the lower back. It involves the narrowing of the spinal canal, which houses the spinal cord and nerve roots, leading to compression and irritation of these neural elements. This condition most commonly occurs in people over the age of 50 due to age-related changes, although younger individuals can also be affected, often due to congenital anomalies or injury. The prevalence of moderate and severe acquired lumbar stenosis increases with age to 47.2% and 19.4%, respectively, in the 60–69 year-old age group.¹ It is important to diagnose and treat lumbar spinal stenosis promptly to prevent worsening of symptoms and the development of neurological complications.

Common Symptoms: The Troubling Signs

The symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis vary widely but generally revolve around the themes of pain, discomfort, and functional limitation. The most common symptoms include lower back pain, leg pain, numbness, and tingling. The condition may also lead to sciatica—a painful condition caused by irritation of the sciatic nerves, which runs from the lower back down to the legs. One of the hallmark features of lumbar spinal stenosis is “neurogenic claudication,” which manifests as pain or cramping in the legs that worsens with prolonged standing or walking and is alleviated by sitting down or leaning forward.

How Symptomatic Spinal Stenosis can Quickly Worsen Overall Health

Over the past decade, several landmark studies have shown that daily walking step count is a critical

determinant of overall health and mortality. In 2020, a study published in JAMA showed that increases in daily step count from 4000 steps to 8000 steps daily cut mortality rates by 50%.² Another follow-up study in JAMA in 2022 showed similar results, with lower risk of both cardiovascular and cancer mortality in persons with higher daily step counts. The importance of daily walking with high step counts, ideally 8000-10000 steps daily cannot be overstated. Spinal stenosis unfortunately is most often symptomatic when patients are upright and walking, and many patients self-regulate their pain symptoms by doing less of the activity that causes the pain. In this case, that translates into spinal stenosis patients walking fewer steps daily, thus worsening their overall health.

Diagnosis: Confirming the Condition

Diagnosis of lumbar spinal stenosis typically starts with a comprehensive medical history and physical examination. Your healthcare provider will assess your symptoms and may perform specific maneuvers to replicate the pain or discomfort you are experiencing. An MRI of the lumbar spine without contrast is generally ordered to confirm the diagnosis and assess the extent of the stenosis. These scans provide detailed images of the spinal canal and surrounding structures, allowing for precise evaluation and planning for potential surgical interventions.

Treatment Options: From Conservative to Surgical

Treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis is often stratified into conservative and surgical options. Conservative measures include medication for pain relief, physical therapy, and lifestyle modifications like weight loss and ergonomic adjustments. Corticosteroid injections may also be used to alleviate inflammation and pain temporarily. These measures are often effective in the early stages or for mild cases of stenosis.

Surgical treatment becomes an option when conservative measures fail to provide relief, or when the stenosis leads to severe or worsening neurological symptoms and decreases in quality of life. The most common surgical intervention is lumbar laminectomy. Laminectomy involves removing a small portion of the vertebral bone to decompress the spinal canal and nerves through a small incision in the midline back. Patients are often able to go home the same day of the surgery or by the next day. Surgical intervention aims to relieve symptoms and improve the quality of life.

Conclusion: The Path to Relief

Lumbar spinal stenosis can severely impact your quality of life, but understanding the condition and seeking prompt medical attention can make a significant difference. Conservative treatment methods are effective for many patients, but neurosurgical intervention may be necessary for severe or worsening cases. Consult your neurosurgeon for a comprehensive diagnosis and treatment plan tailored to your needs. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to preventing complications, maintaining high daily walking step counts, and improving your quality of life.

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About Amanda Sacino, MD, PhD

Dr. Sacino was born and raised on the east coast of Florida. After securing her undergraduate degree at Boston University, she returned to her home state and attended the University of Florida, where she obtained her medical and post-doctorate degrees.

Her PhD work focused on proteinopathies, mainly Parkinsonism. But her mentors recognized her surgical precision skills, and so Dr. Sacino pursued extensive training in cranial, spine, and peripheral nerve surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. From there, she completed two spine fellowships at Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Swedish Neuroscience Institute. Her surgical spine training includes experience with degenerative diseases, congenital diseases, deformity, oncology, and trauma.

Dr. Sacino trained under Dr. Nicholas Theodore, the inventor of the Globus ExcelsiusGPS robot. She was present during the first robotic surgery at Johns Hopkins and trained extensively for five years with the robot during both spine and cranial cases.

Dr. Sacino’s high standards and pursuit of quality has led her to become well-respected by her mentors and peers. Her goal is to provide patients with case-specific solutions so they have all the information and options they need to make informed decisions.



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PICKLEBALL INJURIES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By James M. Ray, MD

Like most racket sports, pickleball comes with traumatic as well as overuse injuries.

Some pickleball injuries are avoidable, others happen because of court trauma.

When they do occur, you can get the treatment you need to get back on the court and enjoy all that pickleball offers. These injuries result in down time for recovery before you can return to play.

Acute pickleball injuries occur from falls, twists, deceleration and cutting activities involving the knees, ankles, wrists, hands, elbows, and shoulders.

Others are chronic, which happen over time, due to overuse.

Most active players are age 60 years or older, and account for many pickleball-related emergency room visits.

Preparticipation precautions can help lower your chances of injury. Most of these principles were learned through our active athletic years but still hold true today.

- Warm up and stretch before playing. Important to prevent muscle strains and ligament sprains.
- Watch for gym bags, rackets, towels, water bottles, moveable benches/chairs on or around the court that could cause trips or falls.
- Avoid courts that may not be in the best repair, or wet becoming, slippery making foot activity difficult to decelerate and cut.
- Avoid backpedaling (moving backward) which may add to proprioception instability, dizziness, and loss of balance on the court resulting in a fall.
- Communicate with your partner, avoid confusion, maintain spacing during play, watch tripping or running into each other.
- Know your body, hydrate often and rest when fatigued. The majority of injuries occur when tired, winded or out of shape.



19,000
INJURIES EVERY YEAR
91%
IN PLAYERS 50 OR OLDER

- **Strains** – A strain results from overstretching or tearing muscles or tendons. Hamstrings are commonly strained if warm-up before playing is inadequate.
- **Sprains** – An ankle sprain involves an injury to a lateral ligament to the outside of the ankle. Pain is usually felt on the outside of the ankle. Depending upon the severity, swelling may be immediate. Discoloration may not immediately present over the area of injury but will delineate the ligament injury.
- **Fractures** – The most common fracture is of the wrist. The mechanism of injury is from falling on an outstretched arm landing on the hand. Going backward for a ball, or falling forward, positioning the arm to break the fall results in the fracture. Osteoporosis also plays a role in the fracture severity.

Returning to play in the case of pickleball injuries is important to understand to prevent reinjury. Less severe injuries like mild muscle (hamstring) strains, players can return to pickleball after a few weeks of

rest and stretching activities. Severe strains may take longer to heal and extend the down time before return. Ankle sprains also may take 3-6 weeks of recovery time before returning to play. Fractures need to be completely healed, no pain with function and full range of motion before return. Bracing may also help with returning to athletic activities.

If medical treatment was implemented after injury, listening to your doctor or health care professional during recovering is important. When you do return to playing, take it slow. Our Medical/Orthopedic/Sports Medicine Experts at Naples-Clinic can care for your acute pickleball injuries, including your chronic injuries, and help you with return to play issues. **Naples-Clinic Offers Walk-in Medical and Ortho Urgent Care.** To learn more, or schedule an appointment, or walk-in call 239-384-9392.

James M. Ray, MD

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

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The Secret to Fixing Pain Fast: Addressing Neurological Compensation

By Ally Folkert, DAT, LAT, ATC

Chronic pain is an ever-growing problem in this country. There are over 50 million people who report chronic pain in the United States alone. If not affected personally, many of our friends and family members' daily lives are impacted by limitations caused by chronic pain. The US physical rehabilitation market is overwhelmed with hundreds of billions in annual costs to treat musculoskeletal pain and yet the number of individuals in pain continues to rise.

