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

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DIGESTIVE HEALTH  
HAZARDS FOR  
THE HOLIDAYS**

**STRESS MANAGEMENT**  
A Key to Boosting Immunity and  
Maintaining Overall Health

**THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH**  
Unlocking Longevity Through  
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# Change your Smile – Change your Image – Change your Life

It happens to all of us. We wake up one day, look in the mirror, and decide its time to make a change. Maybe it was a life event. A tragedy. A celebration. You've been thinking about it for a long while, but today you decide, is the day to take action. This is where Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry patient Brian's story begins. Brian is a medical professional in Naples, Florida and knows how important your smile is to soothe a patient's fears. Brian was not happy with his smile and noticed he had been smiling a lot less lately because he had neglected his oral health for way too long.

"I made an appointment for a whitening treatment. I thought this would be a good place to start." Says Brian. "I just wanted to feel better about myself and my image. However, when I went in for the whitening treatment, the aesthetician gave me a real wake-up call. Turns out I hadn't been to the dentist in over two years. Not even for cleaning. I had some crowns that were falling out and my gums were a mess. I called my regular family dental office and found that the dentist I always saw had retired. So I started looking for recommendations for a new dental provider."

Brian's son was a patient of Dr. Bill Campbell at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry. Upon his son's recommendation, Brian took the first step and made an appointment for a consultation. That was in December of 2019. Brian met with Dr Campbell and was given the immediate care he needed, and then together, they made a treatment plan to change Brian's smile for life.

"Dr. Campbell gave me several different options and explained the pro's and con's of each, along with an estimated price. Did I want a quick fix? Did I want to invest the money for a life long solution? Dental work is not cheap, but you get what you pay for. Dr. Campbell's credentials and his ability to explain the options with a price comparison was what made me want to have the work done at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry."

When asked why Brian chose Dr. Campbell, he said, "Bill is just kind. He is a kind man with a heart for what he does. Bill is the kind of guy who you could invite over for a picnic, and he would come over the day before and mow the lawn and help set up the grill. Bill is the kind of guy you want to help you make life-changing decisions."



Brian chose a full mouth extraction and dental implants to replace his natural teeth. After the extraction, Dr. Campbell placed bone grafts to strengthen Brian's mandible and maxilla so they would be strong enough to hold the screws that would attach the new teeth in place. In February of 2022, after a year of wearing removable dentures and allowing the bone grafts to work, Brian received his new smile.

"I just cant express how happy I am with my new mouth. It's changed my whole attitude and outlook. I have self-confidence again. The color, the shape, the fit, I LOVE TO SMILE now!"

When asked if he would do it again, go thru the waiting and the pain and the process, the SMILE said it all. "Yes! Yes, I would do it all again! But I would do it sooner! I would not wait until I felt like I had to hide my smile at work. I would not wait until a tragic life event gave me no reason to smile. I would go straight to Dr. Campbell and the superior staff at Park Family & Cosmetic Dentistry and give myself a smile worth showing off!"

Dr. Bill Campbell, a distinguished Naples dentist, graduated from Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine in 2009, following an accelerated program at Barry University for a master's in biomedical sciences degree before dental school. With over ten years of experience and a commitment to continuous learning, Dr. Campbell has accumulated over 1000 hours of Continuing Education, showcasing his dedication to staying at the forefront of dental advancements.

- **Continuing Education:** Accumulated over 1000 hours of CE, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing learning.
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## William Campbell, DMD



Dr. Campbell's dedication to excellence is underscored by his comprehensive training and commitment to utilizing advanced techniques, including Guided Implant Placement, ensuring precision in implant procedures. When Dr. Campbell is not practicing his craft, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two active sons at their sporting events.

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# Dr. Tam Mai – Keeping you as Preserved as Possible

**B**reast-conserving therapy is an approach to treating breast cancer to preserve as much of the breast as possible. This therapy typically includes two main components: lumpectomy and radiation therapy. Breast-conserving surgery, also known as lumpectomy or partial mastectomy, involves the removal of the tumor along with a small margin of healthy tissue. The procedure aims to preserve the breast's natural appearance by removing only the affected area.

Following a lumpectomy, radiation therapy is often recommended. This involves directing high-energy rays at the affected breast to target and eliminate any remaining cancer cells. Radiation therapy is typically administered over several weeks, with daily sessions lasting a few minutes each.

The advantages of breast-conserving therapy include its positive impact on the cosmetic outcome, its less invasive nature compared to mastectomy, and a generally shorter recovery time for patients. Eligibility for breast-conserving therapy depends on factors such as the size and location of the tumor, extent of skin involvement, or absence of inflammatory breast cancer. Individualized treatment plans are crucial, and decisions should be made in consultation with healthcare providers.

**Oncoplastic Surgery: Thinking Outside the Box...** Oncoplasty represents a significant advancement in the surgical management of breast cancer, blending the principles of oncology with the artistry of plastic surgery. This approach is particularly relevant for individuals diagnosed with breast cancer who may not be traditionally thought of as candidates for breast-conserving surgery due to tumor location or multiple foci of cancers. The overarching goal of oncoplasty is to combine the effective removal of cancerous tissue with immediate breast reconstruction, ensuring that the patient not only survives cancer but also retains a positive body image.

Careful consideration is given to each patient's unique situation in oncoplastic surgery. This involves assessing factors such as the location and size of the tumor, the patient's overall health, and the individual anatomy of the breast. The collaborative effort of a multidisciplinary team, including

surgical oncologists and plastic surgeons, is integral to the success of oncoplastic procedures. However, at Magnolia Breast Center, you have another option. Dr. Tam Mai is BOTH a surgical oncologist and an oncoplastic surgeon. Making Magnolia Breast Center the only center with oncoplastic trained surgeon.

Dr. Mai's surgical techniques employed in oncoplasty are diverse and tailored to each patient's needs. These techniques may include breast reduction, mastopexy (breast lift), and various flap reconstructions. The choice of course is guided by the goal of achieving clear margins during tumor removal while simultaneously optimizing the cosmetic outcome.

One of the primary advantages of oncoplasty is the marked improvement in aesthetics compared to traditional breast-conserving surgeries. By preserving the natural appearance of the breast and addressing issues of symmetry and contour, oncoplastic surgery can positively impact a patient's psychological well-being and overall quality of life.

It's necessary to emphasize that oncoplasty is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Patient selection is a meticulous process, and the decision to pursue oncoplastic surgery is made in consideration of the individual's unique circumstances. The primary focus remains on effective cancer treatment, with the integration of plastic surgery techniques serving to enhance the patient's physical and emotional well-being.

Combining treatment and reconstruction in the same operation means you only need one surgery. You'll have a single recovery period, which means less interruption of your life. Operating with reconstruction already planned enables Dr. Mai to remove more tissue surrounding the cancer site, which may help in obtaining the complete removal of the tumor.

For anyone contemplating oncoplasty, a consultation with a medical professional specializing in breast cancer surgery, such as Dr. Tam Mai, is the first step. This ensures a personalized and comprehensive approach to treatment, addressing the journey's oncologic and cosmetic aspects.



**Tam T. Mai, MD, FACS, FSSO**  
Board Certified Breast Surgical Oncologist

*Dr. Tam T. Mai is a board-certified fellowship trained breast surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery and the Society of Surgical Oncology. She completed her oncoplastic breast surgery training at the University of Southern California, Hoag Breast Fellowship Program, under the world-renowned Dr. Melvin Silverstein a pioneer of oncoplastic breast surgery. This approach utilizes plastic surgery techniques and principles to reshape the breast immediately following breast-conserving surgery for breast cancer to preserve the aesthetics of the breasts.*

*Before her move to Naples, Dr. Mai served as Medical Director of the Springfield Clinic Breast Health Center, an NAPBC-accredited multidisciplinary breast health center in central Illinois. During this time, she also participated in training the next generation of surgical residents in the General Surgery and Plastics Residency Programs at Southern Illinois University.*

*Dr. Mai is passionate about practicing evidence-based medicine and bringing high-level breast care to serve patients with breast diseases. She strongly believes in exercise as a treatment to improve overall wellness, breast cancer survival and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence.*

*In her free time, Dr. Mai enjoys traveling, cooking, exercising, weight training, yoga, reading, and spending time with her family.*



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# TIPS TO AVOID DIGESTIVE HEALTH HAZARDS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**D**uring this holiday season, the steady onslaught of treats, holiday buffets, and that ever-so-tasty double peppermint mocha latte topped with whipped cream can easily knock down the wall of resistance for even the most health-conscious eater.

While many of us are thinking about calories and possible weight gain, our attention should also be on our digestive health. “The holidays can wreak havoc on the GI tract,” says **Dr. Afshin Khaizer, M.D.**, board-certified Gastroenterologist with Physicians Regional Medical Group. “I see a large increase in indigestion, bloating, abdominal pain, and irregular bowel complaints during this time.”

Digestion affects us more than we may think - including mood, energy, sleep, general wellbeing, and overall health. Studies show that a big shift in digestive health can happen fast, sometimes within days of what we eat. The good news: There are ways to enjoy the holidays while keeping your waistline and digestive health in check.

“The holidays are when more people do their own cooking, so it is a great time for people to challenge themselves to make healthier versions of their favorite foods,” Dr. Khaizer says. “For example, look for recipes using lower fat and sugar content than the traditional version.” He adds having an eating game plan is also important. “If desserts are your thing, then map out a strategy to minimize the front end of the meal.”

Dr. Khaizer recognizes that portion control is a big factor in keeping digestive health in line. He suggests eating smaller, frequent meals that will allow the body to process and digest the food without discomfort. “It’s tempting to eat that large holiday meal, but you always feel it after.”

#### He adds the following tips:

- 1) Limit cocktails to 1-2 servings of alcohol.
- 2) Schedule meals earlier and avoid fried or fatty foods.
- 3) Add some fruits and veggies to each meal to ensure you’re getting the fiber you need.
- 4) Chew your food well and eat slowly.
- 5) Drink plenty of water with each meal.



The holidays can be a challenging time to be mindful of the foods you are fueling your body with but with a few tweaks and simple guidelines, you can be on the road to better digestive health for the entire year.

Dr. Khaizer specializes in colon cancer screening and prevention, pancreatic and gallbladder disease, liver disease, cirrhosis, hepatitis, acid reflux/GERD, celiac/gluten intolerance, Crohn’s disease as well as Ulcerative colitis.

**For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (239) 348-4236, or schedule online at [PhysiciansRegionalMedicalGroup.com](https://www.physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com).**

Dr. Khaizer has office locations near both Physicians Regional Collier and Physicians Regional Pine Ridge.

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# STRESS MANAGEMENT: A KEY TO BOOSTING IMMUNITY AND MAINTAINING OVERALL HEALTH

By Theresa Vergo, PA-C

In today's fast-paced world, stress has become an unavoidable part of our lives. Whether it's work pressure, personal relationships, or unforeseen challenges, stress can take a toll on our mental and physical well-being. One aspect often overlooked is the impact of stress on the immune system. Chronic stress can weaken the immune response, making individuals more susceptible to illnesses. Therefore, understanding and implementing effective stress management techniques is crucial for maintaining a robust immune system and overall health.

## THE LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND IMMUNITY

The connection between stress and the immune system is well-documented. The "fight or flight" response is triggered when the body perceives a threat, releasing stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. While these hormones are essential for short-term survival, chronic exposure can harm the immune system.

Prolonged stress suppresses the immune system's ability to fight off antigens, leaving the body vulnerable to infections and diseases. Also, stress can exacerbate existing health conditions, contributing to declining well-being.

## EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

**Regular Exercise:** Engaging in regular physical activity is a powerful stressbuster. Exercise helps release endorphins, the body's natural mood lifters, improves circulation, and promotes better sleep. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.

According to Better Health Channel, exercise can improve your sense of control, coping ability, and self-esteem. People who exercise regularly often report how good achieving a goal makes them feel.<sup>1</sup>

A list of health benefits from regular exercise that should be emphasized and reinforced by mental health professionals include:

- Improved sleep
- Increased interest in sex
- Better endurance
- Stress relief
- Improvement in mood
- Increased energy and stamina
- Reduced tiredness that can increase mental alertness
- Weight reduction
- Reduced cholesterol and improved cardiovascular fitness<sup>2</sup>

Also, among the theories about how exercise affects immunity is that the brief rise in body temperature during and right after exercise may prevent bacteria from growing. This rise in temperature may help the body fight infection better.

Another theory is that exercise slows down the release of stress hormones. Some stress has been shown to increase the chance of illness. Therefore, lower stress hormones may protect against illness.<sup>3</sup>

**Mindfulness and Meditation:** Mindfulness practices like meditation and deep breathing exercises can help calm the mind and reduce stress. These techniques have been shown to lower cortisol levels, promote relaxation, and improve overall mental well-being.

**Healthy Nutrition:** A balanced and nutritious diet plays a crucial role in supporting the immune system. Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in your diet. Avoid excessive caffeine and sugar intake, which can increase stress levels.

**Adequate Sleep:** Quality sleep is essential for overall health and stress management. Establish a consistent sleep routine, create a comfortable sleep environment, and aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep can impair the immune system's ability to function optimally.

**Social Connections:** Maintaining strong social connections and fostering positive relationships can provide crucial support during stressful times. Share your thoughts and concerns with trusted friends or family members, and be open to seeking professional help if needed.

Tying this idea in with exercise, as mentioned above, the Mayo Clinic reminds us that exercise and physical activity may give us the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as we walk around the neighborhood can help our mood.<sup>4</sup>

**Time Management:** Effectively managing time and setting realistic goals can reduce feelings of overwhelm. Prioritize tasks, break them into smaller, more manageable steps, and delegate when possible. This approach can help prevent chronic stress from accumulating.

**Hobbies and Leisure Activities:** Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading, gardening, or pursuing a creative hobby, dedicating time to things you enjoy can be a powerful antidote to stress.

In conclusion, incorporating effective stress management strategies into your daily routine is not just a luxury but a necessity for maintaining a healthy immune system and overall well-being. By prioritizing activities that promote relaxation and adopting a holistic approach to health, individuals can build resilience against the adverse effects of stress. Remember, taking care of your mental health is integral to safeguarding your immune system and living a fulfilling life.

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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 looks forward to supporting your efforts at Inspire Exercise Medicine.

# The Fountain of Youth: Unlocking Longevity Through Cosmetic Botox, Weight Loss Shots, and Stem Cell Hair Restoration

In the quest for longevity, modern science and medicine have made remarkable strides. Beyond traditional approaches to health, emerging treatments at medical spas are gaining popularity for their potential to not only enhance appearance but also extend life. In this article, we delve into the promising realms of cosmetic Botox, weight loss shots, and stem cell hair restoration, exploring how these therapies may contribute to a longer and healthier life.

## Cosmetic Botox: More Than Skin Deep

Botox, short for Botulinum Toxin, has long been associated with wrinkle reduction and facial rejuvenation. However, recent research suggests that its benefits may extend beyond cosmetic enhancements. The key to understanding the potential longevity benefits lies in Botox's ability to target and relax muscles.

As we age, facial muscles can contribute to the formation of fine lines and wrinkles. By inhibiting muscle contractions, Botox not only smoothens the skin but may also impact the aging process at a cellular level. Studies have shown that reduced muscle activity can lead to decreased oxidative stress, a major contributor to aging. Oxidative stress, caused by an imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants, can damage cells and accelerate aging.

Furthermore, Botox may have an impact on inflammation, a factor linked to numerous age-related diseases. Chronic inflammation is associated with conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and neurodegenerative disorders. By mitigating muscle-related inflammation, Botox could potentially contribute to a lower overall inflammatory burden, promoting longevity.

## Weight Loss Shots: A Shot at a Longer Life

Weight management is a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle, and medical spas are now offering innovative approaches to help individuals shed excess pounds. Weight loss shots, often containing a combination of vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, are gaining attention for their potential to accelerate fat metabolism and support overall wellness.

These injections typically include compounds like B vitamins, which play a crucial role in energy metabolism and can boost the body's ability to convert food into usable energy. Additionally, amino acids such as L-carnitine may enhance the transportation of fatty acids into cells, promoting efficient fat burning.

Maintaining a healthy weight is not just about aesthetics; it is intricately linked to longevity. Obesity is a significant risk factor for various chronic conditions,

including heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. By addressing weight concerns through targeted injections, individuals may not only experience the cosmetic benefits but also reduce their risk of developing life-threatening illnesses.

## Stem Cell Hair Restoration: Unlocking Regenerative Potential

Hair loss is a common concern that can affect confidence and self-esteem. However, the innovative field of stem cell hair restoration is providing more than just a solution to thinning locks; it may hold the key to unlocking the body's regenerative potential and promoting overall longevity.

Stem cells are undifferentiated cells with the unique ability to develop into different cell types. In the context of hair restoration, stem cells can stimulate the regeneration of hair follicles, promoting thicker, healthier hair. Beyond the cosmetic appeal, this process taps into the broader regenerative capabilities of stem cells.

Recent research suggests that stem cells may contribute to tissue repair and rejuvenation throughout the body. By harnessing the regenerative power of stem cells for hair restoration, individuals may inadvertently be promoting overall cellular health. This could potentially extend to other organs and systems, offering a holistic approach to longevity.

## Combining Therapies for Maximum Impact

While each of these therapies—cosmetic Botox, weight loss shots, and stem cell hair restoration—holds promise in its own right, the synergistic effects of combining these treatments may provide a comprehensive approach to promoting longevity.

For example, Botox and weight loss shots may complement each other by addressing both the external signs of aging and internal factors contributing to age-related conditions. Botox can target facial muscles, reducing wrinkles and potentially impacting cellular aging, while weight loss shots address metabolism, aiding in weight management and reducing the risk of obesity-related diseases.

Integrating stem cell hair restoration into the mix adds another layer of potential benefit. By tapping into the regenerative power of stem cells, individuals may not only experience cosmetic improvements in hair density but also promote systemic rejuvenation at the cellular level.

## Conclusion: A Holistic Approach to Longevity

As medical spas continue to evolve, offering cutting-edge treatments that extend beyond mere aesthetics, the potential for promoting longevity becomes increasingly tangible. Cosmetic Botox, weight loss shots, and stem cell hair restoration, when used in combination, may offer a holistic approach to age management.

While these treatments are not a substitute for a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, a balanced diet, and stress management, they may complement existing efforts to promote overall well-being. As research in these fields progresses, the integration of these therapies into personalized longevity plans may become a reality, ushering in a new era where the pursuit of beauty aligns seamlessly with the pursuit of a longer, healthier life.



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# Understanding the Link Between Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension and Multiple System Atrophy

**N**eurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension (nOH) and Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) are two closely related neurological disorders that can significantly impact a patient's quality of life. In this article, we will explore the connection between these two conditions and their clinical manifestations, diagnosis, and treatment options.

## Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension: An Overview

Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension (nOH) is a disorder characterized by a drop in blood pressure upon standing, leading to symptoms such as dizziness, lightheadedness, and even syncope (fainting). This condition is primarily caused by dysfunction in the autonomic nervous system, which controls involuntary bodily functions, including blood pressure regulation.

## Multiple System Atrophy:

### A Complex Neurodegenerative Disorder

Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) is a rare and progressive neurodegenerative disorder that shares similarities with Parkinson's disease. MSA is characterized by a combination of symptoms that affect various systems in the body, including the autonomic nervous system. These symptoms may include parkinsonism, cerebellar dysfunction, and autonomic dysfunction.

## The Link Between nOH and MSA

The connection between nOH and MSA lies in the autonomic nervous system dysfunction that both conditions exhibit. In MSA, the degeneration of specific brain regions leads to the loss of control over autonomic functions, such as blood pressure regulation. As a result, individuals with MSA are at an increased risk of developing nOH. A study published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry* found that nOH was a common feature in MSA patients, affecting up to 90% of them (Laurens et al., 2004).

## Clinical Manifestations

Both nOH and MSA share similar clinical manifestations due to their autonomic dysfunction. Common symptoms include:

- **Orthostatic Hypotension:** The hallmark symptom of both conditions, characterized by a drop in blood pressure upon standing, leading to dizziness and fainting.
- **Bladder and Bowel Dysfunction:** Patients may experience urinary urgency, incontinence, and constipation due to autonomic nerve involvement.

- **Motor Symptoms:** MSA patients may exhibit parkinsonism-like symptoms, such as muscle stiffness, tremors, and bradykinesia (slowed movements).

- **Impaired Coordination:** Cerebellar dysfunction can result in problems with coordination and balance.

## Diagnosis

Diagnosing nOH in MSA patients requires a comprehensive evaluation of the patient's clinical history and symptoms. Physicians may use various tests, including:

- **Orthostatic Blood Pressure Measurement:** A drop in blood pressure of at least 20 mm Hg systolic or 10 mm Hg diastolic within 3 minutes of standing is indicative of nOH.

