

S O U T H W E S T F L O R I D A ' S

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

January 2024

Collier Edition - Monthly

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## START THE NEW YEAR HEALTHY

**Mary Ann Campbell, M.D.**

Family Medicine

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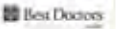
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# DR. MAT MOURITSEN, DMD HAS A PASSION FOR YOUR SMILE

**H**ave you ever seen a genuine smile that didn't catch your eye or make your heart happy? Dr. Mat Mouritsen has one of those smiles and says he is blessed to spend his days creating them. Health and Wellness Magazine interviews Dr. Mouritsen to learn about his passion, his love of technology, and why he thinks your entire body's overall health starts in your mouth.

**H&W Magazine: Dr. Mouritsen, tell the readers about your passion for dentistry.**

**Dr. Mouritsen:** My passion is changing people's lives through implementing clinical excellence. Using the latest technology to do the highest quality work is like completing a puzzle. All the pieces must fall into place to make the magic. At Park Family Dental, we have access to all the latest technology to do the work. Platelet Rich Fibrin in surgery and Cone Beam Computed Tomography (CBCT) to identify anatomical variations for implants and root canals.

**H&W Magazine: Platelets in Surgery? Explain to the reader's Doctor.**

**Dr. Mouritsen:** Platelet Rich Fibrin (PRF) is used in dental surgical procedures such as extractions and dental implants. PRF accelerates healing, decreasing surgical pain and swelling for dental implants and wisdom tooth extraction. PRF also improves the strength of bone's direct structural and functional connection to implants.

The PRF process is very simple. One vial of blood is drawn per surgical site immediately before your dental procedure, the same process as when blood is taken during a routine medical exam. The blood is then put into a centrifuge and separated into various layers, one being the PRF. The PRF layer is rich in fibrin, platelets, and growth factors.

The use of Platelet Rich Fibrin (PRF), protects the bony surgical site from infection, accelerates the healing process and decreases pain after a procedure. Platelet Rich Fibrin treatment is 100% natural without additives or preservatives. PRF is placed directly into the tooth extraction site and implant site. Without the PRF, dental extraction sites are commonly left to heal open. When PRF is placed into the extraction site, the PRF protects the site from infection and enriches the area with proteins that accelerate the healing process. In sites where implants are placed, the PRF occupies the space between the

extraction site and the dental implant. Placement of PRF in dental implant sites decreases the implant healing time and the chance of dental implant failure. PRF is better than sending a tooth removal patient home with an unfilled bony extraction socket or implant site.

**H&W Magazine: And the CBCT... how does this technology help you and your patients?**

**Dr. Mouritsen:** The CBCT systems dental professionals use rotates around the patient, capturing data using a cone-shaped X-ray beam. These data are used to reconstruct a three-dimensional (3D) image of the following regions of the patient's anatomy: dental (teeth); oral and maxillofacial region (mouth, jaw, and neck); and ears, nose, and throat ("ENT"). No more mushy molds and goop in trays forced into your mouth.

We also have our own lab in the building to customize our ceramics using the latest dental imaging. We even have our Master Ceramist, Lance Finch, who can often create your new smile in one day. Dental Technology is indeed a field exploding with patient care and comfort.

**H&W Magazine: Share with the readers a patient success story where you used these technologies.**

**Dr. Mouritsen:** Well, I have so many, but one that quickly comes to mind is a young man named Colby. Colby was in his twenties and had many health issues that contributed to his teeth having significant decay and crowding. I was able to clean up the decay, get his teeth healthy and give him a beautiful new smile. His health and self-confidence improved, and Colby's overall outlook on life was so changed that his career began to skyrocket. Changing a person's smile truly can change their life.

The health of your mouth is the key to your overall health in general. I just worked with a man in his sixties who was struggling with many other health problems due to badly infected teeth. We removed all the teeth and associated infections and placed implants throughout his mouth. He left THAT DAY with new teeth. He reports that his overall health has improved dramatically, and he can finally eat solid foods again. He even reports that he has stopped smoking based on his new desire to take better care of himself and his new teeth!

**"As a dentist, I help people smile, laugh, and enjoy food. These are three of life's most enjoyable activities for all of us. I love when I can help someone and make their world a better place."**

Dr. Mat Mouritsen considers himself a lifelong student of all things dental health-related and is constantly engaged and eager to learn. His passion for teaching and learning has been the driving force in his career. He worked as a mentor at the Spear Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. There, he helped other dentists learn and understand many advanced concepts in dentistry.



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

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# Comprehensive Advances in Breast Cancer:

## Empowering Prevention, Enhancing Survivorship, and Embracing Comprehensive Care

**B**reast cancer research has made significant strides, not only in cutting-edge treatments but also in the realms of prevention and survivorship. This holistic approach, coupled with comprehensive care offered by Magnolia Breast Centers, plays a pivotal role in reshaping the breast cancer landscape.

### Prevention: A Pillar of Progress

Recent advancements underscore the importance of prevention strategies in mitigating breast cancer risks. Technologies like the Breast Cancer Risk Calculator, funded by NCI, aid in estimating a woman's risk, allowing for personalized decisions regarding screening, especially among diverse populations.

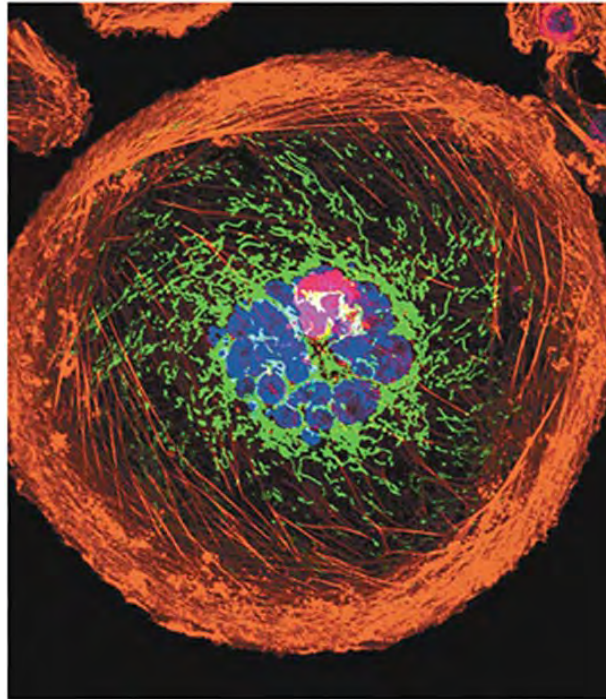
The emphasis on research programs like the Cancer Biomarkers Research Group and the Early Detection Research Network (EDRN) underscores the relentless pursuit of early detection biomarkers. These initiatives pave the way for proactive measures, enhancing early diagnosis, and potentially preventing the development of aggressive forms of breast cancer.

### Survivorship: Nurturing Beyond Treatment

Survivorship is a crucial aspect of breast cancer care. Studies backed by the Office of Cancer Survivorship delve into post-treatment challenges, ranging from physical and emotional well-being to cognitive health. This holistic approach addresses the diverse needs of survivors, including financial impacts, support for caregivers, and tackling racial disparities in healthcare access.

### Magnolia Breast Center: Pioneering Comprehensive Care

In the landscape of breast cancer care, Magnolia Breast Center stands out as a beacon of comprehensive care. As a comprehensive breast center, Magnolia Breast Center champions a unified approach, offering a continuum of care from prevention through survivorship. By integrating various aspects of breast health under one roof, Magnolia Breast Center ensures a seamless journey for patients, reducing fragmentation in healthcare.



A polyloid giant cancer cell (PGCC) from triple-negative breast cancer. Credit: National Cancer Institute

Their commitment to providing a range of self-assessment tools and resources for patients empowers individuals to take charge of their breast health. This proactive stance aligns with the evolving landscape of breast cancer care, emphasizing early detection and personalized preventive measures.

### Conclusion: Uniting Progress and Patient-Centric Care

The advances in breast cancer research are not solely confined to groundbreaking treatments but extend to encompassing prevention strategies and holistic survivorship care. Centers like Magnolia, with their comprehensive approach, epitomize the amalgamation of progress and patient-centric care, reshaping the narrative around breast cancer treatment.

In conclusion, the journey towards conquering breast cancer thrives not just on pioneering treatments but on a comprehensive, patient-focused continuum of care—empowering prevention, nurturing survivorship, and exemplifying excellence through centers like Magnolia Breast Center.

Source: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/breast/research>

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

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

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

Call our dedicated breast care center today at 239-758-PINK (7465) or contact us online and schedule an appointment with one of our experienced breast surgeons.



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# START THE NEW YEAR HEALTHY

It's that time of the year once again. Time to put 2023 behind us and look forward to 2024! We have all worked hard to make the holidays cheerful but now is the time to take a deep breath and put all your stress behind you and to think about a new year's resolution.

As we all know, New Years is the time to set personal and family goals and resolutions to better yourself and your loved ones. It's also the busiest time of year with the holidays and kids getting back to school. Most usually have a New Year's resolution related to dieting or exercising. "When you are mentally and physically at your best you will spread your happiness to those around you." Says Dr. Mary Ann Campbell, board certified in Family Medicine. There's no other better way to know how you can improve yourself than to ask your primary care doctor. Your doctor has all your health documents and can easily tell you how you can better yourself.

*Dr. Campbell recommends a few tips to focus on your family's health this New Year:*

**Eat dinner as a family without devices.** About 40% of American adults battle obesity and are overweight. However, it's not just a problem that adults face. In the year of 2020, close to 17% of children were also affected by obesity. Studies have found that device-less dinners gave families time to bond and increased communication which then made them less likely to become overweight. When families eat together at least three times per week, kids tend to eat more fruits and vegetables and less fried foods and sugary drinks.

**Snack better.** Buying and serving healthier foods and more fruits and vegetables is a great start. Letting your children help pick the foods or select produce at the store can get them excited to eat it. Also, be sure that the portion sizes are correct. While it might be easy to choose that for ourselves, a tablespoon per year old for young children is a good place to start. Some great choices are raisins, yogurt, fruit, reduced-fat cheese, baby carrots and peanut butter. Mom and dad can set a good example by putting down the junk food, too.

**Get enough sleep.** Some studies found that 30% of American children don't get enough sleep and unfortunately, some adults aren't the best example when it comes to shut-eye. The National Sleep



Foundation reports that more than 70% of adults don't get the recommended seven hours of sleep a night. For us, sleep deprivation might present as brain fog and forgetfulness, but it can also contribute to obesity, insulin resistance, and heart disease and high blood pressure risks. For kids, a lack of sleep can decrease their learning ability, increase tantrums and make them more accident-prone. Children need between eight and 17 hours of sleep per day, depending upon their age, so make sure sleep is a priority.

**Play together.** Exercise is no fun if it's something you dread doing. Instead, make it a family affair through play. Set specific goals for movement at least five days per week so it's easier to stick to your plan. If something arises, don't cancel—reschedule. Activities you can do together include walking, jumping rope, hula-hooping, playing putt-putt, riding your bikes or playing basketball. Stuck inside? Try yoga or roll up soft socks into balls and have a "snowball" fight.

These are all great family resolutions, but everyone should have a personal goal as well. Have a goal

to visit your Primary Care doctor and see what you can improve on to stay healthy and feel at your very best!

Dr. Campbell specializes in all aspects of primary care for adults and children of all ages. Her preventative health care services include general physical exams, women's health exams and child wellness exams. She treats type 2 diabetes, hypertension, thyroid disease, obesity, kidney disease, anxiety, depression, arthritic disorders and hyperlipidemia. She also treats hyperhidrosis with Botox as well as using Botox to treat chronic migraines as well as using Botox and dermal fillers to treat the effects of aging.



**Start the year right and schedule your annual wellness exam with Dr. Campbell!**

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<https://www.physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com/doctors-providers/campbell-mary-ann-md-9411>





# BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE NEW YEAR:

## The Undeniable Benefits of Strength Training Over Cardiovascular Exercise

By Theresa Vergo, PA-C

As the New Year dawns, a myriad of resolutions are forged, each person aspiring to shape their future self with renewed vigor. Among the multitude of goals, a fervent debate arises on the most effective path to physical transformation: the timeless rivalry between strength training and cardiovascular exercise. While both offer distinct benefits, the resolute enthusiast often finds themselves drawn towards the iron and resistance, advocating the superiority of strength training over the rhythmic beat of cardio. In this quest for self-improvement, the clanging of weights becomes a resounding anthem, signaling not just the pursuit of physical prowess, but also a belief in the transformative power that lies within the realms of muscle and might. The New Year unfolds as a canvas, and for those who champion the supremacy of strength training, the brushstrokes of change are etched with resilience, determination, and the promise of a robust, sculpted future.

In the realm of fitness, the perennial debate between cardiovascular exercise and strength training has been ongoing. While cardio workouts undeniably have their merits, an increasing body of evidence supports the notion that strength training holds unique and substantial advantages. In this article, we delve into the reasons why incorporating strength training into your fitness routine may be the key to unlocking a healthier and more resilient body.

### Building Lean Muscle Mass

One of the fundamental benefits of strength training lies in its ability to build lean muscle mass. Contrary to common misconceptions, strength training does not equate to bulky muscles; instead, it contributes to a sculpted and toned physique. The website The Healthy Back Bag emphasizes this point, stating that "strength training helps to build muscle, which burns more calories at rest than fat does." This increased muscle mass can lead to a higher basal metabolic rate (BMR), promoting more efficient calorie expenditure even when at rest.

### Improved Metabolic Health

Cardiovascular exercise primarily focuses on burning calories during the workout itself, whereas



strength training has a more lasting impact on metabolic health. A study published in the journal Obesity found that regular strength training significantly improves insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism. This is particularly relevant in the context of preventing and managing conditions like type 2 diabetes, making strength training a valuable ally in the fight against metabolic disorders.

One study that is cited on the website, Healthline, measured participants' resting metabolisms during 24 weeks of weight training. In men, weight training led to a 9% increase in resting metabolism. The effects in women were smaller, yet still showed an increase of almost 4%.

### Enhanced Fat Burning

The belief that cardio is the ultimate fat-burning exercise has been challenged by research highlighting the effectiveness of strength training in promoting fat loss. According to The Healthy Back Bag, "Cardio doesn't do a lot to help you burn more calories at rest, whereas strength training does." Engaging in resistance exercises elevates your post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC), commonly known as the afterburn effect. This means that the body continues to burn calories at an increased rate even after the strength training session has concluded, making it an efficient strategy for long-term fat loss.

### Protecting Bone Health

While cardio certainly has its cardiovascular benefits, it often falls short in terms of promoting bone health. Strength training, on the other hand, plays a crucial role in enhancing bone density. Weight-bearing exercises stimulate the production

of osteoblasts, the cells responsible for bone formation. This becomes increasingly important as we age, as maintaining strong bones helps prevent fractures and osteoporosis.

In the ongoing debate between cardio and strength training, the evidence strongly suggests that the latter offers a multitude of benefits that extend beyond the physical realm. By incorporating strength training into your fitness routine, you not only build lean muscle mass, improve metabolic health, and enhance fat burning, but also safeguard your bone health. The bottom line is that a well-rounded approach that includes both cardio and strength training can offer a holistic and sustainable path to overall health and well-being. As we strive for resilience and longevity, let's not overlook the transformative power of strength training in achieving our fitness goals.

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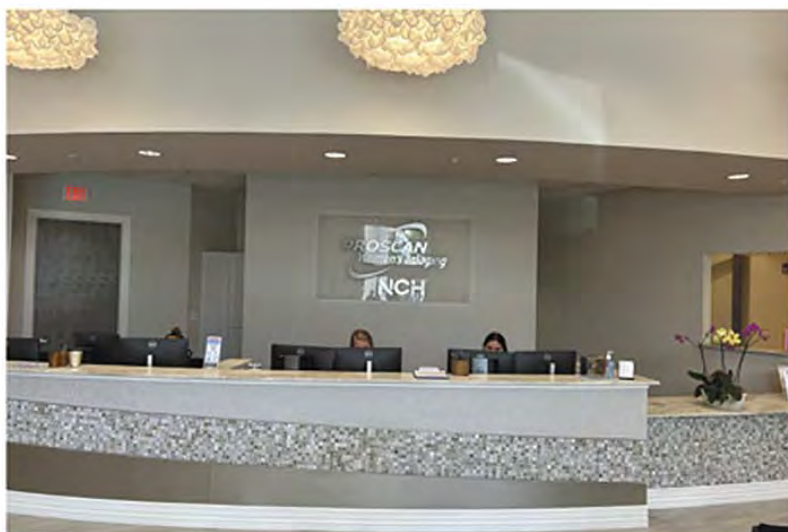
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#### Theresa Vergo, PA-C

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.

# Proscan's Newest State of the Art Women's Center Now Open



**Sergio Dromi, MD**

*Director of Women's Imaging*

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

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

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

**P**roscan Women's Imaging @ NCH has opened its newest facility to provide the most comprehensive imaging services to the women in our community. Our facility, located at 2320 Vanderbilt Beach Road, offers new state of the art equipment in a beautiful, serene setting with a team of compassionate professionals to care for the women in your life.