Have you ever completed physical therapy but the problem returned?

Do you feel like you have tried everything but nothing has seemed to work?

Do you feel like you have lost hope and you are reduced to living with your pain forever?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, it is likely that your therapy thus far has focused on the symptoms and hasn't addressed the root cause of your problem neurologically.

Coordinated movement is planned in the cerebral cortex, and staged signals are sent down to the spinal cord and out to the motor neurons. When staged signals fire in the correct order and reach their intended muscles, the body moves with an efficient motor pattern. After an injury or feeling pain, the pattern of these staged signals can become distorted or changed; resulting in compensation, which can lead to weakness, pain and further injury. Pain signals from the brain can last long after the acute tissue is healed causing chronic pain.

Correcting your neurological compensation allows for signals to fire in the correct order to absorb the force of movement. Once your brain and muscles communicate as they should, your body will operate efficiently and the brain will not elicit a pain signal. The leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naples based Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat over 70 professional athletes, 11 Olympians and thousands of SW Florida



residents in as little as two weeks. In their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it fast and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods without any results. When you address pain, injury and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain. The team spent the next five years compiling various techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan's rehabilitation. The results were immediate and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.

"When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered," says Vesce. "So we started testing our new process on pro athletes, and it worked. We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method worked so well that our clients told all of their family and friends about it. That's when we knew we really had something really special. Within 2 weeks virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today. The process worked fast. The culture was inspiring, and we began to take off."

The first step in Matterhorn Fit's process is a comprehensive initial evaluation. Through their evaluation, they will be able to identify any neurological compensation in the client's system. If they do find compensations, there is a very high probability that they can improve the client's pain in two weeks.

"Through our initial evaluation we will be able to determine IF we can help you. If we do find something that we can fix, then we will start you with 6 sessions over a two week period to resolve your symptoms," says Vesce. "Over 94% of our clients have reported a major reduction of pain within two weeks. After the symptoms are resolved, we build a personalized movement plan to prevent the problem from returning."

*To schedule an initial evaluation visit
matterhornfit.com or call the office at
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BRIDGING THE GAP

The Crucial Link Between Prenatal Care, Disease, and Postnatal Care

By Dr. Michel Saaloukeh - MD, FAAP, IBCLC

The journey of pregnancy is a remarkable one, filled with joy, anticipation, and a fair share of uncertainties. While expectant parents eagerly prepare for the arrival of their little one, it is vital to recognize the profound connection between prenatal care, potential diseases, and their implications on postnatal care. In our relentless pursuit of ensuring the health and well-being of both mothers and newborns, healthcare providers have begun to embrace the concept of fourth trimester care, extending their support beyond the delivery room.

Understanding the Link: Prenatal Care and Its Role

Prenatal care is the cornerstone of a healthy pregnancy. Regular check-ups, screenings, and healthcare guidance during this period lay the foundation for a smooth childbirth and reduce the risk of complications. It's during these visits that healthcare providers can identify and manage potential diseases that might affect both the mother and the unborn child.

Proper prenatal care involves monitoring maternal health, addressing risk factors, and providing essential information about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This proactive approach helps in preventing or managing conditions like gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and infections, which could have a significant impact on postnatal care if left untreated.

The Implications: Diseases and Postnatal Care

Complications that arise during pregnancy, if not managed effectively, can have lasting effects on both the mother and the newborn. For instance, gestational diabetes can lead to high birth weight in the baby, making labor more challenging and increasing the risk of cesarean delivery. Preeclampsia can affect the mother's cardiovascular health and result in premature birth or low birth weight, putting the baby at risk for various health issues.

Recognizing these implications, the transition from prenatal to postnatal care has become more holistic and integrated. Healthcare providers now emphasize continuity of care, ensuring that the strategies and treatments initiated during pregnancy are seamlessly carried forward into the postnatal period.

Fourth Trimester Care: A Lifeline for Special Cases

In some cases, the need for extra care extends beyond the delivery room. Premature babies, born before their expected due date, often require intensive medical attention in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). However, the journey doesn't end there. The period after discharge from the NICU, known as the fourth trimester, presents unique challenges.

Fourth trimester care focuses on addressing the specific needs of premature babies and providing support to parents as they navigate the intricacies of caring for their fragile newborns at home. This includes close monitoring of developmental mile-

stones, ongoing medical assessments, and guidance on feeding and nurturing techniques tailored to the premature baby's requirements.

Closing the Gap: A Collaborative Effort

The bridge between prenatal and postnatal care is a crucial one, and it's built on collaboration between expectant parents and healthcare providers. Regular communication, adherence to treatment plans, and a proactive approach to managing potential diseases are key components of ensuring a seamless transition.

In conclusion, the journey of pregnancy involves more than just the nine months of gestation. It's a continuum that extends from prenatal care to the postnatal period, with a particular emphasis on fourth trimester care for premature babies. Recognizing the connection between prenatal care, potential diseases, and postnatal implications is pivotal in ensuring the health and well-being of both mothers and newborns. As healthcare providers, we are committed to closing the gap and providing comprehensive care that encompasses every trimester of this remarkable journey.

Dr. Michel Saaloukeh, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, is board certified in Pediatrics, Neonatology and lactation. Trained at University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre UPMC, has been practicing for over 15 years in the field of Pediatrics and Neonatology. Dr. Saaloukeh is the medical director of a general pediatrics practice, Comprehensive Pediatric and Neonatal Clinic in Southwest Florida. He is IBCLC certified and is committed to providing breast feeding support to mothers and infants after discharge home from the hospital. With a focus on infants who graduate from the NICU, and their special needs, he is dedicated in providing support following discharge home.

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UNDERSTANDING JIMMY BUFFET'S MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA:

A RARE BUT AGGRESSIVE SKIN CANCER

By Vivian Wong, MD, PhD, FAAD

Merkel Cell Carcinoma (MCC), although rare, is a highly aggressive and potentially life-threatening form of skin cancer. Named after its discoverer, Dr. Friedrich Merkel, who identified it in 1875, MCC has gained increased attention in recent years due to its rapid progression and challenging treatment options. This article aims to shed light on this lesser-known skin cancer and provide valuable information for those seeking to understand its characteristics and risks.

1. Rarity and Prevalence:

Merkel Cell Carcinoma is considered a rare skin cancer, accounting for just 1% of all skin cancer cases. However, its incidence has been on the rise, with an estimated 2,500 new cases diagnosed each year in the United States. This upward trend has led to increased efforts in research and awareness.

2. Risk Factors:

MCC primarily affects older adults, with the average age of diagnosis being 75 years old. Key risk factors include a weakened immune system, exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or tanning beds, and infection with the Merkel cell polyomavirus (MCV). Those who have spent significant time outdoors, have had a history of other skin cancers, or have received organ transplants are at a higher risk.

3. Clinical Presentation:

MCC typically manifests as painless, firm, shiny nodules, or lumps on the skin, usually red, blue, or purple in color. They often appear on sun-exposed areas such as the head, neck, and arms. Due to its rarity and benign appearance, MCC lesions resemble harmless skin conditions, leading to delayed diagnosis.

4. Diagnosis and Staging:

A definitive diagnosis of MCC involves a biopsy of the lesion. Staging is essential to determine the extent of the cancer's spread. MCC is categorized into stages I to III based on tumor size and lymph node involvement, and stage IV if it has metastasized to distant organs.

5. Treatment Options:

Treatment options for MCC typically involve a combination of surgery, radiation therapy, and immunotherapy. Surgical removal of the tumor and affected lymph nodes is often the first step. Radiation therapy may follow to target any remaining cancer cells. Immunotherapy drugs, such as checkpoint inhibitors, have shown promise in treating MCC by boosting the body's immune response against the cancer.