- **Autonomic Function Tests:** These tests assess autonomic nervous system function and may include heart rate variability tests and sudomotor function tests.

- **Neuroimaging:** Brain imaging, such as MRI, may reveal atrophy in specific brain regions characteristic of MSA.

## Treatment Options

Managing nOH in MSA patients can be challenging but is crucial for improving their quality of life. Treatment options include:

- **Lifestyle Modifications:** Patients should be advised to maintain adequate hydration, elevate the head of the bed, and rise slowly from a seated or lying position to minimize blood pressure drops.

- **Medications:** Several medications, including fludrocortisone, midodrine, and droxidopa, can help raise blood pressure and alleviate nOH symptoms.

- **Physical Therapy:** Physical therapy can assist in improving muscle strength, balance, and coordination in MSA patients.

Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension and Multiple System Atrophy are complex neurological disorders that often go hand in hand due to their shared autonomic nervous system dysfunction. Early diagnosis and management of nOH in MSA patients can significantly enhance their quality of life. A multidisciplinary approach involving neurologists, cardiologists, and physical therapists is essential in providing comprehensive care for individuals affected by these conditions.

Clinical trials are essential in advancing our understanding of MSA and nOH and in identifying new therapies. These trials aim to test new medications and interventions that may slow disease progression or alleviate symptoms. Participating in clinical trials can provide patients and their families with access to cutting-edge treatments and contribute to the development of future therapies.

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 is currently looking for MSA patients with nOH to participate in a clinical trial for a new medication called *Theravance 0197*.**

It is used for the treatment of symptomatic neurogenic orthostatic hypotension (nOH) in patients with Multiple System Atrophy (MSA).

We are seeking patients 30 years of age or older. The study is a twenty-week treatment period with an optional 2-year long-term extension. All study-related medical tests and procedures are free. Compensation for time and travel are provided.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with MSA, contact Aqualane Research Clinic for more information on this trial.



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

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

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

**UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY**  
Peripheral Neuropathy is a complex condition, but nerve damage and signaling are the issue, finding the root cause is how a comprehensive plan is customized to regenerate a patients nerves, cells and tissues. Having high blood sugar levels, along with low blood oxygen supply, nutrient deficiency, high toxicity and inflammation damages the nerves throughout the body. This damage generally affects the long peripheral nerves that feed sensations to the legs, feet, and toes from the spinal cord, through communication with the brain. If your condition has progressed, you may feel nerve damage sensations in your upper extremities as well.

## PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY SYMPTOMS

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

## STOP MASKING SYMPTOMS AND PAIN

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

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



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

## FEEL AMAZING INSTITUTE'S ALTERNATIVE CARE

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

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

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

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

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

## FEEL AMAZING INSTITUTE

We proudly serve the Naples area with comprehensive Chiropractic, Physical Medicine, and Regenerative Medicine services since 1998. Our office strives for excellence, and we are consistently furthering our education and techniques to improve the care you receive in our office. Whether you suffer from chronic pain, are recovering from an injury, or are seeking overall improved health and performance, we have the skills and experience to help you work toward your goals.

If you are looking for a chiropractor to treat bulging discs and/or herniations, neck or back pain, knee, shoulder or hip pain, sciatica, or neuropathy (numbness and/or burning and pain in feet and hands), you have found the right place for your health care needs.

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- Severe neck & back pain
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- Hip, knee pain treatment, ankle, or foot pain
- Arm or leg pain, or numbness
- Peripheral Neuropathy pain or numbness
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Headaches, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- Disc bulge or herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

If you are in need of a highly experienced chiropractic neurologist in Naples, FL, look no further than Feel Amazing Institute. For more information, to schedule a free telephone consultation, or **free informational seminar**, call today!



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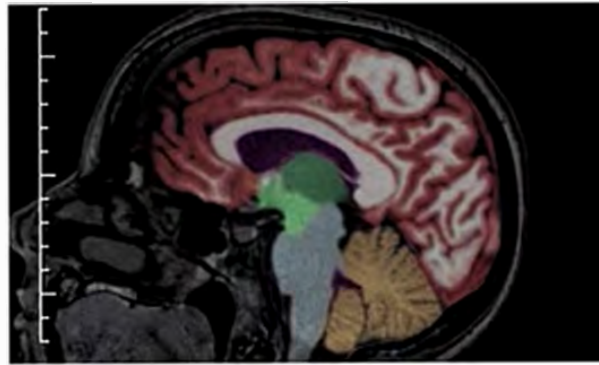
# Alzheimer Dementia

By Michael Shriver, MD - Proscan Imaging NCH Partner

**A**lzheimer disease is the most common form of dementia and is responsible for 60 to 80% of all neurodegenerative disease in the population. This imposes a significant mental, emotional, and financial burden on nations around the world, including the United States. The prevalence of Alzheimer dementia is directly correlated with age. Approximately 10% of adults 65 and older are diagnosed, compared to 20-40% of those over 85-90 years of age being diagnosed with Alzheimer dementia. An estimated 6.7 million Americans aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer dementia in 2023. By 2050, it is projected that more than 12.7 million people will be diagnosed with Alzheimer dementia aged 65 and older. At the age of 70, individuals living with Alzheimer dementia are twice as likely to die before the age of 80 than those who do not have the disease. One in three senior citizens will die with Alzheimer or another dementia. Deaths from Alzheimer dementia have doubled between 2000 and 2019, while most other leading causes of death such as heart disease or kidney disease have decreased over that same time period. As well, patients with Alzheimer dementia before age 60 are more likely to have a genetic form of the disease, emphasizing the need for early detection and intervention. Alzheimer dementia is characterized by the accumulation of cerebral amyloid-beta neuritic plaques and Tau neurofibrillary tangles, which eventually result in the loss of neurons.

These abnormal accumulations of material occur in certain areas of the brain that lead to neurocognitive decline in patients over time. While Alzheimer dementia is a common and impactful disease, it is difficult for primary care providers to diagnose and treat, especially early in the disease process when care can be the most important to slow disease progress. Nearly 40% of primary care physicians reported that they “never” or “only sometimes” are comfortable making a diagnosis of Alzheimer dementia. As well, half of primary care physicians report they do not feel adequately prepared to care for individuals with Alzheimer or other dementias.

These stark numbers and difficulty in diagnosing and caring for individuals with dementia are likely related to the heterogeneity of Alzheimer dementia presentation in patients, which makes it hard to identify and appropriately diagnose. In the past, and often still to this day, the definitive diagnosis is



only made at the time of autopsy following a patient's death. This can often result in ambiguity of a patient's disease, which delays appropriate care. Given Alzheimer dementia's prevalence, impact on society, and deterioration of individuals and their relationships with loved ones, it is of utmost importance to continue our goal to detect Alzheimer dementia earlier, accurately diagnose patients with the correct form of dementia, and optimize the patient's care to delay dementia progression and provide patient's with the best possible life as they move forward. Fortunately, there are new FDA approved medications for the treatment of Alzheimer dementia that have shown a delay in cognitive decline for patients.

These drugs are Aducanumab (Aduhelm™) and Lecanemab (Leqembi). These medications target amyloid plaques, with randomized controlled studies showing a reduction in amyloid plaques over the course of treatment. This further exemplifies the need to diagnose Alzheimer dementia early so that patients can receive these groundbreaking and life-changing treatments. ProScan/NCH Imaging offers a variety of radiology services to help physicians diagnose Alzheimer disease. NeuroQuant MRI of the brain is the first FDA cleared software that allows for the volumetric analysis of brain parenchyma. It provides quantitative volumetric measurements of the brain parenchyma, including cortical, subcortical, cerebellar, deep grey, and brainstem structures/nuclei. NeuroQuant can be used to evaluate for patterns of brain parenchymal volume loss in the setting of memory loss or cognitive impairment. This allows for a more sensitive and accurate understanding of a patient's neurodegenerative pattern, which affords clinicians the ability to better understand the etiology of a patient's cognitive impairment. Nuclear medicine imaging also plays a critical role in diagnosing neurodegenerative disorders. F-18 fluorodeoxyglucose

(FDG) PET of the brain identifies areas of hypometabolism in the cerebral hemispheres, which is evaluated by a radiologist to identify the pattern of the patient's neurodegeneration. As well, Amyloid PET uses radiotracers to identify whether amyloid plaques are present or not present in the brain. This will be a critical diagnostic examination to determine if these new groundbreaking Alzheimer treatments are indicated and would be effective for the patient's care. These radiology imaging examinations offered by ProScan/NCH imaging allow the radiologist to provide the patient's physicians with detailed, evidence based findings to accurately detect and identify the patient's neurodegenerative disorder. At ProScan/NCH imaging, these studies are interpreted by board certified Neuroradiologists and Nuclear Medicine physicians, ensuring accurate and precise interpretations. These services will play a critical role in the future care of patients with neurodegenerative diseases, especially Alzheimer dementia.



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

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



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# Health Insurance – Important Dates!

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

## MEDICARE ENROLLMENT ENDS SOON – 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 benefits 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 an insurance agent 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 an 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 guaranteed issue you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6-month on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! **Especially important:** when you **move** you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

We offer **Free Medicare Seminars** in Lee & Collier County please e-mail [info@logicalinsurance.com](mailto:info@logicalinsurance.com) to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov).

**MARKETPLACE -Obama Care/Affordable Care Act – open enrollment starts November 1st- December 15th for January 1st effective. December 16th for January 15th will have February 1st, 2024, effective.** The website is [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov), your local insurance agent can help you through the maze. The government also changes each year how much you can earn to receive subsidies 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 Marketplace 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 the plans and can help educate and guide you through the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans, most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.

**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.

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# HOW COLONOSCOPY SCREENINGS HELP PREVENT COLON CANCER

**A**ccording to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Despite being preventable and treatable, many individuals still die from this disease due to a lack of awareness about preventive care.

Physicians Regional is committed to promoting early detection and prevention of colon cancer through regular colonoscopy screenings because, when detected early, the survival rate for colon cancer is approximately 90%.

Screenings involve doctors examining the colon and rectum for pre-cancerous polyps, which are removed, reducing the risk of developing colon cancer in the future.

Many people fear that there might be discomfort and pain associated with a colonoscopy. However, it's important to know that you will be in a "twilight sleep." Unlike general anesthesia, which puts patients to sleep completely, conscious sedation keeps patients drowsy and comfortable, yet awake enough to respond to questions and follow instructions.

"Colonoscopies may not be the most enjoyable procedure, but they are essential for early detection and prevention of colon cancer," said **Margaret Avery**, a family nurse practitioner with Physicians Regional Medical Group. "Don't delay getting what could be a life-saving procedure."

Colonoscopy screening should start at age 45 for those at average risk, with regular screenings continuing every 10 years. However, the screening frequency and start date may differ for individuals at higher risk of developing the disease, as colorectal cancer incidence is higher in certain populations, including Black and Indigenous adults, people with a family history of colorectal cancer, and men.

Age also plays a big factor when it comes to risk. On average, those 50 and older are the most likely to suffer from colorectal cancer. While age and family history cannot be changed, there are several



lifestyle factors that you can modify to lower your risk, including losing weight, maintaining a healthy diet, limiting alcohol, quitting smoking and regular exercise.

"Colonoscopies have revolutionized how we detect and prevent colon cancer. With advancements in technology and improved patient comfort, there's never been a better time to prioritize your colon health," Avery said.

Avery Provides primary care with an in-depth knowledge of emergency and critical care, pre and post-operative care, colorectal surgery, cancer screenings, early cancer detection and colon health.

Margaret also has a special interest in patient education which includes preventive medicine, lifestyle changes, proper diet and surgical complication prevention.

Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk level and the appropriate timing and frequency for screenings. Remember, you're never too young to take charge of your health.

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MEDICAL GROUP**

To make an appointment, please call **239-348-4128** or visit <https://www.physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com/doctors-providers>

# Seasons Change - People Change.

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

**S**omehow the title of this popular 80's song felt appropriate for what I had to say in this article today. Winter is upon us. It may not be obvious when you live in Florida, where beautiful blue skies and lush palm trees can make you feel like you are perpetually in paradise. However, if you have just arrived from the Northeast or the Midwest, you have most definitely seen the foliage, the days getting shorter and the darker rainy skies dominating the picture. Nature is seasonal and so are we. Unfortunately, we often forget that humans are an extension of Nature and tend to ignore Nature's seasonal calendar, and continue living on an autopilot - eating the same things, wearing the same things, and performing the same daily routines. One of the most exciting parts of my holistic medical practice is to educate the patients about the changes that take place inside our bodies as we move from season to season and how to adjust accordingly - to preserve homeostasis with our surroundings. The idea behind this is expressed in various cultures around the world. My personal take on this stems from Ayurvedic wellness philosophy which took its origins in India thousands of years ago.

Ayurveda treats humans as being of energy and aims to classify common expressions of temperament, behavior, and visual characteristics accordingly. There are three main energetic imprints ruling the big picture of our Mind-Body physiology: Pitta, Kapha, and Vata doshas. Pitta runs metabolism, digestion, and passion aspect of what you do. Kapha underlies anatomical and cellular structure, water content, thoughtfulness and loving disposition. Vata rules nervous system, creativity, and detoxification via elimination. Each of these categories has its own associated set of physical characteristics. Pitta will tend to express itself with piercing gaze, thin hair, and mesomorph type of body built. Kapha is usually associated with soft peaceful gaze, heavy or big boned built and lush thick hair. Vata is classically attributed to thin, lanky build, cold hands and feet, and dry skin. There are many physical attributes which tend to be associated with respective Ayurvedic doshas. Most people possess all three, though within one person some are expressed more than others. Each energetic category is associated with temperament characteristics. While Pitta-dominant people tend to be workaholics, Vata-dominant folks are often artists and writers, and Kapha-dominant ones are frequently engaged in physical work and strength-based workouts.



Each energetic category is also classically associated with the set of illnesses to which it is predisposed. If the person leads an unhealthy lifestyle - he or she is more likely to drive their dominant dosha out of balance - and the malady follows. For example, if you find yourself hungry often and have ravenous appetite for food - this is typically associated with Pitta - an energetic blueprint which is an energetic, fiery, and sharp quality. Becoming aware of Pitta qualities in yourself can help you balance them with the world around you. For example, it would be unwise for Pitta-dominant person to eat many hot and spicy foods - he or she would just build more fire in his or her Mind-Body System. As a result, he or she could become prone to developing Pitta-associated diseases such as Gastric Ulcer, Psoriasis, Acne, or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Each season in Nature represents a predominance of certain energetic qualities as well. For example, early autumn is characterized by Pitta quality, which is wet and oily. However, late fall is dominated by Vata quality, which is colder, drier, and windier. Ideally, we should try to be aware of this internal clock that we have in order to balance it with the external change of seasons. If the transition is smooth, we feel on top of our game and full of energy. If there is a sharp discrepancy between how I treat my body and mind and the seasonal change, I will feel tired, blue, and listless.

It is not enough to know charts of Ayurvedic doshas and associated disorders. There are plenty of people who exhibit a seemingly classic energetic quality and yet never develop imbalance despite doing all the wrong things. And there are some folks who do all the seemingly right things and yet succumb to maladies characteristic to their energetic predisposition. In the hands of an experienced medical doctor who understands Ayurveda and incorporates it into her medical practice, it becomes more than just lists and associations - it evolves to be an indispensable tool in wellness and prevention, customized to a given patient's unique set of life circumstances.



**Svetlana Kogan, M.D.**

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

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# Importance of PROSTATE EXAMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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



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



**Kristina Buscaino, DO**  
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# 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.

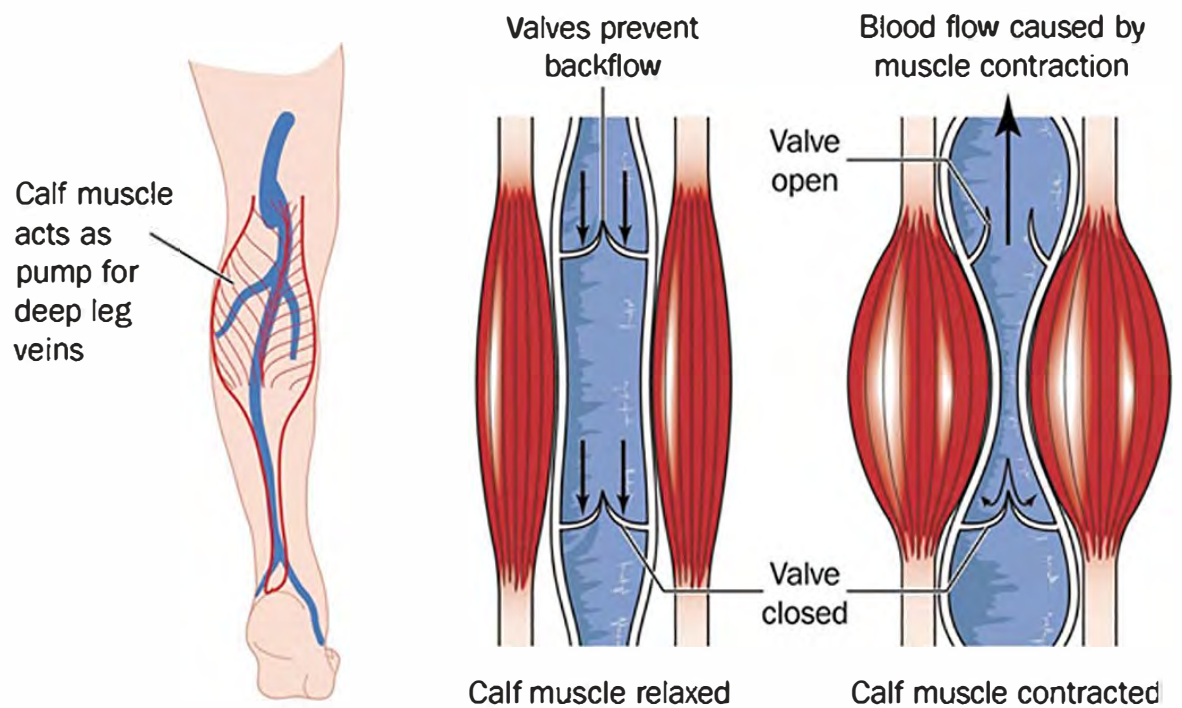
#### Symptoms of venous insufficiency:

- 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



Tracy Roth, MD

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# EMPOWERING LIVES: THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF CROHN'S DISEASE AND COLITIS TREATMENT

**C**rohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis, collectively known as Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD), significantly impact millions worldwide. With Paragon Healthcare's dedication, the landscape of treating these conditions is shifting positively. In 2022, Paragon's commitment was evident, administering nearly 15,000 infusions to aid patients. In the ongoing year, that number soared to over 16,000, showcasing a vital increase in support for IBD patients in 2023.

Paragon Healthcare's arsenal of therapies encompasses a diverse range, tailoring treatments to individual needs. From Albumin to Avsola, Cimzia, Entyvio, Infliximab (and biosimilars), Iron (Injectafer, Monoferric, Venofer), Hydration, Skyrizi IV, Steroids, and Stelara (IV & subcutaneous), this comprehensive array reflects the commitment to personalized care.

The impact of these treatments goes beyond mere numbers; it echoes in the stories of individuals battling IBD. Each infusion represents a step towards betterment, offering relief from the relentless symptoms that define these conditions. Through Paragon Healthcare's interventions, lives are being transformed, allowing patients to regain control and quality of life amidst their challenging journey with Crohn's Disease and Colitis.

The rise in administered infusions from 2022 to 2023 is not just statistical growth; it's a testament to the continuous advancements in healthcare. It mirrors the ongoing efforts to enhance treatment accessibility, efficacy, and patient experience. It signifies a collective stride towards a future where IBD is better understood and managed.

However, awareness remains a cornerstone in this journey. Educating individuals about Crohn's Disease and Colitis is pivotal in fostering a supportive and informed community. It's crucial to demystify misconceptions surrounding these conditions, cultivating empathy and understanding among the public.



Moreover, the integration of innovative therapies like Skyrizi IV alongside established treatments showcases a commitment to exploring and embracing cutting-edge solutions. This proactive approach underlines Paragon Healthcare's dedication to not just meeting current needs but also anticipating and addressing future challenges in IBD treatment.

The significance of Paragon Healthcare's impact extends beyond the medical realm. It's a beacon of hope for those navigating the complexities of IBD. Each infusion administered represents a compassionate touch, a lifeline that propels patients towards a better tomorrow.

Looking ahead, the trajectory of Crohn's Disease and Colitis treatment is promising, bolstered by the dedication of organizations like Paragon Healthcare. As research progresses and technology evolves, the possibilities for improved therapies and outcomes continue to expand.

In conclusion, the strides made by Paragon Healthcare in administering infusions and their diverse treatment options exemplify a paradigm shift in Crohn's Disease and Colitis care. Their unwavering commitment not only transforms statistics but fundamentally reshapes lives. Together, as awareness grows and advancements continue, a future where those battling IBD find solace, support, and effective treatments draws nearer.