We are pleased to offer needed screening, diagnostic and multimodality biopsy services under one roof. Bone density, 3D mammography, breast ultrasound, genetic testing, MRI along with the corresponding biopsy capabilities are available here. We will also be offering contrast enhanced mammography in the very near future (at radiologist discretion) for those patients who are unable to have a breast MRI.

When imaging reveals the need for additional testing, we understand how concerning that can be. Our experienced, empathetic team members strive to answer all your questions and expedite any recommended follow up imaging or procedures. Our staff includes a Breast Nurse Navigator who is available to assist patients with items such as financial and community resources, educational information about their diagnosis and/ or procedures and avenues of support for patients and their loved ones. A support group for breast cancer patients is held monthly at our new facility. If you have questions or would like to register for the group, you may call 239-624-6648.

At Proscan Women's Imaging at NCH, our number one priority is caring for our patients. We know you have a choice where you receive your medical care and we appreciate the opportunity to provide you with an exceptional experience.

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

[PROSCAN.COM](http://PROSCAN.COM)



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the Naples Cardiac & Endovascular Center we deliver comprehensive heart and vascular care tailored to you.



Julian Javier, MD



Tracy Roth, MD

Dr. Julian J. Javier and Dr. Tracey Roth are Interventional Cardio-Vascular specialists with emphasis on peripheral arterial and venous disease and valvular heart problems. They are board certified in interventional cardiology and recognized nationally and internationally, authors of multiple articles in prestige peer review journals and book chapters.

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# THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

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

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

## What is the Ultimate Neuropathy Program?

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

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

## All neuropathies are not the same and require different programs.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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## What modalities are used for improvement?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# REDISCOVER YOUR YOUTH: THE POWER OF HAIR RESTORATION

In the pursuit of a more youthful appearance, there's a game-changer you don't want to miss: plant stem cell hair restoration at Tribe Med Spa. It's not just about getting your hair back; it's about gaining confidence and feeling youthful again.

### Understanding Plant Stem Cell Hair Restoration:

As we age, our hair tends to thin out. Enter plant stem cell hair restoration, a simple yet powerful solution offered at Tribe Med Spa. By using the regenerative abilities of plant stem cells, this treatment promotes thicker, denser hair, helping you look and feel younger.

### The Science Behind Plant Stem Cells:

Plant stem cells are like nature's repair crew. They can transform into different cell types, and when applied to hair, they wake up sleepy hair follicles, making your hair not only healthier but also fuller.

### Benefits of Plant Stem Cell Hair Restoration:

**1. Fuller Hair, More Confidence:** Plant stem cell treatments at Tribe Med Spa result in not just thicker but fuller hair. Picture that – a full head of hair can do wonders for your confidence, making you feel vibrant and youthful.

**2. Say Goodbye to Grays:** These treatments can even help bring back your natural hair color by reviving the cells responsible for it. Goodbye, grays; hello, natural vibrancy!

**3. Radiant Skin, Thanks to Collagen Boost:** Plant stem cells don't stop at the hair; they also stimulate collagen production, making your skin firmer and more elastic. It's a win-win for a youthful look!

*Tribe Med Spa isn't just a spa; it's your destination for confidence and youthfulness. With their expertise in plant stem cell hair restoration, each session is tailored just for you, ensuring the best results.*

### Conclusion:

Plant stem cell hair restoration is more than a treatment; it's a confidence booster. Imagine the joy of having fuller hair, looking, and feeling younger. Tribe Med Spa is your go-to place to turn this dream into reality. It's where science meets beauty, and you rediscover the confidence that comes with a full head of youthful hair.



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(6 TREATMENTS)

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# SHEDDING LIGHT ON NATIONAL GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

## UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING GLAUCOMA

**G**laucoma, often referred to as the "silent thief of sight," silently robs millions of individuals of their vision worldwide. January marks National Glaucoma Awareness Month, a crucial time to educate and raise awareness about this prevalent eye condition that affects over 70 million individuals worldwide.

Glaucoma is not just one eye disease but a group of conditions that damage the optic nerve, often caused by increased pressure within the eye. The danger lies in its asymptomatic nature during the early stages, gradually stealing peripheral vision and, if left undiagnosed and untreated, progressing to blindness.

This observance month aims to highlight the importance of regular eye check-ups, as early detection is fundamental in managing and preventing irreversible vision loss. Vision screenings and comprehensive eye exams can catch glaucoma before noticeable symptoms develop, allowing for timely intervention and treatment to preserve sight.

Understanding the risk factors is crucial. Age, family history, certain medical conditions like diabetes, and even race (African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are at higher risk) can contribute to an increased likelihood of developing glaucoma. However, anyone can be affected, making awareness and proactive eye care vital for everyone.

The two primary forms, open-angle and closed-angle glaucoma, present distinct mechanisms affecting the drainage of aqueous humor within the eye. Open-angle glaucoma involves resistance in the trabecular meshwork, leading to increased intraocular pressure. Conversely, closed-angle glaucoma results from blockages in both the uveoscleral drains and the trabecular meshwork, often due to an impaired iris.

Recognizing symptoms is crucial. While early-stage glaucoma may not manifest noticeable signs, eventual symptoms can include reduced vision, peripheral vision loss, and eye redness, particularly acute in closed-angle glaucoma cases. However, the absence of symptoms doesn't confirm the absence of the condition, emphasizing the necessity of regular eye exams.

Diagnosing glaucoma involves a comprehensive eye examination, including visual field tests, tonometry to measure intraocular pressure, and a dilated eye exam. Advanced techniques like optical coherence tomography aid in objectively assessing optic nerve fiber loss.

Treatment primarily aims at reducing intraocular pressure. Hypotensive eye drops, particularly prostaglandin analogs, serve as the frontline treatment, improving fluid drainage. Second-line drugs and procedures like selective laser trabeculoplasty or trabeculectomy are also employed to manage pressure and facilitate better drainage.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for glaucoma, underscoring the importance of early detection and consistent management. Lifetime monitoring remains crucial, but advancements in treatments, including laser procedures and surgeries, offer hope in mitigating its impact on vision loss.

Prevention is anchored in regular eye check-ups. Early detection drastically improves prognosis, making annual eye exams, especially for those over 40, an integral part of glaucoma prevention.

While lifestyle adjustments may offer some protection, they aren't foolproof against glaucoma. However, adopting a healthy lifestyle in conjunction with regular eye screenings serves as a proactive approach in managing this sight-threatening condition.

In conclusion, understanding the differences between open-angle and closed-angle glaucoma, recognizing their symptoms, and engaging in routine eye exams are fundamental in managing this condition and preserving vision health. As advancements continue, early diagnosis and vigilant management remain the best defense against the progression of glaucoma-induced vision impairment.

Remember, sight is a precious gift, and preserving it starts with awareness and regular eye examinations. Let's shine a light on glaucoma this January and beyond, ensuring that sight-saving knowledge reaches everyone, everywhere.



**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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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WITH UPPER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS ON THE RISE

If it seems like more people are getting sick each day – it's not your imagination. Diagnosis of flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are on the rise across the U.S with the CDC trackers showing flu activity to be increasing here in Florida and more people visiting the emergency department or needing hospitalizations for treatment of severe symptoms.

If you are one of those who has gotten ill, the symptoms for each condition are similar and it's important to know when they signal a medical emergency. All can cause mild to severe illness and sometimes lead to complications such as pneumonia or sepsis which can be life-threatening.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, emergency warning signs of flu and COVID-19 include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen and confusion. Additional dangerous flu symptoms include persistent dizziness, inability to arouse, seizures, not urinating, severe muscle pain, severe weakness or unsteadiness, fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen and worsening of chronic medical conditions. If you or someone you know have any of these symptoms, seek emergency medical care immediately.

To protect yourself and others, there's still time to get vaccinated for flu, COVID-19 and RSV, and it is safe to get them at the same time. Other steps to reduce the spread of respiratory diseases during this busy season are:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick with respiratory symptoms, except to get medical care.



“The holidays can bring us together in more social settings than the rest of the year, making them a perfect breeding ground for illness,” said Dr. Rodolfo Fernandez, a Primary Care Physician with Physicians Regional Medical Group. “Vaccination is always a key way to lessen your chance of illness, but common sense also remains important. Stay home if you are not feeling well as illness is the gift no one wants.”

Those at the highest risk of serious illness from flu or COVID include babies and toddlers, the elderly, pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions, including asthma, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

People ages 60 years and older should talk to their healthcare provider about whether RSV vaccination is right for them as well. Older adults, adults with chronic heart or lung disease, with weakened

immune systems or living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities are at the highest risk for RSV illness.

Dr. Fernandez continues, “your physician can test to determine whether the flu, COVID-19 or RSV virus is causing your illness and what treatment will be beneficial. Seek medical care immediately if you are experiencing extreme symptoms such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or confusion.”



If you need to make an appointment with a primary care provider, call (239) 920-4503 or visit <https://www.physiciansregionalmedicalgroup.com/doctors-providers/fernandez-rodolfo-md--8929>

# One Dozen Holistic Hacks for Managing Common Winter Viruses

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

If you are afflicted with a viral cold or even a flu – the illness is going to run its course, and the best you can do is to allow your body to eliminate the virus naturally and efficiently (i.e. poop it out, pee it out and sweat it out). This means that you should create ideal conditions for your organ systems to function. Here are some things I commonly recommend:

1. Eliminate alcohol while you are sick.
2. Get a good night sleep and allow yourself to curl up in bed in the middle of the day if you feel like it.
3. Hydrate generously
4. Make fresh organic chicken soup. Sip on this warm soup throughout the day, here and there.
5. If you have a sore throat – try this traditional Eastern European herbal gargling solution. The ingredients are: 1 tablespoon of eucalyptus, 1 tablespoon of calendula, 1 tablespoon of sage, 1/2 tablespoon of chamomile and 1/2 tablespoon of licorice – all dried herbs from a reputable herbal apothecary. To do: use any glass, ceramic or enamel-coated container which has a lid/cover. Pre-mix all the ingredients in a small cup. Take one tablespoon of this mix, place it in the above-mentioned container, and pour one cup of boiling water over it. After stirring well, cover tightly and wrap with a thick towel to preserve the heat. Steep for 40 minutes. Cover small strainer with a gauze, place it over a container with herbal infusion, and strain the gargle mixture into a mug. Gargle and spit 4 times/day. Note: you must make a new gargle mix every time you gargle. I find this to be an effective natural remedy, which you can alternate with sipping on organic chicken soup.
6. Another great gargle has ¼ teaspoon of sea salt and ¼ teaspoon of baking soda – both dissolved in a glass of lukewarm water – just gargle and spit. Try alternating this with the herbal gargle #5.



7. If you have a cold without a fever but with a nasal congestion and a sinus pain – try this ancient Eastern European foot bath. To do: fill up a medium to a large foot bassinet with hot water. Make sure not to burn yourself but make it sufficiently hot, yet still comfortable. Dissolve one heaping tablespoon of dry mustard in the water and slowly lower your feet in – make sure your ankles are fully submerged. Close your eyes and relax for 15 minutes. Rinse your feet under warm/hot running water, dry them thoroughly, put warm cotton or wool socks on, and get a good night sleep.
8. For any cold or flu-related cough or sore throat, try Gogol-Mogol – a popular folk remedy in Eastern Europe. To do: Bring eight ounces of whole organic milk to a boil in a ceramic or a glass container. Stir in one uncooked egg yolk. Add 1/3 teaspoon of organic ghee and 1 teaspoon of organic honey. Stir vigorously. Swallow one teaspoon of Gogol-Mogol at a time, slowly, over several minutes. This concoction coats the back of the throat, calms the cough, and improves the hoarseness.
9. If you have a fever and do not feel like taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen, try this ancient remedy first: Add one teaspoon of raspberry preserves to a cup of hot black tea. Let it cool slightly to a comfortable temperature. Sip slowly. This provides a great fever-lowering effect for many people.

10. If you have an upper respiratory infection with a cough, you can ask a friend or a family member to paint a traditional Eastern European therapeutic iodine grid on your upper back (between the scapulae). Iodine grid can be painted by dipping a Q-tip into any iodine solution and painting a crisscross grid on the upper back, with 20 horizontal lines running in parallel ¼ inch from each other and 10-15 vertical lines crossing over them at a ¼ inch distance from each other. The iodine grid is painted once at the onset of the respiratory virus and can soak into the skin over the course of several days.
11. Additionally, there are some good homeopathic remedies I recommend keeping at home: Hevert Cough, Hevert Cold and Flu, and Hevert Sinusitis. These can be combined with any and all the above-mentioned home remedies, as necessary. Hevert homeopathic remedies are available at <https://us.fullscript.com/welcome/skogan>
12. Finally, do not underestimate the benefits of a sense of humor and positive attitude. Good mood and laughter are huge immune boosters. On the other hand, people who are depressed have much higher rates of seasonal infections. Keep in mind that you should always discuss your health with your doctor and let him or her examine and diagnose you properly. Have a healthy and joyful winter season!



**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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# EMBRACING BLUE ZONE PRINCIPLES FOR AN ACTIVE START TO THE YEAR

By Jenny Bradley

**A**s we step into the new year, there's no better time to embark on a journey toward an active and vibrant life. Drawing inspiration from the Blue Zones—geographic regions known for the remarkable health and longevity of their population—there are several lifestyle changes we can adopt to make wellness more than just a New Year's resolution but a way of life.

**Move Naturally:** In Blue Zones, people engage in daily activities that involve natural movement. From gardening to walking, these individuals seamlessly integrate physical activity into their lives.

At The Carlisle Naples, an active retirement community, residents have numerous opportunities to embrace natural movement, complemented by a variety of structured exercise classes. For example, strategically located amenities such as the pool, restaurant, library, and business center within The Carlisle contribute to the seamless integration of natural movement into residents' daily routines. Live entertainment and music also draw residents to the dance floor, providing a fun, upbeat way to move naturally.

**Purposeful Living:** Find and cultivate a sense of purpose in your daily activities. Whether volunteering, pursuing a hobby or contributing to your community, having a clear purpose can motivate you to stay active.

"It's so important to have a strong sense of "why" in your life," said The Carlisle's Zest Director Marcia Aldana. "Our holistic approach to wellness appeals to residents' mind, body and spirit. Whether a resident is discovering a new hobby or volunteering to help a local charity, our Zest initiatives are designed to improve residents' quality of life."

**Stress Reduction:** Chronic stress can take a toll on your well-being. Practice stress-reducing techniques such as mindfulness, meditation or yoga. In Blue Zones, regular social interactions and close-knit communities contribute to stress reduction. Prioritize building meaningful connections with friends and family.

Senior living communities offer a maintenance-free lifestyle, ensuring residents can eliminate the stress of homeownership such as lawn care, cooking, and cleaning. Without day-to-day household responsibilities, residents can spend each day as they wish. The Carlisle, for example, provides weekly housekeeping and flat linen services and delicious dining with daily, chef-prepared specials. Fitness classes – linked to reduced stress – are also conveniently available onsite.

**Plant-Based Nutrition:** Embrace a predominantly plant-based diet rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Blue Zone residents often follow a similar diet, contributing to their overall health and longevity. Prioritize colorful, nutrient-dense foods to fuel your active lifestyle.

At The Carlisle, an executive chef ensures residents have well-balanced and nutritious options, including fresh salads and an assortment of fruits and vegetables. The Carlisle also offers FreshZest, an initiative that encourages a plant-based, whole-food diet that has been shown to provide numerous health benefits and may even reverse some chronic ailments, particularly in older adults. FreshZest is part of the expansive dining choices available in the community's restaurant, The Carlisle Room.

**Social Engagement:** Surround yourself with a supportive community. Social connections play a vital role in maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle. Join local clubs, fitness groups or community events to foster meaningful relationships. The sense of belonging and accountability can keep you motivated to stay active.

A retirement community such as The Carlisle is the perfect place to expand one's social connections. Residents who may have been living alone or serving as a caretaker for an ill spouse find the camaraderie of being with others uplifting. It's unusual to have new friendships develop over a card game or through a shared former career. The Carlisle also hosts a variety of events, including a Newcomers' Block Party, to help get residents acclimated to the community and meet their neighbors.



"By adopting the Blue Zones principles and incorporating these practical tips into your life, you're not just starting the year off on the right note, you're embarking on a lifelong journey towards vitality and well-being," added Aldana. "At The Carlisle, wellness is at the heart of our community, and we encourage residents to embrace an active and purposeful lifestyle."

*Located at 6945 Carlisle Court in Naples, The Carlisle offers independent and assisted living lifestyles featuring spacious one-and two-bedroom residences, weekly housekeeping and flat linen services, basic cable TV, all utilities except telephone, and delicious dining with daily, chef-prepared specials. The community is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an important distinction that provides residents with the assurance that the highest standards of quality care, services and safeguards are maintained. For more information about the community, please call 239-221-0017 or visit [www.TheCarlisleNaples.com](http://www.TheCarlisleNaples.com).*



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# Knowledge is Power!

Educate yourself today for the resources you or someone you love may need tomorrow.

## EDUCATE - ENGAGE - PLAN

**A**re you proactive or reactive when planning for life's next chapters? When considering your options or a loved one's, it is essential to know the benefits of advance planning before a crisis occurs.