6. Prognosis:

MCC's prognosis can be challenging due to its aggressive nature and potential for recurrence. Early diagnosis and intervention significantly improve the chances of successful treatment. However, for advanced cases, the prognosis may be less favorable.

In conclusion, Merkel Cell Carcinoma may be a rare skin cancer, but its aggressive behavior demands attention and vigilance. Understanding the risk factors, clinical presentation, and available treatment options is crucial for early detection and improved outcomes. Regular skin examinations, UV protection, and prompt medical evaluation of suspicious skin changes are essential steps in preventing and managing this challenging skin cancer. If you or someone you know falls into a high-risk category, consult a dermatologist at Skin Wellness Physicians for guidance and early detection measures.

MEET VIVIAN WONG, MD, PHD, FAAD

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



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



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BIDETS: A REFRESHING APPROACH TO COLON CANCER AWARENESS AND EVERYDAY WELL-BEING

Colon cancer is a silent but deadly disease that affects millions of lives worldwide. It often goes unnoticed until it reaches advanced stages, making early detection and prevention crucial. In the quest to raise awareness about colon cancer and promote overall colorectal health, one surprising ally emerges: the bidet.

The Growing Concern of Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women globally, with a significant mortality rate. While many factors contribute to its development, maintaining proper hygiene and promoting bowel health are essential steps in reducing the risk.

Colon Cancer and Hygiene

Proper hygiene is essential for overall health, and it plays a crucial role in reducing the risk of colon cancer. Bidets, long popular in countries like Japan and parts of Europe, offer a revolutionary approach to personal hygiene.

Bidets use a gentle stream of water to clean the anal and genital areas after using the toilet, offering a thorough and hygienic alternative to traditional toilet paper. This practice not only provides a refreshing and comfortable experience but also significantly reduces the risk of irritation, infection, and inflammation, all of which can contribute to colorectal health issues.

Bidets for Colon Cancer Patients

For those already affected by colon cancer, bidets can provide invaluable relief and comfort during treatment. Radiation therapy and chemotherapy can lead to various side effects, including diarrhea, constipation, and skin sensitivity. Traditional toilet paper can exacerbate these issues, causing further discomfort.

Bidets offer a gentle and soothing alternative, helping patients maintain hygiene without the abrasive effects of paper. This can make life a little more bearable during a challenging time and support the healing process.

Preventive Benefits for Everyone

Bidets aren't just for those battling colon cancer. They offer preventive benefits that can benefit everyone, regardless of their current health status. Regular use of bidets can:

- **Promote Hygiene:** Bidets ensure a more thorough cleaning process, reducing the risk of bacterial and fungal infections.
- **Reduce Irritation:** The gentle stream of water is less abrasive than toilet paper, reducing the chances of skin irritation and discomfort.
- **Minimize Hemorrhoids:** Bidets can help prevent the development or worsening of hemorrhoids, a common issue often exacerbated by harsh wiping.
- **Enhance Comfort:** Bidets provide a refreshing and comfortable experience every time you visit the bathroom, promoting overall well-being.

The Environmental and Economic Aspect

In addition to their health benefits, bidets also have environmental and economic advantages. They reduce the demand for toilet paper, helping to save trees and reduce the environmental impact of production. Additionally, they can save individuals and families significant money over time by reducing their toilet paper consumption.

As we strive to raise awareness about colon cancer and enhance our personal well-being, bidets emerge as a surprising yet powerful ally. These innovative bathroom fixtures not only promote proper hygiene but also provide comfort, relief, and even environmental benefits. So, as we champion the cause of colon cancer awareness, let us not overlook the potential of bidets to make a positive impact on our lives, both in health and in everyday comfort.

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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Custom Medications for Your Favorite Feline

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

Transdermal medications are a valuable treatment option in veterinary care, especially for addressing various cat behavioral and health issues. These medications are administered through the skin and can effectively manage specific feline problems. It's important to note that while transdermal medications can be helpful, it's always advisable to consult a veterinarian before starting any treatment regimen for your cat's specific needs. These medications target the root causes of these behaviors and illnesses, helping to create a more peaceful and comfortable living environment for both cats and their owners.

Behavioral Issues Treated with Transdermal Medications in Cats

Marking and Spraying

Transdermal medications can be beneficial in managing marking and spraying behaviors in cats. Often linked to territorial instincts, these behaviors involve urine deposition on vertical surfaces. Transdermal anti-anxiety medications can help reduce the urge to mark and spray, promoting a calmer environment.

Aggression

Aggressive behavior in cats can stem from various causes, including fear, stress, or territorial disputes. Transdermal medications containing anti-anxiety or calming agents can assist in addressing aggressive tendencies. These medications work by targeting the underlying factors contributing to the aggression, helping to create a more harmonious living environment for both the cat and its human companions.

Sedation

Transdermal sedative medications can play a role in managing situations where a cat's anxiety needs alleviating, such as during travel, vet visits, or other stressful events. Sedatives administered through the skin can help keep the cat relaxed and calm, reducing stress levels and making the experience more comfortable for both the cat and the owner.

It's crucial to emphasize that while transdermal medications can relieve certain behavioral issues in cats, seeking guidance from a veterinarian is essential before initiating any treatment. Each cat is unique, and a veterinarian can provide a tailored approach that considers the cat's medical history, overall health, and specific behavioral patterns.



Additionally, a veterinarian can ensure the proper dosage and application technique for the transdermal medication, maximizing its effectiveness and minimizing potential risks.

Medical Conditions Treated with Transdermal Medications in Cats

Heart Problems

Cats can experience various cardiac issues, including heart disease and congestive heart failure. Transdermal medications can be used to administer medications that help manage these conditions. These medications may include drugs that improve heart function control blood pressure, or reduce fluid buildup around the heart. Proper dosage and administration are essential, and a veterinarian's expertise is vital to tailor the treatment plan to your cat's specific needs.

Kidney Problems

Chronic kidney disease is common in older cats and can lead to various complications. Transdermal medications can play a role in managing kidney-related symptoms, such as hypertension or nausea. Drugs administered through the skin can help regulate blood pressure and alleviate discomfort, enhancing the cat's overall quality of life.

Gastrointestinal Problems

Cats may experience gastrointestinal issues like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or vomiting. Transdermal medications can provide anti-nausea or anti-inflammatory drugs that target these problems. These medications can help reduce inflammation in the digestive tract and relieve gastrointestinal discomfort.

Allergies and Inflammation

Cats can develop allergies that result in skin irritation, itching, and inflammation. Transdermal medications containing corticosteroids or antihistamines can help manage these allergic reactions by reducing inflammation and itchiness. Proper usage and dosage are essential to prevent overuse and potential side effects. Inflammation can occur due to injury, infection, or chronic conditions. Transdermal anti-inflammatory medications can be applied to affected areas to provide localized relief. These medications help to reduce pain, swelling, and discomfort associated with inflammation.

It's crucial to emphasize that while transdermal medications can offer benefits in treating these medical conditions, they are not a one-size-fits-all solution. A veterinarian's assessment is essential to determine the appropriate treatment approach, medication selection, dosage, and administration method for your cat's specific condition.

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November is National Diabetes Month

Diabetes affects 37 million Americans, and many are undiagnosed. It has become a national health crisis.

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

Most patients affected have Type 2 Diabetes, a disorder associated with insulin resistance and beta cell dysfunction leading to a deficiency of insulin. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to devastating complications triggered by damage to both the small and large blood vessels of the body. Small blood vessel disease can lead to damage to the retina of the eye, the kidneys, and the nerves. Large blood vessel disease leads to heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease. Many with diabetes have poor control of their disease even though there are more effective treatments for diabetes than ever before.

In my 25 years as an endocrinologist, there has been an explosion of treatments that have improved the lives of patients with both Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes. For example, when I started my fellowship in Endocrinology and Diabetes, we had three treatments for diabetes: insulin, sulfonylureas and metformin. We now have more than 80 treatments in the form of “designer” insulins, insulin pumps, continuous glucose monitoring, non-insulin injectables, inhaled insulin and many oral drugs and combinations.