This ongoing commitment to innovation and patient-centric care heralds a future where the burdens of Crohn's Disease and Colitis may be alleviated, enabling individuals to live life beyond the confines of their conditions.

## Paragon Healthcare

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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# BRIGHTEN YOUR HOLIDAY TRAVELS: ESSENTIAL EYE CARE TIPS FOR A SAFE JOURNEY

The holiday season brings joyous reunions and exciting adventures. As you gear up for your holiday travel plans, ensuring your eyes remain healthy and comfortable is essential for a seamless journey. Here are some expert eye care tips to keep your vision crystal clear while you traverse the holiday trails.

## 1. Pack Essentials

Start with the basics. Always carry your prescription glasses or contacts, an extra pair if possible, and any necessary eye medications. Sunglasses are a must, protecting your eyes from harmful UV rays and reducing glare during sunny or snowy travels.

## 2. Hydrate Regularly

Airplane cabins and road trips can lead to dehydration. Keep yourself hydrated to prevent dry eyes, which can cause discomfort and irritation. Drink plenty of water throughout your journey to maintain moisture in your eyes.

## 3. Blink Often and Rest Your Eyes

Long hours of staring at screens or focusing intensely while driving can strain your eyes. Make a conscious effort to blink frequently to prevent dryness. Additionally, take regular breaks during long drives or flights to rest your eyes and reduce fatigue.

## 4. Use Eye Drops

Consider carrying lubricating eye drops, especially if you'll be exposed to dry or dusty environments. They can provide quick relief from dryness and help keep your eyes refreshed.

## 5. Protect Against Digital Eye Strain

If you're using electronic devices during travel, follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This simple practice helps reduce eye strain caused by prolonged screen time.

## 6. Clean Your Glasses Regularly

Keep your glasses clean to ensure clear vision. Use a microfiber cloth and lens cleaner to remove smudges, fingerprints, or dust, which can obstruct your view and strain your eyes.

## 7. Sleep Well

Adequate sleep is crucial for overall health, including eye health. Prioritize a good night's sleep before



embarking on your journey. Proper rest can reduce eye puffiness and prevent redness and irritation.

## 8. Mind Your Diet

Consume a balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients essential for eye health, such as omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and antioxidants. Snack on fruits, vegetables, and nuts during your travels to support your vision.

## 9. Protective Eyewear for Activities

Engaging in outdoor winter activities? Ensure you use appropriate protective eyewear, especially when skiing, snowboarding, or participating in any sports. This guards your eyes against potential injuries from debris or UV exposure.

## 10. Be Mindful of Allergens

Traveling to different locations means encountering various allergens that could trigger allergic reactions in your eyes. Consider carrying antihistamines or allergy eye drops if you're prone to seasonal allergies.

Remember, your eyes are your windows to the world, so taking care of them is vital, especially during holiday travel. Incorporating these simple yet effective eye care tips into your travel routine can help you maintain optimal eye health and enjoy your holiday adventures with clear vision and comfort.



## JULIE A. CARTER, M.D.

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

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

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

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

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

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TOP DOCTORS  
2023

# Revitalize Your Look:

## Aging Hair, Thin Hair, and the Rejuvenating Power of Luxurious Virgin and Remy Hair Extensions

**A**s we gracefully mature, our hair often shows signs of aging, thinning, and losing its vibrant essence. The quest for fuller, more youthful-looking hair has led many to discover the transformative benefits of extensions crafted from luxurious virgin or top-notch Remy hair.

As time passes, our hair naturally undergoes changes. Factors like genetics, hormonal shifts, and lifestyle can contribute to thinning hair or a loss in volume. However, embracing extensions made from high-quality virgin or Remy hair presents a game-changing solution.

Virgin hair, renowned for its untouched quality, is obtained from donors with minimally processed hair. This type of hair is unaltered by chemicals or treatments, maintaining its natural strength, shine, and texture. When utilized in extensions, virgin hair seamlessly integrates with one's natural locks, providing a voluminous and youthful appearance.

On the other hand, Remy hair, distinguished by its intact cuticles aligned in one direction, offers exceptional durability and a natural look. This meticulous alignment prevents tangling and ensures a smooth, flawless blend between the natural hair and the extensions. The result? Hair that exudes vitality and fullness.

Extensions made from these high-caliber hair types not only add volume and length but also offer a plethora of styling options. Whether it's a chic updo or flowing locks, the versatility of these extensions empowers individuals to experiment with different hairstyles, enhancing their overall aesthetic and confidence.

Moreover, the quality of the hair used in extensions plays a pivotal role in how it complements one's appearance. Luxurious virgin or Remy hair extensions boast a luster and softness that mimic the natural qualities of youthful hair. This characteristic radiance contributes to a more youthful and rejuvenated overall look.

For those experiencing the challenges of aging or thinning hair, investing in top-tier extensions made from virgin or Remy hair presents a reliable solution. Not only do these extensions restore volume and thickness, but they also evoke a sense of vitality and youthfulness that enhances one's self-assurance.



However, it's crucial to prioritize the quality and authenticity of the hair used in extensions. Opting for reputable suppliers or salons that specialize in ethically sourced, premium-grade virgin or Remy hair ensures a worthwhile investment. Authenticity guarantees not only the desired aesthetic results but also a durable and long-lasting solution for hair concerns.

Furthermore, proper care and maintenance are essential for maximizing the lifespan and quality of these extensions. Gentle cleansing, conditioning, and styling techniques tailored to the specific type of hair will preserve its luxurious attributes, allowing individuals to enjoy their revitalized appearance for an extended period.

In conclusion, the journey toward fuller, more youthful-looking hair for individuals with aging or thinning hair can be revolutionized by embracing extensions crafted from luxurious virgin or Remy hair. Beyond just adding volume and thickness, these extensions offer a renewed sense of confidence and a vibrant, age-defying allure. With the right care and quality, these extensions become a powerful tool in the pursuit of a rejuvenated, timeless look.

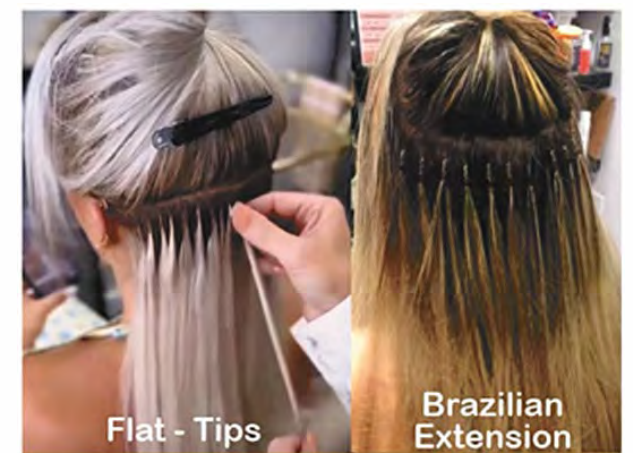
Call Moonlight Wellness Spa today to transform your look and enhance your hair's volume and length with our premium hair extension services.

### The Moonlight Experience

At Moonlight Wellness Spa, we are more than just a place for relaxation; we are a sanctuary dedicated

to nurturing your mind, body, and spirit. Nestled in the heart of Naples, Florida, our spa was born out of a profound belief in the power of tranquility and self-care.

Every visit to Moonlight Wellness Spa is an opportunity to embark on a personalized journey towards well-being. Our expertly trained therapists and practitioners are dedicated to understanding your unique needs and tailoring each experience to provide the utmost relaxation and rejuvenation.



**MOONLIGHT**

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# Understanding Bunions:

## A Podiatrist's Guide to Treatment and Relief

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

**B**unions, a common foot ailment, can cause discomfort and impact daily activities. As a podiatrist, I often encounter patients seeking effective ways to address this condition. Understanding bunions and exploring viable treatment options is crucial for those looking to alleviate pain and regain mobility.

Bunions, medically known as Hallux Valgus, manifest as a bony bump at the base of the big toe. They develop when the joint at the base of the big toe shifts out of place, causing the big toe to lean toward the second toe. This misalignment can lead to pain, inflammation, and difficulty finding comfortable footwear.

One primary cause of bunions is wearing ill-fitting shoes, especially those with a narrow toe box. Genetics also play a role; if bunions run in your family, you might be more prone to developing them. Additionally, conditions like arthritis and foot injuries can contribute to bunion formation.

For those experiencing bunion-related discomfort, consulting a podiatrist is crucial. A podiatrist can assess the severity of the condition and recommend appropriate treatment options. Here are some common strategies podiatrists employ to address bunions:

**Footwear Modifications:** Wearing shoes with a wider toe box and low heels can help reduce pressure on the affected area. Podiatrists often advise against high heels or shoes that squeeze the toes, as these can exacerbate bunion symptoms.

**Orthotic Devices:** Custom orthotic inserts can provide additional support and help distribute pressure more evenly across the foot. Podiatrists may recommend off-the-shelf or custom-made orthotics based on the patient's specific needs.

**Padding and Taping:** Applying pads or moleskin to the bunion can alleviate friction and reduce pain. Taping techniques may also be employed to help realign the big toe and relieve pressure on the bunion.



**Physical Therapy:** At times Physical Therapist are implemented as part of the post operative bunionectomy recovery to facilitate better range of motion in the joint. This is especially important for not all bunion surgeries are the same. Some include correction of the soft tissue, bone, or both, and the postoperative course and rehab depends on the type of surgery and exercise modification to be implemented.

**Medications:** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can help manage pain and reduce inflammation associated with bunions. However, long-term use should be monitored by a health-care professional.

**Bunion Splints:** Splints or braces designed to hold the big toe in a corrected position may be recommended, particularly during sleep. These devices can help slow the progression of the bunion.

**Injections:** In some cases, corticosteroid injections may be administered to alleviate severe pain and inflammation. This is a short-term solution and is typically used when other conservative measures are insufficient.

**Surgical Intervention:** When conservative treatments fail to provide relief, surgical intervention

may be considered. A podiatrist can discuss surgical options, such as bunionectomy, to realign the affected joint and alleviate pain.

It's essential for individuals with bunions to address the condition promptly to prevent worsening symptoms. Regular check-ups with a podiatrist, along with proactive measures like choosing appropriate footwear and maintaining a healthy weight, can contribute to better bunion management.

In conclusion, bunions are a common foot condition that can impact daily life, but with the guidance of a podiatrist, effective treatment options are available. Whether through conservative measures or surgical intervention, addressing bunions promptly can lead to improved comfort and mobility. If you're experiencing bunion-related discomfort, don't hesitate to seek professional advice and take steps toward better foot health.

### Collier Podiatry

It's important to be evaluated by an experienced podiatric professional if you're experiencing any type of foot pain. At Collier Podiatry, Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 29 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers, he and his staff see a countless number of patients with bunion pain in the Naples area.

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

Please call Collier Podiatry, P.A. today if you are suffering from bunions to discuss the treatment you need to relieve the pain and correct deformities!



**COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A.**  
Michael J. Petrocelli  
D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P.

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Phone: (239) 775-0019  
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# Join the Cause:

## Support Naples Cancer Advisors This Giving Season

**A**s the year ends, many of us seek meaningful ways to contribute to our communities. End-of-year giving provides an opportunity to support causes close to our hearts, sometimes with the added benefit of tax advantages. In 2021, Americans donated an estimated \$484.85 billion to charity, reflecting a growing culture of generosity. This year, consider a contribution to Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA), a nonprofit organization in SWFL dedicated to offering essential no-cost cancer consultation services to people facing a cancer diagnosis.

In its first year in Southwest Florida, NCA is building on the legacy of its sister office in Cincinnati and has already made a significant local impact. Its Founder, Dr. William Barrett, emphasizes that "facing cancer is daunting, but our aim is to elevate Southwest Florida to become the best place to be for cancer care and support."

NCA stands out by eliminating financial barriers to cancer care. In a healthcare system where out-of-pocket costs can be prohibitively high, NCA's initiative is a beacon of hope. Second opinions, often critical in cancer treatment, can be expensive and are not always covered by insurance. NCA's 20/20 Foresight program absorbs the cost of services for its patients, which includes secondary case reviews, care coordination, financial advocacy, and advanced precision oncology services. This approach helps patients navigate their diagnosis with less stress and confusion.

One patient, **Mike Barnes**, and his wife **Debbie**, shared their experience: "I had a lengthy consultation with Naples Cancer Advisors. The appointment was so easy to schedule. I had no idea that a virtual visit could be so comprehensive, informative & reassuring. The team had done a complete review of my medical records. A detailed head-to-toe history of my health, my family history & work exposures were all taken into account. I am so grateful for their clinical expertise & recommendations. We received a detailed plan and Dr. Leming also reached out to consult with my treating doctors to assure the best outcomes. All of this at NO COST!"

NCA's role is to provide consultation, leaving treatment in the hands of each patient's oncologist. This ensures that NCA's guidance is objective and focused solely on enhancing patient outcomes.

The consultations provided by NCA are thorough, offering patients a comprehensive understanding of their diagnosis and treatment options - at No Charge- made possible through the support of generous donors. In a nation where nearly two-thirds of people trust nonprofits to do what is right, organizations like NCA play a crucial role in community wellbeing.

One of the key fundraising events for NCA is the Wine Women & Shoes Naples, taking place on February 10th at Naples Yacht Club. This event promises an unforgettable day of wine tasting, fashion, auctions, and more, all in support of NCA's vital services. Charitable events like this are vital, as over half of the nonprofits surveyed in 2022 reported that 21% or more of their annual operating revenue came from event and online fundraising efforts, particularly critical for smaller organizations.

Wine Women & Shoes is an innovative fundraising event, mixing fashion, camaraderie, and charity. Featuring international wines, a fashion show by Dillard's, a "Key to the Destination" raffle, & fabulously unique silent & live auction packages, the event is an enjoyable way to support a crucial cause. Tickets are available starting at \$150 for general admission and \$200 for VIP, with all proceeds benefiting NCA. This aligns with the trend that individuals contribute the largest share of charitable giving, accounting for nearly 69% of the total.

For those interested in more involvement, several opportunities exist to volunteer, attend, and/or sponsor. This is a great way for businesses both small and large to sponsor a worthwhile cause and get great attention for your business.

**For ticket purchases or more information, visit [winewomenandshoes.com/nca](http://winewomenandshoes.com/nca) or contact our Naples site leader, Lana Uhrig at [lanauhrig@naplescanceradvisors.org](mailto:lanauhrig@naplescanceradvisors.org).**

Participation in such events is a reflection of the broader philanthropic spirit, as 30% of annual giving occurs in December.

Since its inception in Napa Valley in 2004, Wine Women & Shoes by *STUDIO 4forty* has helped raise over \$120 Million for various nonprofits across the country, highlighting the power of community-driven fundraising.



*Be there.  
Be fabulous!*

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 10, 2024  
11 AM-3 PM at NAPLES YACHT CLUB**

Residents of SWFL facing cancer can access NCA's no-cost consultation services, designed to work alongside your physician to improve your treatment journey. For details, call 239.846.2273 or visit [NaplesCancerAdvisors.org](http://NaplesCancerAdvisors.org).

As we embrace the season of grateful giving, supporting NCA can make a profound difference in the lives of those battling cancer. Your contribution, whether through donations, sponsorship, event participation, or spreading awareness, is part of a larger movement of kindness and generosity that defines our community and nation and Naples Cancer Advisors thanks you!



**239-846-2273 (CARE)**  
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[naplescanceradvisors.org](http://naplescanceradvisors.org)

# EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CROHN'S DISEASE AND COLITIS

In recent years, medical marijuana has emerged as a topic of interest in the realm of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), particularly in the treatment of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. As individuals seek alternative therapies to manage the debilitating symptoms associated with these conditions, the potential benefits of cannabinoids, the active compounds in marijuana, have garnered attention from both patients and the medical community.

## Understanding Crohn's Disease and Colitis

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic inflammatory bowel diseases characterized by inflammation and irritation of the digestive tract. These conditions can lead to a range of symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhea, fatigue, and weight loss. Managing IBD often involves a combination of medications, lifestyle modifications, and, in some cases, surgery.

## The Endocannabinoid System and Cannabinoids

The human body has an endocannabinoid system (ECS), a natural and complex cell-signaling system that plays a crucial role in regulating various physiological processes, including immune response, inflammation, and gastrointestinal function. Cannabinoids, such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), found in marijuana, interact with the ECS and may influence these processes.

## Research Findings on Medical Marijuana and IBD

Several studies have explored the potential therapeutic effects of medical marijuana in the context of Crohn's disease and colitis. Some research suggests that cannabinoids possess anti-inflammatory properties, which could be beneficial in reducing inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract.

A study published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* found that cannabinoids may help modulate the immune response and decrease inflammation in the colon. Another study in the *European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology* reported that medical marijuana could improve symptoms and quality of life in patients with Crohn's disease.



## Pain Management and Symptom Relief

One of the most common challenges faced by individuals with Crohn's and colitis is the management of chronic pain. Medical marijuana has been reported by some patients to provide relief from pain associated with IBD. The analgesic properties of cannabinoids may offer an alternative or complementary approach to traditional pain management strategies and is often preferred when compared to traditional narcotic pain relief options.

## Nausea and Appetite Stimulation

Nausea and loss of appetite are frequent symptoms in individuals with Crohn's disease and colitis. Medical marijuana, particularly THC, has long been recognized for its antiemetic effects and its ability to stimulate appetite. This could be especially beneficial for patients experiencing weight loss and malnutrition due to the impact of IBD on their digestive system.

## Considerations and Caveats

While there is growing interest in the potential benefits of medical marijuana for Crohn's and colitis, it's essential to approach this topic with a nuanced perspective. The medical community is still exploring the long-term effects, safety, and efficacy of cannabinoids for IBD treatment. Not all patients may experience the same benefits, and individual responses can vary.

The legal status of medical marijuana varies widely, with some states allowing its use for specific medical conditions while others maintain strict regulations or prohibit its use altogether. Patients considering medical marijuana in Florida will be pleased to know that Crohn's Disease in addition to similar conditions in kind and class are approved for medical cannabis usage in Florida.

## Consulting with Healthcare Professionals

Before considering medical marijuana as a treatment option, individuals with Crohn's or colitis might want to consult with their healthcare providers or gastroenterologist on its potential benefits. Once they desire to move forward they can contact a certified cannabis doctor who can assess the individual's medical history, current symptoms, and overall health to complete the certification for a medical marijuana card.

These specialised providers can also offer guidance on dosing, potential side effects, and interactions with other medications. Open and honest communication between patients and healthcare professionals is crucial to making informed decisions about improving their life and incorporating medical marijuana into an IBD management plan.

## Conclusion

The exploration of medical marijuana as a potential holistic therapy for Crohn's disease and colitis represents an exciting and promising avenue in the quest for effective IBD management. While research is ongoing, and the landscape of medical marijuana is evolving, some patients report extremely positive outcomes in terms of symptom relief and improved quality of life.



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# Unlocking the Power of Micronutrient Testing

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, a groundbreaking advancement has emerged, promising to revolutionize the way we approach nutrition and wellness. Micronutrient testing, a cutting-edge diagnostic tool, is gaining traction as a key player in the quest for personalized health.

## The Micro World Within: Understanding Micronutrients

Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, play a crucial role in maintaining optimal health. These tiny but mighty compounds are essential for various physiological functions, ranging from energy production to immune system support. Despite their significance, deficiencies or imbalances in micronutrients often go unnoticed, leading to a host of health issues.

## The Rise of Micronutrient Testing

Traditionally, nutritional assessments relied on broad strokes, such as dietary surveys and basic blood tests. However, these methods often failed to provide a complete picture of an individual's micronutrient status. Enter micronutrient testing, a state-of-the-art approach that delves into the specific levels of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants within the body.

This diagnostic tool goes beyond the one-size-fits-all mentality, offering a personalized insight into an individual's nutritional needs. By analyzing blood, urine, or tissue samples, micronutrient testing identifies deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances that may be undermining health and well-being.

## Why take a Micronutrient Test?

Even if you eat healthily and take your vitamins and supplements religiously, there's a good chance you're still vitamin deficient. All bodies are different, meaning you may absorb some, but not all the nutrients you take in through food.

If you experience frequent headaches or start your day feeling tired or low on energy, you may be vitamin deficient.

Remember that vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant deficiencies have been shown to affect the function of the immune system, which can contribute to degenerative processes and illnesses such as Arthritis and Alzheimer's.

## The Science Behind the Test

Micronutrient testing employs advanced analytical techniques, such as high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and mass spectrometry, to quantify the levels of various micronutrients accurately. This precise analysis enables healthcare professionals to tailor interventions based on an individual's unique nutritional profile.

The results of micronutrient testing provide a roadmap for targeted interventions, including personalized dietary recommendations, supplementation plans, and lifestyle modifications. This nuanced approach is a game-changer, allowing for more effective and efficient strategies to address specific health concerns.