Aging can bring challenges, but being proactive by doing your homework in advance can make this process much smoother. Taking a proactive approach and not waiting until a crisis occurs, reduces stress for you and those that you love.

To help educate people about their many options, Seniors Blue Book is hosting its **12th Annual Preparing for Aging Symposia** on **January 25, 2024**, from 9am-3pm at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church (625 111th Ave N., Naples, 34108) and **February 21, 2024**, 9am-2pm at Marion Hall by Saint Cecilia (5698 Sunrise Dr., Fort Myers 33919).

At our upcoming symposia, aging seniors, their family and caregivers will enjoy a variety of educational panels from area experts and visit over 70 exhibitor tables with valuable information to share.

The day will consist of five panel discussions. Panel one, *Dotting Your I's and Crossing Your T's*, will feature D. Gates Wealth Management, AVOW Hospice, Palm Royale Funeral Home & Cemetery, Comfort Keepers and Safe Harbor Law Firm. Panel Two, *Preparing for a Move* will feature Taryn Cafiero with J.R. Wood Realty and Bruce Rosenblatt with Senior Housing Solutions. Panel Two, *Medicare / Medicaid 101* will feature Preferred Home Health Care, ProMedica Skilled Nursing, Arden Courts and Logical Insurance Solutions. Panel Three, our medical panel, will feature FYZICAL, Millennium Physician Group, Park Royal and Doctors Hearing. Panel Four, *Senior Living Options*, will feature Arbor Trace, The Carlisle, Aston Gardens, Terracina Grand and The Terraces.

**EVENT IS FREE and will feature a complimentary continental breakfast and delicious lunch - HOWEVER RSVP IS REQUIRED - 239-776-7353.**



Learn how you can make the best decisions to ensure comfort, safety and opportunities for enriched lifestyles. For example, come discover if your legal and financial affairs are set in place as you age, and if not, learn the right steps that need to be done! Or maybe you're at the point where you or a loved one may require outside assistance to help you age in your own home. Come and discover the many options available in our area, and what makes each one different. And who knows, maybe you'll discover that the best choice may be moving into one of the many beautiful senior housing communities in our area. No matter where you are in the aging process, our symposium is crafted specifically for you.



The goal of our annual symposia is so that in one day our elders, their families and caregivers can get answers they need, discover the best options available, and be set to age well!

**Please register early, space is limited. RSVP is required, call 239-776-7353.**



### What is Seniors Blue Book?

The Seniors Blue Book is a user-friendly resource offering educational articles and information about local aging services, senior housing and health-at-home options. We believe it is our responsibility to compile accurate information in a concise format and keep it current for all seniors and their families. We've been doing just that for more than 40 years by publishing this comprehensive senior directory used by professionals, seniors, their families and caregivers - often referred to as "My Senior Bible!" Our guides are free and can be found at more than 1,700 locations across Lee & Collier counties. You can request a free copy be direct mailed to you by calling 239-776-7353. Visit [www.SeniorsBlueBook.com](http://www.SeniorsBlueBook.com) to learn more.

Seniors Blue Book

For more symposium information and registration, please call 239-776-7353.

**What is Seniors Blue Book (SBB) University**

Aging, a natural part of life's journey, often brings with it a range of considerations and challenges. Being prepared and informed can significantly ease this transition. Seniors Blue Book recognizes the importance of proactive planning when it comes to aging gracefully and it offers a program called **Seniors Blue Book Universities** throughout all Southwest Florida. These events are **FREE** with a complementary lunch and held monthly at various locations.

**Why should you join?** Proactivity in planning for aging isn't solely about addressing imminent concerns; it's about creating a foundation for a smoother, more enriched journey through life's later chapters. Seniors Blue Book embodies this philosophy by offering a wealth of educational events year-round by esteemed local experts. These events cover a myriad of topics, from legal and financial considerations to healthcare options and senior living arrangements. Attendees will have the opportunity to absorb insights, ask questions, and get 1:1 time with the presenting experts (if needed).

Seniors Blue Book firmly believes that it's never too late—or too early—to equip oneself with knowledge. Whether you're planning for your own aging process or assisting a loved one on their journey, our educational events offer a free opportunity to gain insights that can transform the way you approach aging. What sets Seniors Blue Book Universities apart is their dedication to providing a diverse curriculum that covers a spectrum of topics crucial to navigating the aging process. From financial planning and legal considerations to healthcare options, lifestyle adjustments, and emotional well-being, each session is meticulously crafted to equip attendees with insights and tools for a smoother journey through life's later chapters.

Imagine the relief of knowing that you've taken steps to prepare, reducing stress not only for yourself but also for those you hold dear. Our educational series aren't just events; they're gateways to empowerment, offering tools and insights that pave the way for informed decisions and a more secure future.

What sets Seniors Blue Book Universities apart is the diverse curriculum that covers a spectrum of topics crucial to navigating the aging process. From financial planning and legal considerations to healthcare options, lifestyle adjustments, and emotional well-being, each session is meticulously planned to provide attendees with insights and tools for a smoother journey through life's later chapters. Not only curriculum, but the programs are accessibly and inclusive. Held at various locations across Southwest Florida every month (12 events a month on average), these free sessions invite seniors, their families, and caregivers to partake in a day of learning, engagement, and community building.

**By attending, you'll join a community of like-minded individuals—individuals dedicated to enhancing their understanding of aging, equipped with the knowledge to make informed choices.** It's more than a mere free event; it's a commitment to self-empowerment, a pledge to navigate the complexities of aging with confidence and grace.

Join Seniors Blue Book at our many Seniors Blue Book University Events, and discover how preparedness, education, and proactive planning can unlock a future filled with opportunities, comfort, and enriched lifestyles.

To learn more, please call us at 239-776-7353.  
 Or visit <https://www.SeniorsBlueBook.com/events>.  
 Or visit our exact calendar of SBBU events found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/seniors-blue-book-17207823442>.

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RESOURCES FOR AGING WELL



By Dr. Michael Shaffer

# Spinal Decompression Without Surgery

**S**pinal decompression is a therapeutic technique often employed to address certain spinal conditions and alleviate associated symptoms. It's essential to understand that the information provided here is for general informational purposes, and individual cases may vary. For personalized advice, consulting with a qualified healthcare professional is crucial.

Spinal decompression aims to relieve pressure on the spinal discs and nerves, which can occur due to various conditions such as herniated discs, degenerative disc disease, or spinal stenosis. The spine is composed of vertebrae separated by discs, which act as cushions and shock absorbers. When these discs become compressed, it can lead to pain, discomfort, and potential nerve compression.

The decompression process involves the use of a specialized decompression table. During a treatment, the patient is comfortably positioned on the table, and controlled decompressive forces are applied to the spine. This gentle pulling force is designed to create negative pressure within the discs, promoting the retraction of herniated or bulging material and facilitating the movement of nutrients, oxygen, and water into the affected discs.

The benefits of spinal decompression may include:

- 1. Pain Relief:** By reducing pressure on nerves and promoting the healing of damaged discs, patients often experience relief from pain and discomfort.
- 2. Improved Circulation:** Decompression helps enhance blood flow to the affected area, supplying essential nutrients for healing.
- 3. Increased Disc Height:** The negative pressure created during decompression may contribute to increased disc height, potentially alleviating pressure on nerves.
- 4. Enhanced Healing:** By creating an optimal environment for healing, spinal decompression supports the body's natural ability to repair and regenerate damaged tissues.

It's important to note that there may be contraindications to spinal decompression and, therefore, may not be indicated. Before considering spinal decompression, it's advisable to consult with a qualified

healthcare professional such as Dr. Michael Shaffer, a Chiropractic Physician, who can assess your medical history, perform a thorough examination, and provide personalized recommendations based on your unique situation.

## The Spinal Decompression Table

The HillDT spinal decompression table consists of an upper and lower body portion that moves independently.

Spinal decompression tables use computerized technology to create negative intradiscal pressure in the spine. Based on the history and exam/imaging findings, Dr. Shaffer would specify an appropriate protocol of decompression therapy that is best suited to the patient's needs. As the decompression table gently decompresses the spine, negative pressure is created within the spinal discs, which can result in the retraction or repositioning of the disc material, leading to pain relief. In addition, the lower pressure within the disc can cause an influx of healing nutrients to the disc to promote further relief even when the patient is not on the table.

During decompression therapy, the body may resist stretching, known as muscle guarding. The decompression table Dr. Shaffer utilizes has sensors known as actuators that can detect when the patient's muscles guard against the stretch. As a result, it continually monitors and readjusts the decompressive force ensuring maximum therapeutic benefit. Research has shown that the minimum therapeutic dosage is 20-24 decompression treatments.

A patient's initial visit will help determine whether he or she would be a good candidate for decompression therapy. An initial analysis will include reviewing the patient's history, including available imaging such as X-rays and, most importantly, MRI results. If the patient is a good candidate, the doctor will prescribe a decompression protocol for that specific patient and diagnosis.

Each spinal decompression treatment is approximately 20-30 minutes in duration. The patient is positioned on the table using a thoracic and pelvic harness during the session. For lumbar decompression, the lower portion of the body will move to



stretch and relax the spine gently based on computerized algorithms designed to maximize the decompression and minimize the body's resistance to that stretch. For decompression of cervical herniated discs, the upper portion of the body will move.

An advanced decompression table, such as the *HillDT Spinal Decompression Table* that Dr. Shaffer uses, will be able to store patient profiles and protocols so that for each session, once the patient is positioned on the table, a touch of the computer monitor will enact the correct protocol sequence.

## Specializing in Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression

*Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation.*

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

By Deborah Korpi, BGS, LMT, MMP

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

## The Perils of Poor Posture at the Beach:

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



BEFORE

AFTER

## The Benefits of Improved Posture:

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

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

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

## The Benefits of Deborah's Approach:

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

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

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

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

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# The Transformative Power of Massage in Alleviating Pain

As the New Year unfolds, many seek ways to embrace a healthier lifestyle, often overlooking the therapeutic benefits of massage in managing and alleviating pain. The practice of massage therapy transcends mere relaxation, offering a myriad of advantages, especially in tackling pain-related issues that persist from the previous year. Here's a comprehensive exploration of how incorporating massages into your routine can significantly enhance your well-being in the upcoming year.

**1. Relief from Chronic Pain:** Massage therapy, with its varied techniques and methods, serves as a non-invasive yet potent tool for addressing chronic pain. From muscle soreness to tension headaches, regular massages can alleviate discomfort by promoting blood flow, releasing muscle knots, and enhancing flexibility.

**2. Stress Reduction:** The correlation between stress and pain is undeniable. Massage not only targets physical pain but also aids in reducing stress levels. By triggering the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, massages foster a sense of relaxation, combating stress-induced pain effectively.

**3. Improved Circulation:** Poor circulation often exacerbates pain symptoms. Through the application of pressure and manipulation techniques, massages encourage better blood flow. Improved circulation helps in delivering nutrients and oxygen to damaged tissues, thereby accelerating the healing process and reducing pain.

**4. Enhanced Range of Motion:** Pain often restricts movement. Regular massage sessions can gradually improve flexibility and enhance the range of motion in joints and muscles, diminishing stiffness and discomfort caused by limited mobility.

**5. Targeted Pain Relief:** Massage therapists employ various techniques tailored to specific pain areas. Whether it's Swedish massage for overall relaxation, deep tissue massage to address muscle knots, or trigger point therapy for localized pain, a customized approach ensures targeted relief.



**6. Natural Pain Management:** In an era where dependency on medications is a concern, massages offer a natural alternative for pain management. By reducing the need for painkillers, individuals can mitigate the risk of dependency while seeking relief through holistic means.

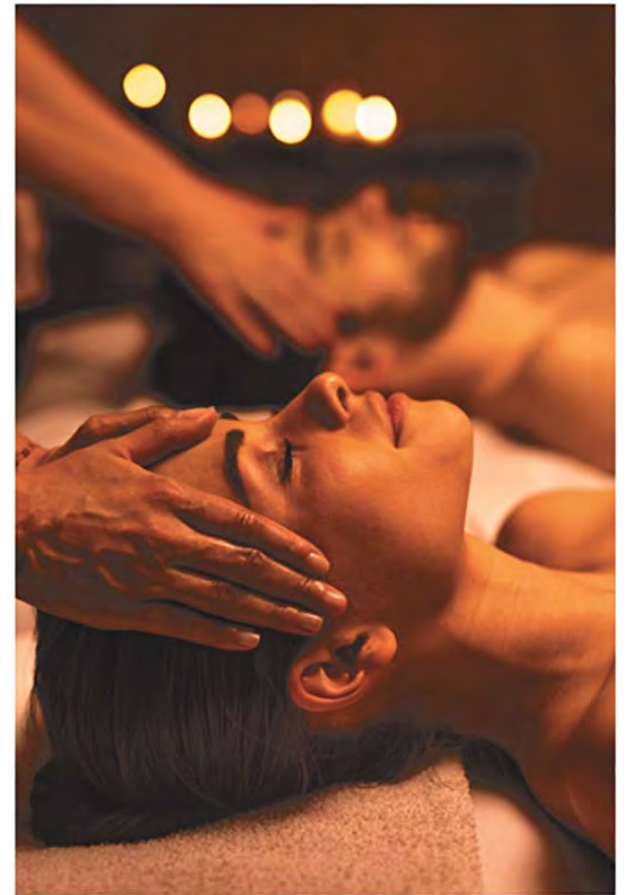
**7. Mental Well-being:** Pain often takes a toll on mental health. Regular massage not only eases physical discomfort but also promotes mental well-being by reducing anxiety, depression, and the overall perception of pain, fostering a more positive outlook on life.

**8. Supportive Rehabilitation:** For those recovering from injuries or surgeries, massages can complement traditional rehabilitation methods. By loosening scar tissue, improving flexibility, and reducing swelling, massages expedite the recovery process.

In embracing the New Year, consider integrating massages into your routine to combat pain and usher in a year of improved well-being. Whether you opt for occasional sessions or commit to a more structured schedule, the cumulative benefits of massage therapy can significantly enhance your quality of life.

As you embark on this journey, ensure to communicate openly with a certified massage therapist. Discuss your specific pain points, health concerns, and desired outcomes to tailor a massage plan that best suits your needs.

Remember, the transformative power of massage extends far beyond mere relaxation. It's a holistic approach to pain management, promoting healing, rejuvenation, and a renewed sense of vitality as you step into the new year.



At Moonlight Wellness Spa, we offer a range of massage therapies designed to relax your mind, rejuvenate your body, and enhance your overall well-being. Our skilled massage therapists are committed to providing you with a personalized and soothing experience, tailored to your specific needs. Explore our diverse selection of massage treatments to find the perfect one for you.

Whether you're looking for relaxation, stress relief, or therapeutic bodywork, Moonlight Wellness Spa has the perfect massage therapy for you. Contact us today to schedule your massage and embark on a journey to complete relaxation and rejuvenation.

*Let us be your guides on the path to relaxation and self-care.*



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# Revitalize Your Health: New Year's Resolutions for a Nourishing Diet

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

**A**s the New Year approaches, the promise of a fresh start beckons many to embrace healthier habits. Among the most common resolutions are those geared toward diet and health. Whether aiming to shed a few pounds, adopt a more nutritious lifestyle, or cultivate mindfulness around eating, setting achievable goals is key to success.

## Setting Realistic Goals

Amidst the buzz of resolutions, it's crucial to set realistic and specific goals. Instead of a broad aim like "eating healthier," consider actionable steps like incorporating more fruits and vegetables into daily meals or reducing processed sugar intake. These specific objectives provide a clear path toward success.

## Embracing Balance

In the pursuit of a healthier diet, balance is paramount. It's not about deprivation but rather about making mindful choices. Opting for whole foods, prioritizing lean proteins, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates can significantly impact overall well-being. Cultivating a balanced approach fosters sustainable habits for the long haul.

## Mindful Eating Practices

In a fast-paced world, practicing mindfulness around eating often takes a backseat. New Year's resolutions present an opportune moment to reintroduce this essential practice. Mindful eating involves savoring each bite, being aware of portion sizes, and paying attention to hunger and fullness cues. These practices not only enhance digestion but also promote a healthier relationship with food.

## Cultivating Physical Activity

A holistic approach to health encompasses more than just dietary changes. Incorporating regular physical activity into daily routines complements any dietary resolutions. Whether it's a brisk walk, yoga, strength training, or any activity that brings joy, finding a sustainable exercise routine is crucial for overall well-being.

## Prioritizing Mental Health

Amid the focus on physical health resolutions, mental well-being often takes a backseat. However,



dedicating time to mindfulness, stress reduction techniques, and selfcare practices is equally important. A healthy mind contributes significantly to a healthy body.

## Creating a Support System

The journey towards a healthier diet and lifestyle can be challenging. Establishing a support system—be it friends, family, or online communities—provides encouragement, accountability, and a sense of camaraderie. Sharing goals and progress with others can be motivating and inspiring.

## Resilience and Flexibility

Resolutions often come with unforeseen challenges. Embracing resilience and flexibility in the face of setbacks is crucial. Instead of viewing a slip-up as a failure, see it as an opportunity to learn and readjust. Being adaptable in the pursuit of health goals ensures sustainability.