Treating diabetes has always been my passion. It is also personal for me. I received my Type 1 diagnosis at age 15. As someone with diabetes and a doctor, I was always frustrated by the side effects of the older treatments, namely weight gain and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Fortunately, we now have drugs that help patients lose weight that do not typically cause hypoglycemia. Some of these drugs

have also been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and heart failure. With the main cause of death for a person with Type 2 diabetes being heart disease, it is wonderful to have pharmaceuticals that not only lower blood sugars, but also improve longevity.

It is important to build a team of health care professionals to help them improve their lives through lifestyle choices, prevention and management of complications. It is also essential that individuals be their own health care advocates and seek help from those that are experts in diabetes care.

Are you at Risk for Diabetes? Follow the ABCs

What can YOU do, as a person who is either at risk for, or already diagnosed with diabetes? There are three areas of high importance for optimal metabolic control. These are commonly called the ABCs of diabetes.

A stands for A1C

The A1C test measures a 90 day blood sugar average. A non-diabetic A1C typically averages around 5.5%. Optimal glycemic control in patients with diabetes is accepted to be less than 6.5 to 7% depending on the patient’s individual situation. The A1C should be measured every three months in diabetic patients so that providers and patients can determine what the average blood sugar has been. The A1C does not give information on highs and lows. It simply gives an estimate of overall control.

B stands for Blood Pressure Control

It is essential for patients with diabetes to have blood pressure measurements that are as close to normal as possible, thus helping protect the damage that

can occur in the vasculature of the body. In general, patients with diabetes should maintain a blood pressure less than 140/90 mmHg.

C stands for Cholesterol

Cholesterol management is important to keep the blood vessels of the body clean and free of plaque. The most important number to watch is the LDL, which represents the bad cholesterol that leads to heart disease. The goal LDL in most diabetics is less than 70 mg/dl although for those with pre-existing heart disease, I sometimes strive to achieve LDL levels less than 55 mg/dl.

I hope everyone will take the following advice: know your ABCs and be pro-active in your own health care. Find a health care provider that has expertise in treating patients with diabetes. Establish a meal plan that is effective in managing your blood sugar and weight goals and most importantly, one that you can stick with life-long. Make physical activity an enjoyable and regular part of your lifestyle. Take your medicines as prescribed and check your blood sugar regularly. Inquire about continuous blood sugar monitors so that you know what your sugar is all the time, not just a couple of times per day. Also, don’t forget to manage stress through exercise and healthy support systems.

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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Taking the Emotions Out of Investing

By Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Wintrust Investments

Emotions help us in so many aspects of our lives — from deciding which color we want to paint our homes to what to cook for a large family dinner, we unknowingly use emotions to fuel decisions that we make. Oftentimes, our emotions help to intuitively guide us when logical reasoning doesn't readily present itself, however, in some situations, like investing, emotions can lead to more harm than good. Leaving your emotions at the door when investing your money saves you from making costly mistakes and can help keep you on track with your long-term goals.

Understanding how emotions influence our decisions and judgements when doing something as significant as investing can go a long way in ensuring that you keep a level-head when managing your money. Humans tend to respond emotionally in decisions when faced with uncertainty, a phenomenon known as Psychological bias, that can result in errors of judgement.

For example, emotions can lead you to take on more risks to prevent a sure loss, but when faced with a sure gain, we fail to take risks to maximize our profits.

The fact of the matter is that the more emotional an event happens to be, the less sensibly we respond. So, how can we prevent our emotions from clouding our judgements, and what alternative strategies should we utilize to ensure that the investments we make to guarantee future stability are well-reasoned and logically sound? Well, first, we need to look into the common emotional mistakes that people make when investing.

Understanding Emotional Investment Mistakes

There are four main emotions that can impact how you invest your money but being able to recognize and combat them will prevent you from making common investment mistakes.

1) Impatience, which causes frequent trading to try and quickly enhance returns, can lead to higher trading costs, more taxes, and lower returns in the long run. To avoid falling victim to wanting to see results quickly, building and following an investment plan can stop you from getting distracted by short-term movement of the market and remain on-track with long term goals.



2) Overconfidence, like relying on "hot" investments to boost your portfolio's performance, can lead to lower performance and a higher risk of loss. Instead of following word-of-mouth, select investments based on research, not, and keep your portfolio diversified to generate more consistent returns in any market.

3) Another common emotion that can affect your investment decisions is fear. Fear of loss can result in becoming too hesitant to reenter the equity market, which in turn can prevent you from losing income by failing to capitalize on a market rebound. Rather than allowing fear to hold you back, try looking into easing into the equity market with an automatic investing strategy like dollar cost averaging. Fear and its byproduct, indecision, make you more likely to stay in cash to help protect your assets from market volatility. However, cash alone is unlikely to generate the returns necessary to achieve your retirement goals. Overall, this can lead to a loss of purchasing power over time. Monitoring your portfolio using the "3 Bucket Model" to review your asset allocation can help to offset the fears that inherently come with taking financial risks.

4) The final primary emotion that can impact how you choose to invest is panic. Say for example, one of your investments isn't doing too well. If you allow panic to control your decisions, you may think selling equities in down markets and moving to cash may help, but this only ensures short-term safety. Doing this leads to potential shortfalls in retirement income and can prevent you keeping the long-term growth necessary to reach your retirement goals. Instead of letting panic guide you, try staying calm and using history as a reliable tool to guide you in maintaining your long-term focus.

Managing Emotions and a Trusted Advisor

It may seem overwhelming to try and keep all the various emotions listed above in check, but there are simple ways that you can manage your emotions when investing in order to help you yield the most effective returns.

First, make sure you understand how your investments will respond to different market conditions. Focusing on the key benefits and the potential pitfalls, such as how your investment is likely to perform in turbulent markets, will make you less likely to make emotional mistakes because you'll be able to understand the nature of the risks you take. Remember to always keep in mind that the more volatile your investment, the stronger emotions you may feel when dealing with them. Another way to prevent your emotions from disrupting your long-term investment plans is to focus on strategizing rather than reacting. Building a diversified portfolio can not only generate consistent returns but can also offer a sense of stability when dealing with strong emotions.

Creating a withdrawal strategy can also give you the reassurance that your income will last for life.

Finally, seeking an outside perspective, like a trusted financial professional that suits your needs and availability, can help you navigate the ups and downs of the market. A financial professional's third-party objectivity and their ability to help guide you during difficult decisions reduces your risk of making emotional-fueled investment mistakes.

As humans, emotions are an invaluable tool we use when navigating through life, but when it comes to the world of investments, acknowledging, but not acting on them is your smartest and safest plan of action.

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Understanding Depression: Diagnosis and Expert Management

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

Depression is a pervasive mental health condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It is a complex and often debilitating illness that requires comprehensive diagnosis and expert management to improve the quality of life for those affected. In this article, we will explore the diagnosis and management of depression from the perspective of a psychiatrist, shedding light on the importance of professional intervention.

Diagnosing Depression

The first step in managing depression is an accurate diagnosis. Psychiatrists, as medical doctors with specialized training in mental health, are uniquely qualified for this task. They employ a combination of methods, including clinical interviews, psychological assessments, and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) criteria to evaluate a patient's symptoms. This thorough assessment helps determine the severity and type of depression, ensuring that treatment is tailored to the individual.

Differentiating Depression Types

Psychiatrists play a crucial role in distinguishing between various types of depression, such as major depressive disorder, persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder. Each type may necessitate distinct management strategies, underscoring the importance of precise diagnosis.

Medication Management

Once diagnosed, psychiatrists can recommend medication as part of the treatment plan. Antidepressant medications, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), are commonly prescribed. Psychiatrists carefully select the appropriate medication and dosage based on the patient's symptoms, medical history, and potential side effects.