*A Micronutrient test measures if you're low in any of these important nutrients:*

### VITAMINS

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin B1
- Vitamin B2
- Vitamin B3
- Vitamin B6
- Vitamin B12
- Biotin
- Folate
- Pantothenate
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin K

### MINERALS

- Calcium
- Magnesium
- Manganese
- Zinc
- Copper

### FATTY ACIDS

- Oleic Acid

### AMINO ACIDS

- Asparagine
- Glutamine
- Serine

### ANTIOXIDANTS

- Alpha Lipoic Acid
- Coenzyme Q10
- Cysteine
- Glutathione
- Selenium
- Vitamin E

## CARBOHYDRATE METABOLISM

- Chromium
- Fructose Sensitivity
- Glucose-Insulin Metabolism

## METABOLITES

- Choline
- Inositol
- Carnitine

## ALSO INCLUDES:

- Iron Deficiency Anemia
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Diabetes, Cholesterol and heart disease risk indicators
- Inflammation markers
- Liver, Gallbladder and intestinal distress
- Hormone levels
- Thyroid
- Heavy Metal Toxicity; Lead, Mercury, and Aluminum
- Food and Respiratory Allergies
- Autoimmune: Gluten Sensitivity; Rheumatoid and more.

## Applications in Preventive Medicine

Micronutrient testing isn't just for those experiencing health issues; it's a powerful tool for preventive medicine. Identifying and addressing micronutrient imbalances before they manifest as clinical symptoms can significantly impact long-term health outcomes.

Athletes, for instance, can benefit from micronutrient testing to optimize performance and recovery. Individuals with chronic conditions, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, may uncover micronutrient deficiencies that contribute to their health challenges.

## Navigating the Micronutrient Landscape

In a world where one size does not fit all, micronutrient testing emerges as a beacon of hope for personalized health. By unlocking the secrets of individual nutritional needs, this innovative approach empowers individuals to take charge of their well-being and healthcare professionals to provide more targeted and effective interventions. As we navigate the frontier of personalized medicine, micronutrient testing stands as a testament to the transformative power of marrying cutting-edge technology with a deep understanding of the intricacies of human health. It's not just a test; it's a pathway to a healthier, more tailored future.



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# Ketamine Health Centers: HELPING NAVIGATE THE HOLIDAYS

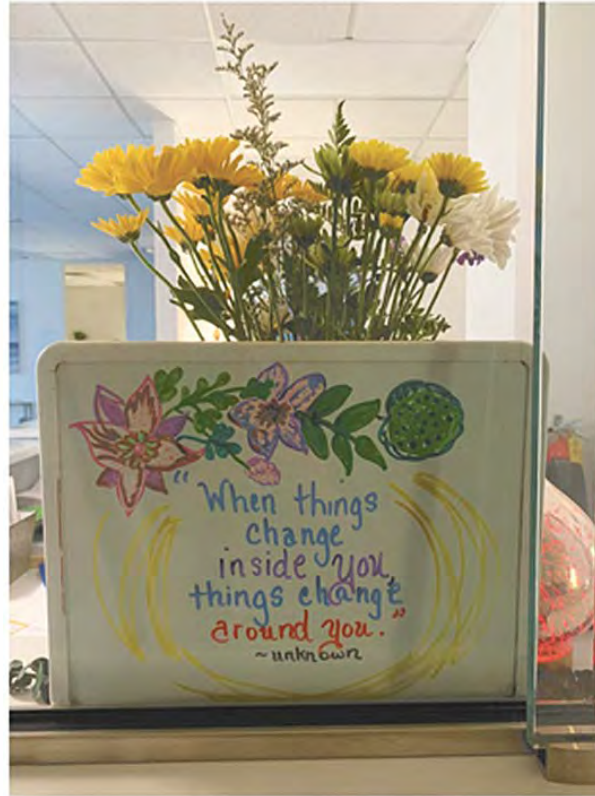
October marked the 75th anniversary of World Mental Health Day, with the theme of Mental Health being a Universal Human Right. We all know that the holidays can be a very stressful time for everyone, especially for those who have ongoing mental health wellness issues. This added layer of stress can easily affect functioning and quality of life. Some common symptoms of stress include anxiety, sadness, headaches, body aches, inability to sleep, restlessness, and irritability.

A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that over 38 percent of those surveyed felt increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety and reported more substance abuse during the holiday season.

At Ketamine Health Centers, we address these concerns through a holistic approach that individualizes treatment for each person based on their symptoms and needs. Our goal is to assist our clients in managing this stress in the healthiest possible ways, which will lead to fulfilling holiday experiences.

Here are a few general tips that could lead to more positive outlooks and events for this time of year:

1. Plan ahead, and make a list of "must do" items with dates attached of expected completion.
2. Put yourself first! Giving to others is often the complete focus, but we must also remember to give to ourselves if we are to continue to give to others. (Examples - yoga, massage, walk in nature, lunch with a friend, mindful breathing)
3. Be realistic about finances, only what you can comfortably afford. Being creative and staying within your budget will lower your stress. (4.) Give yourself permission to say "No" to those events that will only cause you to be overwhelmed. Say "Yes" to those that you know will bring you joy and happiness.



5. Come treat yourself to an Immunity Boost Alive nutritional infusion!

6. Honor loved ones who are no longer here. Celebrate their lives by reflecting or doing something meaningful in their honor.

7. Give Yourself Permission to Feel Good (from Super Attractor by Gabrielle Bernstein): We need practices for feeling good in order to make feeling good a habit. We've given more faith and energy to the negativity in our minds, and it's time to redirect our focus...The next time something doesn't go your way, do something to feel good fast! Listen to your favorite guided meditation or your favorite song. Call a friend who always makes you laugh. Take a walk outside. Allow yourself to access happiness even in the midst of a difficult time. That joy will be your guide out of the negative experience. It's totally fine to let yourself feel discomfort, but don't be afraid to balance it with joy.

Ketamine Health Centers offers comprehensive clinical consultations, ongoing mental health therapy, medication evaluations, and alternative treatments, including Stellate Ganglion Blocks, IV Ketamine Infusions, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation, and ALIVE Nutritional Infusions.

According to research studies, infusions of ketamine to treat depression can be effective for 60-80% of individuals. Unlike traditional treatments, ketamine is safe, and patients report minimal side effects.

We are here for you and your loved ones. If you have questions or concerns about holiday stress or other mental health issues, please call or email us. Remember, Mental Health is a universal human right!

## What Our Patients Are Saying

"I did my first treatment in January of 2019, and it was life changing to say the least. The staff is spectacular, and this place was essential on my road to mental health recovery. You can view my testimonial on the Instagram page for the ketamine health centers. Truly grateful, thank you so much!!" - Juan C.



## KETAMINE HEALTH CENTERS

As the leading provider of IV ketamine infusion therapy in Florida, we aim to provide relief and offer hope to those suffering from treatment-resistant conditions. We are one of the very few centers specializing in ketamine infusion therapy, with a team of both mental health and certified anesthesia professionals to help our patients on their journey to recovery.



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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.

**Ketamine Health Centers Vision** - Create a holistic array of heart-centered services that promote mental, physical, and spiritual health and well-being while partnering with like-minded community resources that share our vision and values.

At **Ketamine Health Centers**, our goal is for our patients to succeed. We want you to be happy and healthy. Our mission is to help depression, fibromyalgia, and post-traumatic stress disorder sufferers to regain balance in their lives.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmTvhURAUzIs>

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

\***Ketamine Health Centers** is affiliated with **Irwin Naturals Emergence** as a mental health and chronic pain provider. We are collaborating with the nutritional supplements company to address the mind-gut connection.



**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.



**Jessica Mitchell**

Jessica Mitchell is a Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern working toward licensure Status. She has been servicing clients and patients at Ketamine Health Centers since Spring of 2021.

Jessica completed her Associate in Science Degree in Human Services at Florida Southwestern University, her BS in Applied Psychology and MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Hodges University; graduating with Honors in May of 2022.

Jessica's passion for understanding Human Behavior, paired with her passion for the application and integration of alternative treatment methods has helped to pave the way for her educational focus, and a career in the field of Mental Health and Wellness.

# Optimistic Approach

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# When someone you love is having trouble hearing, it's no secret.

By Sarah Sessler, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

**A** loved one's hearing loss often limits the restaurants you frequent, the social gatherings you attend, and the television shows you used to enjoy together. Hearing well is essential to living life to the fullest.

For a spouse, child, or friend, it can be difficult to confront a loved one about their hearing loss. Here are some tips to help:

- **Seize the moment.** Many people have a hard time bringing up hearing loss to their loved ones. Look for a topic that naturally leads you into the conversation and politely suggest that they should have a hearing screening.
- **Lean heavily on all the reasons you want them to hear.** Put meaning behind your request. Let them know it doesn't affect just them – their hearing loss can impact the relationship they have with you.
- **If they resist, explain how early intervention is the key to success.** When people wait too long, the brain forgets how to make sense of certain sounds, and it's hard to get that clarity back.
- **If they resist because of vanity, reassure them.** There are plenty of "invisible" hearing aid options available. More people will notice that you are struggling to hear than will ever know you are wearing a hearing aid.
- **If they cite a friend's hearing aid experience as the reason they won't try, don't accept that.** Everyone has different ears and different reasons for their hearing loss. People with hearing loss can no longer assume that someone else's experience will be the same as their own.
- **Walk the walk.** Accompany them to their appointment and let us know that you'd like to have your hearing screened as well. It's recommended individuals who are 55 years old have a baseline hearing screening. And it's free!

While addressing hearing loss with a loved one may seem challenging, the reward is abundant. So often



we hear from folks who have reconnected with their families, gone on dates with their spouses, or heard their grandchildren giggle once again.

#### Results of untreated hearing loss:

Hearing loss is frustrating for those who have it and for their loved ones. But recent research from Johns Hopkins reveals that it also is linked with walking problems, falls and even dementia.

In a study that tracked 639 adults for nearly 12 years, Johns Hopkins expert Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D., and his colleagues found that mild hearing loss doubled dementia risk. Moderate loss tripled risk, and people with a severe hearing impairment were five times more likely to develop dementia.

#### Many Causes, Early Symptoms

Everything from genes and noise exposure to medications, head injuries and infections can play a role in hearing loss. Trouble detecting soft or high-pitched sounds is often the first sign that stereocilia — the delicate hair cells that convert sound waves into electrical signals within the ear—have been damaged. Soft sounds include phone conversations or background noise in settings such as restaurants. High-pitched sounds may include children's voices. Ringing in the ears, called tinnitus, is another early signal of possible hearing loss.

Hearing loss is an invisible handicap. Although it is increasingly prevalent with age, hearing loss is often ignored during the diagnosis and treatment of cognitive and memory disorders in elderly patients (Chartrand, 2005). The comorbidity of hearing loss and cognitive disorders makes it even more important to determine hearing status prior to any diagnostic protocol. This would undoubtedly lead to more appropriate diagnosis and treatment as well as significantly better outcomes for individuals with cognitive impairments.

Vision impairment is another common comorbidity affecting between 9% and 22% of adults over 70 (Saunders & Echt, 2011). Researchers using longitudinal data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the National Institute on Aging analyzed the relationship between vision impairment and hearing loss on quality of life in older adults, and they concluded that both hearing loss and vision impairment have a negative impact on health, social participation, and daily activities, and those individuals with a combination of both hearing loss and vision impairment (i.e., *dual sensory impairment*) experience the greatest difficulty (Crews & Campbell, 2004). The implication is that when both sensory systems are impaired, the individual is less able to compensate.

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# Navigating the Season of Sniffles: Understanding Flu, Cold, and Virus Dynamics

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

**A**s winter approaches, so does the notorious season of sniffles, where the battle against flu, colds, and various viruses intensifies. Understanding the dynamics of these microscopic adversaries becomes crucial for maintaining a healthy and resilient immune system.

In the chilly embrace of winter, the flu virus often takes center stage. This infectious villain can strike with a sudden onset of symptoms, including fever, body aches, and a relentless cough. Vaccination stands as our primary defense, creating a shield against the most common strains and reducing the severity of the illness.

Closely trailing the flu, the common cold weaves its way into the season. Despite its milder reputation, the cold virus can still disrupt daily life with sneezes, congestion, and throat irritation. Good hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing and avoiding close contact with the infected, act as the unsung heroes in the battle against the common cold.

In recent times, the threat of novel viruses has become an unsettling reality. Emerging viruses challenge our immune systems with unfamiliar adversaries, demanding global cooperation for effective prevention and management. Maintaining vigilance, staying informed, and adopting preventive measures are key components in fortifying ourselves against these ever-evolving threats.

As the season progresses, bolstering our immune defenses becomes paramount. A nutrient-rich diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep form the trifecta of immune support. Embracing these lifestyle choices empowers the body to stand resilient against the onslaught of seasonal viruses.

The workplace becomes a battleground for viruses, as close quarters and shared spaces facilitate their spread. Employers play a vital role in curbing outbreaks by promoting a culture of health and implementing flexible sick leave policies. Simple measures like sanitizing shared surfaces and providing easy access to hand hygiene resources contribute significantly to a healthier work environment.



Schools, another breeding ground for viruses, face unique challenges during this season. Educators and parents must collaborate to reinforce hygiene habits among children. Teaching the importance of handwashing, respiratory etiquette, and the proper use of tissues equips young ones with valuable tools to protect themselves and others.

While viruses may seem relentless, a proactive approach to health can turn the tide in our favor. Regular health check-ups, especially for vulnerable populations, enable early detection and intervention. Vaccination campaigns, backed by scientific research, offer a collective shield against influenza, reducing the overall burden on healthcare systems.

In conclusion, the flu, cold, and virus season is a test of our resilience and collective responsibility. By arming ourselves with knowledge, adopting healthy habits, and embracing preventive measures, we can navigate this season with confidence. Let us stand united against the microscopic adversaries that seek to challenge our well-being, emerging stronger and more prepared for the seasons to come.

#### Are you ready for a consultation?

Your treatment will be performed by a Certified Nurse Practitioner. Schedule your appointment now!

#### 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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# BREATHING EASY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

**T**he holiday season is a time for joy, celebration, and spending precious moments with loved ones. For those who rely on supplemental oxygen, the festivities can sometimes be accompanied by concerns about mobility and enjoying the season to the fullest. However, with the advent of portable oxygen solutions, individuals can now embrace the spirit of the holidays without compromising on their respiratory needs.

Portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) have become game-changers for those with respiratory conditions, offering newfound freedom and flexibility. These compact devices allow users to maintain their oxygen therapy while on the move, ensuring that they can actively participate in various holiday activities.

One of the significant advantages of portable oxygen is the ability to travel effortlessly. Whether it's visiting family and friends, attending holiday gatherings, or even embarking on a winter vacation, portable oxygen concentrators enable users to explore new horizons without the constraints of traditional oxygen tanks. Say goodbye to the days of feeling tethered to stationary oxygen equipment and hello to the joy of mobility.

Moreover, these devices are designed with convenience in mind. Lightweight and compact, portable oxygen concentrators seamlessly integrate into daily life, allowing users to move about with ease. No longer confined to a stationary source, individuals can decorate the tree, prepare festive meals, and partake in cherished traditions without interruption.

The holiday season is synonymous with beautiful decorations, twinkling lights, and cozy gatherings. With portable oxygen in tow, individuals can actively participate in these festive preparations. From hanging ornaments to stringing lights, the liberating nature of portable oxygen ensures that everyone can contribute to creating a warm and inviting holiday atmosphere.

Attending holiday parties and family gatherings becomes a stress-free experience with portable oxygen concentrators. These devices are designed to be discreet, emitting minimal noise and drawing



little attention. Users can focus on the joyous moments, confident in the knowledge that their oxygen needs are met without being a focal point of conversation.

Winter festivities often include outdoor activities, and portable oxygen allows individuals to partake in these seasonal delights. Whether it's a stroll through a winter wonderland, enjoying a cup of hot cocoa by the fire, or even engaging in a friendly snowball fight, portable oxygen ensures that the cold air doesn't hinder the holiday merriment.

Traveling during the holiday season can be stressful, but portable oxygen concentrators make it easier for individuals to journey to see loved ones or explore new destinations. With airlines becoming increasingly accommodating to passengers with medical needs, traveling with portable oxygen has never been more accessible. The freedom to create lasting holiday memories knows no bounds.

In conclusion, the advent of portable oxygen concentrators has transformed the holiday experience for individuals with respiratory conditions. The liberating power of these devices allows users

to embrace the festive spirit with open arms, participating in all the joyous activities that make the season special. This holiday season, let portable oxygen be the key to breathing easy and savoring every precious moment.

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# Shopping for the Best Incontinence Underwear?

There Might be a Better Solution

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

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

## What is Overactive Bladder?

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

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

You may be suffering from overactive bladder if:

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

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

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

## What is Axonics Therapy?

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

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

## What are the benefits of Axonics Therapy?

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

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

### Clinically proven results:

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

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

Take the first step towards symptom relief. Call us at **239-449-7979** to schedule your Axonics Therapy consultation today.

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Brilliant. Amazing staff. Incredible results. Totally life changing. I am going to retire and work on my bucket list instead of settling for 'I have issues'.

— Tricia M., Patient —



Joseph Gauta, MD



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\*50% or greater reduction in symptoms

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# WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A "SURGICAL" NECK LIFT

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

For 115 years, neck & facelift procedures have been performed by surgeons.

Over that time the procedure has change from being simply a slight skin tightening, to altering all elevations, tightening, and lifting of the deeper structures of the face, and to the current combination techniques involving lifting, removing extra skin in augmenting areas with reduced tissue volume and even some procedures that involve minimally invasive techniques.

As a person matures in age, facial structures change as does the envelope of the skin, migrating, stretching, and becoming less elastic in its natural state resulting in jowls, sometimes sunken areas or deep wrinkles and fatty deposits an area that we don't consider attractive.

Neck and Face lifts are a restorative procedure, lifting tissues, where they were when a person was younger, giving a youthful appearance and turning back the clock.

Newer, minimally invasive techniques have great uses but often don't have enough ability to reduce the amount of extra skin and tissue sag that has developed over the years; therefore, an open, surgical technique is necessary. A well trained plastic Surgeon will tell you when these approaches wont remove your sagging skin and thus will recommend the open, surgical neck lift.

With advances in technique, a deep facelift can be done in an office setting under local anesthesia. This involves an incision around the ear, (and often under the chin) from which you can dissect out the tissues of the face as well as the neck. Sometimes we must make an accessory incision in the area under



the chin. Some of the bands that develop in your neck can be addressed via this incision, and now we can also sometimes address this through percutaneous approaches which use very small incisions to release his muscle bands.

Neck & face lifts are not a cookie-cutter procedure. Everybody tends to be a different person and often there is a variation in technique between patient and patient. Surgical technique has evolved to find use from some of the excessive tissues removed which may be placed in some areas of the head and neck. It's common we would do some fat grafting or soft tissue augmentation with this tissue in areas that have lost volume, particularly the cheeks.

Sometimes one of the issues is not the fat under the skin, but rather the glands under the muscles in the neck. If this is the case, these can be reduced through a small incision under the chin. It is important to have an assessment by a qualified and experienced surgeon to recognize the difference between the structures which still need to be respected, augmented, lifted, or tightened and, to be sure that you



have the right amount of soft tissue coverage. Occasionally less experienced surgeons will try to over resect tissue, particularly in the neck, resulting in a very unattractive contour, and even though it has less fat and tissues, results are not attractive or authentic looking.

I have included some pictures for a full face and neck lift down for deep plane, SMAS, (Superficial Musculo Aponeurotic System) lift using local anesthesia in the office. While results are immediate, you can see in these three years after photos, that her facelift stands up to time, because of the quality of the work.

Do not be confused by official sounding boards or certifications, as there is no recognized certifying board with "cosmetic surgery" in its title. Look for surgeons with the symbol from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons when seeking a trusted surgeon for any cosmetic procedure. The ASPS assures that a surgeon has met the most rigorous requirements in skill, patient safety as well as having had superior surgical training from an accredited residency program.

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**Gunnar Bergqvist, MD**  
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# TIS' THE SEASON TO SHINE

**R**eady or not – the holiday season is here and the countdown to Christmas is on. It's time to surprise and delight your friends and family with bath and body care gifts that will make them look and feel their best. Here's how:

**Inner Calm & Peace:**

A gift of self care is an excellent way to promote mindfulness and wellness. Self care gifts encourage loved ones to escape the hustle and bustle to enjoy a soothing moment to themselves. Simple ideas include bubbly bath bomb sets, aromatic essential oils with a diffuser, or soothing face masks.

**Every Day Luxury:**

High-quality skin care can promote the feeling of every day luxury without the high-ticket price. Gifting something as simple as a handmade soap, creamy body lotion or foaming body wash, can provide that feeling of indulgence and joy.