## Celebrating Milestones

Acknowledging progress, no matter how small, is vital. Celebrating milestones along the way boosts motivation and reinforces positive behaviors. Whether it's losing a few pounds, trying a new recipe, or consistently sticking to a workout routine, every achievement is a step in the right direction.

## Seeking Professional Guidance

For those seeking a more structured approach to diet and health resolutions, consulting with a nutritionist, dietitian, or personal trainer can provide

personalized guidance. These professionals can offer tailored advice and support to help achieve specific health goals effectively.

New Year's resolutions centered around diet and health offer a chance to embark on a transformative journey toward a nourished body and mind. By setting realistic goals, embracing balance, practicing mindfulness, prioritizing physical and mental well-being, creating a support system, and being resilient, individuals can cultivate sustainable habits that promote long-term health and vitality. As the New Year dawns, seize the opportunity to embark on this empowering journey toward a healthier you.

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## KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

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



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# THE IMPACT OF IV THERAPY & B VITAMIN INJECTIONS ON FITNESS RESOLUTIONS

As the clock strikes midnight, the air buzzes with promises of change, resolutions to embrace a fitter, more active lifestyle. New Year's resolutions often orbit around the desire to feel healthier, energized, and active. While goals are set, the challenge lies in sustaining the enthusiasm and momentum beyond January. This is where the intersection of New Year's resolutions, fitness aspirations, and the efficacy of IV therapy and B vitamin injections converge.

The dawn of a new year sparks a surge of determination to hit the gym, lace up those running shoes, or embark on a healthier diet. However, as weeks progress, the initial zeal can wane due to fatigue, stress, or a lack of visible progress. This is where the role of IV therapy and B vitamin injections becomes noteworthy.

IV therapy, often celebrated for its quick absorption and effectiveness, has found its niche in bolstering energy levels and enhancing overall wellness. By directly infusing essential vitamins and minerals into the bloodstream, this therapy bypasses the digestive system, ensuring a higher absorption rate. In particular, B vitamins—such as B12, known for its pivotal role in energy production—feature prominently in these treatments. The replenishment of these crucial nutrients can revitalize energy reserves, combating fatigue and boosting endurance, ideal for those striving to maintain an active lifestyle.

Picture this: a fitness enthusiast embarking on a journey towards their fitness goals. Amidst the sweat and determination, a deficiency in B vitamins could hinder their progress, leading to sluggishness and reduced stamina. Incorporating B vitamin injections can act as a catalyst, elevating their energy levels and potentially enhancing workout performance. This synergy between injections and fitness goals creates a harmonious balance, propelling individuals towards achieving their resolutions.

Moreover, the benefits of IV therapy and B vitamin injections extend beyond physical activity. Mental clarity and cognitive function receive a boost, fostering a sharper focus during workouts and daily tasks.



Amidst the chaos of hectic schedules, this mental acuity becomes a valuable asset, aiding in maintaining the dedication needed for consistent workouts and healthier choices.

However, it's crucial to approach these therapies with informed guidance. Consulting healthcare professionals or licensed practitioners ensures personalized treatments aligned with individual needs. Tailoring the infusion of B vitamins and other nutrients according to specific deficiencies or goals maximizes their effectiveness, making the journey towards a fitter, more active lifestyle more attainable and sustainable.

New Year's resolutions often falter due to burnout or a lack of tangible results. Incorporating IV therapy and B vitamin injections as a supportive pillar in one's fitness journey presents an opportunity to break through plateaus and maintain enthusiasm.

This complementary approach not only enhances physical endurance but also nurtures an overall sense of well-being, contributing to the longevity of one's commitment to a healthier lifestyle.

In conclusion, as the calendar flips to a new year, the synergy between New Year's resolutions, the pursuit of an active lifestyle, and the incorporation of IV therapy and B vitamin injections emerges as a powerful alliance. It's not just about setting goals; it's about sustaining the drive, overcoming obstacles, and embracing supportive measures that amplify efforts. This integration empowers individuals to not only envision a fitter version of themselves but also actively pursue and achieve it, one revitalizing infusion at a time.

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# Following A Mediterranean Diet Leads to Improved Health

By Andre Davies, M.D.

**T**he Mediterranean diet has gained significant popularity in recent years, and for good reason. As a board-certified physician in internal medicine and geriatrics, I work closely with my patients to make healthy dietary choices that will help them achieve their personal goals, be it weight loss, improved cardiovascular health, or even improved cognition. I have witnessed first-hand the numerous benefits that this diet can offer to individuals of all ages. The Mediterranean diet has been shown in research to reduce the risk of heart disease, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, certain cancers, and depression. In older adults, it has been linked with a decreased risk of frailty, along with slowing the progression of Alzheimer's Dementia.

The Mediterranean diet was recently ranked by experts in the U.S. News & World Report as one of the healthiest ways you can eat. Along with winning the category for Best Overall Diet, it was also voted the Best for Healthy Eating, Easiest to Follow and Best Plant-Based Diet. One reason why it is so good for you is the emphasis on whole, unprocessed foods. Although there is no specifically recommended menu, the Mediterranean lifestyle encourages the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds; these foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which play a crucial role in maintaining optimal health. By incorporating these nutrient-dense foods into their diet, individuals can boost their immune system, improve digestion, and enhance their overall energy levels.

Another significant benefit of the Mediterranean diet is its focus on healthy fats. Unlike many other diets that focus on reducing all fats, the Mediterranean diet recognizes the need to consume good fats in moderation. Olive oil, a staple in this diet, is a prime example of a healthy fat that offers numerous health benefits. It is rich in monounsaturated fats, which can help lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease. Additionally, the Mediterranean diet includes fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines, which are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids. These essential fats have been shown to reduce inflammation, improve brain health, and support cardiovascular function.

The Mediterranean diet also promotes the consumption of lean proteins, such as poultry, fish, and legumes. These protein sources are low in saturated fats and provide essential amino acids necessary for



muscle growth and repair. By incorporating lean proteins into their diet, individuals can maintain a healthy weight and support bone health. As a Geriatrician, I place a great deal of focus on healthy protein intake with my older patients, as this is a key element in preventing frailty syndrome. The Mediterranean diet offers a plethora of healthy, lean, protein options to discuss with my patients.

One of the most significant benefits of the Mediterranean diet is its positive impact on cardiovascular health. Numerous studies have shown that this diet can reduce the risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, and improve cholesterol levels. The combination of healthy fats, fiber-rich foods, and antioxidants found in the Mediterranean diet work together to protect the heart and blood vessels from damage. By following this diet, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, which remains a leading cause of death worldwide. Protecting the heart has trickle down effects to other disease processes as well. Improved cardiovascular health is also associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and chronic kidney disease.

In addition to being heart-healthy, the Mediterranean diet is brain-healthy too. Research has shown that a close adherence to the Mediterranean diet is associated with improved cognition. The reasons for this correlation are still being studied, but whether it is because of antioxidants in the diet, or increased healthy fats that the brain utilizes, it is clear that patients see clinical benefits. These benefits may be seen in the form of improved memory or more stability. With my patient panel, I stress that following a healthy Mediterranean diet is a large part of the preventative plan to slow the progression of cognitive changes.

Furthermore, as a physician, I am often asked about the benefits of red wine in the context of the Mediterranean diet. Red wine contains a variety of compounds, such as resveratrol and polyphenols, which have been associated with numerous health benefits. Consider talking to your health care provider or a specialist, to figure out what amount, if any, is right for you.

Overall, the Mediterranean diet provides a good approach to nutrition and health. Its focus on whole, unprocessed foods, healthy fats, and lean proteins, provides a well-rounded and sustainable lifestyle. As a board-certified internal medicine and geriatrics physician, I highly recommend the Mediterranean diet to my patients as a means of improving their overall well-being and reducing the risk of chronic diseases. By adopting this lifestyle, individuals can enjoy the numerous benefits that this diet has to offer and pave the way for a healthier future.

## ANDRE DAVIES, MD

Dr. Andre Davies a highly qualified Ivy League trained Board Certified physician he brings a wealth of expertise to his practice. Specializing in adult internal medicine for both men and women, he has a focus on preventive health, managing conditions such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. Dr. Davies excels in pre-op exams, annual physicals, diabetes screenings, immunizations, cancer screenings, weight management, and nutrition. His extensive experience includes handling chronic diseases like hypertension, thyroid issues, women's health concerns, lipid management, and nutritional deficiencies. As a fellowship-trained Geriatrician, he adeptly addresses complex health issues, emphasizing cognitive evaluations and mental well-being. Dr. Davies aims to educate patients on maximizing brain function and preventing cognitive decline. With a background in various prestigious medical roles, including at NCH Healthcare Group and Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, he stands as one of the top providers in the area.



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# RELIEF FOR CHRONIC NERVE PAIN

If you're struggling with persistent pain, especially in your legs and feet, the cause could be NEUROPATHY. Peripheral nerve damage is a condition that often goes unnoticed, and individuals may endure prolonged pain without understanding the root cause. Neuropathy is a condition that affects millions of Americans which often leads to symptoms such as tingling, numbness, and loss of balance.

## Causes of Peripheral neuropathy can include: (but not limited to)

- 1. Diabetes:** Elevated blood sugar levels over time can damage nerves.
- 2. Trauma or Injury:** Physical injuries, accidents, or trauma can lead to nerve damage.
- 3. Infections:** Certain infections, such as shingles or Lyme disease, may affect the peripheral nerves.
- 4. Toxins:** Exposure to certain toxins, like those found in some medications or environmental substances, can cause neuropathy.
- 5. Autoimmune Diseases:** Conditions where the immune system attacks the body's own tissues may lead to nerve damage.
- 6. Genetics:** Some individuals may be genetically predisposed to peripheral neuropathy.

## How do you know if you have Neuropathy?

Peripheral neuropathy can manifest with a variety of symptoms that can significantly impact an individual's well-being and overall quality of life. Patients often report sensations of tingling or numbness, akin to experiencing "pins and needles" in the affected areas, numbness, pain when walking, difficulty sleeping due to foot discomfort, muscle weakness and even sensitivity to touch. All affect quality of life- starting out gradually and gradually getting worse if not treated.

Furthermore, nerve damage can affect coordination and balance, leading to challenges in maintaining stability. These diverse symptoms underscore the complexity of peripheral neuropathy and highlight the importance of seeking professional medical evaluation for an accurate diagnosis and tailored treatment plan. It is crucial



for individuals to be vigilant about any changes in sensation, movement, or pain, and to promptly consult with a healthcare provider for comprehensive assessment and treatment options.

## Treatments:

There are traditional treatments for Neuropathy limited to a narrow range of pain medications. Often these only provide temporary relief and can contribute to further complications.

At Jaffe Sports Medicine, our innovative all-inclusive approach to treating pain combines various therapeutic techniques with advanced treatments to reduce pain and inflammation associated with peripheral nerve damage. What sets our Clinics apart is the comprehensive treatment approach consisting of Interventional Pain Management, Physical Therapy, Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery. In addition, Nerve conductive studies and EMG testing play an important role in your overall treatment plan. Our program's primary goal is to alleviate pain and numbness and actively work towards restoring, and rebuilding your overall quality of life. Our Physician-led team understands pain can impact various aspects of your life, from

daily activities to your emotional well-being. The goal at Jaffe Sports Medicine is for you to Live, Work & Play Pain Free! Our team is here to support you on your journey to living a fulfilling life.

We currently accept new patients at our three Southwest Florida locations conveniently located in Cape Coral, North Naples, and Downtown Naples. Most major insurances, including Medicare and many HMO plans, cover treatment at Jaffe Sports Medicine, making our comprehensive care accessible to a broader spectrum of individuals.

It's crucial to understand that while our treatments aim to alleviate discomfort, the information provided here is for informational purposes only and should not be considered a substitute for professional medical advice. Every individual's situation is unique, and consulting with your healthcare provider is paramount for personalized guidance and recommendations for living a pain free life.

Jaffe Sports Medicine blends rehabilitative medicine, pain specialist and therapeutic services under one roof to provide a complete, thorough, and customized treatment plan for each patient.

If suffering from neuropathy, any chronic pain, fibromyalgia, arthritis, or any other condition, preventing you from living your best life, our team of board-certified physicians, and certified physical therapists are here to help and all clinics are accepting new patients

To learn more about our services and schedule an appointment, visit our website at [JAFFESPORTSMEDICINE.COM](http://JAFFESPORTSMEDICINE.COM).



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# Empowering Your Health Journey: Naples Cancer Advisors' Comprehensive Preventative Care Approach

**T**he start of a new year is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of a fresh chapter in time for your health and well-being. This chapter is also a time to create a preventative care plan tailored to you or a loved one with cancer, at risk of cancer, or for general wellness.

Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) is a unique nonprofit practice in the area that takes preventative care measures seriously. NCA provides platinum-level consultative oncology services such as secondary case review, care coordination, referrals, clinical trial navigation, financial navigation, and precision oncology services such as genetic testing and counseling. "The NCA Difference" sets this group apart from other practices.

Naples Cancer Advisors' services are provided at no cost to the patient, thanks to private donors in the community. These consultations are also thorough and immersive, lasting as long as comfortably needed and affording each patient ample opportunity to understand their diagnosis and treatment options. Preventative care measures and recommendations are discussed during the consultation with the patient, and afterward with their treating physician.

If you or your loved one chooses to move forward with a consultation, the Naples Cancer Advisors will actively listen to your concerns and carefully study your diagnosis. Then, they will design a clearly communicated cancer second opinion, which will include:

- Connection to trials or other treatment options, if warranted
- Important primary data, treatment options, and research options
- Direct, rapid communication with you and your existing physician team
- NCA's suggestions to get you the best care options in the world.

The set of discussed recommendations includes but is not limited to the following:

**Clinical Trials:** The Naples Cancer Advisors team offers assistance in clinical trial navigation, especially after other recommendations are performed. Evaluating the safety and effectiveness of new medical interventions, such as drugs, treatments, or medical devices is essential in identifying the best plan of care moving forward.

**Medical Problems:** Review any current or pre-existing medical problems that should be addressed in the plan of care.

**Preventative Measures:** Patients should take proactive steps to avoid or minimize the risk of illness or adverse scenarios, including having age and gender cancer screening tests, up-to-date vaccinations, avoiding alcohol and all tobacco products, adequate sleep and more listed below.

**Mental Health:** The days following a cancer diagnosis can stir feelings of uncertainty, urgency, and apprehension. Naples Cancer Advisors exists to improve the care of cancer patients seeking a second opinion so that they walk away with a thorough understanding of their diagnosis and confidence in their plan of care. We are here to help patients find support when needed and address mental health concerns proactively with them, their treating physician, and the caregivers or family members who need help.

**Exercise:** Patients are advised on the importance of physical activity and regular exercise which can be modified based on physical abilities. Walking is usually a feasible form of exercise for all patients.

**Diet:** Patients are counseled about having a balanced diet with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables and avoiding unconventional or strict dietary plans. They should also avoid a weight loss diet during cancer treatment. Taking any over-the-counter medications, including vitamins or herbs, should be done only after consultation with physicians. The use of dietary supplements is discouraged.

**Financial Navigation:** NCA provides free consultative oncology services to cancer patients in the Southwest Florida area and to assist with financial needs, we have partnered with the Patient Advocate Foundation to offer a unique financial assistance service.

**Patient Education:** During the consult, the NCA expert team discusses the patient's disease status, test results, further work-up needed, and treatment options. NCA also provides the patients with relevant educational materials, such as an episodic list of the Medical Minute video podcast. This series of short video vignettes simplifies otherwise complicated topics into easy-to-understand explanations designed to enable better treatment choices and improve outcomes. (Scan the QR code to tune in to previous episodes).

**Follow-up Visit:** Patients can schedule follow-up visits on an as-needed basis and the NCA team will coordinate with the patient and their care team. Patients are informed of the nature of the consultation, which is to provide information and guidance to the patient, and all recommendations should be implemented by their treating physician.



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Naples Cancer Advisor's services extend beyond the initial consultation, as well as before the patient arrives. Cancer does not wait, and neither does the NCA team. They understand the urgency of seeking an oncology second opinion for your cancer diagnosis, which is why you can expect to receive a same-day or next-business-day invitation for a consultation.

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



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3201 Tamiami Trail N, Suite 112, Naples, FL 34103  
[naplescanceradvisors.org](http://naplescanceradvisors.org)



# Understanding Glaucoma: Insights into Treating Retinal, Macular, Vitreous, and Eye Structure Disorders

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

**T**he eye, a marvel of intricate design, is susceptible to various conditions affecting its delicate structures. Among these, glaucoma and disorders of the retina, macula, vitreous, and related structures pose significant threats to vision.