Therapeutic Interventions

In addition to medications, psychotherapy plays a vital role in managing depression. Psychiatrists often provide therapy themselves or collaborate with clinical psychologists and therapists to offer evidence-based approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy (IPT), and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). These therapies help patients understand and cope with their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, ultimately promoting recovery.

Monitoring and Adjustments

Regular follow-up appointments with a psychiatrist are crucial during depression management. They monitor medication efficacy, side effects, and overall progress, making necessary adjustments to the treatment plan. This ongoing relationship helps ensure that patients receive the most suitable care throughout their recovery journey.

Addressing Co-occurring Conditions

Psychiatrists are trained to identify and address co-occurring conditions that may exacerbate depression, such as anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, or medical conditions. Treating these comorbidities is essential for comprehensive depression management.

Preventing Relapse

Depression can be a recurring illness, and psychiatrists help patients develop relapse prevention strategies. This may involve continuing therapy, adjusting medications, and incorporating lifestyle changes to reduce stress and support mental well-being.

Supporting the Family

Depression affects not only the individual but also their loved ones. Psychiatrists often work with families to educate them about depression, improve communication, and provide guidance on how to support their loved one's recovery.

Depression is a challenging mental health condition, but with the expertise of a psychiatrist, it can be diagnosed accurately and managed effectively. Through a combination of medication management, psychotherapy, ongoing monitoring, and a holistic approach to mental health, individuals living with depression can find hope and healing on their journey to recovery. Consulting a qualified psychiatrist is a vital step in this process, as they possess the knowledge and experience to provide the comprehensive care needed for those battling depression.

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

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



Is it Depression or Dementia:

Risk Factors, Masking and Differentiating Between the Two

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

October is Depression Awareness Month and it leads into the holiday season which is oftentimes a difficult time of year for seniors. Depression is common. It is important to understand that dementia and depression are two distinct yet interconnected conditions, often creating a perplexing challenge for individuals and their families to distinguish what is happening, especially as people age.

The connection between these two conditions is not merely coincidental; it is grounded in scientific research. Let us explore the connection between dementia and depression, how depression can mimic dementia, and discuss strategies to differentiate between the two, with a particular focus on age-related aspects. Several factors contribute to this intricate relationship, particularly in older adults:

Shared Risk Factors

• Age

Aging is a common risk factor for both dementia and depression. As individuals grow older, they become more susceptible to these conditions. It is not just the act of aging that makes depression a risk factor. We are at greater risk of depression as we age because people are not good at cultivating new relationships and experiences as they age. Watching the world change and loved ones pass away, coupled with being less active, increases our risk of depression and dementia. Additional risk factors for both depression and dementia include: genetics, inflammation, and chronic health conditions.

• Neurobiological Overlap

The brain regions affected by both conditions frequently intersect, which can lead to symptom overlap. For example, the hippocampus, vital for memory function, is vulnerable in both depression and certain types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.

• Symptom Similarities

Depression can manifest symptoms that mimic those seen in dementia, such as cognitive decline, memory problems, and disorientation. Conversely, individuals with dementia may experience mood disturbances, which can lead to a misdiagnosis of depression.

Depression Masking as Dementia in Older Adults

In older adults, depression can sometimes imitate dementia, complicating the diagnostic process.

• Cognitive Impairment

Depression often leads to cognitive impairments, including difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and poor decision-making. These symptoms can be misattributed to dementia, especially in older individuals. For example: An elderly person experiencing cognitive difficulties and forgetfulness might be wrongly assumed to have dementia, when in fact, they may be battling depression. In times of stress, cognitive function diminishes. If your loved one is dealing with cognitive impairment, consider what their life has been like recently.

• Social Isolation

Both depression and dementia can cause social withdrawal and a decreased interest in activities. In older adults, social isolation may be interpreted as a sign of cognitive decline when it could be related to the emotional challenges of depression. For example: An older individual who suddenly withdraws from social activities may be thought to have dementia due to their decreased engagement, but it may be a manifestation of underlying depression. After upsetting events, we are all likely to be less socially active. Consider, have there been any upsetting life events in your loved one's life recently?

• Physical Symptoms

Depression can manifest physical symptoms like fatigue, sleep disturbances, and psychomotor agitation. These physical symptoms can be mistaken for the frailty and cognitive sluggishness often associated with dementia. For example: An older person displaying signs of physical and mental slowing may raise concerns about dementia, yet these symptoms may be due to depression's psychomotor effects.

Differentiating between Dementia and Depression

To distinguish between dementia and depression in older adults, a comprehensive approach is necessary. Here are some strategies that can be helpful:

1. Comprehensive Evaluation: A thorough evaluation by a healthcare professional, considering medical history, physical examination, and relevant diagnostic tests, is crucial. Imaging studies, such as MRI or CT scans, may be needed in some cases to differentiate between the two conditions.

2. Mood Assessment: Assessing the individual's mood is vital. Depression is characterized by persistent sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in once-enjoyed activities. If these emotional symptoms are prominent, it may suggest depression rather than dementia.

3. Cognitive Testing: Cognitive assessments, such as the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) or the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), can help gauge cognitive impairment. However, it is essential to consider that depression can affect test performance, so results should be interpreted by a professional in the context of the individual's emotional state.

4. Timeline of Symptoms: Understanding the timeline of symptom onset is valuable. Depression often has a more abrupt and identifiable onset, whereas dementia typically progresses gradually over time. Keep a journal of symptoms and events. Example: If an elderly individual experiences a sudden and marked decline in cognitive and emotional functioning, it may point more toward depression than dementia.

5. Response to Treatment: Monitoring how an individual responds to treatment can be a valuable diagnostic clue. Depression typically improves with psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of both. If cognitive and emotional symptoms improve with treatment, it may suggest that depression was the primary cause.

Conclusion

The intricate relationship between dementia and depression, especially in older adults, necessitates a nuanced approach to diagnosis and treatment. Recognizing how depression can mimic dementia is crucial for ensuring that individuals receive appropriate care and support. By raising awareness about the age-related complexities of these conditions, we can reduce stigma and enhance the quality of life for older adults and their families facing these challenges. Accurate diagnosis and tailored interventions can make a significant difference in the well-being of individuals navigating the maze of dementia and depression.



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Can Breast Cancer Treatments Have Ocular Side Effects?

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

It is estimated that there are currently more than 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the United States. This is great news when we look at the fact that as many as 1 in every 8 women in this country will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. And statistics show that this year alone, more than 2,500 men will receive the diagnosis.

One thing that we want to recognize about these nearly 4 million breast cancer survivors is that the treatments they have gone through can and often do have lasting side effects. One such side effect is how cancer fighting drugs and radiation affects the eyes. Let's have a look at some of the possible side effects that can affect the ocular health of cancer patients and survivors.

Though it may be only a small number of patients who experience ocular side effects from their cancer treatment, there is evidence that conditions such as dry eye, cataracts, and retinopathy can at least partly be attributed to some breast cancer treatments and medications. When you look at the numbers, even a small percentage of 3.8 million is a large number. That is why it is important to take a look at the research and know what may happen if you find yourself undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

The breast cancer medication most commonly associated with ocular side effects is tamoxifen, but 5-flouracil (5-FU) has also been called into question as well as aromatase inhibitors which are sometimes prescribed to suppress secondary tumor formation. Let's have a look at each.

Tamoxifen

Tamoxifen has been shown to cause such eye problems as dryness, irritation, cataracts, and deposits on the retina. However, according to Dr. K.V. Chalam of the University of Florida College of Medicine, these side effects are related to dosage. In the past, cancer patients were given doses as large as 150 mg and ocular side effects were prevalent. Today, the dose is much smaller, usually around 20 mg or less and there are fewer cases of side effects. However, they still exist and should be addressed by an ophthalmologist.



White or yellow refractile crystals around the macula are a characteristic finding in tamoxifen retinopathy (Image courtesy of Retina Image Bank. Young Hee Youn, MD; Sung Hyun Kim. 2012; #559. © American Society of Retina Specialists.)