**A Complete Set:**

You can't go wrong with a carefully curated skin care set. These sets are often filled with complementary products so that the recipient can enjoy a simple self care routine from start to finish. Examples include a face wash, face mask, face toner and face moisturizer. Skin care sets feature mini indulgences that will be enjoyed well beyond the holidays.



**Stocking Stuffers:**

Fill your stockings with something they'll actually use. From hair clips to massagers to lip balms and butters, it's easy to affordably stuff your stockings with simple items that your friends and family will enjoy.

**Hostess Gifts:**

Humorous holiday tea towels, Santa-themed wine stoppers and colorful Christmas soaps, are always a hit with the holiday hostess.

**Earth-Friendly Gifts:**

From eco-friendly, super concentrated shampoo and conditioner bars, to plastic-free bar soaps, to laundry detergent sheets, go for gift ideas with high usage and minimal waste.

This holiday, it's time to glow with your gifting. Your thoughtful gifting will not only help your friends and family look their best but also remind them to indulge in a little self care this festive season.



*Skip the holiday hustle this year. Make your list. Check it twice. And get your holiday shopping done!*



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Naples Soap Company has carefully curated a huge assortment of gift sets to make your gift giving a breeze this holiday season. From our coastal-inspired "Christmas on the Beach Box" to our all-new "Self Care Essentials Sets" to our fan favorite "Soap Stacks," we have something for every budget and for everyone on your list. Naples Soap Company has 13 stores across the state of Florida. Visit us at [naplessoap.com](http://naplessoap.com) to find a store near you or shop online and ship for free with orders over \$50.

# THE GIFT OF GOOD HEALTH: GIVING BACK LINKED TO IMPROVED WELL-BEING

By Jenny Bradley

As we close out the year, our calendars will fill with festive gatherings, the exchange of holiday cards, and the joy of selecting gifts for our loved ones. However, amidst the hustle and bustle, it is important to embrace the true spirit of the season – being of service to others.

Beyond the invaluable support volunteers provide to nonprofits and organizations, research shows those delivering these services also reap a host of health benefits. Volunteers report reduced stress, anger and anxiety. Older adults involved in charitable activities also noted improved health and well-being, including lower blood pressure and a more optimistic outlook on life.

For example, at The Carlisle Naples, residents relish opportunities to serve both within the active retirement community and in Collier County.

“With all home maintenance taken care of along with the responsibilities of cooking and cleaning, there’s more free time to give back and be of service to others,” said Dory Hayden. “Our Zest Director organizes many charitable activities such as collecting school supplies for local students or raising funds for breast cancer research. It feels good when you can make someone else’s holiday brighter.”

The Carlisle also provides numerous avenues for residents to align their interests and passions with meaningful volunteer opportunities. For extroverted individuals who enjoy meeting new people, the community’s Welcoming Committee offers an ideal space to socialize and assist their newest neighbors get acclimated. On the other hand, the Resident Council, acting as a crucial liaison between residents and management, may be particularly appealing to those who are interested in actively contributing to the community’s overall well-being.

There are many ways to be of service this holiday season, even if you don’t live in a retirement community:



## Share Your Expertise

Were you a former chairman or an accountant? Consider sharing your breadth of knowledge with entrepreneurs as they try to avoid the pitfalls of small business ownership. Organizations such as SCORE provide confidential business mentoring services and host workshops to help small business owners achieve success. Retired executives and CEOs are always welcome.

## Become a Foster Grandparent

With families living further apart than previous generations, it’s not unusual for young adults to see their grandparents infrequently. Becoming a foster grandparent can be a rewarding experience for young and old alike. Intergenerational activities help bridge the gap between older adults and teenagers and shatter misconceptions about aging.

## Tap into Your Hobbies

Seniors who enjoy knitting or crocheting will find their crafts can be enjoyed by more than just family and friends. From hospitals to oncology departments, many organizations welcome the donation of baby hats and lap blankets.

## Support a Cause

Post-retirement is the perfect time to champion a cause that may be near and dear to one’s heart. Homelessness, education, women’s equality and accessibility to health care are just some areas in which older adults

can lend their voice. A simple internet search will be able to locate a charity that addresses each respective issue. From making telephone calls to writing letters of support, there is a task for everyone looking to get involved.

## Look Around – Opportunities Abound

Cuddling a premature baby in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), walking a dog at an animal shelter or greeting guests at a museum are just a few of the numerous tasks performed by volunteers across the country. Organizations such as Senior Corps and AARP are wonderful resources for matching older adults’ talents and interests with noteworthy charities in need of assistance.

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



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# DOES ACUPUNCTURE SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH?

By Alik Minikhanov, DACM, AP

**V**arious studies from different publications and sources show that acupuncture supports mental health.

Mental health is a critical part of our overall well-being. While traditional mental health treatments, such as therapy and medication, have shown efficacy, complementary and alternative therapies, like acupuncture, are gaining recognition for their potential in supporting mental health.

Let's start with one of everyone's least favorite words: **stress**.

## To Start Acupuncture Reduces Stress.

Stress is a prevalent issue that can lead to a range of mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression.

Acupuncture is part of an ancient practice in Traditional Chinese medicine. An acupuncturist will use hair-thin, metallic needles to penetrate the skin into specific pathways or meridians.

Inserting the needles into these pathways will promote a healthy flow of Qi, thereby improving your health.

A study conducted in 2016 found that acupuncture "has been demonstrated to enhance endogenous opiates, such as dynorphin, endorphin, enkephalin, and release corticosteroids, relieving pain and enhancing the healing process."<sup>1</sup>

Endorphins are the body's natural painkillers and mood lifters.

This is *significant* because endorphins play a pivotal role in reducing anxiety and improving overall mental well-being.

Since stress can lead to larger issues such as anxiety and depression, how does acupuncture help with those conditions?

## Acupuncture Reduces Anxiety and Depression too!

According to the American Psychiatric Association, "anxiety disorders are some of the most common mental health conditions worldwide, affecting nearly 30% of adults at some point in their lives."

According to a recent study by Goyatá (2016), acupuncture may be a valuable tool in managing anxiety.

The study also found that acupuncture sessions significantly reduced anxiety symptoms in patients, indicating its potential as an adjunct therapy for anxiety management.<sup>2</sup>

Depression is a complex mental health condition, and its treatment often requires a multifaceted approach.

While acupuncture alone may not replace conventional therapies, it can be a valuable complementary treatment for individuals with depression.

A study published in 2022 indicated that when acupuncture was used in conjunction with antidepressant medication, it contributed to a more significant reduction in depressive symptoms and a decrease in medication-related side effects.<sup>3</sup>

But acupuncture can do even more for your health.

## Neurotransmitter Regulation – a Better Way to Say "Chemical Messengers."

Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers in the brain that significantly affect mood regulation.

Imbalances in neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and dopamine, are associated with mental health conditions. Research has shown that acupuncture can help regulate neurotransmitter levels in the brain.

The findings from a study researching the impact of acupuncture on serotonin and dopamine levels suggested that acupuncture can increase the availability of these neurotransmitters, promoting feelings of well-being and emotional stability.<sup>4</sup>

Scientists have begun to study further which parts of the brain acupuncture affects to understand its benefits.

## Brain Imaging Provides a Clearer Picture of the Benefits.

Advancements in neuroimaging have allowed researchers to study the effects of acupuncture on the brain. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies have provided insight into how acupuncture impacts the brain's structure and function, shedding light on its role in supporting mental health.

One study, published in the *Journal of Integrative Medicine*, used fMRI to investigate the effects of acupuncture on the brain regions associated with mood and emotion regulation. The results showed that acupuncture modulated the activity of these regions, suggesting that it could have a role in improving mood and emotional well-being.<sup>5</sup>

As much as your mind affects your mental health it also affects your digestive health.

## The Gut-Brain Connection

Maybe you've heard of this one recently. It's a new way of thinking about our health. Until recently, scientists thought that anxiety and depression were the cause of our gut problems when it's the other way around.

Recent research has highlighted the connection between the gut and mental health, known as the "gut-brain axis." The balance of gut microbiota can influence mood and emotional well-being. Acupuncture has been studied for its potential to affect the gut-brain axis positively.

The same study, published in 2021, explored how acupuncture influenced gut microbiota in rats. The findings revealed that acupuncture treatment led to a positive shift in gut microbiota composition, which could affect mental health improvements.<sup>6</sup>

The benefits of acupuncture are robust. But it works so well because each individual will experience results.

## Acupuncture can be Tailored to the Individual.

Acupuncturists assess each patient's unique constitution and symptoms to create a personalized treatment plan.

This tailored approach ensures that the treatment addresses the specific needs and imbalances of the individual, making it a holistic and patient-centered therapy designed to enhance your well-being physically and mentally.

## Acupuncture Helps Improve Mental Health

*Scientific research demonstrates the potential of acupuncture as a valuable tool in supporting mental health.*

Acupuncture can reduce stress, alleviate anxiety, mitigate depression, improve sleep quality, regulate neurotransmitters, and influence brain activity. Furthermore, its impact on the gut-brain axis adds another layer to its therapeutic potential.

While acupuncture should not replace conventional mental health treatments, it can be a complementary therapy that enhances overall well-being. As more research is conducted, acupuncture's role in mental health care is likely to gain further recognition and acceptance.

If you're considering acupuncture as part of your mental health management, consult with a licensed acupuncturist like Dr. Alik to discuss your individual needs.

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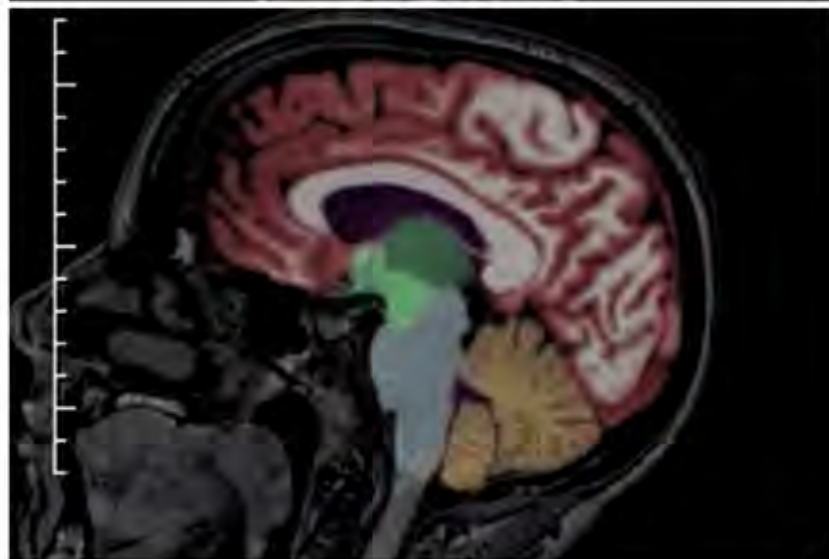
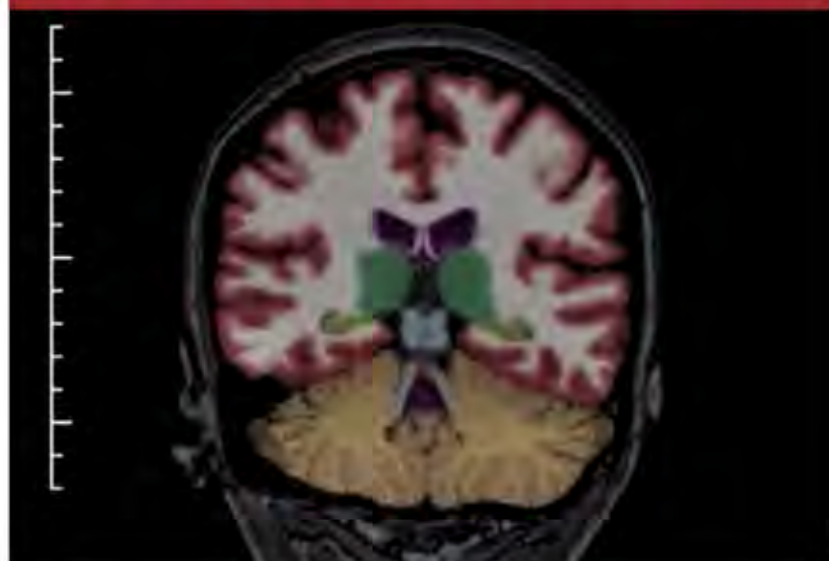
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# CHOOSING THE BEST ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY PROGRAM

By Robert C. Gibson

Managing Director Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group

**A**lcohol and substance abuse treatment facilities encompass a diverse range of programs and settings designed to address the complex needs of individuals struggling with addiction. Inpatient rehabilitation centers offer intensive, residential care where individuals reside for an extended period, typically ranging from 28 days to several months. These facilities provide a structured environment with round-the-clock support, counseling, and medical supervision. Outpatient treatment programs offer more flexibility, allowing individuals to receive therapy and support while still living at home. Detoxification centers focus on the initial phase of sobriety, providing medical supervision to manage withdrawal symptoms safely. Each type of facility addresses the multifaceted aspects of addiction, aiming to help individuals achieve and maintain sobriety through comprehensive and tailored approaches. Additionally, 12-step programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), are self-help groups that follow a structured set of guiding principles for recovery.

*Crossroads Behavioral Health Center / Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group*, located at 708 Goodlette-Frank Road Naples, FL 34102, is a unique 90-day intensive outpatient (IOP) treatment program that is tailored for each client's needs. Crossroads has developed a proprietary curriculum that helps individuals seeking long term sobriety and aids in reaching their goals and dreams. Intensive outpatient treatment (IOP) is often considered the most effective and flexible form of treatment for alcohol and substance abuse disorders for several reasons. One key advantage is the flexibility it offers in terms of scheduling. Unlike inpatient programs that require individuals to reside at the facility, IOP allows participants to maintain their daily routines, such as work or school, while still receiving intensive treatment during specified hours. This flexibility makes it a practical option for those who cannot commit to a full-time residential program due to family or work responsibilities. Additionally, Crossroads offers tele-health therapy, that delivers the treatment program to clients unable to attend in-person therapy sessions.

Crossroads multifaceted approach that includes individual counseling, group therapy, and educational sessions, addresses the various aspects of addiction, providing a well-rounded support system for recovery. The program serves as a transitional step and guide to increased independence and returning to daily life. This continuity of care helps individuals maintain their progress and cope with the challenges of reintegration into society.

## CROSSROADS TREATMENT PLANS:

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

**CROSSROADS TIER 2 TREATMENT PROGRAM** - is designed specifically for professionals or retirees who recognize their increased drinking or drug use and want to make a change in their lives. Unfortunately, many of these individuals continue to suffer because they fear the stigma of recovery and often feel they are too old, or far along in their careers to set aside the time for a 30-60-day residential rehab program. At Crossroads we fully understand these concerns and apprehensions. An independent intensive outpatient program (IOP) addiction recovery program for professionals and retirees is crucial for addressing:

**1. Confidentiality:** Professionals and retirees are often hesitant to seek treatment for addiction in traditional rehab or outpatient programs due to concerns about confidentiality. A program specifically designed for professionals can provide a more discreet and confidential environment, which can increase the likelihood that they will seek and receive treatment.

**2. Unique Needs:** Professionals and retirees have unique needs and challenges in addiction recovery, including concerns about their careers or the impact of addiction on their reputations. Crossroads autonomous program addresses these needs and provides specialized support and resources for professionals in recovery.

**3. Supportive Environment:** Our program provides a supportive environment with others who face similar

challenges and experiences. This helps our clients feel less isolated and increases their motivation to engage in treatment and maintain their sobriety.

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

**CROSSROADS TIER 3 TREATMENT PROGRAM** - is specifically oriented towards those individuals suffering from dual diagnosis. Dual diagnosis treatment, which refers to the treatment of co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, can be challenging in addiction recovery for:

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

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

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

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

Crossroads dual diagnosis program involves medication management, behavioral therapy, and support groups. In addition, our individualized treatment plans address each person's unique needs and challenges.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE IOP TREATMENT PROGRAM

**1. Individualized Treatment Plans:** Each patient's journey towards recovery is unique and requires a personalized approach. Crossroads has developed individualized treatment plans based on a thorough assessment of the patient's addiction history, mental health, and overall health status. The plans are regularly reviewed and updated based on the patient's progress.

**2. Evidence-Based Therapies:** Effective IOP programs provide evidence-based therapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Crossroads integrates these therapies which are proven to be effective in treating addiction and co-occurring mental health disorders.

**3. Group Therapy:** Group therapy is an essential component of Crossroads IOP programs as it provides patients with a supportive community of peers who can relate to their struggles. Group therapy also allows patients to learn from each other and provides opportunities to practice healthy communication and relationship-building skills.

**4. Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT):** MAT involves the use of medications such as anti-depressants, methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone to manage cravings, withdrawal symptoms, and diagnosed mental health issues during the recovery process. Crossroads IOP program offers MAT to patients who need it as part of their individualized treatment plan.

**5. Holistic Care:** A strong IOP program addresses the whole person, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Crossroads holistic care includes activities such as art therapy, meditation, yoga, boating, hiking, as well as other group outings and activities.

**6. Family Involvement:** Addiction affects not only the individual struggling with it but also their loved ones. Crossroads promotes the involvement of family members in the treatment process through family therapy and education.

**7. Aftercare Planning:** All IOP programs should prepare patients for the transition back to their daily lives by developing a comprehensive aftercare plan. Crossroads offers ongoing support such as continued therapy, support group meetings, and sober living arrangements as needed.

#### WHY IS CROSSROADS SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE PREMIERE INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT (IOP) TREATMENT PROGRAMS IN SW FLORIDA?

There are a few factors that contribute to an IOP treatment program's reputation as a top program that is well-regarded in the field. One of the main factors is the program's history of success in treating substance abuse and addiction. This is evidenced by the program's outcome data, testimonials from former patients, or recognition from reputable third-party organizations in the field of addiction treatment.

Another crucial factor is the program's adherence to evidence-based treatment practices, as well as its ability to provide individualized treatment plans to meet the unique needs of each patient.

Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group maintains a highly qualified and experienced staff, including licensed therapists and medical professionals who

are skilled in treating addiction and co-occurring mental health disorders. The program prioritizes ongoing support and aftercare planning to help patients maintain their sobriety and avoid relapse after completing the program. Overall, Crossroads, offers high-quality care and support tailored to each patient's needs, along with a commitment to evidence-based treatment practices and ongoing support for long-term recovery.

#### REDEFINING CORE BELIEFS IN RECOVERY

At Crossroads we examine the core beliefs of each client. Core beliefs in recovery refer to the deeply held beliefs that individuals have about themselves, the world around them, and their place in it. These beliefs are often shaped by past experiences and can influence a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, including their ability to recover from addiction. In the context of recovery from addiction, core beliefs may include beliefs about oneself, such as feelings of worthlessness or shame, or beliefs about others, such as distrust or fear of being judged. These core beliefs are often negative and may contribute to feelings of hopelessness or despair, which can make recovery more challenging.

As a result, one of the key objectives of recovery is to identify and challenge these negative core beliefs, replacing them with more positive and empowering beliefs that support recovery. At Crossroads, this involves working with a therapist or counselor to identify these beliefs and understand how they are impacting a person's recovery.

By identifying and challenging negative core beliefs, individuals in recovery create a more positive mindset that supports their efforts to maintain sobriety. This involves practicing mindfulness, engaging in positive self-talk, and focusing on the present moment, rather than dwelling on past mistakes or negative thoughts. Through this process, individuals cultivate a sense of self-worth and empowerment, which help support their ongoing recovery journey.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF REGAINING SELF-ESTEEM IN RECOVERY:

Regaining self-esteem is an important aspect of recovery from addiction because addiction often causes individuals to feel a sense of shame, guilt, and worthlessness. These negative feelings often contribute to substance abuse and addiction relapse and make it challenging for individuals to achieve and maintain sobriety.

Regaining self-esteem in recovery involves rebuilding a sense of self-worth, self-respect, and self-confidence. At Crossroads, this involves working with a therapist or counselor to identify negative thoughts and beliefs that are contributing to feelings of shame and worthlessness. Through therapy, individuals can learn to challenge and replace these negative beliefs with more positive and empowering beliefs that support their recovery.

At Crossroads, self-esteem is improved through engagement in activities and behaviors that promote feelings of accomplishment, such as setting and achieving personal goals, volunteering, or pursuing new hobbies and activities. These behavioral changes help individuals develop a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives that help boost feelings of self-worth and confidence.

In addition, we strive to build and maintain healthy relationships with others that contribute to improved self-esteem. By surrounding oneself with supportive and positive people, clients can feel more valued, respected, and connected, which further boosts their sense of self-worth and self-esteem. By rebuilding self-esteem, individuals can improve their chances of achieving and maintaining sobriety over the long term.

#### UTILIZING COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) IN RECOVERY

Crossroads IOP program is built upon the foundation of implementing cognitive-behavioral health therapy for long term alcohol and substance abuse recovery. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on identifying and changing negative thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. In the context of recovery from addiction, CBT is used to help individuals challenge and reframe negative thoughts and beliefs that contribute to substance abuse and addiction.