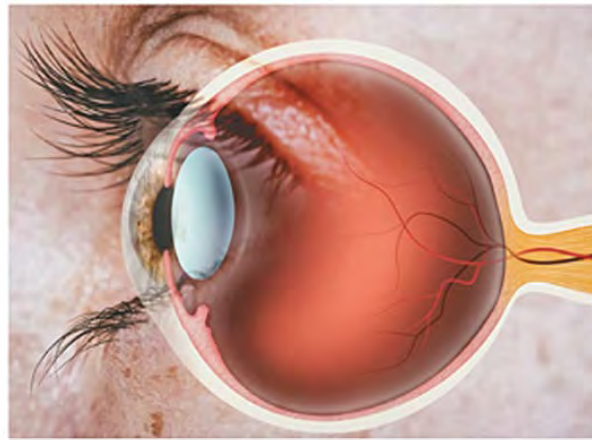
Glaucoma, often termed the "silent thief of sight," manifests as increased pressure within the eye, damaging the optic nerve. This condition gradually steals peripheral vision, progressing stealthily until noticeable vision loss occurs. With its insidious nature, early detection through regular eye exams becomes imperative. Treatment primarily focuses on lowering intraocular pressure to preserve remaining vision. Medications, laser therapy, or surgical interventions aim to alleviate pressure, reducing the risk of irreversible vision impairment.

Retinal disorders encompass various conditions affecting the retina, a vital layer of tissue at the back of the eye responsible for converting light into neural signals for vision. Disorders like age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic retinopathy are prevalent. AMD alters central vision, impacting tasks like reading and recognizing faces, while diabetic retinopathy stems from diabetes-related damage to retinal blood vessels. Treatments range from medications to surgical procedures, aiming to slow progression and preserve visual acuity.

The macula, a tiny but crucial part of the retina, allows detailed central vision. Conditions like macular degeneration or macular holes impair this area, leading to blurred or distorted central vision. Treatment options vary, including injections, laser therapy, or surgery, aiming to restore or prevent further loss of central vision.

The vitreous, a gel-like substance filling the eye, can develop disorders such as vitreous detachment or floaters. Vitreous detachment occurs when the gel separates from the retina, causing floaters or flashes. While usually benign, sudden onset or severe symptoms necessitate immediate medical attention to rule out retinal tears or detachment.

Advanced technologies have revolutionized the treatment landscape for these conditions. Laser therapy offers targeted precision, such as in laser



trabeculoplasty for glaucoma or photocoagulation for retinal disorders. Intravitreal injections, delivering medication directly into the eye, have become a cornerstone in managing retinal diseases like AMD or diabetic retinopathy.

Surgical interventions, ranging from traditional to minimally invasive procedures, play a crucial role in treating severe cases or complications. Surgeries like vitrectomy for vitreous disorders or trabeculectomy for glaucoma aim to alleviate symptoms and prevent further vision loss.

Early diagnosis and timely intervention significantly impact the prognosis of these eye conditions. Regular eye exams remain pivotal, allowing healthcare professionals to detect subtle changes and initiate prompt treatment, potentially preserving vision and quality of life.

Moreover, ongoing research endeavors continually push the boundaries of treatment. Advancements in gene therapy, stem cell research, and artificial intelligence-aided diagnostics hold promise in revolutionizing treatment approaches and possibly restoring vision in previously incurable conditions.

In conclusion, glaucoma and disorders affecting the retina, macula, vitreous, and related eye structures pose significant threats to vision. However, with early detection, advancements in treatments, and ongoing research, there is hope for better management and potential cures. Vigilance, regular eye check-ups, and access to cutting-edge therapies are vital in safeguarding one of our most precious senses—vision.

Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes, and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times.

Dr. Taba is a board-certified ophthalmologist in both her home country of Brazil and in the United States. She earned her medical degree at a leading medical school in Brazil and continued specialized vitreoretinal surgery training in Florida, New York, California, Louisiana, and many other locations in the U.S. Dr. Taba trained under the leading experts in the field of ocular disease.

Dr. Taba's extensive training and experience include many years as both a clinician and academician. She entered solo practice as a way to deliver consistently great care in a world where the environment and health care policies are always changing.

Dr. Taba wants to make sure that patients always get the most accurate diagnosis and most effective treatment, so she uses only the latest, state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. Dr. Taba is the first retina specialist on the southwest coast of Florida to have wide-angle viewing imaging. Dr. Taba also makes sure that injections and treatments are pain-free so patients can always expect a comfortable experience.

#### Retina Group of Florida

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.



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**Katia E. Taba, M.D., Ph.D.**

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**[www.retinagroupflorida.com](http://www.retinagroupflorida.com)**

# CAN A HIGH-TECH CHAIR CURE INCONTINENCE?

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

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

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



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

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

**How Long Is The Treatment?**

**How Many Sessions Do I Need?**

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

**What Does The Procedure Feel Like?**

**Is It Painful?**

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

**The following patients should not seek Emsella treatment.**

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

**How Fast Will I See Results?**

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

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

*References:*

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



**Some comments from local users:**

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

To learn more about this technology please go to our website at [www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com](http://www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com). Call 239-449-7979 to schedule your Emsella consultation today.



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C

  
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[info@floridabladderinstitute.com](mailto:info@floridabladderinstitute.com)

# New Year—Health Goals:

## Why You Should Make Your Medical Appointments Now

It's the new year, and most of us want to make changes and learn to stick to our resolutions for our health and fitness goals, but what about your annual appointments? Are you putting them off or ignoring them due to fears of the pandemic? This is a common concern for many patients, but one that purports more risk to your overall health.

If you are putting off your medical wellness or physical examinations and screenings because you fear getting COVID-19, you are actually putting yourself in a high risk category. We all know early detection is best for optimal outcomes and the treatment of various conditions and disorders.

Advanced Urology Institute (AUI) takes the health of its' staff and patients to the next level. With rigorous sanitizing and disinfecting of all areas and high touch surfaces, along with physical distances to eliminate any patient to patient contact, the offices at advanced urology are strategically and stringently cleaned between all patients. With these protocols it's safer to visit their office than most public areas such as markets and drug stores.

The catch-22 of not keeping your medical appointments is that if you unfortunately are ignoring your symptoms and are not properly diagnosed on time, there is a much higher susceptibility to infection, weakened immune function, and needing surgery and/or a hospital stay.

Taking the lead on your health is always better for long term outcomes and living well. Advanced Urology Institute offers numerous treatments and diagnostics for erectile dysfunction, vasectomies, urinary, kidney, and bladder health, and prostate disorders.

Make your appointment, listen to your body and it's warning indicators, be proactive and call Advanced Urology Institute for your examination.



### Safety precautions in AUI practices Your safety is our No. 1 priority in our AUI practices.

- Care team members have their temperature taken and are screened before their shift begins.
- At AUI practices, we ask you to wait in your vehicle until your appointment time and only one companion if accompanying a minor, person with a disability, or serving as a translator for someone who cannot speak English. All other visitors will be asked to wait outside the facility.
- You must wear a face mask that covers your mouth and nose in all areas of the office, unless you have a medical reason for not being able to do so.
- We screen patients and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19 when you come into our office.
- Waiting rooms are used sparingly due to social distancing needs caused by COVID-19. We promote social distancing by spacing out seating in waiting areas. If someone brings you to your appointment (one person per patient), he or she can come inside if accompanying a minor, person with a disability, or serving as a translator for someone who cannot speak English. All other visitors will be asked to wait outside the facility.
- You will see our team cleaning and disinfecting all areas to ensure they are ready for you.

We continue to recommend virtual care options, like video and telephone visits for care that does not require an in-person appointment.

### Advanced Urology Institute

A partnership of highly qualified, board-certified urologists practicing in the state of Florida.

AUI was developed as a single-specialty physician led organization to respond to the mounting changes in healthcare. Solo-practitioners and small groups cannot keep up with the increased governmental burdens and continue to stay focused on providing the highest level of care to their patients. We believe that by combining our efforts, geographically disparate Urology groups can function most efficiently and effectively to deliver the highest quality medical care to our patients.

### Services Offered & Conditions We Treat

- Erectile Dysfunction
- Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)
- Kidney Stones
- Da Vinci Robotic Assisted Surgery
- Prostate Cancer Treatment
- Vasectomy & Vasectomy Reversal
- Urinary Tract Infection
- Pediatric Urology
- Women's Urological Health

### We Value Patient-Centered, Evidence-Based Care

As a patient, you can be certain that you are a critical member of our treatment team. We will answer your questions and strive to provide the best services and the best care, based on your individual needs, preferences, and choices. AUI Physicians emphasize the use of proven treatment guidelines within our specialty, to optimize clinical decision making. Through our internal measures, our involvement in research studies, and our passion for continuous learning, you can be confident that our treatment team is providing you with the best treatment options.

*Please Contact Advanced Urology Institute Today.*



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# Add an Annual Hearing Test to Your List of New Year Resolutions!

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

It's important to test your hearing every year because hearing loss is often a gradual process. You may be struggling to hear, but since the day to day changes in your hearing are small, you might not recognize your hearing loss at first. In fact, your friends and family are more likely to notice your hearing loss and may comment that you're not hearing as well as you used to.

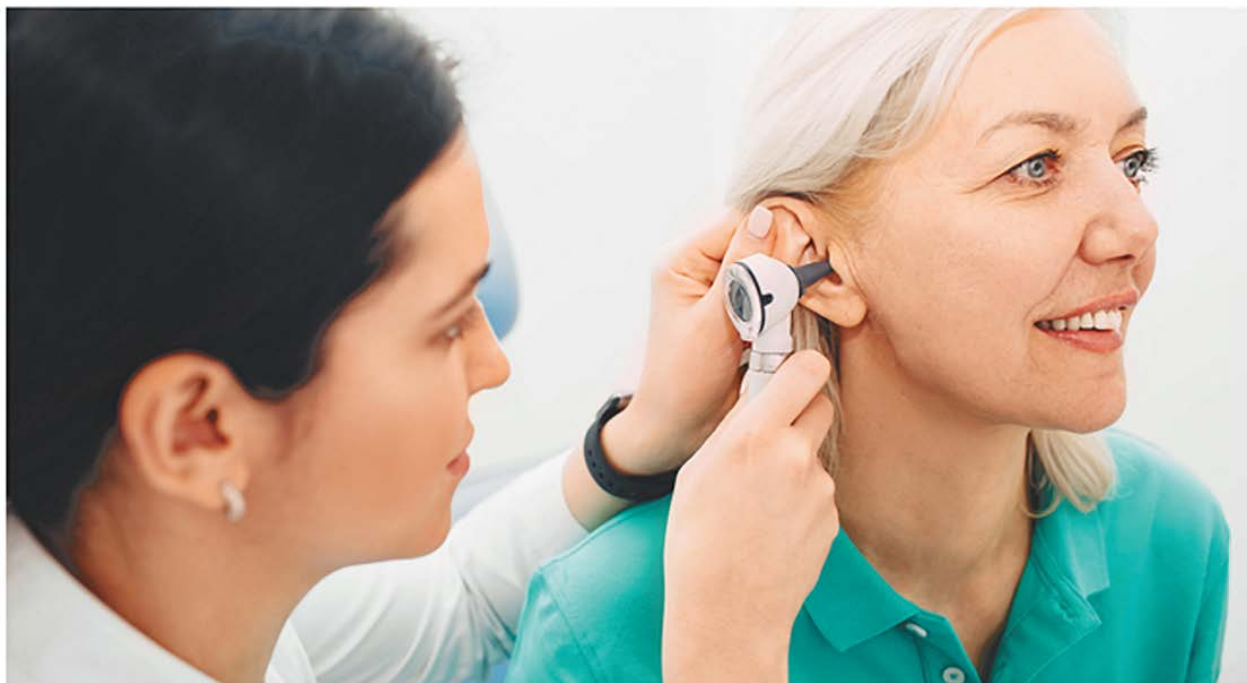
In the same way that you go to your doctor for an annual checkup, you need to schedule an annual hearing test with a licensed audiologist. This provides you with a baseline for your hearing health, and at subsequent hearing tests you'll be able to monitor your hearing health and see if your hearing has changed.

Many people fail to recognize the signs of hearing loss and wait far too long before seeking treatment. On average, Americans wait 7 years before visiting a hearing health professional, even if their quality of life has been severely impacted by their hearing loss! Yearly hearing tests will insure that you catch your hearing loss early and seek treatment before hearing loss affects other areas of your life.

## Untreated Hearing Loss and Relationships

For those living with untreated hearing loss, relationships with friends and loved ones start to suffer. You're not able to communicate as well as you used to, fail to hear a whisper 'I love you', or accidentally ignore your loved ones when they speak to you from across the room. Even if your family knows you are not being rude and are struggling to hear, difficulty having a deep conversation can be frustrating for everyone and leads to tension and miscommunication.

Those with hearing loss often draw back from social situations as well. When you're struggling to follow conversations, the last place you want to be is in a crowded restaurant scrambling to understand a group conversation. You'll often get lost and confused and are worried that you may mishear something and answer inappropriately. If you're living with untreated hearing loss you risk social isolation as you spend more time at home



alone than out with friends. You're more likely to deal with stress and anxiety, and greatly increase your risk of depression.

## Untreated Hearing Loss and Health

Living with untreated hearing loss doesn't just affect your relationships, it's also linked to a lot of negative health outcomes. Those with hearing loss are more accident prone, visit the hospital more, and have far higher health care costs. They're often less mobile, and more likely to suffer from conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease.

Untreated hearing loss is also closely linked to rapid cognitive decline. Not only are the parts of your brain used to hear not being exercised, but when you're less social and active other parts of your brain are idle as well. This affects the neural pathways in your brain, and in a sad case of use it or lose it, you're likely to experience brain shrinkage and brain cell death. You're more likely to suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and this further diminishes your brain's capabilities.

## Treating Hearing Loss

The good news is that treating hearing loss will help you avoid these negative outcomes, both in

your relationships and your overall health. With a quality pair of hearing devices, you'll be able to hear clearly, engage with your loved ones, and participate in all the activities you love, keeping your body and mind healthy and happy.

Treating hearing loss as soon as possible is the key to a healthy year so call Decibels Audiology to book your annual hearing test, meet our university-trained doctors of audiology, and find out what treatment options are right for you.

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# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA ON GLAUCOMA

**J**anuary is National Glaucoma Awareness Month, where we recognize the disease responsible for a large amount of vision loss. Glaucoma is a medical condition where the eye's intraocular pressure (IOP) increases to dangerously high levels. Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of vision loss and blindness in the United States. There are roughly 3 million Americans who suffer from this condition, along with another 57 million worldwide. Previous research studies suggest that marijuana may not suit everyone; however, it might be worth considering if you are among those who struggle and suffer from glaucoma.

Medical marijuana has historically been used to relieve various medical conditions, from cancer to chronic pain. Old and new studies infer that marijuana may effectively treat glaucoma by significantly decreasing pressure within the eye. Multiple studies discovered that cannabinoids found in marijuana help reduce eye pressure levels regardless of the method of consumption. Research focusing on various consumption methods showed equal benefits whether taken orally or inhaled. Surprisingly, however, when researchers placed cannabinoids onto the eye directly, little to no effect was identified.



## It Has Potential To Lower Intraocular Pressure

With the ability to lower intraocular pressure, marijuana has been studied as a therapy for glaucoma. Patients interested in using cannabis for glaucoma relief will learn what form and how much to take when consulting with the proper healthcare provider. These answers may vary according to individual factors such as eye strain or duration of exposure time. In most trials, a single dose of marijuana or cannabinoid was shown to maintain the desired effect and lasted three to four hours. However, to effectively control optic nerve damage resulting from glaucoma, an individual would need between six and eight doses per day for effective management.



While marijuana lowers IOP, it has some drawbacks and is not risk-free. Since the lower IOP is not long term, most patients still require prescription drops for extended pressure control.

## It Helps a Debilitating Condition

Glaucoma is a debilitating medical condition classified into three types – open-angle, angle-closure, and normal-tension.

Open-angle glaucoma occurs when the drainage duct gets clogged. Open-angle glaucoma (OAG) is the most common of the types and affects roughly 90% of patients. Healthcare providers can treat OAG with FDA-approved eye drops that work well if taken as prescribed to maintain visual health!

Angle-closure glaucoma, aka closed-angle glaucoma, can occur suddenly (acute angle-closure) or gradually (chronic angle-closure). In acute angle-closure glaucoma, the drainage duct suddenly becomes fully occluded, and this occlusion prevents fluid outflow from the eye, leading to dangerously high IOP. Acute closed-angle glaucoma is a true medical emergency resulting in permanent blindness if not treated soon enough. These patients will experience severe eye pain, headache, and vision loss due to the elevated IOP. This condition will require timely surgical intervention for relief.

**Normal-tension glaucoma** is a unique form of glaucoma that is not fully understood. Normal-tension glaucoma results in damage to the optic nerve despite normal IOP. It is thought to occur due to either increased nerve sensitivity or alterations in blood flow. Sometimes, these patients are treated with medicated eye drops that lower the IOP below the normal range.

## Treatment With Marijuana

Several different drugs are effective at managing glaucoma and IOP. New research studies on medical marijuana usage and glaucoma have documented improvement in some patients. Still, due to the requirement to manage pressure 24 hours a day, Medical Marijuana is usually not a standalone solution for glaucoma.

There is still no FDA-approved form for medical use in America. Scientists and researchers can't say what ingredients might trigger reactions differently among individual patients.

Various options exist to lower IOP, such as prescription eye drops, laser treatment, and surgery such as trabeculectomy. Trabeculectomy involves removing pieces of tissue from inside the eye and inserting an artificial tube called a shunt into the drainage channel.