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy drugs are toxic to cells, especially those in a tumor. However, they can also affect other cells that divide regularly like those in the corneal epithelium. As a result, patients undergoing chemotherapy often report dry eye. The fact that this is easily treated with lubricating drops is good news for those who already have enough to deal with at the moment!

Another possible side effect of chemotherapy is conjunctivitis (aka pink eye). A topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory eyedrop can be administered along with lubricating drops if the patient is experiencing pain.

Aromatase Inhibitors

The effects of aromatase inhibitors (AIs) are similar to those of tamoxifen. AIs such as anastrozole, letrozole, and exemestane are often prescribed to postmenopausal breast cancer patients. Their ocular side effects are usually mild, but if left untreated could lead to serious eye disease.

Source:
<https://www.aao.org/eyenet/article/watch-ocular-effects-of-breast-cancer-drugs>



Research shows that patients taking anastrozole are more likely to have a retinal hemorrhage than those taking tamoxifen. This hemorrhage may be caused by estrogen depletion caused by the drug.

More research is necessary in order to show why cancer treating medications have this effect of many breast cancer patients. As mentioned, it is only a small percentage of patients who report these side effects, but to those women (and men), it is one more thing in a long list of what they must deal with as they undergo treatment or recover from months or years of treatment. If these side effects could be avoided, it would make their lives at least a little more comfortable.

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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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STEADY REAL ESTATE MARKET RESILIENCE IN NAPLES AMID RISING INTEREST RATES

By Robert Nardi, Broker/Owner

While much of America grapples with unfamiliarly high interest rates that have stalemated the resale home market, broker analysts reviewing the July 2023 Market Report by the Naples Area Board of REALTORS® (NABOR®), which tracks home listings and sales within Collier County (excluding Marco Island), point to data that shows home sales activity in Naples has remained steady for the past year despite several interest rate increases. Yet, even as cash sales for homes in Naples decreased from 66.7 percent in January to 53.5 percent in July, the overall median closed price of homes in the first seven months of 2023 has continued to increase compared to most months in the first seven months of 2022.

The July Market Report's total sales data showed 81 fewer homes sold in July than in July 2022, an 11.9 percent decrease to 600 closed sales from 681 closed sales. On the other side of the spectrum, pending listings (homes under contract) in July increased 6.3 percent to 798 pending listings from 751 pending listings in July 2022, which illustrates our market's steadiness. Also, the percentage of list price received this July is steady at 96.1 percent compared to 97.9 percent in July 2022. In July, days on market increased 115.4 percent to 56 days from 26 days in July 2022, the lowest reported in the history of NABOR®'s Market Reports. Incidentally, before the pandemic, days on market averaged over 100 days (104 days in July 2019).

New listings in July decreased 15.4 percent to 810 new listings from 957 new listings in July 2022. Before the pandemic, new listings supplemented an

already very healthy inventory level. Data showed 5,200 properties for sale in Naples in July 2019 compared to 2,583 properties listed for sale in July 2023. But while new listings, closed sales, and pending sales activity have almost returned to 2019 levels, overall inventory has not. As inventory faded away during the homebuying frenzy of the pandemic years, median closed prices rose by over 50 percent. In July 2019, the median closed price in Naples was \$325,000. But in July 2023, the median closed price increased 9.2 percent to \$595,000 from \$545,000 in July 2022.

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

What does this mean?

The July report shows we are in a steady market with lower inventory. Prices are stable, and the market is not on "shaky ground." To add to the steadiness, Hurricane Idalia was a non-event for Southwest Florida. Whew!

Back-on-market properties

An interesting finding in the July statistics is that 199 pending listings returned to the market in July. So potential Buyers should look at this as an additional opportunity. Why did these properties come back on the market? Some Buyers, even though pre-approved for a mortgage, are denied after their paperwork is submitted/processed by their lender's underwriting

division. If the sales contract has a mortgage contingency, the lender issues a denial letter to the Buyer to present to the Seller, and the Buyer's escrow funds are refunded. Another way for a property to come back on the market is when a Buyer and Seller cannot come to terms with fixing non-working items discovered in the inspection period. In Naples, you have the NABOR® sales contract and the NABOR® AS-IS sales contract. In the NABOR® contract, you inspect the property and present all non-working items to the Sellers to fix. As a Buyer, you can ask for remedial action or get estimates and request a credit at closing for fixing non-working items. If the Seller refuses to fix anything or give a credit at closing, the Buyer can cancel the contract and receive their escrow monies back.

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REVOLUTIONIZING INTIMACY

The P-Shot with Stem Cells Unveiled for Enhanced Sexual Performance and Sensitivity

By Dr. Carolina Young

In recent years, medical science has been pushing the boundaries of what's possible in enhancing sexual performance and sensitivity. One groundbreaking innovation that has garnered significant attention is the P-Shot with stem cells. This cutting-edge procedure is poised to revolutionize the way we approach sexual health and pleasure. In this article, we'll delve into the science behind the P-Shot with stem cells, its potential benefits, and what you need to know if you're considering this transformative treatment.

The Science of the P-Shot with Stem Cells

The P-Shot, short for Priapus Shot, is a minimally invasive procedure designed to improve sexual performance and sensitivity in men. It involves the injection of platelet-rich plasma (PRP) into the penis. PRP is derived from the patient's own blood and is rich in growth factors that stimulate tissue regeneration and repair.

The addition of stem cells to the P-Shot takes it to a whole new level. Stem cells are the body's natural repairmen, capable of transforming into various cell types and promoting healing. When introduced into the penis alongside PRP, these stem cells have the potential to rejuvenate and regenerate the tissues, leading to improved sexual function.

Benefits of the P-Shot with Stem Cells

- 1. Enhanced Sensitivity:** One of the most sought-after benefits of the P-Shot with stem cells is heightened sensitivity. The rejuvenated tissues and improved blood flow can result in a more responsive and enjoyable sexual experience.
- 2. Improved Erectile Function:** Stem cells can aid in repairing damaged blood vessels and erectile tissue. This can lead to firmer and longer-lasting erections, potentially helping those with mild to moderate erectile dysfunction.
- 3. Increased Confidence:** Knowing that you have taken proactive steps to enhance your sexual

performance can boost self-esteem and overall confidence in the bedroom.

- 4. Natural and Non-Invasive:** The procedure uses the body's own resources, reducing the risk of allergic reactions or rejection. It's minimally invasive and typically well-tolerated.

What to Expect During the Procedure

The P-Shot with stem cells is a relatively straightforward outpatient procedure. Here's what you can expect:

- 1. Consultation:** You'll have a consultation with a qualified healthcare provider to assess your suitability for the procedure.
- 2. Blood Draw:** A small amount of your blood will be drawn for the preparation of PRP and stem cells.
- 3. Injection:** The PRP and stem cell mixture will be injected into specific areas of the penis, targeting areas that require rejuvenation.
- 4. Recovery:** There is minimal downtime, and you can typically return to your normal activities shortly after the procedure.

Considerations and Potential Risks

While the P-Shot with stem cells holds great promise, it's essential to consider the following:

- 1. Results Vary:** Individual responses to the treatment can vary, and not everyone may experience the same degree of improvement.
- 2. Temporary Discomfort:** Some individuals may experience mild discomfort, bruising, or swelling at the injection site, which usually subsides within a few days.
- 3. Consult a Professional:** Always seek treatment from a qualified healthcare provider experienced in performing the P-Shot with stem cells to ensure safety and efficacy.



The P-Shot with stem cells represents a cutting-edge advancement in sexual health and performance. While it may not be a magic solution for everyone, the potential benefits, including enhanced sensitivity and improved erectile function, are undoubtedly intriguing. If you're considering this procedure, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional who can provide guidance tailored to your unique needs. With the potential to transform your intimate life, the P-Shot with stem cells is a remarkable development in the field of sexual wellness.