CBT is based on the idea that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected and that changing one can impact others. At Crossroads, the therapist collaborates with the individual to identify negative thoughts and beliefs that may be contributing to addiction, including beliefs about self-worth, stress, or coping mechanisms. Once these negative thoughts and beliefs are identified, Crossroads therapists help the client develop strategies for challenging and replacing them with more positive, empowering thoughts and beliefs.

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

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



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# 7 Common Examples of Premises Liability Claims in Florida

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

**A**lthough we rarely think about it, we all face a variety of injury risks on a daily basis. From slippery floors to cracked walkways and other construction and maintenance-related hazards, all types of premises-related dangers can (and often do) lead to severe injuries.

## Dangerous Conditions that Qualify for a Premise Liability Claim

When you or someone you love suffers serious injuries in a premises-related accident, it is essential to speak with a lawyer about your legal rights. Florida's premises liability laws entitle accident victims and their families to just compensation in many cases. For example, the following types of accidents (among others) can all potentially support claims for just compensation:

### Slip and Fall Accidents

Slip and fall accidents are among the most common causes of premises-related injuries. Spills, recently cleaned floors, slippery flooring materials and a variety of other issues can lead to sudden, unexpected and dangerous falls.

### Trip and Fall Accidents

Trip hazards are a common injury risk as well. Cracked sidewalks, unmarked curbs, protruding roots, items left in hallways and stairwells, and numerous other hazards can lead to trip and fall accidents. Whether due to pedestrian traffic, poor lighting or other issues, accident victims often don't see these types of hazards until it is too late.

### Falls from Heights

Falls from heights can be extremely dangerous for obvious reasons. Loose and missing handrails are among the most common causes of these serious premises-related accidents.

### Elevator and Escalator Malfunctions

Elevator and escalator accidents are far more common than they should be. While property owners have a duty to inspect and service their elevators and escalators regularly, many fail to do so. Negligent inspections and maintenance work can lead to malfunctions as well.



### Electrocutions

While the risk of electrocution is greatest at construction sites, faulty wiring and other issues at homes, businesses and government buildings can lead to electrocutions as well. Regardless of where it happened, if you or a loved one has been electrocuted, you should speak with a premises liability lawyer promptly.

### Falling Objects

Falling objects can also cause serious injuries. Overstocked shelves and dangerous product displays are among the most common causes of these accidents. From amusement parks to grocery stores and home improvement stores, falling objects are a safety risk at many different types of locations.

### Construction Defects

Regardless of whether a property has been properly maintained, construction defects can lead to falls, electrocutions and a wide range of other premises-related accidents. While property owners and tenants will be liable for premises-related issues in most cases, contractors and subcontractors will often be liable when a construction defect is to blame.

### Speak with a Premises Liability Lawyer in Naples for Free

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### About the Author

F. Scott ("Scott") Pauzar, 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 19 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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# Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

## The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

## PKD Treatment

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

## How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

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

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

## Associates in Nephrology

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

## Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

## Services Provided

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

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- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
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- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
- Glomerulonephritis
- Hypertension
- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

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

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- The ability to experience and express all of your emotions, including **happiness, joy, pride, satisfaction, and love.**
- Managing these emotions, thoughts, and actions.
- Coping with day-to-day stressors.
- Finding satisfaction in life.

### What is Quality of Life?

The WHO (World Health Organization) defines QoL as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns”.

Your Quality of Life includes your health, social relationships, personal safety, and emotional well-being. It impacts how you think and feel about all the big and small things that you do, think about, and experience daily. This includes how your body functions, how safe you feel (both alone and with others), your perception of self-worth, and how you engage in social interactions. Your Quality of Life revolves around the meaningful daily activities of your life.

With a neurological condition such as Parkinson’s Disease, the nervous system is affected. It might feel like something has “hijacked” your life, including many of the things you love to do! It’s known that the nervous system relays sensory information to our brains and enables us to think, move, feel, breathe, see, and hear.

Lasene offers solutions to those living with conditions that negatively influence Quality of Life. Enhancing QoL can mean improved sleep, enhanced brain functions, reduced brain fog, and improved responses in movement, as well as decreased chronic pain — all aimed at fostering hope for living with the challenges of a neurological condition while providing enhancements in areas that impact your Quality of Life.

### About Us

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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.



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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

**M**any 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:

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# The Importance of Giving Back

**G**iving is contagious. Have you ever noticed that when the people around you are being generous, you feel compelled to join in? When you see someone drop their coins into the Salvation Army bucket, don't you start to search your pockets too? Why is this?

One study conducted by the Harvard Business School reports that people who give charitably to organizations felt greater happiness, but that there was no correlation between spending on oneself and happiness. (1) This study seems to prove the old saying, "Tis better to give than to receive". If this is true, then how can I get in on the fun? Below is a list of some practical ways we can all give back not only during the holidays, but throughout the year as well.

## 5 WAYS TO GIVE BACK

**1. Give money to an organization.** Find an organization and research where the money goes. Who are you interested in giving to? Children? Funding research for curing an illness? Feeding the homeless in your area? There are hundreds of organizations asking for donations. Do a quick search and find out where they money goes. Does it go to the people they claim to help or does most of the money stay within the organization and its million-dollar-salaried CEO? Make sure your money is being used for what you intend it to be used for.

**2. Give to people you know.** Does the neighbor have trouble making ends meet? Does your coworker need help buying gifts for their kids' birthdays? Listen to the people around you talk and look for ways that you can jump in and meet a need they may have.

**3. Give your time.** Every city across our nation has a soup kitchen or a clothing closet. Volunteer to serve meals or to wash donated clothes. Does the single mother down the street need help with the kids and would be willing to let you watch them a couple of hours a week? Could the elderly couple next door use help mowing the lawn? Look around you. Need is everywhere and it often won't cost you a dime.

**4. Give your talent.** Volunteer to play and sing at the local nursing facility. Help the neighbor paint the fence. Change the oil a single mom's car. Paint a



picture of a sunset for someone who isn't able to get out of the house much. Are you a dentist? Offer free dental care to someone in need. Are you a makeup artist? Give free makeovers to high school girls who can't afford it at prom time.

**5. Give your possessions.** That car that you have sitting in the garage that hasn't seen the light of day in more than a year could be a huge blessing to someone else. If you're not using that set of dishes, why not give it to someone who could use it?

There are plenty of ways for us to make an impact on the world around us. Each day we can do small acts of kindness that may have a great impact on the receiver. Often, we don't see the full results of what we have done, but we can feel happy knowing that in some way, we have improved another person's day or even life. Look for ways to give back in your community and in the world. It is up to us to create a culture of generosity. A small spark can ignite a blazing inferno of generosity. Take the time to give back today.

*"They may forget what you said—but they will never forget how you made them feel."*

- Carl W. Buehner

Source:

1. Kinnear, David (2017) The psychology behind giving back, David Kinnear | Medical Research and Environmental Conversation. Available at: <http://davidkinnear.org/psychology-giving-back/>



**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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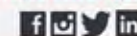
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# The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

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

Of the many hormones in the body, a select few are typically categorized as being for one gender or for the other. Many people are often surprised to learn, though, that despite these hormones being more prominent in one gender, they are essential for proper body functioning in both.

One example of these hormones is progesterone, which is often considered for women, although it has many essential roles in men. However, progesterone can decline in both genders for a number of reasons, including with age or due to health conditions. When progesterone levels fall, unpleasant symptoms can occur, which is why progesterone replacement is a crucial treatment for those with unbalanced hormones.

## What Is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone most often known to be released by the corpus luteum after a woman has ovulated. Also referred to as the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy by thickening the lining and preventing muscle contractions that would expel an egg.

Despite its primary role in preparing the female body for pregnancy, though, progesterone is also vital for men, albeit with different roles.

Let’s further discuss the role of progesterone in both genders and why it is crucial for men and women to have balanced progesterone levels.

## The Role of Progesterone in Women

Progesterone varies considerably through a woman’s menstrual cycle, with it being produced in low levels during the first half but rising considerably following ovulation. If a woman becomes pregnant, progesterone remains high throughout the pregnancy and aids in breast milk production upon delivery of the baby.

While the ovaries initially produce progesterone, the placenta begins producing progesterone at a higher rate after 8 or 10 weeks of pregnancy. This increase in progesterone keeps the body from releasing more eggs and prepares the breasts to produce milk.



Despite the role of progesterone in pregnancy, it can also be used to prevent pregnancy. In fact, progesterone is often used by itself or in combination with estrogen in hormonal contraceptives. When in this format, it helps the cervical mucus thicken, making it difficult for sperm to reach and fertilize an egg. It can also cause the uterine lining to thin, or it may stop ovulation entirely.

Because of these extremes in the body, promoting an ideal amount of progesterone is critical for healthy fertility, if pregnancy is a woman’s goal.

## Signs Of Low Progesterone in Women

Some signs of low progesterone in women include:

- missing periods or having abnormal periods
- uterine bleeding
- repeated miscarriages
- spotting and pain while pregnant
- infertility

Progesterone and estrogen are also closely related, so if progesterone is too low, it may cause estrogen levels to become high, which can cause weight gain, headaches, or mood swings.

## The Role of Progesterone in Men

Despite being considered the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone is also an essential hormone in men.

In men, progesterone plays a vital role in mood regulation and keeping the mind calm. It also impacts libido and promotes fertility from the man’s side. This is because progesterone influences spermiogenesis, or the creation of sperm; if the amount of progesterone in a man is too low, the body might not be able to produce as much sperm, which can influence a couple’s ability to conceive.

Progesterone is also crucial for the biosynthesis of testosterone, otherwise known as the male sex hormone, which is responsible for the development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair, muscle growth, and a deeper voice.

Progesterone also plays an essential role in the male body regarding counteracting the effects of estrogen, which can cause testosterone levels to decline. Proper progesterone levels ensure that these sex hormones are in the correct balance.

## Signs Of Low Progesterone in Men

Some of the signs of low progesterone in men include:

- hair loss
- low libido
- fatigue
- weight gain
- depression
- breast growth
- muscle loss
- bone loss
- erectile dysfunction

Low progesterone levels can also increase the risk of certain health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and prostatism.

## Estrogen Dominance and Progesterone

Progesterone is an antagonist to estrogen, giving it an important role in keeping estrogen levels in check. However, this also means that if progesterone levels are too low, estrogen levels can become high without anything to keep them in the correct range, a condition called estrogen dominance.

While estrogen dominance is most often referred to in women, it can affect men as well, with both genders having shared and also different symptoms.

Women with estrogen dominance may have symptoms that include:

- swelling and tenderness in the breasts
- low libido
- bloating
- weight gain
- mood swings
- headaches
- increase premenstrual syndrome symptoms
- fatigue
- cold hands or feet
- memory problems
- anxiety and panic attacks



Men can share some of the above symptoms in addition to experiencing infertility issues, breast tissue growth, or erectile dysfunction.

Normal estrogen levels in adult, menopausal women range from 15 – 350 pg/ml. In adult men, estrogen levels should range from 10 - 40 pg/ml. Estrogen counts higher than these ranges may signify low progesterone.

#### What Causes Low Progesterone?

There are many causes of low progesterone, some due to a temporary situation, whereas others may be more chronic.

#### Hypothyroidism

Many of the hormones in the body interact, which is evident between the thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and progesterone. With hypothyroidism, the thyroid does not produce enough hormones, and since the thyroid is responsible for regulating the endocrine system, this can then influence how well the body is able to produce progesterone.

It is also possible for low progesterone to lead to hypothyroidism, so this connection is bi-directional.

#### Low Cholesterol

Cholesterol is needed by the body in order to make progesterone. So, if your cholesterol is low, your body does not have enough of the building blocks required to produce enough progesterone.

#### Stress

Stress contributes to many health conditions, and low progesterone is one of them. This is because the hormone secreted by the body when in a perceived stressful situation, cortisol, utilizes the resources needed to make progesterone.

Essentially, when the body is stressed, it halts progesterone production in order to increase the amount of cortisol produced. For those experiencing chronic stress, this means that cortisol continually interferes with progesterone production.

#### Anovulatory Cycle

An anovulatory cycle is a menstrual cycle where ovulation does not occur. Since a rise in progesterone is triggered by the release of an egg and the empty follicle it leaves behind called the corpus luteum, an anovulatory cycle results in no increase in progesterone.

Anovulatory cycles are common in those on certain types of birth control or with PCOS.

#### Abnormal Bodyweight

Your body weight can play a prominent role in progesterone production because of its impact on the menstrual cycle. This is because women need a certain amount of body fat in order to have a regular cycle, which leads to ovulation and a rise in progesterone. Because of this, low body weight may impede ovulation, leading to no progesterone production.

Problems can occur at the other end of the spectrum as well, though. This is because fat cells produce estrogen, so high body fat can result in an overproduction of estrogen, which can lead to low progesterone. Studies have shown this correlation between obesity and low progesterone in men as well.

#### Prolactin Disorder

Prolactin is a hormone produced by the pituitary, and it negatively affects the production of sex hormone precursors. Those with hyperprolactinemia produce too much prolactin, which can disrupt the menstrual cycle, keeping progesterone from being produced.

#### Correcting Low Progesterone

Progesterone replacement therapy involves progestins, which are synthetic compounds mimicking the effects of progesterone on the body.

Some reasons why someone may be treated with progesterone hormone therapy are to:

- correct a low amount of progesterone due to underproduction
- bring on menstruation
- reverse low progesterone resulting from certain medications
- replace progesterone that is limited due to specific medical procedures

There are many different forms of progesterone hormone therapy, such as:

- injections
- oral capsules
- vaginal gels
- vaginal inserts
- vaginal suppositories

The ideal method of progesterone replacement will depend on gender, symptoms, and personal preferences.

#### The Importance of Progesterone Replacement

Besides helping to address problems with fertility, progesterone replacement can also be essential for a healthy pregnancy in women. For example, women who are pregnant, but have low progesterone, may be at a greater risk of preterm delivery or miscarriage. Replacing progesterone can help prevent these complications from occurring.



Progesterone replacement produces similar benefits in men regarding improving fertility due to its role in spermatogenesis and the fact that low progesterone can lead to erectile dysfunction.

Progesterone can also help with other symptoms affecting well-being, including those that appear in men with low progesterone. These benefits can include an improvement in mood, better sleep, and stronger bones.

Some cases of low progesterone are temporary, but for those suffering significantly from low progesterone, it is likely due to a chronic cause, and the only way to find relief is by addressing the hormonal imbalance.

Progesterone can be supplemented in many forms, such as injections, pills, or creams, which help raise progesterone levels and assist the body in functioning correctly, reversing unpleasant symptoms. Working with a doctor who specializes in hormones can also ensure that you get just the right amount of progesterone, as too much can also cause problems, especially for those looking to conceive.

By adequately balancing progesterone, all other hormones in the body can work in balance again, significantly improving your quality of life.

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# UNLOCKING THE BENEFITS OF PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPY: EMPOWERING WOMEN OF ALL AGES

**P**elvic health is a critical aspect of overall well-being that often goes unnoticed or neglected. Many women experience pelvic floor dysfunction at some point in their lives, leading to discomfort, pain, and a diminished quality of life. Fortunately, Pelvic Health Physical Therapy (PT) offers effective and non-invasive solutions to address these concerns. In this article, we will explore the fundamentals of pelvic health physical therapy, its benefits, common conditions treated, and the road to a healthier pelvic region.

## Understanding Pelvic Health Physical Therapy

Pelvic Health Physical Therapy is a highly specialized area of physical therapy that focuses on evaluating, diagnosing, and treating conditions related to the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor muscles, ligaments, and connective tissues provide support to the pelvic organs, including the bladder, uterus, and rectum. Pelvic floor dysfunction can occur due to a variety of reasons, such as pregnancy, childbirth, surgery, aging, or other chronic conditions.

Pelvic Health PT sessions typically involve a comprehensive assessment of the patient's condition, which includes a thorough medical history review, physical examination (may include both internal and external), and functional assessment. Based on the findings, the physical therapist develops an individualized treatment plan that may include exercises, manual therapy techniques, biofeedback, education, and lifestyle modifications. The primary goals of Pelvic Health PT are to relieve pain, improve muscle strength and coordination, enhance bladder control, and restore overall pelvic health and function.

## Treatment for a Range of Conditions

Pelvic Health PT is not solely limited to one particular condition. It addresses a broad spectrum of pelvic floor dysfunctions, including, but not limited to:

- **Pelvic Pain:** Pelvic pain is a common symptom that can arise from various conditions such as pelvic floor dysfunction, endometriosis, or musculoskeletal issues. Pelvic Health PT can help identify the underlying causes of pelvic pain and develop a personalized treatment plan to alleviate pain and improve quality of life.

- **Urinary Incontinence:** Pelvic floor muscles play a vital role in maintaining bladder control. Pelvic Health PT can teach individuals exercises and techniques to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles and improve muscle coordination.

- **Pre-and Postnatal Care:** Pelvic Health PT provides invaluable support during pregnancy and after childbirth. It focuses on strengthening the pelvic floor muscles, addressing diastasis recti, and rehabilitating the body post-delivery.

- **Pre-and Post-Surgical Support:** Pelvic Health PT is often recommended before and after pelvic surgeries, such as a hysterectomy, or surgeries related to pelvic organ prolapse. Pre-surgical therapy can prepare the pelvic floor muscles for the procedure, while post-surgical therapy can aid in recovery, reduce pain, and restore function.

- **Pelvic Organ Prolapse:** Pelvic organ prolapse occurs when the pelvic organs descend into our outside the vaginal canal. Pelvic Health PT can provide exercises and strategies to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which can alleviate symptoms and potentially reduce the need for surgery.

- **Sexual Dysfunction:** Pelvic Health physical therapy can address sexual dysfunction related to pelvic floor issues, such as pain during intercourse, lack of sensation, or difficulty achieving orgasm. By addressing underlying pelvic floor muscle dysfunction and providing specific exercises, physical therapists can help improve sexual function and satisfaction.

## Advantages of Pelvic Health Physical Therapy

Pelvic Health PT offers numerous advantages for women dealing with pelvic floor dysfunctions. Some advantages include, but are not limited to:

- **Non-Invasive and Constructive approach:** Pelvic Health PT emphasizes non-invasive and conservative treatment options. It aims to empower individuals to actively participate in their recovery. This approach is particularly beneficial for those who prefer to explore natural solutions or wish to avoid surgery.

- **Improved Quality of Life:** Pelvic Floor Dysfunctions can significantly impact an individual's quality

of life, often leading to embarrassment, social isolation, and decreased self-confidence. Pelvic Health PT helps individuals regain control over their bodies and lives and positively impacts mental health, self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.

- **Prevention and Long-Term Benefits:** Pelvic Health PT not only focuses on treating existing conditions but also emphasizes preventive strategies. Through education and exercises, individuals can learn proper techniques for pelvic floor muscle activation, breathing patterns, and body mechanics, which can reduce the risk of future pelvic floor issues.

## Why Choose Absolute Physical Therapy of SW FL for Pelvic Health PT

Absolute Physical Therapy is the ideal choice for Pelvic Health PT due to their unparalleled expertise, personalized care, above national average outcomes, and commitment to improving their patients' quality of life. With a team of highly skilled and specialized Pelvic Health therapists, they possess extensive knowledge treating pelvic floor dysfunctions and related conditions. By utilizing evidence-based techniques, they provide tailored treatment plans that address the unique needs of each individual. Moreover, their compassionate and supportive approach creates a comfortable environment for patients, allowing them to openly discuss their concerns and receive the highest level of care. With Absolute Physical Therapy, patients can trust in their dedication to restoring pelvic health and achieving long-lasting results.



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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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# VERTEBRAL COMPRESSION FRACTURES: Understanding Their Impact on Health

By Gregory Cannarsa, MD, Fellowship-Trained Neurosurgeon

**V**ertebral compression fractures (VCFs) are a prevalent yet often overlooked health issue affecting more than 700,000 Americans yearly, especially the elderly population. These fractures occur when the vertebral body in the spine collapses due to weakness in the bone, which can lead to severe back pain, reduced mobility, and a significant decline in quality of life. Understanding the impact of VCFs is crucial for effective management and prevention of long-term complications.

## The Nature of Vertebral Compression Fractures

VCFs are most commonly caused by osteoporosis, a disease characterized by decreased bone density and strength. They can also result from traumatic injuries or metastatic diseases. The spine's vertebrae become so porous and weak that they can fracture under the normal pressure of daily activities, sometimes with minimal or no apparent cause.

## Symptoms and Diagnosis

The primary symptom of a VCF is sharp, sudden back pain. It may be exacerbated by standing or walking and relieved by lying down. Other symptoms include height loss, deformity, and limited spinal mobility. Diagnosis typically involves a thorough medical history, physical examination, and imaging tests like X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs to confirm the presence and extent of the fracture.