## The Positive & Negative Aspects

Medical marijuana can control the pressure in your eyes to reduce damage to the optic nerve. Studies have shown that cannabis can lower IOP for glaucoma patients and those without glaucoma. Experts aren't sure how this works yet. No evidence suggests daily use will help prevent or slow down the progression of disease-related vision loss such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The good news is scientists continue to research and study the benefits that medical marijuana may hold.

## Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)

The benefit of medical marijuana in glaucoma sufferers is related to the endocannabinoid system, cannabinoids, and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC contains high concentrations of various cannabinoids that have effectively lowered IOP.

Although glaucoma is a qualifying condition in Florida for Medical Marijuana usage, it is important to note that not all researchers agree with the findings. Many insist more long-term testing needs to be conducted before we can say anything definitive about how cannabis might affect one's vision over time.



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# Health Insurance – Important Dates!

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

**MARKETPLACE - Obama Care/Affordable Care Act – open enrollment IT'S NOT TO LATE. December 16th to January 16th will have February 1st, 2024, effective.**

The website is [HealthCare.gov](https://www.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. The cost is the same as going direct with the insurance carrier, so why would you not seek free professional help with an agent that sells all of the companies?

**MEDICARE Open Enrollment Period January 1st- March 31st, effective the 1st of the following month. Medicare Advantage – Part C**

If you change/enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan Part C if you are not happy with the one you have. You can make a 1 time change from one Advantage Plan to another, you can go back to Original Medicare and buy a standalone drug plan. I personally don't feel you should have Original Medicare without a Medicare Supplement because your financial exposure is unlimited. Medicare Supplements are NOT guaranteed to accept you, there are a few exceptions. But in general, you need to pass medical underwriting. There are Medicare Supplements Letters A-N, each pays in conjunction with Original Medicare. There are a lot of companies and plans that you need to understand the plans and the differences in companies, it's not just about the price today.

Most of the plans in your area have made many changes for 2024 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](https://www.Medicare.gov).

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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# NEW YEAR, NEW YOU WITH RHINOPLASTY: COSMETIC AND FUNCTIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

**R**hinoplasty stems from the Latin words rhino (nose) and plasty (to form or shape). Rhinoplasties have a rich history in human culture. Originating as a punishment for theft in ancient Egypt in the form of rhinectomy, the reconstruction of noses truly began in 500 BC under Shushruta, a doctor credited to inventing the forehead flap. In the Roman empire, rhinoplasties and other cosmetic procedures were referenced, especially the reconstruction of noses due to birth defects

Italians were performing rhinoplasties on soldiers returning from war in the 1500s. Since the end of the 19th century there have been great advancements in the cosmetic procedure as surgeons have honed their skills and expanded their understanding of the structure and functions of the nose.

A common misconception is that this is always a cosmetic procedure, however this is not always the case. There are cosmetic, functional, or restorative rhinoplasties, each serving a specific purpose. A cosmetic rhinoplasty is done to alter the shape and appearance of your nose. A reconstructive is done for the purpose of restoring the function of the nose. Lastly, a restorative rhinoplasty is done to give one back their nose in the instance of trauma or disease. It is important that no matter what type of rhinoplasty one does, that they consider the primary functions of nose and make sure that the result restore each of these functions to the maximum capability.

According to Dr. Bergqvist, there are six primary functions of the nose that must be considered. The primary is to breathe, to work as a conduit to your lungs while your mouth is closed. Second, and another obvious function, is that of smell. This is extended to facilitate your sense of taste, the third function. Inside of the nose you have several protrusions which create moisture for your airways,



these are called turbinates. Without these structures and the moisture, they provide, your lungs would become damaged by the dry air. The nose also helps to filter dust, and particles out of the air functioning as one of your body's primary defenses against foreign bodies. The last function is to look good.



One of the most important aspects of any surgery of the nose, is to go back to the 6 function of the nose and restore each as much as possible. While not always the objective the outcome typically corresponds to an aesthetically pleasing nose.

While considering the functions of the nose, one must also consider the overarching structural complexity. While the exterior of the nose consists of many intricate aesthetic units, the nose as a whole is composed of many tissues- skin cartilage, bone, connective and neural tissue. One of the more intricate structures in the nose which require surgery are the valves. The nose has multiple air valves, the external consisting of the nostril. If this is having issues with collapse, this can be reconstructed to help breathing.

The internal nasal valve is one of the most commonly missed structure of the nose, and if collapsed can cause you difficulty with breathing. This valve can be reconstructed to stay open. Behind this valve, the next level of air obstruction would be the septum. The septum has a primary function of maintaining the height of your nose. It is not uncommon that the septum may be bent or broken or have a hematoma after trauma. Each of these may be referred to as a deviated septum. This reconstruction more commonly known as a septoplasty. This is also typically done in conjunction with turbinate surgery to improve breathing.

Now more than ever rhinoplasties are fulfilling more than one purpose. Attached are the before and after images of a patient who underwent cosmetic and functional reconstruction by Dr. Bergqvist. Typical recovery varies patient from patient. However, should you consider a rhinoplasty you should expect bruising for 1-3 weeks (bruising may persist should you require structural repositioning), and swelling to subside within several weeks.

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**Gunnar Bergqvist, MD**  
Practice Made Perfect



# What is an Ingrown Toenail?

**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

**W**hen a toenail is ingrown, it is curved and grows into the skin, usually at the nail borders (the sides of the nail). This “digging in” of the nail irritates the skin, often creating pain, redness, swelling, and warmth in the toe.

If an ingrown nail causes a break in the skin, bacteria may enter and cause an infection in the area, which is often marked by drainage and a foul odor. However, even if the toe isn’t painful, red, swollen, or warm, a nail that curves downward into the skin can progress to an infection.

## Causes of ingrown toenails include:

- **Heredity.** In many people, the tendency for ingrown toenails is inherited.
- **Trauma.** Sometimes an ingrown toenail is the result of trauma, such as stubbing your toe, having an object fall on your toe, or engaging in activities that involve repeated pressure on the toes, such as kicking or running.
- **Improper trimming.** The most common cause of ingrown toenails is cutting your nails too short. This encourages the skin next to the nail to fold over the nail.
- **Improperly sized footwear.** Ingrown toenails can result from wearing socks and shoes that are tight or short.
- **Nail Conditions.** Ingrown toenails can be caused by nail problems, such as fungal infections or losing a nail due to trauma.

## Treatment

Sometimes initial treatment for ingrown toenails can be safely performed at home. However, home treatment is strongly discouraged if an infection is suspected, or for those who have medical conditions that put feet at high risk, such as diabetes, nerve damage in the foot, or poor circulation.

## Home care:

If you don’t have an infection or any of the above medical conditions, you can soak your foot in room-temperature water (adding Epsom’s salt may be



recommended by your doctor), and gently massage the side of the nail fold to help reduce the inflammation.

Avoid attempting “bathroom surgery.” Repeated cutting of the nail can cause the condition to worsen over time. If your symptoms fail to improve, it’s time to see a foot and ankle surgeon.

## Physician care:

After examining the toe, the foot and ankle surgeon will select the treatment best suited for you. If an infection is present, an oral antibiotic may be prescribed.

Sometimes a minor surgical procedure, often performed in the office, will ease the pain and remove the offending nail. After applying a local anesthetic, the doctor removes part of the nail’s side border. Some nails may become ingrown again, requiring removal of the nail root.

Following the nail procedure, a light bandage will be applied. Most people experience very little pain after surgery and may resume normal activity the next day. If your surgeon has prescribed an oral antibiotic, be sure to take all the medication, even if your symptoms have improved.

## Preventing Ingrown Toenails

Many cases of ingrown toenails can be prevented with proper trimming and wearing well-fitted socks and shoes. Cut toenails in a fairly straight line, and don’t cut them too short. You should be able to get your fingernail under the sides and end of the nail. Don’t wear shoes that are short or tight in the toe area. Avoid shoes that are loose, because they too cause pressure on the toes, especially when running or walking briskly.

## What You Should Know About Home Treatment

- **Don’t cut a notch in the nail.** Contrary to what some people believe, this does not reduce the tendency for the nail to curve downward.
- **Don’t repeatedly trim nail borders.** Repeated trimming does not change the way the nail grows, and can make the condition worse.
- **Don’t place cotton under the nail.** Not only does this not relieve the pain, it provides a place for harmful bacteria to grow, resulting in infection.
- **Over-the-counter medications are ineffective.** Topical medications may mask the pain, but they don’t correct the underlying problem.

## 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 20 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 heel pain and injuries 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.

The caring supportive staff at Collier Podiatry is available to answer your questions and make your appointment. Please visit their website at [www.collierpodiatry.com](http://www.collierpodiatry.com), or call them at (239) 775-0019



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# PICKLEBALL

By Robert Swift, D.O.

Board Certified Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine



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

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

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

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

## Associated Injuries

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

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

## Acute Injuries

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Listing Agreements in Florida: Seller Beware

By Lenore T. Brakefield, Esq. and Logan Wardlow

In a world brimming with contracts and fine print, we have all grown accustomed to simply checking the box or signing on the dotted line. While such practice may be of no consequence in certain circumstances, that is certainly not always the case. For example, those who sign a listing agreement with a broker for the sale of real property without the review of a professional may unknowingly expose themselves to the potential for a real estate broker to lien and foreclose on their property.

*Sellers should be aware that certain listing agreements may contain language like the following:*

If the transaction shall not be closed because of the refusal, failure or inability of SELLER to perform, or if SELLER fails or refuses to enter into a contract with a ready, willing and able buyer of the Property, SELLER shall pay the Compensation to BROKER in full upon demand by BROKER. In such event, this Listing Contract shall not be terminated, but shall continue in full force and effect. If SELLER fails or refuses to pay BROKER's Compensation after demand by BROKER, **SELLER hereby grants to BROKER the right to place a lien on the property, which lien shall survive termination of this Listing Contract, and can be foreclosed in the same manner as a mortgage on real property.** If deposits are retained by SELLER, 50% thereof, but not exceeding the full amount of the Compensation to BROKER, shall be paid to BROKER as full consideration for BROKER's services, including costs expended by BROKER, and the balance shall be paid to SELLER. *(Emphasis added.)*

This clause means if the seller does not enter into a contract or close on a contract with a ready, willing, and able buyer or that contract is terminated due to some act of the seller, the broker has the right and may impose a lien, in an amount equal to the broker's commission had the deal closed, on that property. Once a lien is recorded, the broker is then able to foreclose on the property as if it were a mortgage.

## Statutory Verses Contractual

Luckily for sellers, the above language is not required by Florida law to be present in a listing agreement for residential property. Per Section 475.42 of the Florida



Statutes, there are only two ways in which a broker can impose a lien on a seller's property.

- (1) Where expressly permitted by contractual agreement (as described above); and
- (2) Where the broker obtains and records a judgment.

Given that this provision is a matter of contractual agreement rather than a statutory requirement, it offers room for negotiation between the broker and the seller prior to finalizing the listing agreement. Additionally, alternative listing agreements, like the one offered by Florida Realtors®, does not contain language authorizing the placement of a lien on the seller's property.

## Seek Professional Guidance

If you are contemplating entering into a listing agreement with a Florida real estate broker, seeking professional guidance and legal advice is strongly recommended. Doing so can help you navigate and mitigate potential risks, ensuring that you are well-informed and protected from any less-than-favorable conditions that may be present in listing agreements in Florida. Contact the attorneys at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. for professional guidance in these matters. To learn more, please call 239-649-6555 or get in touch online today.



## Lenore T. Brakefield, Esq.

Lenore is a partner at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. (WPL). She is a Naples native and graduated *cum laude* from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. She focuses her law practice on civil and commercial litigation, including construction litigation. Lenore also handles local government law, code enforcement violations, community association law, real estate law, and contract and transactional matters. Lenore serves as board counsel to the City of Everglades City Code Enforcement Board and represents the firm's various municipal and special district clients. Additionally, Lenore is a Certified Financial Litigator (CFL™) by the American Academy for Certified Financial Litigators.

Lenore acknowledges WPL summer associate Logan Wardlow for his contribution to this article. Logan attends The University of Mississippi School of Law in Oxford, Mississippi. He graduated with honors from the University of West Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, General Business Major, and a Management and Legal Studies Double Minor.



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# THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF WEIGHT LOSS IN PREVENTING NUMEROUS DISEASES

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

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

## The Link Between Weight and Disease

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

## Reducing the Risk of Heart Disease

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

## Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

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



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

## The Impact on Cancer Risk

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

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

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

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



## Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

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

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

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# UNMASKING PARKINSON'S DISEASE: Recognizing Prevalence and Warning Signs

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

## The Prevalence of Parkinson's Disease

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

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

## Warning Signs of Parkinson's Disease

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Conclusion

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

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

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# NEW YEARS RESOLUTION 2024: PUTTING DOWN THE DRINK OR THE DRUG

By Robert C. Gibson

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

**E**mbarking on the journey of sobriety as the New Year unfolds is a courageous decision that can bring about a transformative change. Choosing to stop drinking or using drugs is a commitment to self-discovery, improved health, and a more fulfilling life. As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, it symbolizes not just the passing of time but also the opportunity for a fresh start. This decision is not merely a resolution; it's a declaration of self-love and resilience. Breaking free from the shackles of addiction requires determination, support, and the recognition that each day is a chance to embrace a new, healthier version of oneself.

If change and growth is what you and your loved ones truly desire, then help is available. Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and 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. 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 treatment programs to clients unable to attend in-person therapy sessions.

## Key Elements for an Effective IOP Treatment Program

**1. Individualized Treatment Plans:** Each patient's journey towards recovery is unique and requires a personalized approach. Crossroads IOP program 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 should 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 for them to practice healthy communication and relationship-building skills.

**4. Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT):** MAT involves the use of medications such as methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone to manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms 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 should address the whole person, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Crossroads holistic care includes activities such as art therapy, yoga, meditation, 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 strives to involve family members in the treatment process through family therapy and education.

**7. Aftercare Planning:** 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 if needed.

A successful IOP program must prioritize patient-centered care, evidence-based treatments, and ongoing support to ensure the best possible outcomes for individuals struggling with addiction.

## Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group is a Premier Intensive Outpatient (IOP) Treatment Program in SWFL

Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group has established itself as a premier Intensive Outpatient Treatment Recovery Program (IOP) in Southwest Florida, acclaimed for its multifaceted approach and unwavering commitment to individualized care. At the heart of its distinction lies an expert team of dedicated professionals renowned for their depth of expertise and compassionate approach. Crossroads offers a comprehensive array of evidence-based therapies, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and holistic



treatment modalities, tailored to address the unique needs of each client. Its emphasis on a client-centered approach fosters a sense of empowerment and personal agency, creating a supportive environment conducive to sustainable recovery.

Crossroads strong community integration and collaborative partnerships with local support networks contribute to its exceptional standing. The program not only focuses on addressing the immediate challenges of substance abuse but also places significant emphasis on equipping individuals with the necessary life skills and coping mechanisms essential for sustained sobriety and successful reintegration into society. Through its innovative and inclusive treatment strategies, Crossroads actively promotes a culture of understanding, empathy, and respect, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie among its clients.

The program's holistic philosophy extends beyond treatment sessions, with an emphasis on long-term aftercare and relapse prevention strategies, ensuring ongoing support for individuals even after the completion of the program. This comprehensive post-treatment approach has garnered accolades and commendations from both clients and the broader community, solidifying Crossroads' reputation as a beacon of excellence in the realm of substance abuse services. As a result, Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group continues to serve as a pillar of hope and transformation, exemplifying the highest standards of care and dedication to recovery in Southwest Florida.

## Why is There so Much Resistance to Receiving Treatment for Alcohol and Drug Dependence?

For decades, the medical community has recognized addiction as a complex, multifaceted disease. In a landmark decision in 1956, the American Medical Association (AMA) officially classified addiction as a disease, aiming to destigmatize the struggles of those grappling with substance abuse. Despite this crucial acknowledgment, the battle to eradicate resistance to alcohol and drug treatment persists, presenting an intricate web of challenges that continue to hinder progress in combating this pervasive issue.

One of the predominant barricades remains the enduring stigma associated with addiction. Misconceptions persist, perpetuating the notion that addiction is a matter of personal choice rather than an ailment demanding compassionate and evidence-based treatment. This deep-seated misunderstanding fosters a culture of alienation, deterring individuals from seeking the support they urgently require.

Moreover, the accessibility of comprehensive treatment services remains a pressing concern. Unfortunately, not all alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs are created equally.

**The Need for Destigmatizing Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment**

The critical need to destigmatize alcohol and substance abuse treatment cannot be overstated, as it is essential to foster an environment of understanding and empathy for individuals grappling with addiction. Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group, recognizing the profound impact of stigma on individuals seeking help, has spearheaded innovative initiatives aimed at dismantling the pervasive societal misconceptions surrounding addiction. By actively promoting a culture of inclusivity and non-judgment, Crossroads has created a safe and nurturing space where individuals feel empowered to share their struggles without fear of condemnation or discrimination.

Crossroads' commitment to providing personalized, evidence-based care underscores its dedication to treating each client with the utmost respect and dignity. By offering a holistic range of therapeutic interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, group counseling, and family support programs, Crossroads tailors its treatment plans to meet the unique needs of each person, ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach to recovery. This personalized care, coupled with a strong emphasis on post-treatment support and relapse prevention strategies, serves to reinforce the message that seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a courageous step towards reclaiming one's life.