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National Pet Wellness Month

A Time to Celebrate Happy, Healthy Pets

Every October, pet lovers across the nation come together to celebrate National Pet Wellness Month, a time dedicated to the health and happiness of our beloved four-legged companions. This annual observance serves as a reminder of the importance of proactive pet care, promoting their overall well-being, and fostering a deeper bond between humans and animals.

Our pets hold a special place in our hearts, providing us with unwavering love and companionship. As responsible pet owners, it is our duty to ensure they lead long, fulfilling lives. National Pet Wellness Month offers a unique opportunity to focus on their health and wellness in various ways.

Nutrition: A Key Ingredient for Pet Wellness

One of the cornerstones of pet wellness is nutrition. The food we provide to our furry friends plays a pivotal role in their health. During National Pet Wellness Month, it's the perfect time to review your pet's diet. Consult with your veterinarian to ensure you are feeding them a balanced and appropriate diet tailored to their specific needs. Proper nutrition can prevent obesity, allergies, and other health issues.

Regular Exercise: Keeping Pets Fit and Happy

Exercise is equally vital for your pet's wellness. Dogs need daily walks and playtime, while cats enjoy interactive toys and climbing structures. Regular exercise not only helps them maintain a healthy weight but also keeps their minds active and their spirits high. Use this month to establish an exercise routine that suits both you and your pet.



Preventive Healthcare: A Priority

Preventive healthcare is the cornerstone of keeping your pet healthy. Regular veterinary check-ups, vaccinations, and dental care are essential. National Pet Wellness Month encourages pet owners to schedule these visits if they have not already done so. Early detection of illnesses can save both money and heartache down the road.

Mental Well-being: A Happy Mind, a Happy Pet

Mental well-being is just as important as physical health. Pets thrive on routine and social interaction. Ensure your pet is mentally stimulated through play, training, and spending quality time together. Mental enrichment toys and activities can keep their minds engaged.

Safety First: Pet-proofing Your Home

During this month, take some time to pet-proof your home. Ensure that toxic plants, chemicals,

and hazards are out of reach. Checking your fences and gates can also prevent your pets from wandering off or getting into dangerous situations.

Community Involvement: Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership

National Pet Wellness Month is also an opportunity to get involved in your local community. Participate in pet adoption events, volunteer at animal shelters, or donate to organizations dedicated to animal welfare. Promoting responsible pet ownership benefits not only your own pet but also countless others in need.

Celebrate Pet Wellness Year-Round

As National Pet Wellness Month draws to a close, remember that pet wellness should be a year-round commitment. Our pets give us unconditional love, and it's our responsibility to reciprocate by providing them with the best care possible. By embracing a holistic approach to pet wellness, we can ensure that our furry family members lead happy, healthy lives filled with love and joy.

Contact Animal Oasis Veterinary Hospital to schedule a wellness exam, vaccinations, and calming medications for your pets today!

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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Treatment

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

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

Associates in Nephrology

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Source:

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM7OKwmG3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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Compounded Hormone Replacement Therapy

Upon aging, women will start to experience symptoms of hormonal imbalance, which can be related to perimenopause, menopause, postmenopause, giving birth or from a hysterectomy.

Females tend to experience an imbalance of estrogen, testosterone, and progesterone, which can lead to hot flashes, night sweats, anxiety, depression, brain fog, weight gain, loss of muscle, irritability and bone deficiency. Bone loss in women can exacerbate stress fractures caused by osteopenia or osteoporosis.

Changing the hormone levels through bio-identical hormone therapy can alleviate or in many cases eliminate these symptoms and life fluctuations. There are even studies now that suggest bio-identical hormones can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

In the U.S., Bio-identical Hormone Therapy (BHT) has been used since the 1930s. And based on hundreds of current medically thorough studies, the results for patients overall quality of life and dramatic changes in their hormonal symptoms are astounding.

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.

MISIRx Compounding Pharmacy

Obviously, the bio-identical progesterone hormone therapy is the better option due to its ability to work with the body naturally, and due to the proven health benefits that coincide with the treatment. At MISIRx Pharmacy, they understand the importance of providing this type of hormone therapy for their patients.



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Liver Health and Therapeutic Agents

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

Your liver health may not be top of mind, but the minute it malfunctioned there wouldn't be much else on your mind. Cirrhosis, in which liver cells are replaced with scar tissue, can prevent your liver from doing its critical jobs. So can nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, a fast-growing epidemic among the obese, which can lead to cirrhosis. If your liver stopped working, toxins would accumulate, you couldn't digest your food and medications would never leave your body.

In fact — you can't live a week without your liver. "It's an organ you could easily trash if you don't take good care of it," says Rohit Satoskar, MD, of the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute. "And once you trash it, it's gone." Your liver is about the size of a football and sits under your lower ribcage on the right side. It has several important things to do. It helps clean your blood by getting rid of harmful chemicals that your body makes. It makes a liquid called bile, which helps you break down fat from food. And it also stores sugar called glucose, which gives you a quick energy boost when you need it.

There's nothing tricky about keeping your liver in good shape. It's all about a healthy lifestyle, says Ray Chung, MD, medical director of the liver transplant program at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Taking care of your liver is far more about avoiding what's bad than it is about eating or drinking things that are particularly nourishing to the liver," he says.

The liver is your body's largest internal organ, weighing between 3 and 5 pounds. Your liver is located on the right side of your upper body, below the lungs, taking up most of the space in your rib cage. The gallbladder, which stores bile made in the liver, is found tucked under your liver. Your liver is made up of two separate sections, or lobes: the larger right lobe and the smaller left lobe. These two lobes are separated by tissue which anchors your liver in place.

Unlike the lungs or heart, we cannot feel our liver working. Your liver is an incredibly hard-working organ with more than 500 different vital functions. Only your brain has more functions than the liver. Many of the liver's functions are related to your metabolism. These metabolic functions allow you to convert food to energy, break down food to basic building blocks needed by your body and eliminate waste.



The liver...

- Produces bile
- Produces proteins for blood plasma
- Produces cholesterol and special proteins to help carry fats through the body
- Converts unused glucose into glycogen for storage
- Regulates levels of amino acids in blood
- Stores iron processed from hemoglobin
- Converts poisonous ammonia, made during digestion, to urea
- Processes drugs and other poisonous substances to your body
- Regulates blood clotting (or our ability to stop bleeding)
- Fights infections by making immune factors and removing bacteria from the bloodstream
- Removes bilirubin from red blood cells

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is one of the most common chronic liver diseases. Astaxanthin, the active ingredient in Mitopak is a carotenoid, and beneficial effects of astaxanthin, including anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumor activity, have been identified.

Studies have shown that most carotenes have anti-aging, free radical scavenging, antioxidant, and anti-cancer effects, and have been widely used in the fields of medicine, food, cosmetics, and feed. Astaxanthin is the only carotenoid to penetrate the blood-brain and retinal barriers. It is frequently used as an antioxidant to treat brain injury and cardiovascular diseases and has been extensively studied in clinical practice. In addition, astaxanthin has shown anti-cancer effects in many cancers, including liver cancer, colon cancer, bladder cancer, oral cancer, and leukemia. In addition, many animal experiments have proved that astaxanthin plays an important role in regulating sugar metabolism, improving immunity and improving motor function.

The Role of Astaxanthin in Liver Diseases

Astaxanthin has been used in the prevention and treatment of a variety of systemic diseases in vivo due to its various biological activities. In recent years, researchers have confirmed that astaxanthin plays an important role in preventing acute liver injury, alleviating insulin resistance and NAFLD, liver fibrosis and liver cancer.

Liver Fibrosis

Liver fibrosis is a key link in the deterioration of chronic liver diseases such as viral hepatitis and fatty liver. Without effective intervention, 75–80% of these diseases can develop into cirrhosis, which seriously endangers human health. The reversibility of these factors also provides an important research target for the reversal of hepatic fibrosis. The mechanism of liver fibrosis is complex, involving the regulation of histopathology, cytology, cytokines, and their molecular levels. Mitopak can potentially prevent and treat liver diseases by inhibiting inflammation and improving glycolipid metabolism at the mitochondrial level.