## Impact on Physical Health

- **Chronic Pain and Disability:** The most immediate impact of a VCF is pain, which can become chronic and debilitating. This pain significantly limits mobility and interferes with daily activities, often leading to disability.
- **Spinal Deformity:** Multiple VCFs can cause changes in the shape of the spine, such as a stooped posture or kyphosis. This deformity can further exacerbate pain and impair function.
- **Height Loss:** VCFs can cause a loss in body height due to the collapse of the vertebral bodies. This physical change can impact self-esteem and body image.
- **Reduced Lung Function:** Severe spinal deformity can compress the abdomen and thorax, reducing lung capacity and leading to breathing difficulties.

## Impact on Mental and Emotional Health

The chronic pain and physical limitations associated with VCFs can lead to significant mental and emotional distress. Patients often experience depression, anxiety, and a sense of isolation due to their reduced ability to engage in social activities and maintain independence.

## Increased Risk of Further Fractures

Once a vertebral compression fracture occurs, the risk of subsequent fractures significantly increases. Each additional fracture can lead to a worsening spiral of pain, disability, and further decline in overall health. This risk escalation can be attributed to several factors:

- **Structural Compromise:** A VCF inherently weakens the structural integrity of the spine. Once one vertebra has fractured, the biomechanical load is redistributed to adjacent vertebrae, increasing their vulnerability to fractures.
- **Decreased Mobility and Muscle Weakness:** Following a VCF, patients often experience decreased mobility and muscle weakness due to pain and fear of movement. This reduction in physical activity can lead to further weakening of the spinal muscles and bones, compounding the risk of additional fractures.
- **Impact of Chronic Pain:** Chronic pain from a VCF can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, further exacerbating osteoporosis and muscle weakness. Additionally, the use of pain medications, particularly opioids, can affect balance and coordination, increasing the risk of falls and subsequent fractures.
- **Psychological Factors:** The fear of experiencing another fracture can lead to a condition known as "fracture anxiety". This anxiety may cause patients to limit their activities, which, while intended to protect the spine, can actually weaken it further due to lack of exercise and movement.

## Economic and Healthcare Burden

VCFs pose a substantial economic burden, both for the individuals affected and the healthcare system. The costs include medical treatment for the fractures, need for multiple repeat imaging studies, long-term pain management, and indirect costs related to lost productivity and the need for caregiving.

## Treatment Approaches

- **Conservative Management:** This includes pain medication, bed rest, and physical therapy. While conservative management can help relieve symptoms, it does not address the underlying vertebral collapse. As well, pain medications such as opioids can have significant side effects if taken over a long period.
- **Procedural Intervention:** Procedures like kyphoplasty are minimally invasive, stabilize the fracture, alleviate pain, and can be performed in the office setting in less than an hour. These procedures involve injecting bone cement into the fractured vertebra to restore its height, stabilize the fracture, and relieve pain.

**Osteoporosis Management:** Treating the underlying osteoporosis is crucial to prevent further fractures. This can involve medications, dietary changes, and lifestyle modifications to strengthen bones.

## Prevention and Awareness

Prevention of VCFs involves managing osteoporosis and reducing fall risks, especially in the elderly. Regular bone density tests, calcium and vitamin D supplementation, and exercises to improve strength and balance are essential preventive measures.

## Conclusion

Vertebral compression fractures significantly impact an individual's health, leading to chronic pain, physical deformity, and a decline in mental well-being. These fractures also pose a significant economic burden. Effective management involves not only treating the fracture with minimally invasive kyphoplasty but also addressing the underlying causes, such as osteoporosis, to prevent future fractures. Raising awareness about VCFs, their impact, and the importance of preventive measures is crucial for improving patient outcomes and quality of life.

The *Compression Fracture Clinic*, a service of Apex Brain & Spine, was specifically created and designed for the specialized care and treatment of vertebral compression fractures. Focused on minimally-invasive kyphoplasty, the Compression Fracture Clinic is certified and licensed by the Florida Department of Health. Patients are able to come into a comfortable office setting, have their fracture treated while under moderate sedation, recover in a private room, and go home within an hour of the procedure being completed. To learn more or to schedule an appointment for you or your loved one with a compression fracture, call 239-422-2739.



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# Ten Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

## Take control of the holidays

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

## Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- 2. Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious, or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups, social media sites, or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship.

If you're feeling stressed during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call, or a video chat. Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.



**3. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails, or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.

**4. Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

**5. Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

**6. Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends, and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.

**7. Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

**8. Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese, or drinks. Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and limit alcohol.

**9. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing, and restoring inner calm.

**10. Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or mental health professional.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of a mood disorder, there is help in SWFL. Dr. Richard Capiola, MD is a Board Certified Psychiatrist with specialty certifications in addiction and forensic psychiatry with over 32 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1990. Be sure to call ahead with Dr. Capiola to book an appointment toady 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.



# MALE ANDROPAUSE:

## How to Increase Your Testosterone Levels

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

**A**s men age, they undergo a natural and gradual process known as male andropause, which encompasses the physiological changes associated with a decline in testosterone levels. This transformative phase typically manifests in the late 40s or early 50s and brings about a range of symptoms that can impact various aspects of life. A revolutionary base, **Atrevis® Gel**, which is only available from PCCA-member compounding pharmacies, has been designed, studied, and proven to facilitate the effective transdermal delivery of testosterone back into the body. By understanding the nuances of andropause and the role of innovative solutions like **Atrevis® Gel**, individuals navigating this phase can make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

### UNDERSTANDING MALE ANDROPAUSE

The physical and mental manifestations of male andropause are multifaceted, reflecting the intricate interplay between hormonal shifts and overall well-being. Understanding these symptoms is pivotal for individuals navigating this phase of life, allowing them to recognize and address the challenges that may arise.

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- **Fatigue:** The persistent feeling of fatigue is a common companion during andropause. Testosterone, a key player in energy regulation, experiences a decline, leaving men with diminished vitality. Everyday tasks that were once routine may become more demanding, underscoring the need for proactive health management.

- **Reduced Libido:** Andropause often introduces a decline in sexual desire and performance. The intricate relationship between testosterone and libido underscores the impact hormonal changes can have on intimate relationships. Addressing these changes may involve a comprehensive approach that includes open communication with partners and exploring potential therapeutic options.

- **Changes in Body Composition:** Testosterone's role in maintaining muscle mass and regulating fat distribution is significant. As levels decline, men may observe changes in body composition, such as increased body fat and decreased muscle mass. This shift affects physical appearance and can affect overall health and mobility.

### MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT

- **Mood Swings:** Fluctuations in hormone levels, particularly testosterone, can contribute to mood swings

and irritability. The emotional toll extends beyond the individual experiencing andropause, affecting relationships with family and friends. Recognizing these mood changes as potential symptoms of hormonal shifts is a crucial step in seeking appropriate support and interventions.

- **Cognitive Changes:** Some men may notice subtle cognitive changes during andropause, including difficulties with concentration and memory. While these changes may not be as pronounced as those associated with other conditions, they can impact daily life and productivity. Strategies for cognitive support, including lifestyle adjustments and mental exercises, may be considered.

- **Sleep Disturbances:** Disruptions in sleep patterns are another facet of andropause. Difficulties falling or staying asleep contribute to fatigue and daytime drowsiness, exacerbating overall well-being. Addressing sleep hygiene and discussing sleep-related concerns with healthcare professionals can be essential in managing these challenges.

### HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY WITH ATREVIS GEL

When considering hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for managing male andropause, it's crucial to highlight that **Atrevis Gel**, a cutting-edge solution, is exclusively available through PCCA (Professional Compounding Centers of America) licensed compounding pharmacies. PCCA is an international company that supplies the highest quality chemicals, bases, and equipment. This ensures that individuals seeking **Atrevis Gel** can rely on the expertise of licensed compounding pharmacies to provide a tailored and high-quality solution.

In addition to innovative treatments like **Atrevis Gel**, some complementary approaches and supplements may enhance the effectiveness of hormone replacement therapy:

### SUPPLEMENTS AND LIFESTYLE FACTORS

**Zinc and EGCG (from Green Tea):**

- **Zinc:** This essential mineral is crucial for testosterone synthesis. Ensuring an adequate zinc intake supports the body's ability to produce testosterone.

- **EGCG (Epigallocatechin Gallate):** Found in green tea, EGCG may help decrease the conversion of testosterone to estrogen, supporting hormonal balance.

### VITAMIN B6

- Vitamin B6 plays a role in signaling the testicles to produce more testosterone. Including sufficient levels of Vitamin B6 in the diet or via supplements can contribute to hormonal health.

### VITAMIN C

- Higher doses of Vitamin C (at least 1000mg) have been associated with increased testosterone production. Including Vitamin C-rich foods or supplements can be beneficial.

### VITAMIN A

- Vitamin A contributes to reducing the production of estrogen and supports testosterone production. Ensuring an adequate intake of Vitamin A is integral to hormonal balance.

### POMEGRANATE JUICE

- Consuming 2 to 4 ounces of pomegranate juice daily has been linked to potential benefits in supporting testosterone levels.

### LIFESTYLE FACTORS ALSO CONTRIBUTE

Regular physical activity, including aerobic and strength-training exercises, has positively affected testosterone levels. Maintaining a healthy weight or achieving weight loss when necessary can positively impact hormonal balance. Excessive alcohol consumption can interfere with hormonal balance. Limiting alcohol intake is advisable for overall health and well-being. Including healthy fats in the diet, such as those from avocados, nuts, and olive oil, is crucial. Cholesterol from healthy fats is a precursor for producing sex hormones, including testosterone, therefore, avoiding overly restrictive "low-fat" diets is essential. Adequate cholesterol intake supports the synthesis of hormones critical for overall health.

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# MANAGING ECZEMA: Tips from a Physician's Assistant

By Christina Tremblay

**E**czema, or atopic dermatitis, is a chronic skin condition in which you develop patches of dry, red, and itchy skin.

Eczema often begins in childhood but can start at any age. The cause is not fully understood but thought to be a combination of genetics and environmental factors. Individuals with eczema tend to be overly sensitive to allergens and irritants in the environment which will trigger inflammation and itchy rashes on the skin. Here are some tips to avoid an eczema flare:

### Use gentle products:

An individual with eczema has very sensitive skin, meaning their skin cannot tolerate just any product. It is important to avoid harsh fragrances or irritating ingredients and opt for both skin care and laundry products labeled for sensitive skin or that indicate 'hypoallergenic' or fragrance free. Gentle brands such as Vanicream make skin care products that include moisturizers, shampoos, and soaps that are great for individuals with eczema due to being free of fragrance, dyes, and other chemicals.

My favorite detergent recommendation for sensitive skin is All Free Clear Liquid Laundry Detergent. Keep in mind that perfumes, colognes, essential oils, diffusers, plug-ins, and candles all contain fragrances that can also flare eczema. Although these are not necessarily applied directly to the skin, exposure in the environment can still trigger an eczema flare.

### Avoid hot showers:

Eczema often gets worse in the winter months due to the dryer air combined with using heat indoors. Heat from a hot shower will further dry out your skin and cause it to become redder and more irritated. It is best to avoid hot showers and instead use lukewarm water and shower less frequently.

### Moisturize, moisturize, moisturize:

To keep your skin from drying out further, the best time to moisturize your skin is directly out of the shower. Rather than drying off completely, it is best to apply your moisturizer while your skin is still damp. This will help to lock in the moisture. I recommend using a cream over a lotion as creams have a thicker consistency and are more hydrating. Both Cerave and La Roche Posay offer moisturizing creams that are great for this.

Finally, remember that our bodies undergo changes over time. Patients often express using familiar products and claiming, "nothing has changed," yet experiencing eczema flares. This phenomenon occurs because, even if the products remain constant, our bodies and skin evolve with each birthday we are lucky to have (aka age)!

## Christina Tremblay, PA-C




*Christina Tremblay, PA-C, was born and raised in Orlando. She attended University of Miami on a scholarship, studying biomedical engineering. Christina went on to graduate cum laude with her bachelor of science in biology from University of Central Florida. Prior to PA school, she acquired experience in pediatric and adult emergency medicine at NCH North Naples and Downtown hospitals.*


*Christina attended PA school at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. During her graduate studies, she authored and presented research on melanoma and the importance of patient education and screening. Christina was twice awarded the Chancellor's Scholarship and graduated with honors in master of medical science, physician assistant.*

*Personally trained by Dr. Daniel Wasserman, Christina specializes in general dermatology for all age groups. She emphasizes educating her patients and listening to their individual needs to provide personalized treatment. Christina is passionate about treating skin cancer, acne, rosacea, rashes, and psoriasis. Due to her previous struggle with skin conditions, Christina is particularly dedicated to enhancing how her patients look and feel about themselves. In her free time, Christina enjoys weightlifting, traveling, playing piano, and spending time with her family.*

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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE MAGNYM/BOCOX PROCEDURE?

By Dr. Carolina Young

**E**rectile dysfunction (ED) is a prevalent condition that can significantly impact a man's physical and emotional well-being, as well as intimate relationships. In the ever-evolving landscape of medical science, innovative solutions such as the Magnym procedure have emerged, incorporating the use of neuromodulators to address the complex neural aspects of ED. This groundbreaking approach offers a new frontier in the quest to restore sexual function and enhance overall quality of life.



## Understanding Erectile Dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction, the persistent inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse, can result from a myriad of factors. These include age, chronic health conditions, psychological issues, and lifestyle factors such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. The complexity of ED often involves both vascular and neural components, requiring a multifaceted approach for effective treatment.

## How does the Magnym procedure work?

This treatment is so effective because it uses a neuromodulator to relax the specific muscles that play a part in causing ED. For example, Botox is a neuromodulator that, when injected into the muscle, relaxes them thanks to an active ingredient that blocks the communication between the nerve signals and the muscles.

When used during the Magnym Procedure, the neuromodulator addresses chronic retraction by relaxing the muscles within the penis responsible for flaccidity to enhance its size and length.

## An Innovative Way to Utilize Neuromodulators

Additionally, the use of neuromodulators as the primary method of treatment can also improve sexual function. Neuromodulators deliver more

blood flow to the penis, which helps not only enhance but prolong an erection. Studies have shown that patients who used this treatment to address cosmetic concerns and erectile dysfunction also experienced improved sexual function long-term.

During the treatment, neuromodulators are delivered to some specific areas of the penis to relax the muscles that are directly responsible for retraction. In doing so, the neuromodulators will inhibit that contraction which helps reduce retraction and make the penis look bigger and longer when flaccid.

## What results can be expected from the Magnym procedure?

Once a patient undergoes this treatment, he can expect an improvement in both sexual performance and in the appearance of the penis when not erect. It can also help address premature ejaculation in addition to erectile dysfunction. It's important to note that while this treatment does increase the length and girth of a flaccid penis and can improve overall function, it has no effect on the size or condition of the penis when erect.

## What are the benefits of the Magnym procedure?

This treatment uses the same active ingredient that is used to reduce wrinkles and lines on the face to help improve the appearance of a flaccid penis and treat ED. This innovative use of neuromodulators can help make a significant difference in a man's confidence on a daily basis. Plus, the results look completely natural. Treatments last anywhere from six to nine months, so only two to three treatments per year are needed to maintain the results.

## Orchidia Medical Group is Here to Help

At Orchidia Medical Group in Naples, FL, we know that erectile dysfunction is a common issue experienced by men. For this reason, we offer the Magnym Procedure to resolve this problem and help you feel more confident in every area of life. Your sexual health affects your life in many ways, so if there is an issue, it will affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Sexual dysfunction is a condition that spills over into every area of your life, so it's important that you take steps to resolve that condition, whatever it may be. Our experts can provide you with a safe, confidential, and relaxing environment in which you can seek out the treatment you need to improve your confidence and get back your self-esteem.

Let us help you realize your potential well-being and become the individual that you have long desired.

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# DEFENDING FRAGILE BEGINNINGS: RSV Infections in Newborns, the Crucial Role of Nirsevimab and Synagis, and Maternal Vaccines for a Safer Start

By Dr. Michel Saaloukeh - MD, FAAP, IBCLC

**R**espiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) poses a substantial risk to the health of newborns and infants, with premature infants being particularly vulnerable to its effects. Understanding the impact of RSV on these delicate lives is vital, and recent medical breakthroughs provide hope through preventive measures such as Nirsevimab (Beyfortus) and Synagis. Additionally, the administration of vaccines to pregnant mothers between 32 and 36 weeks of gestational age (GA) emerges as a proactive strategy to shield babies from RSV-related complications in their early months of life.

## The Menace of RSV in Newborns and Premature Infants

RSV is a pervasive respiratory virus that often causes mild symptoms in adults but can lead to severe respiratory distress in infants. Premature infants, born before completing the full term, face a higher risk of complications due to their underdeveloped immune and respiratory systems. RSV infections in these tiny warriors can result in bronchiolitis and pneumonia, putting their lives in jeopardy.

## Nirsevimab (Beyfortus) - A Revolutionary Shield

In the quest to protect premature infants from RSV, Nirsevimab emerges as a groundbreaking preventive measure. This long-acting antibody offers a paradigm shift in RSV prophylaxis. Administered as a single injection, Nirsevimab provides

extended protection against severe lower respiratory tract infections caused by RSV. Clinical trials have showcased its effectiveness in reducing the risk of RSV-associated complications, marking it as a promising advancement in safeguarding the health of premature infants.

## Synagis - A Tried and True Guardian

While Nirsevimab brings innovation to the forefront, Synagis has long been a stalwart in RSV prevention for premature infants. This antibody preparation is administered monthly during the RSV season, acting as a shield against the virus. Synagis has proven efficacy in reducing the severity of RSV-related illnesses, providing a well-established defense for premature infants during their most vulnerable period.

## Maternal Vaccination: Paving the Way for Early Immunity

The defense against RSV doesn't start after birth; it begins before a baby takes its first breath. Pregnant mothers can play a pivotal role in protecting their infants by receiving RSV vaccinations between 32 and 36 weeks of gestational age. These vaccinations contribute to the transfer of protective antibodies from the mother to the unborn child, enhancing the infant's immune defenses against RSV during the crucial early months of life.

## A Comprehensive Approach to Early Protection

The synergy between Nirsevimab, Synagis, and maternal vaccinations creates a comprehensive approach to shield newborns from the potentially devastating effects of RSV. Nirsevimab's revolutionary single-dose administration offers prolonged protection, potentially reducing the need for frequent interventions. Synagis, with its established track record, continues to be a reliable ally in the fight against RSV. Simultaneously, maternal vaccinations lay the groundwork for a robust immune system in infants right from the start.

In the evolving landscape of neonatal care, the battle against RSV infections in newborns, especially premature infants, is witnessing significant strides. Nirsevimab and Synagis provide valuable tools in this fight, offering both immediate and extended protection. The inclusion of maternal vaccinations adds a proactive layer to the defense, underscoring the importance of prenatal care in shaping a resilient start for infants. As these preventive measures continue to advance, they promise a safer and healthier beginning for the most vulnerable members of our society.

*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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# Senior Driving: Navigating the Road Ahead

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

inevitably, there comes a time when roles reverse, and we find ourselves concerned about the well-being of our aging parents, particularly when it comes to their ability to drive safely. Addressing this issue is often as challenging as it is necessary. AARP, a trusted resource for individuals aged 50 and above, notes, "Driving is often linked to independence for seniors, but there may come a time when it's no longer safe." This acknowledgment is a crucial starting point for the conversation about senior driving. To help you discern whether your loved one may be reaching a point where driving is no longer safe, consider the following:

## Observe for Possible Changes

### • Changes in Driving Habits

Watch for alterations in your loved one's driving habits. Frequent close calls, increased traffic violations, unexplained scratches on the car, or a noticeable decline in overall driving skills may indicate a need for further evaluation.

### • Diminished Executive Functions

Executive functions are cognitive processes which enable us to regulate, control, and manage our thoughts and actions. These functions are critical for safe driving, as they involve decision-making, adapting to changes, and staying focused on the task at hand. As we age, executive functioning naturally declines, and in cases of dementia, this decline can be more pronounced. When executive functioning is diminished drivers' often lack the ability to make quick decisions on the road.

### • Memory Concerns

Memory lapses or forgetfulness can be red flags. If your loved one struggles to remember familiar routes, becomes disoriented while driving, or forgets the purpose of a trip, it's time to consider the impact on their driving abilities.

As you can imagine, any conversation about driving is not just about the act of driving or giving up a set of car keys. It is about addressing cognitive and physical changes that impact a person's ability to operate a vehicle safely. But it is also about a loss of independence for the driver

and additional responsibility for whomever will provide transportation. Realization may make broaching the subject even more daunting.

Approaching this conversation with empathy and sensitivity is crucial. Here are three ways to initiate the dialogue with your loved one.