Through its unwavering efforts to destigmatize alcohol and substance abuse treatment, Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group has not only transformed the lives of countless individuals but has also set a powerful precedent for the broader healthcare community. By advocating for a more compassionate and understanding approach to addiction, Crossroads continues to pave the way for a more inclusive and supportive treatment landscape, emphasizing that every individual deserves the opportunity to embark on a journey of healing and recovery without the burden of societal stigma.

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 Substance Abuse Services Group 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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# THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF OXYTOCIN SUPPLEMENTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

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

**H**ugs, music, exercise. What do all three of these things share? They all release the hormone oxytocin, more commonly known as the love hormone.

We're not talking only about romantic love. Oxytocin is released when a parent looks at their child or even when you look at your dog—it's the love of deep relationships and complete comfort. That's not to say that romantic partners don't trigger a release of oxytocin, but it's not solely limited to these relationships. Oxytocin goes deeper than attraction, cementing feelings of pure connection.

When the hypothalamus produces oxytocin and spreads it into the bloodstream, thanks to the pituitary gland, you'll experience a promotion of empathy, trust, and bonding. The impact of oxytocin doesn't stop there, either, with it also improving your cardiac health and increasing your resilience against stress. In short, oxytocin production can significantly improve both your mental and physical health.

## The Process of Oxytocin Release

Positive social connections and stressful conditions trigger oxytocin release. The former is a way to further the bond, and the latter (speculatively) motivates those under stress to reach out for help. So, the next time you feel stressed and want to ask for help, know that it's your body telling you that you should.

Oxytocin is produced in the hypothalamus, also known as the brain's control center. Once the hypothalamus signals for oxytocin production, it is released to other parts of the brain and spinal cord or into the bloodstream. From there, it binds to oxytocin receptors, and the "feel-good" benefits of oxytocin are triggered.

Oxytocin is involved in many life-affirming activities, including:

- reproduction
- social bonding
- raising children
- building relationships
- childbirth
- breastfeeding

In the past, oxytocin was thought to be a hormone only found in women because of its ties to childbirth and breastfeeding. However, research has since shown that both men and women require oxytocin. For instance, oxytocin helps with male and female production, affects the metabolism of both genders, and influences immune health. While women complete more activities that use and produce oxytocin, it is crucial in those of both genders.

## The Benefits of Oxytocin

The benefits of oxytocin are numerous, spanning both your physical and mental health—there's a reason why this feel-good hormone is so important.

### Reduces Anxiety and Depression

One of the quintessential elements of being a human being is an innate desire to have a group that we connect with and belong to. We can't help it; we're pack creatures and like to know that we're not alone, no matter what group we may fit into.

Oxytocin helps to promote these feelings of trust, connectedness, and intimacy, further helping you benefit from the sense of belonging.

The impact of oxytocin levels on your mental health is significant, with studies showing that low oxytocin is linked to anxiety and depression. So, supplementing oxytocin can help you feel more secure in your family or friend group, lessening the anxiety and/or depression you would otherwise feel from believing you don't belong.

### Reduces Stress Hormones

When the body perceives a stressful situation, it releases the hormone cortisol, which puts your body into a fight-or-flight mode. While it would be good if a lion were chasing you, it's not a great reaction to the everyday stresses our busy lives subject us to. Even more, those with chronic stress have continually high cortisol levels, which can increase blood pressure, suppress your immune system, and increase the risk of diseases such as diabetes or atherosclerosis.

Oxytocin has been shown to reduce cortisol levels, helping your body better manage stress and leaving you more relaxed and with a lower risk of these hazards of chronic stress.

### Improves Cardiovascular Health

As the love hormone, it should come as no surprise that oxytocin supplements can improve your heart health, but perhaps not in the way you would think.

Oxytocin has been shown to lower blood pressure and heart rate, helping to keep your heart from being overworked. High blood pressure, in particular, is commonly referred to as "the silent killer" because of the role it plays in the development of many life-limiting diseases. If you want to keep your health high, managing your blood pressure is a great place to start, and oxytocin can help.

### Induces Labor

Oxytocin helps to strengthen the labor contractions during childbirth while also facilitating the production of prostaglandins. These are chemicals that help increase contractions and move labor along. In addition, oxytocin helps with controlling bleeding after childbirth so that your body can start the healing process.

### Supports Breastfeeding

A 2018 study highlighted that one of oxytocin's primary functions is to support breastfeeding, which is also why it was initially considered only a female hormone (something we now know isn't true).

When a baby nurses from their mother's breast, nerves in the nipple send signals to the pituitary gland that trigger the production oxytocin. This release then causes the tiny muscles around the nipple to contract, releasing milk.

### Oxytocin Supplements

While the benefits of oxytocin are numerous, oxytocin supplements are generally believed to focus primarily on relieving social and emotional problems, such as:

- social anxiety
- autism
- depression
- schizophrenia

Additionally, a synthetic version of oxytocin (Pitocin) can be given intravenously to induce labor.

As of this time, oxytocin supplements are only available as injections or nasal sprays, as it is otherwise destroyed by the gastrointestinal tract.

### Risks of Oxytocin Supplements

The most significant risk of oxytocin supplements is simply a lack of knowledge about their long-term impact. By this, we mean that it isn't entirely known how effective oxytocin supplements can be if used long-term. Furthermore, more research is still needed to determine how different people react to oxytocin supplements based on their genetics or underlying psychiatric disorders.

Some research has shown that some people may experience increased envy, prejudice, and dishonesty when taking oxytocin supplements. In other cases, taking too much oxytocin can cause watery eyes, a runny nose, or more severe complications, including seizures or uterine bleeding.

As for Pitocin, the oxytocin supplement injected to induce labor, it can have side effects that include digestive issues or increased pain. If taken in high doses, it may cause arrhythmia or other cardiovascular symptoms.

Still, many of these risks can be managed by ensuring you only take as much oxytocin as you need, which your doctor can help you with.

### Ways to Naturally Boost Your Oxytocin

Oxytocin supplements are not the only way to boost the levels of this calming hormone. If you're feeling more stressed than usual, give the following a try and help increase your oxytocin levels.

#### Physical Contact

The number one thing associated with oxytocin is physical contact, but few people realize that it relates to any type of physical contact, with massages, hugs, handshakes, sexual activities, and breastfeeding all releasing oxytocin. Even more, whether you're connecting with a friend, lover, child, or parent, physical contact in any form will help increase your oxytocin.

#### Laugh

Laughter truly is one of life's greatest medicines. Watch a funny movie, get together with friends and share funny stories, read a humorous book; whatever gets you laughing will also help boost your oxytocin levels.

#### Give Your Pet Some Love

Spending some time each day giving extra attention to your pet will not only help to raise your oxytocin levels, but this can also help increase the bond you share with them.



#### Share The Love

Cook dinner for someone else, give a gift, or volunteer your time. All of these actions help to raise your oxytocin levels while also making you feel better for doing something for someone else.

Actions may speak louder than words, but saying "I love you" can also raise your oxytocin levels and those of the person you share the sentiment with. So, don't be afraid to share your feelings, and often.

#### Exercise

Going for a walk or some other form of exercise you like is a great way to boost your oxytocin levels while also improving your physical health. Want to boost your oxytocin even more? Try exercising with someone else.

#### Feel the Love: Oxytocin and Oxytocin Supplements

Oxytocin is the "love hormone" produced when you're surrounded by friends, family, or a significant other. It lowers your stress levels while also increasing trust, empathy, and contentment. Its benefits are wide-reaching, reducing anxiety and depression, improving cardiovascular health, and aiding in maternal tasks such as childbirth and breastfeeding.

With how vital oxytocin is for these tasks, it's natural to look into supplementation to boost oxytocin levels and see these benefits. However, as of right now, oxytocin supplements are primarily prescribed to aid the labor process or relieve social and emotional problems. There are some risks associated with oxytocin supplements, but your healthcare provider can help you weigh the risks versus the benefits.

Luckily, for those in need of a quick pick-me-up, there are many ways to naturally boost oxytocin levels that you can begin implementing immediately. They are especially useful for those under stress or looking to further improve their relationships.

Give oxytocin a boost and experience the benefits of love (hormones) on your mind and body.

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# Enhancing COPD Management in Hot and Humid Climates: Optimizing Oxygen Systems for Florida Residents

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

## The Challenge of Heat and Humidity for COPD Patients

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

## Understanding Oxygen Therapy

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

## Selecting the Right Oxygen System

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Consulting Healthcare Professionals

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

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

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

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

## 1. Understanding Chronic Pain

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

## 2. The Therapeutic Power of Water

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

## 3. Managing Pain through Aquatic Therapy

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



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

## 4. Benefits and Considerations

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

### The advantages of aquatic therapy

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

### The following are some of the advantages:

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

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

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

## Why Choose Absolute Physical Therapy of SW FL

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

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



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# Innovative Treatment Improves Quality of Life

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

---



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

---

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

— Patient Judy

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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# ARTHRITIS AFFECTS THE MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

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

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

### What is arthritis?

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

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

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

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

So, how do you treat your arthritis?

### Medication alone isn't the best anymore

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

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

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

### But, which treatment comes first?

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

### Acu-Healing starts with Acupuncture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Finally, cold laser therapy

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

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

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

Particularly when your body is trying to do the opposite!

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

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

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

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

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# Revolutionize Your New Year Resolutions with Healthy Eating

**A**s the New Year dawns upon us, the resolution to prioritize health often takes center stage. The quest for a healthier lifestyle often begins with the food we consume. Embracing a nutritious diet isn't just a fleeting resolution; it's a commitment to sustained well-being.

## Setting the Stage: Understanding Healthy Eating

Healthy eating isn't just about shedding pounds; it's about nourishing the body, mind, and spirit. At its core, a healthy diet comprises a balance of macronutrients—proteins, carbohydrates, and fats—and an array of micronutrients found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.

## Navigating the Maze of Food Choices

In a world teeming with dietary options, finding the right path can be daunting. However, the essence lies in simplicity. Embrace whole, unprocessed foods that fuel the body without burdening it with unnecessary additives. Opt for colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains like quinoa and brown rice, and lean sources of protein such as fish, poultry, and legumes.

## Mindful Eating: Cultivating Awareness

Mindful eating isn't merely about what you consume; it's about how you consume it. Slow down, savor each bite, and relish the flavors. Cultivate a deeper connection with your food, appreciating the journey from farm to plate. This practice not only aids digestion but also fosters a healthier relationship with food.

## Planning for Success: Meal Prepping and Smart Choices

Success in adopting a healthy diet often hinges on preparation. Engage in meal prepping, carving out time each week to plan and prepare meals. This not only saves time but also helps in making mindful choices. Incorporate a variety of foods to ensure a well-rounded intake of nutrients.

## The Role of Hydration

Water—the elixir of life—is often overlooked. Adequate hydration is paramount for bodily functions, aiding digestion, regulating body temperature, and promoting overall health. Aim for at least eight glasses of water a day, adjusting intake based on individual needs and activity levels.



## Navigating Challenges: Overcoming Hurdles on the Path to Health

While embarking on a healthier journey, challenges are inevitable. From cravings to social pressures, staying committed can be tough. However, the key lies in resilience. Understand that setbacks are part of the process and focus on progress, not perfection. Seek support from friends, family, or even online communities to stay motivated.

## Mind and Body: The Connection

A healthy diet isn't just about physical health; it profoundly impacts mental well-being too. Nutrient-rich foods support brain function and emotional balance. Consuming a variety of foods ensures a broad spectrum of nutrients that aid cognitive function and mood regulation.

## Sustainable Choices: Beyond the New Year

The essence of a healthy diet lies in sustainability. Avoid crash diets and extreme restrictions. Instead, aim for a balanced, realistic approach that can be maintained over time. Incorporate foods you enjoy and occasionally indulge in treats—moderation is key.

## Culinary Exploration: Embracing Diversity

Elevate your culinary experience by exploring diverse cuisines. Experiment with herbs, spices, and cooking methods from around the world. Embracing variety not only tantalizes the taste buds but also ensures a broad spectrum of nutrients.

## Conclusion: A Journey Towards Wellness

As the New Year unfolds, embark on a journey towards wellness through the power of a healthy diet. It's not just a resolution; it's a lifestyle change that can transform your life. Embrace the abundance of nutritious foods available, savor each bite mindfully, and relish the transformation within.

Crafting a sustainable diet for your New Year's resolution is not just about the number on the scale; it's about nurturing your body, cultivating a healthy relationship with food, and embracing a lifestyle that prioritizes well-being in all its facets.



## 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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# SCULPTRA: A BIOSTIMULATORY APPROACH TO REBUILDING COLLAGEN

By Karen Swain, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

As you age, many visible changes occur to your skin. It was once widely believed that gravity was the primary cause of facial aging. It is now recognized that gravity only determines the direction of tissue sag and does not affect the extent of volume loss which can be attributed to many factors, including thinning skin, loss of collagen, redistribution of fat, loss of muscle, and loss of bone which all contribute to the overall aging effect. Many treatments address aging skin, but they must be tailored specifically to your needs. One treatment we have recently reintroduced to our practice is Poly-L-Lactic Acid (PLLA), also known as Sculptra.

Sculptra is a revolutionary biostimulatory approach to rebuilding collagen in the skin. It is a popular and effective treatment for a variety of skin conditions, including wrinkles, fine lines, and sun damage.

Sculptra is a collagen-stimulating agent that is gradually absorbed by the body and can be used in the face or body. It is an injectable treatment performed over several sessions, depending on your specific need. Sculptra is beneficial for both males and females and works by restoring lost tissue volume by gradually stimulating fibroblasts to produce new collagen by as much as 80%. Collagen is vital to your skin as it provides structure, support, and strength.

Sculptra is different from other dermal fillers because it stimulates collagen production, affecting the face's foundation and restoring the underlying structure. Other commonly used fillers, such as hyaluronic acids, plump and hydrate your skin but do not create collagen growth.

The success of Sculptra is due to its unique formulation, which stimulates the body's natural production of collagen. Collagen is a protein that provides structure and support to the skin. As we age, our collagen levels decrease, leading to sagging skin, wrinkles, and other signs of aging. Sculptra works by triggering the body's natural collagen production, leading to a gradual and natural improvement in the skin's appearance.

Sculptra has several advantages over other collagen-based treatments. Unlike fillers that provide immediate results, Sculptra's effects develop gradually over several weeks or months. This means that the results are more natural-looking and long-lasting, and there is less risk of over-treating the skin. Additionally, Sculptra is biodegradable and biocompatible, meaning that it is safe for use in the body and will not cause allergic reactions or other adverse effects.

Sculptra is a groundbreaking treatment that uses a biostimulatory approach to rebuilding collagen in the skin. It is an effective and safe treatment for

a variety of skin conditions and is suitable for all skin types and colors. Sculptra's unique formulation provides natural-looking and long-lasting results, making it an excellent option for patients who want to improve the appearance of their skin without the use of invasive procedures. With proper care and treatment, Sculptra can help patients look and feel their best, restoring their confidence and self-esteem.

You may be a candidate for Sculptra if you want to treat facial fat loss, elevate recessed areas of the skin, or soften contours. Sculptra can even be used in the body and is frequently used in conjunction with other treatments.

The results of Sculptra are not immediate as the new changes to your skin structure take time and are normally noticed in about a month. After treatment, your skin will appear plump or full. The initial fullness is from the sterile water used to dilute the Sculptra. The plumpness associated with the initial injections will go away within a few days as you wait for your long-term results.

If you are interested in additional information about Sculptra or other non-invasive cosmetic treatments, don't hesitate to contact our office at 239-322-3790 for more information or to discuss your specific situation. We will be happy to find a treatment modality that best suits your needs.

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# Infusion Therapy

## An Effective Treatment Option for Osteoporosis

**O**steoporosis is a condition that weakens the bones, making them fragile and prone to fractures. It affects millions of people worldwide, with women being more susceptible to it than men. The condition often develops slowly over the years and may go unnoticed until a bone fracture occurs. However, with the advancements in medical technology, various treatment options are available for managing osteoporosis. One such option is infusion therapy, which involves the administration of medications directly into the bloodstream.

Paragon Healthcare is a leading provider of infusion therapy services for 20+ years, and they offer several medications to help treat osteoporosis. These medications include Prolia, Zoledronic Acid, Evenity, and Boniva. These drugs work by increasing bone density, reducing the risk of fractures, and improving overall bone health.

Prolia is an injectable medication that belongs to a class of drugs known as monoclonal antibodies. It works by inhibiting the activity of osteoclasts, which are cells that break down bone tissue. By reducing the number and activity of osteoclasts, Prolia can increase bone density and reduce the risk of fractures. The medication is administered once every six months and is suitable for postmenopausal women with osteoporosis.