Vetirus Pharmaceuticals is based in Naples, Florida and London, England and are 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.

MITOPAK
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HUNGRY HEART

By Alex Anderson

The songwriter and performer Bruce Springsteen was right when he wrote,

"Everybody's got a hungry heart..."

Inside of every human is this need or hunger. Sometimes we try to fill it with love for another person, but for some reason...another person is not the answer.

Sometimes the hungry heart destroys the very things we love and want.

Springsteen goes on to sing,

"We fell in love, I knew it had to end...we took what we had and we ripped it apart...everybody's got a hungry heart...don't make no difference what nobody says...ain't nobody like to be alone...everybody's got a hungry heart."

I do believe our hungry heart is about loneliness, not for another human...but for God himself. We were created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26) but when man left God...man missed, and still misses, God. They had a bond that filled man with joy and satisfied his heart like nothing else.

C.S. Lewis calls this the, "Numinous Awe." It seems to be built into mankind, this *ravenous hungry heart to know God*. And it's so strong nothing can fill it but God himself.

Psalms 34:8 says, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

And the truth is... If you don't get that deep ravenous hunger in your heart satisfied by Jesus you will starve to death spiritually, while eating everything else.

So how do you do that? How do you find the true satisfaction that calms your hungry heart?

If you are a Christ-follower, then you know how to do this. You...'do again'...something that you have already experienced when you asked God to be your Lord and Savior. You "make up" with God and you're back to stay.

You are so glad to be back together. Glad that God owns you and your life. So you decide to be happy because God owns you and is your life partner (Philippians 4:4).

Feel the pleasure, the joy and the delight again about Jesus being your master. Let this fact cause you happiness, pleasure and delight.

Be full of joy because Jesus paid a high price for your life. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Let the reality of what He has done sink over you.

Not only are you in His family now, but you can live the life of a victorious and joyful person of God; with all the rights and privileges of a child of rich royalty.

"You are my child says the Lord...my very rich child says the Lord...let the riches of your heart begin to overflow into all of your life." (3 John 2)

You can, should, and must rejoice always in the Lord...way before anything changes physically in your life.

The seed of hope and joy is there if you have become one with Jesus Christ. His seed is within you. If your hope is nonexistent then find the seed once planted deep in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Like a precious pearl search for it (Matthew 13:45).


When you find it (that small seed), clean it up. Polish it and put it in the center room of your heart, shine the brightest light you can find on it and let its magnificent beauty captivate you. Stare at it with intentional focus as though you are searching and waiting for hope itself.

Its magnificent light will light up your life.

For it will change everything about you as you clearly see and feel the love that God has shed in your heart...that is for you (Romans 5:5).

It is so worthy of your time my friend to mediate and think about Jesus, again.

Whether things in your life are going well or not...you have the power of a Christ-follower to focus on Jesus...the author and finisher of your faith and the centerpiece of your heart.



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Remediation Complete... What Next?

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

I often see clients complete their remediation process and render a sigh of relief after their clearance comes back clean. I understand the thought "glad that is over", but the reality is this is where the homeowner due diligence begins!

Yes your home is now mold safe but the key is understanding all the issues that can affect your home in the future and safeguarding your future. From the moment we complete the work recontamination can begin. Mold is everywhere. Have you considered all the issues that could potentially affect your living space:

1. Finding a great deal on a garage sale furniture or even new furniture that has been sitting in a warehouse that might not be climate controlled could easily transfer mold spores into your home.

2. Have you considered your auto is making you sick? Cars can get moisture in from rain and snow and create humidity to grow mold. Same for boats, campers and RV's.

3. Have you considered your work environment may have mold in building or HVAC. Monitor humidity; look for roof leaks, stained drop down ceiling tiles or condensation moisture, dark stains on return air grates.

4. Has your vacuum been cleaned? Does your cleaning lady bring in her own vacuum or pole duster transferring spores from the previous home they cleaned?

5. What are you doing to eliminate dust? Mold feeds on dust.

6. Remember every time you enter your home from outside mold spores can remain on your clothes and enter your home. True for your pets too, bringing in mold spores.

7. Those that live in wooded areas will naturally have more mold spores around their home.

8. Those that love to nourish your landscape with wood mulch are actually providing more mold spores



around the exterior of their home that can easily enter through entering a door. Be especially diligent when new mulch gets laid before it settles.

9. Condensation. Whether on windows, ductwork or plumbing pipes this added moisture can raise your humidity levels and provide the needed nutrition for mold to multiply.

10. Help your furnace help you. Be sure you are using at least a MERV 8 filter and change regularly. And when you change out be sure and put the old one in a sealed plastic bag before walking through your home to dispose of in your trash.

11. For as little as \$10 you can purchase humidity meters to place throughout your home or office. Make sure the humidity stays below 60% at all times! Some common species of mold can grow and thrive just on high humidity.

12. Basements are notorious for humidity and even the best maintained finished basement can have leaks or sump pump failures. Keep on guard with humidity meters, have back up alarms on sump pumps and monitor humidity.

13. Monitor the humidity coming from your HVAC vents. If your air conditioning short cycles it may cool but not run long enough to remove the humidity. This can be due to your unit being oversized for the home or a fan speed issue. Another HVAC issue is keeping your home too warm when your AC is on. If your unit does not run often to dehumidify then high humidity will cause the most

common mold species, that looks like dust to grow unnoticed. If you are one of those that were told to keep your fan on continuously versus auto is another problem we often see causing high humidity. When your system is on and the humidity it extracts from the air condensates in the unit. If when the system is off but the fan is still running the air blows over these wet coils putting humidity back into your home.

14. Make sure you keep your crawl space vapor barrier in good shape and contractors that might be in there like a plumber does not move it about providing for uncovered areas that can allow earth humidity to rise and increase the humidity within your home.

15. Check your downspouts to be sure they extend from your structure and don't dislodge during mowing or storms.

16. Always be on the look out for excess moisture:

- Disconnected dryer vents
- Icemaker line leaks
- Plumbing leaks
- Roof or chimney leaks
- Windows excess condensation
- Toilet seal leaks
- Tub/shower leaks or escaping water during a bath or shower
- Dishwasher or clothes washer leaks
- Wet towels, swimsuits, athletic clothes

Once you have been affected by mold or the mycotoxins they produce there is a new realization that you must now be more conscious with humidity and water leaks. This list certainly is not exhaustive but can provide a checklist to review. If you have any questions, please contact us.



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How to Enjoy Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

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

Remember that you're hiring human beings

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

Leave your home while it's being cleaned

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

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

Leave a tip

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

To clean or not to clean

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

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

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

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



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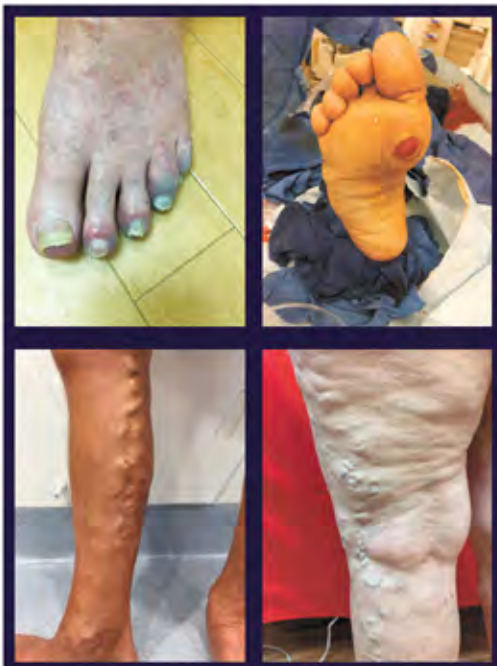


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