### 1. Express Concerns from a Place of Love

Begin by expressing your love and concern for their well-being. Share specific instances that have raised worries about their safety on the road. Emphasize that the goal is to ensure their continued well-being and independence.

### 2. Highlight Alternative Transportation Options

Instead of framing the conversation solely around giving up driving, focus on alternative transportation options available in your family or your community. Highlight the convenience of rideshare services, public transportation, or family and friends willing to assist with transportation needs.

### 3. Involve a Neutral Third Party

Sometimes, having a professional guide the conversation can be beneficial. Consider involving a doctor, a driving specialist, or a member of the Beyond Driving with Dignity program to provide an objective assessment and recommendations.

### Introducing Beyond Driving with Dignity

Beyond Driving with Dignity is a program that offers a comprehensive approach to addressing concerns about senior driving. Developed by Matt Gurwell, a retired Ohio State Trooper, this program equips families with tools for early intervention, identifies signs of decline, and suggests lifestyle changes to enhance safety. This one-hour self-assessment program covers the role of dementia, memory, and executive functioning in older driver safety. It sheds light on the importance of addressing cognitive decline for the well-being of our senior drivers. Beyond Driving with Dignity aims to save lives while preserving the dignity and independence of older drivers.



**Should you Consider Beyond Driving with Dignity?** If you answer yes to more than one of these questions, please reach out to us for a free consultation.

- Do you live away from your loved-one and aren't completely sure of his or her ability to continue driving safely?
- Could you use some help and direction plotting the future of your loved one's safe driving career?
- Are you unsure of how to address the issue with your loved one, or confused about how to initiate "the talk"?
- Not sure what resources are available to you?
- Do you want a skilled and experienced professional to help bring or maintain calm and stability to what can be a very complex and sensitive family issue?
- Are you looking for a program that will help further your loved one's ability to remain a safe driver, and to continue to monitor their skills as they progress through the aging process?

Conversations about senior driving are delicate yet necessary. By recognizing signs of decline, understanding the impact of diminished executive functioning, and approaching the topic with empathy, you can navigate this transition with care and consideration. The Beyond Driving with Dignity program stands as a valuable resource, offering guidance and support to families as they address the complexities of senior driving.

For more information please call (239) 330-2133 or email [cynthia@seniorcareauthority.com](mailto:cynthia@seniorcareauthority.com).



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# The Matterhorn Method: Eliminating Pain and Inspiring Hope

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

**A**s we age, we are constantly fighting an uphill battle of pain and physical limitations. When our body starts to break down, we are unable to perform the activities that we want and the mental burden becomes as great as the physical one. Many patients bounce from doctor to doctor without ever getting to the root cause of their problem. This can be extremely frustrating and causes many to lose hope.

Naples based Matterhorn Fit, has a solution. 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 quickly, and prevent it from returning.

"Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods and are still in pain.. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are fast 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 fast 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. "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 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 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](http://matterhornfit.com) or call the office at  
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# What Is Macular Degeneration?

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

**A**ge-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a problem with your retina. It happens when a part of the retina called the macula is damaged. With AMD you lose your central vision. You cannot see fine details, whether you are looking at something close or far. But your peripheral (side) vision will still be normal. For instance, imagine you are looking at a clock with hands. With AMD, you might see the clock's numbers but not the hands.

AMD is very common. It is a leading cause of vision loss in people 50 years or older.

## Two Types of AMD

### Dry AMD

This form is quite common. About 80% (8 out of 10) of people who have AMD have the dry form. Dry AMD is when parts of the macula get thinner with age and tiny clumps of protein called drusen grow. You slowly lose central vision. There is no way to treat dry AMD yet.

### Wet AMD

This form is less common but much more serious. Wet AMD is when new, abnormal blood vessels grow under the retina. These vessels may leak blood or other fluids, causing scarring of the macula. You lose vision faster with wet AMD than with dry AMD.

Many people don't realize they have AMD until their vision is very blurry. This is why it is important to have regular visits to an ophthalmologist. He or she can look for early signs of AMD before you have any vision problems.

### Who Is at Risk for AMD?

You are more likely to develop AMD if you:

- eat a diet high in saturated fat (found in foods like meat, butter, and cheese)
- are overweight
- smoke cigarettes
- are over 50 years old
- have hypertension (high blood pressure)
- have a family history of AMD

Having heart disease is another risk factor for AMD, as is having high cholesterol levels. Caucasians (white people) also have an elevated risk of getting AMD.

### Age-Related Macular Degeneration Diagnosis

During an eye exam, your ophthalmologist may ask you to look at an Amsler grid. This grid helps you notice any blurry, distorted, or blank spots in your field of vision. Your ophthalmologist will also look inside your eye through a special lens. He or she can see if there are changes in the retina and macula.

Your ophthalmologist will put dilating eye drops in your eye to widen your pupil. This allows him or her to look through a special lens at the inside of your eye.

Optical coherence tomography (OCT) is another way to look closely at the retina. A machine scans the retina and provides very detailed images of the retina and macula.

Your doctor may do fluorescein angiography to see what is happening with your retina. Yellow dye (called fluorescein) is injected into a vein, usually in your arm. The dye travels through your blood vessels. A special camera takes photos of the retina as the dye travels throughout its blood vessels. This shows if abnormal new blood vessels are growing under the retina.

Optical coherence tomography angiography (OCTA) is another way to look closely at the blood vessels in and under the retina. This is like fluorescein angiography but does not use a dye.

## Age-Related Macular Degeneration Treatment

### Dry AMD treatment

Right now, there is no way to treat the dry form of AMD. However, people with lots of drusen or serious vision loss might benefit from taking a certain combination of nutritional supplements. A large study (AREDS and the later AREDS 2 study) found people with certain drusen may slow their dry AMD by taking these vitamins and minerals daily:

- Vitamin C (500 mg)
- Vitamin E (400 IU)
- Lutein (10 mg)
- Zeaxanthin (2 mg)
- Zinc (80 mg)
- Copper (2 mg)

Your ophthalmologist can tell you if vitamins and minerals are recommended for your dry AMD, as not all forms will benefit from the AREDS supplements. Beta carotene should not be used by smokers as it raised the risk of lung cancer.

### Eye-healthy foods

Dark leafy greens, yellow fruits and vegetables, fish, and a balanced, nutrient-rich diet have been shown beneficial for people with AMD.

### Wet AMD treatment

To help treat wet AMD, there are medications called anti-VEGF drugs. Anti-VEGF treatment helps reduce the number of abnormal blood vessels in your retina. It also slows any leaking from blood vessels. This medicine is delivered to your eye through a very slender needle.

Laser surgery may also be used to treat some types of wet AMD. Your eye surgeon shines a laser light beam on the abnormal blood vessels. This reduces the number of vessels and slows their leaking.

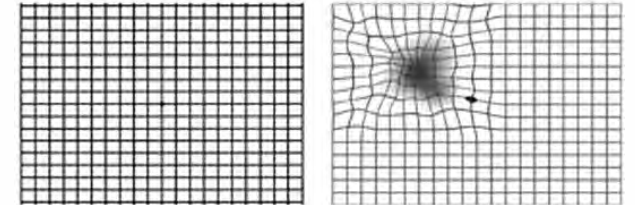
Source:  
<https://www.aaa.org/eye-health/diseases/amd-macular-degeneration>

## Making the Most of the Vision You Have

If you have AMD, you can learn how to make the most of your vision. Often you can still do many of your favorite things with special low vision tools. These can include different kinds of magnifying tools, handheld computers, electronic items and more.

Also, you can learn how to use your side vision to help you do things. A vision rehabilitation specialist can teach you how this works. They also can help you find many low vision support services and tools.

Ask your ophthalmologist to help you find a vision rehabilitation specialist in your area. The goal is to learn new ways to be as independent as possible.



### Here is how to use the Amsler grid:

- Keep the Amsler grid in a place where you see it every day. Many people keep an Amsler grid on their refrigerator door or on their bathroom mirror.
- In good light, look at the grid from about 12–15 inches away. Be sure to wear your reading glasses if you normally use them.
- Cover one eye. Look directly at the dot in the center of the grid with your uncovered eye. Notice if any of the lines look bent or wavy. See if any part of the grid looks blurry, dim, or out of shape.
- Now cover your other eye and test your vision this same way again.

Call your ophthalmologist right away if you notice that any lines or parts of the grid look wavy, blurry, or dim.

### Test Your Vision with the Amsler Grid

AMD causes your vision to change over time. You may not notice these changes when they happen. But you need to catch vision changes as soon as possible. Treating them early can help slow or stop further loss of sight.

You should use an Amsler grid every day to monitor your vision. One is below for you to use.

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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 Retina Group of Florida.

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

Retina Group of Florida 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.



# How Do Mycotoxins from Mold Spread?

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

## What are mycotoxins?

Many of you may not have heard about mycotoxins, so let's start at the beginning. Many common molds produce a byproduct called mycotoxins. As the name implies, these are toxic chemical molecules (non-living) produced by mold in a colony. For mold, they serve two purposes: a) as a waste product, similar to how human bodies produce waste, and b) the poison helps the mold thrive against competitors in their environment, such as bacteria.

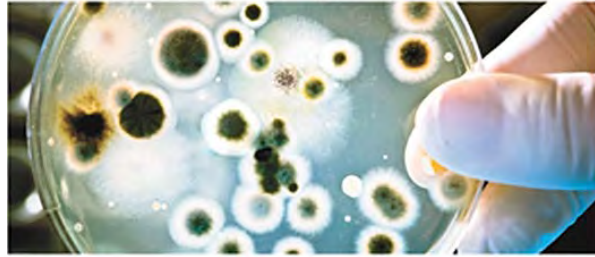
## But how do they spread and cause problems for humans?

They become aerosolized. Think about hairspray or spray paint—these are particles distributed by compressed air.

Mold in your home, even inside your walls, can be affected by air as well. Many things can create airflow in your home, including walking around, vacuuming, running a fan, temperature changes, storms, and running the AC or heater.

A mold colony releases spores, as well as many spore fragments and mycotoxins that can travel on these spores and fragments or even solo. Once released, mycotoxins can also float around and end up stuck to dust, dander, smoke, and other particles in your home.

Because mycotoxins are incredibly small, they end up everywhere and can easily travel through your HVAC system. They can lodge in your books, clothes,



appliance motors, and more. They can even travel with you if you move to a new house.

They cannot be 'killed,' but they can be cleaned or transformed into harmless compounds by things like enzyme formulations.

## How can you keep yourself safe?

### Evaluate your home:

1. Is your humidity controlled and always under 55-60%? Purchase several humidity meters and place them throughout your home to keep a regular check. During our Florida cooler months, the HVAC may not run as much, and that is the main vehicle that dehumidifies our home.
2. Do you see any visible mold? Mold in our shower is common, but if you see mold on drywall or furniture, then you need to be concerned. Mold is microscopic, and by the time you see a 1" square, it contains millions of spores.
3. Clean your home regularly. Mold loves to feed off dust.

4. Check for leaks under sinks and around the house. Mold starts to form colonies between 48-72 hours.

5. Living in Florida, I personally do not have any raw wood, wicker baskets, wreaths, or rattan furniture—mold loves it.

This is not an exhaustive list but a few items to keep in mind. If you have had previous mold remediation but still have possible health issues, it might be mycotoxins still lurking around. Traditional mold remediation (biological remediation) does not address the remediation of mycotoxins (chemical remediation). Very few companies address both mold and mycotoxins.

*If you need more information, please reach out to [info@americanmoldexperts.com](mailto:info@americanmoldexperts.com) or visit [www.AMEswfl.com](http://www.AMEswfl.com).*

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## Retinal Conditions and Diseases We Treat

Retinal diseases are often silent. There is usually no pain, no redness and no tearing associated with most retinal diseases. The paucity of symptoms can delay diagnosis and threaten your vision. Early detection is the key to preserve vision.

- Macular Degeneration
- Retina Detachment, Holes & Tears
- Flashes and Floaters
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Macular Holes and Puckers

## Is Your Home Making You Sick?

- **Mold** is microscopic. By the time you see it, a 1 inch square has over a million spores!
- **Mold** produces a by-product called **MYCOTOXINS**, a light-weight vapor molecule that easily travels through your HVAC, is easily inhaled and absorbed through your skin.
- It is well known that mold and **MYCOTOXINS** cause health issues.
- A water issue - even years earlier - could still be haunting your home.

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needs to be removed."

# 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.*

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# PROMOTING COMFORT AND SUSTAINABILITY: Bidets as a Game-Changer for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness

In a world where health conditions like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis affect millions, raising awareness is crucial. Beyond medical treatments and support, simple changes in daily habits can make a significant difference. Enter bidets – a solution that not only aids those with inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) but also promotes sustainability and well-being for everyone.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic inflammatory conditions that affect the digestive tract, causing symptoms like abdominal pain, diarrhea, and fatigue. Individuals battling these conditions often endure the discomfort of frequent restroom visits, exacerbating the irritation caused by toilet paper. This is where bidets emerge as unsung heroes, offering a gentle and effective alternative.

By reducing reliance on traditional toilet paper, bidets alleviate the risk of irritation and discomfort associated with Crohn's and colitis. The gentle cleansing stream of water not only provides relief but also promotes better hygiene, crucial for those with compromised immune systems. This simple yet impactful shift can significantly improve the quality of life for individuals managing these challenging conditions.

However, the benefits of bidets extend far beyond the realm of IBD. Embracing bidet usage introduces a sustainable approach to personal hygiene by



drastically reducing toilet paper consumption. With environmental concerns at the forefront of global conversations, bidets contribute to a greener planet by cutting down on the vast amounts of paper products used daily.

The environmental impact of traditional toilet paper production is substantial, involving deforestation, water usage, and energy consumption. Bidets, on the other hand, require minimal resources – a small amount of water to generate a cleansing spray. By adopting bidet technology, individuals can actively participate in reducing their ecological footprint and promoting a more sustainable future.

Moreover, bidets cater to a broader audience by addressing common issues associated with traditional toilet paper use. Skin irritation, discomfort, and even allergic reactions are common problems for many, and bidets offer a gentle and efficient solution. The soothing water stream not only cleans but also refreshes, providing a more comfortable experience for everyone.

As we advocate for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness, it's essential to recognize the interconnectedness of health, sustainability, and personal well-being. Bidets symbolize a shift towards a more compassionate and eco-conscious approach to personal hygiene. By embracing this technology, we not only stand in solidarity with those facing the challenges of IBD but also contribute to a healthier, more sustainable world for everyone. Let's make bidets a symbol of awareness, comfort, and environmental responsibility – a small change that can have a profound impact on individuals and the planet alike.

### 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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# Taking the Emotions Out of Investing

By Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Wintrust Investments

**E**motions 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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# Navigating the Holidays: A Pet-Friendly Guide to Stress-Free Travel

The holiday season is a time of joy, family, and festivities. For many, it also means embarking on journeys to visit loved ones or explore new destinations. However, for pet owners, the excitement of holiday travel often comes with the added challenge of ensuring their furry friends have a safe and comfortable experience. In this guide, we'll explore tips and tricks to make holiday travel with pets a breeze.

## Plan Ahead for Pet-Friendly Accommodations

Before hitting the road, ensure your accommodations are pet-friendly. Many hotels and rental properties now cater to pet owners, offering amenities such as pet beds, food bowls, and even designated pet-friendly areas. Researching and booking in advance will help you find the perfect spot for both you and your pet.

## Familiarize Your Pet with Travel Gear

If your pet isn't accustomed to travel, introduce them to the experience gradually. Begin by letting them explore their carrier or travel crate in a calm environment. Reward positive behavior with treats to create a positive association. This preparation can reduce anxiety when it's time to hit the road.

## Keep Pets Comfortable During Transit

Whether you're traveling by car, plane, or train, prioritize your pet's comfort. Pack familiar items such as their favorite toys and blankets to create a sense

of familiarity. For longer journeys, schedule breaks to allow your pet to stretch their legs, hydrate, and relieve themselves.

## Update Identification and Microchip Information

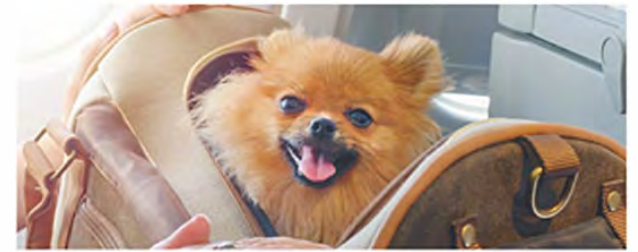
The hustle and bustle of holiday travel can increase the risk of pets getting lost. Ensure your pet's identification tags are up to date with your current contact information. Additionally, consider having your pet microchipped for an extra layer of security. In the event of separation, these measures can greatly improve the chances of a happy reunion.

## Be Mindful of Pet-Friendly Attractions

While planning your holiday itinerary, look for pet-friendly attractions and activities. Many parks, hiking trails, and even some festive events welcome well-behaved pets. Incorporating these into your plans ensures that your pet can share in the holiday joy and create lasting memories with the family.

## Prioritize Health and Safety

Before embarking on your journey, schedule a visit to the veterinarian. Ensure your pet is up-to-date on vaccinations and discuss any specific travel-related concerns. Pack a travel-sized pet first aid kit that includes necessary medications, a copy of their medical records, and contact information for a local veterinarian at your destination.



## Establish a Safe Haven at Your Destination

Upon reaching your holiday destination, set up a designated area for your pet. This provides a familiar space where they can retreat if the holiday festivities become overwhelming. Pack their favorite toys, bed, and a few comforts from home to help them feel secure.

Holiday travel with pets can be a delightful experience with the right preparation and considerations. By planning ahead, prioritizing your pet's comfort and safety, and seeking out pet-friendly accommodations and activities, you can create a memorable holiday season for both you and your four-legged companion.

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# WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

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

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

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

## HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

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

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

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

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

## FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

**Butter and margarine:** less than a tablespoon daily.

**Cheese:** less than one serving per week.

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

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

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

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

Phone: 239-776-1758

Email: bill.springer@chefsforseniors.com



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

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# How to **ENJOY** Having Your Home Professionally Cleaned

**Y**our 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 one of the best feelings around!

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# It's A Wonderful Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**E**very year around this time the old classic Christmas movies start coming on television. It is easy to start a conversation at work by simply asking, "So, what's your favorite Christmas movie?" Mine is Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Some of you might be able to relate to George Bailey this holiday season—lost, confused, stressed out, or at the end of your rope. Perhaps you are even thinking that it would be much easier to die than to go on living as you are.

Perhaps for you life isn't a joy right now. Maybe the debts are high and funds are low. It might even be difficult for you to even enjoy your family as you know you should. You may be wondering, "Is it really possible to live a wonderful life?"

I think the idea of a wonderful life is not that you can attain a wonderful life, but that it is an attitude that results from having certain issues settled in your life.

Truthfully, no one's life is wonderful—even Christ's life was filled with pain, hurt, loneliness, rejection, and sorrow. It is your attitude that determines how you "feel" about your life. You are the one responsible for settling the issues in your life and having an attitude of wonderment. So, what are the issues that need to be settled?

The first issue is to determine **what you are going to love**. To have a wonderful life, you start by having an attitude of love toward God and others. I say this first because where you choose to direct your love is going to affect every other area of your life. Love is a decision we make to place a high value on someone or something.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. Jesus died to prove how much He loved us. God desires more than anything else to have a loving relationship with His creation. We were created to love God and other people. Maybe this Christmas it would be good for you to find a person or family in need and help them by buying some food or gifts. If you want to feel loved... start by loving others.

The second issue to settle is... **how am I going to live?** To have a wonderful life, you need an attitude of joy. This attitude deals with how you look at life. Are you a positive person or a negative person? If you are a person with joy, it simply means that you are cheerful. Over 350 times the Bible talks about us having a spirit of joy or rejoicing.

Joy isn't a feeling that is produced only when good things happen. Joy is the attitude by which we look at the things that happen to us and then respond in a way that lets everyone know we are trusting in God's grace in spite of our circumstances. Remember the disciples in the Bible... they had many negative things happen to them, yet in spite of it all, they had joy.

I've heard it said that you don't feel your way into an action but rather act your way into a feeling. If you want to be a joyful person... start acting joyful around others and you will most likely begin to genuinely feel joyful.



The third issue to settle is...**who are you going to help?** If you want to have a wonderful life, you've got to get beyond serving yourself, and start serving others. Isn't that the lesson that George Bailey learned? His life was wonderful because of all the people he was able to help in his lifetime.

When Clarence showed him what life would have been like had he never been born he realized that he really was making a difference in the world! His life did have purpose! Mr. Potter only cared about making money. Violet only cared about pleasure. But George understood a greater truth: life is better when you are working to make other people's lives better.

Understanding these things can make all the difference in the world. You are not here to fall in love with money and things—you're here to love God. You're not here to point out all the things that are wrong with the world—you're here to spread the joy that God has placed in your heart. You're not here to serve yourself—you're here to serve God and others—thus making a huge difference in the world.



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