Zoledronic Acid is another infusion therapy medication that is used to treat osteoporosis. It belongs to a class of drugs known as bisphosphonates, which work by inhibiting bone breakdown. Zoledronic Acid is administered once a year and can significantly reduce the risk of fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Evenity is a newer medication that is used to treat osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. It works by increasing bone formation and reducing bone resorption. Evenity is administered as a subcutaneous injection once a month for twelve months. Clinical trials have shown that Evenity can significantly increase bone density and reduce the risk of fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Boniva is another bisphosphonate medication that is used to treat osteoporosis. It works by slowing down the breakdown of bone tissue and increasing



NORMAL BONE DENSITY



OSTEOPOROSIS

bone density. Boniva is administered as a once-a-month tablet or as an injection every three months. It is an effective medication for preventing fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Infusion therapy offers several advantages over other treatment options for osteoporosis. For example, infusion therapy medications are administered directly into the bloodstream, which allows for rapid and efficient delivery to the bones. This means that patients can experience faster results and may require fewer doses than they would with oral medications. Additionally, infusion therapy medications are often more potent than oral medications, which can lead to better outcomes for patients.

Another advantage of infusion therapy is that it is generally well-tolerated by patients. While some patients may experience side effects such as fever, headache, or muscle pain, these side effects are typically mild and short-lived. Infusion therapy also allows for more consistent dosing, which can help to ensure that patients receive the proper amount of medication each time.

In conclusion, infusion therapy is a highly effective treatment option for osteoporosis. Paragon Healthcare offers several infusion therapy medications, including Prolia, Zoledronic Acid, Evenity, and Boniva, that can significantly improve bone density, reduce the risk of fractures, and improve overall bone health. Infusion therapy offers several advantages over other treatment options, including more efficient delivery to the bones, more consistent dosing, and fewer side effects. If you or a loved one is living with osteoporosis, consider speaking with a healthcare provider about whether infusion therapy may be a suitable treatment option.



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# KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Treatment

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

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

## Associates in Nephrology

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

## Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Source:

1. [https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM70Kwmg3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM70Kwmg3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE)

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

## Services Provided

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

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

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

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# EMBRACING CHANGE

## Ketamine Therapy and New Year's Resolutions for Overcoming Unproductive Patterns and Triggers

The start of a new year often heralds a period of reflection and resolution. It's a time when many of us embark on a journey of self-improvement, setting goals aimed at overcoming unproductive patterns and navigating triggers that impede our progress. This year, a novel approach to this pursuit of personal growth emerges with the integration of Ketamine therapy—a groundbreaking treatment showing promise in revolutionizing mental health care.

Ketamine, once predominantly known as an anesthetic, has stepped into the limelight for its transformative potential in addressing mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and chronic pain. Unlike traditional antidepressants, which may take weeks to show effects, Ketamine therapy offers rapid relief, often within hours. Its mechanism of action involves modulating certain neurotransmitters in the brain, leading to a profound impact on mood regulation and cognitive processes.

Pairing the therapeutic benefits of Ketamine with New Year's resolutions can offer a powerful strategy for individuals looking to break free from unproductive cycles and cope with triggers more effectively. Resolutions, when backed by the support of Ketamine therapy, can serve as catalysts for genuine and lasting change.

The first step towards personal growth often involves acknowledging unproductive patterns that hold us back. Whether it's procrastination, negative self-talk, or self-sabotage, these behaviors can hinder progress. Ketamine therapy, with its ability to potentially disrupt entrenched thought patterns and depressive cycles, can provide a window of opportunity to confront and modify these behaviors. Through introspection and therapy, individuals can develop strategies to replace unproductive habits with healthier alternatives.

Furthermore, the management of triggers—those stimuli that evoke negative emotions or behaviors—is an integral part of personal development. For many, New Year's resolutions include a commitment to handle triggers more constructively. Ketamine therapy, in conjunction with therapy sessions, equips individuals with a strengthened emotional toolkit to better manage these triggers. It aids in building resilience and providing a clearer mindset to navigate challenging situations.

However, it's important to note that while Ketamine therapy shows promise, it's not a standalone solution. It should ideally complement traditional therapy and holistic lifestyle changes. Resolutions to incorporate mindfulness practices, regular exercise, healthy eating habits, and a strong support network can significantly augment the benefits of Ketamine therapy.

As individuals embark on this dual journey of Ketamine therapy and New Year's resolutions, it's essential to approach it with patience and commitment. Progress might not always be linear, and setbacks may occur. Yet, the combination of therapeutic intervention and personal determination can lead to transformative growth and an enhanced quality of life.

In conclusion, the fusion of Ketamine therapy with New Year's resolutions geared towards confronting unproductive patterns and managing triggers presents a dynamic approach to personal evolution. By harnessing the therapeutic potential of Ketamine alongside proactive efforts to address ingrained behaviors, individuals can embark on a path towards lasting positive change, fostering resilience, and unlocking their full potential in the year ahead.

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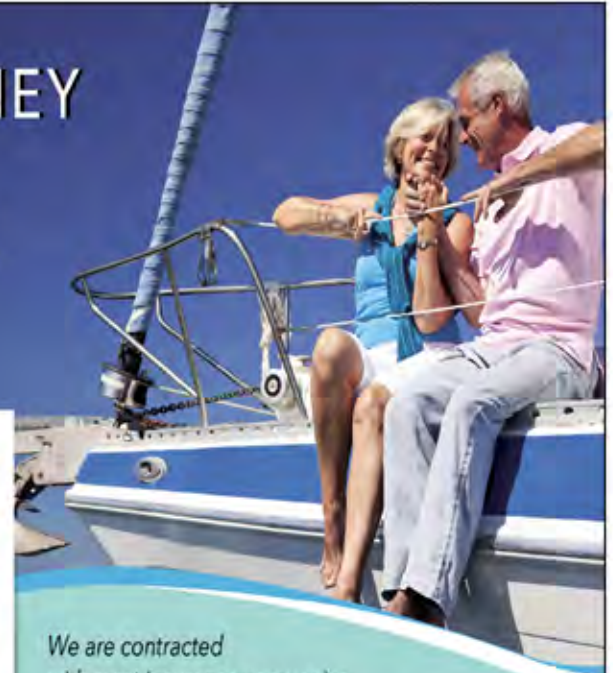
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# Compassionate Home Health: Excellence in Promoting, Maintaining, and Restoring Health

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At the core of compassionate home health lies the understanding that each individual's journey toward wellness is unique. It's about recognizing the person beyond the ailment and establishing a profound connection built on empathy and understanding. This approach transcends the mere clinical routine; it cultivates a sense of trust, fostering an environment where individuals feel heard and cared for on a deeper level.

To promote health in the home setting requires a holistic view that extends beyond just physical wellness. It encompasses emotional support, mental resilience, and nurturing an environment that encourages overall well-being. It's about empowering individuals to take charge of their health while providing the necessary guidance and support to navigate the intricacies of their wellness journey.

Maintaining health within the confines of one's home demands a harmonious blend of expertise and personalized care. It involves meticulous planning, where every aspect of care is tailored to suit the unique needs of each individual. Whether it's managing medications, assisting with daily activities, or offering companionship, the goal remains unwavering – to maintain the highest standard of health and comfort.

However, the true essence of compassionate home health shines when restoration becomes imperative. It's during these challenging times that the dedication to excellence truly becomes palpable. Restoring health isn't just about addressing the physical symptoms; it's about instilling hope, inspiring resilience, and guiding individuals through the process of healing with unwavering support and encouragement.



A passion for excellence becomes the cornerstone in every facet of our service. It drives continuous improvement in the quality of care provided, propelling us to seek innovative approaches, staying abreast of the latest advancements in healthcare, and fostering an environment where learning and development are constant companions.

Moreover, this passion transcends individual roles; it becomes a collective commitment ingrained in the ethos of every caregiver, nurse, and therapist member. It's the unwavering dedication to going above and beyond, to not just meet but exceed expectations, ensuring that those we serve receive nothing short of exemplary care.

In the pursuit of excellence, compassion becomes the guiding light that illuminates every decision made and action taken. It's the willingness to listen intently, to hold hands during difficult times, and to celebrate victories – big or small. Excellence isn't just a standard; it's a way of life that echoes in every interaction, every treatment, and every smile shared.

Compassionate home health, driven by a passion for excellence, isn't merely a profession; it's a calling. It's a commitment to humanity, a dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve. It's about transforming healthcare into an experience imbued with empathy, respect, and a relentless pursuit of the highest quality care.

In conclusion, the heart of compassionate home health beats in rhythm with the passion for excellence. It's a symphony where empathy, dedication, and expertise harmonize to create a melody of healing and hope. This compassionate pursuit of excellence defines our commitment to promoting, maintaining, and restoring health for those whose lives we touch, leaving an indelible mark of care and compassion.

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# NAVIGATING INFLUENZA A AND B: TAMIFLU, TIMING, AND PROPHYLACTIC MEASURES

By Dr. Michel Saaloukeh - MD, FAAP, IBCLC

Influenza A and B viruses are perennial challenges in healthcare, causing seasonal outbreaks worldwide. Understanding the nuances of treatment with antiviral medications like Tamiflu (oseltamivir), the criticality of timing and dosage, as well as proactive prophylactic measures, is pivotal in managing and containing these infections.

Both Influenza A and B share commonalities in symptoms, ranging from fever, cough, and sore throat to more severe complications such as pneumonia. However, their genetic structures differ, affecting their susceptibility to antiviral drugs. Tamiflu, a neuraminidase inhibitor, stands as a frontline defense, effective against both strains by impeding the virus's ability to spread within the body.

The timing of Tamiflu administration is paramount. Initiating treatment within the first 48 hours of symptom onset significantly reduces the duration and severity of the illness. While the drug remains beneficial beyond this window, its efficacy diminishes as the virus progresses. Physicians often recommend a five-day course, yet individual cases might necessitate adjustments based on the patient's health status and response.

Dosage precision is equally critical. Typically administered orally, Tamiflu dosing varies based on age, weight, and severity of symptoms. Children, adults,



and high-risk individuals may require different dosages, emphasizing the importance of medical consultation before medication intake.

Beyond treatment, preventive strategies play a pivotal role. Vaccination stands as the most effective measure against influenza. Annual flu vaccines are designed to target prevalent strains, bolstering the immune system and reducing the risk and severity of infection. Moreover, maintaining good hygiene practices—regular handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding close contact with infected individuals—proves instrumental in curbing the spread of the virus.

In high-risk scenarios, such as influenza outbreaks in closed communities or households with infected individuals, prophylactic use of Tamiflu can be considered. This preemptive approach involves administering Tamiflu to individuals who have been in close contact with infected persons, aiming to prevent the onset of symptoms or mitigate their severity. However, this strategy necessitates careful assessment by healthcare professionals to balance benefits and potential side effects.

While Tamiflu remains a cornerstone in influenza management, emerging strains and variations in viral susceptibility necessitate ongoing research and vigilance. The dynamic nature of influenza viruses underscores the importance of continued surveillance, swift diagnosis, and adherence to evolving treatment guidelines.

In conclusion, navigating the complexities of influenza A and B infections involves a multi-pronged approach. Timely administration and precise dosing of Tamiflu can significantly mitigate the impact of the illness, especially when complemented by vaccination and stringent preventive measures. Healthcare providers play a pivotal role in guiding treatment decisions, underscoring the significance of collaborative efforts in combating these seasonal adversaries.

*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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# Why Your Future Health and Wellness Matter Now

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## The Importance of a Living Will

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Joan's Five Steps to Overcome a Sedentary Lifestyle

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

In a society that frequently underscores the value of youth and vitality, the narratives of those who defy stereotypes and champion physical activity in their golden years are particularly noteworthy. Joan is one such person. A 60-year-old retiree, Joan transformed her life from a sedentary existence to an active and thriving life she loves. Joan's story not only serves as an inspiration but is also underscored by scientific research, emphasizing that the pursuit of physical well-being is a possible journey for everyone, irrespective of age.

### The Turning Point:

Joan gained weight after each of her three children were born. Physical activity became something she did not have time for as a busy mom. She led a sedentary lifestyle, grappling with fatigue, stiffness, and a sense of unfulfilled potential. The turning point came in the form of her husband's dementia diagnosis and subsequent move into a memory care community. Joan knew she had beat the odds; dementia caregivers have a 67% higher chance of dying before the person for whom they care. She set about making changes.

### Overcoming Mental Barriers:

Like many individuals in her age group, Joan first had to navigate the mental hurdles associated with overcoming a sedentary lifestyle. Shifting her perspective on physical activity from a perceived chore to a gateway for personal growth proved to be a crucial step. She committed to walking every day, no matter how few steps it equaled. She knew consistency mattered more than an arbitrary goal.

Joan's approach aligned with the findings of a study published in the *"Journal of Aging and Physical Activity,"* emphasizing the importance of moderate-intensity physical activity for improved health outcomes in older adults (Brown et al., 2018).

### Handling Emotions Through Movement:

Central to Joan's success was the discovery of joy in movement. On her walk, Joan listened to new music and even found podcasts on topics she enjoyed. She found that walking outside before visiting her husband in the memory care community put her in a better mood which made their visits better. Additional walking after her visit helped Joan process her grief. Experimenting with various activities, from dancing to her favorite tunes to participating in local fitness classes for seniors, Joan found that making physical activity enjoyable was pivotal to sustaining her new lifestyle.

### Social Connection and Support:

Joan's children were grown and lived out of state. She maintained deep love for her husband, but she also felt lonely. Joining a local walking group and participating in senior fitness classes not only provided companionship but also transformed exercise into a communal activity. A study in the *"Journal of Aging and Social Policy"* supports this approach, underscoring the positive impact of social participation on the physical and mental well-being of older adults (Chang et al., 2020).

### Embracing Variety:

Over the course of a year, Joan incorporated a variety of activities into her routine. She learned she liked the feeling of strength which came from lifting weights but

did not like water aerobics. She was intimidated to try yoga, but found she loved how leaner, taller and more flexible she felt after a simplified version of restorative yoga.

### Celebrating Progress:

Joan celebrated every milestone, no matter how small, reinforcing her commitment to an active lifestyle. These celebrations became powerful motivators, propelling her to explore new activities and continually push her boundaries. Her family also noticed her success and praised her determination. They had never expressed it before, but as they watched their father deteriorate and take no action towards improving his lifestyle when he still had capacity to do so, they were afraid their mom was going to go down the same road. Samantha\* said, "With my dad it was hard to see him get worse so quickly. I was afraid I was going to lose my mom, too." Samantha continued, "Now, I do not worry about her anymore. She is committed. She knows that a healthy life is built one step at a time. And, she inspires me!"

Joan's journey exemplifies that age does not have to be an impediment to embracing physical activity. Her story, backed by scientific research, underscores that it is never too early and it is never too late to change your lifestyle. Start where you are and do what you can with what you have.

Joan's daily walks became a force of strength and inspiration for herself and her family. During a time when it would have been easy to "give up" all over again with her husband's diagnosis, Joan determined in her heart not to end up as a statistic. She has since moved into an Independent Living community because she knew that living alone was not ideal. She needed more community and social relationships to live a long, full life. Now, with the physical and social aspects of life dialed in, Joan feels unstoppable.

If you see yourself in Joan's story, let us know. You can reach us at (239) 330-2133 or info@scanyfl.com.


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# 7 COMMON CAUSES OF LOW BACK PAIN, THE LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE

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

**B**ack pain is a widespread ailment affecting millions worldwide. A recent peer-reviewed study published in *Lancet Rheumatology* found that back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is projected to affect almost 1 billion people by 2050 (1). While it can arise from various factors, certain conditions are more commonly responsible for this discomfort. This article delves into seven prevalent causes: spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis, herniated disc, synovial cyst, compression fracture, muscle strain, and excessive sitting.

## 1. Spinal Stenosis

Spinal stenosis occurs when the spaces within your spine narrow, putting pressure on the nerves traveling through the spine. This condition is most often seen in adults over 50 years old. Symptoms vary depending on the location of the stenosis and can include back pain, numbness, weakness, and cramping or pain in the legs. The narrowing is typically caused by wear-and-tear changes in the spine related to osteoarthritis. Management typically involves non-opioid analgesic medications, physical therapy, targeted epidural steroid injections, and, as a last resort, surgery to create additional space for the spinal cord or nerves.

## 2. Spondylolisthesis

Spondylolisthesis is a condition where one of the vertebrae slips out of place onto the bone below it. This is often due to a fracture or a defect in the pars interarticularis, part of the vertebra. While it can occur in athletes who engage in sports that put stress on the back, it can also occur as people age and their discs become less spongy. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and include lower back pain, stiffness, muscle tightness, and nerve pain. Treatment options include physical therapy, medications, corticosteroid injections, bracing, and in some cases, surgery.

## 3. Herniated Disc

A herniated disc, also known as a slipped or ruptured disc, occurs when the soft inner portion of the disc protrudes through a tear in the tougher exterior. This herniation can irritate nearby nerves, resulting in pain, numbness, or weakness in an arm or leg. While a herniated disc can occur anywhere in the spine, it most frequently appears in the lower back. Treatments for a herniated disc range from rest, bracing, and pain relief medications to physical therapy, corticosteroid injections, and, in severe cases, surgery.



## 4. Synovial Cyst

Synovial cysts are fluid-filled sacs that can develop in the spine because of degeneration. These cysts are commonly found in the lumbar spine and can cause back pain, sciatica, or spinal stenosis. While these cysts are generally benign, they can become problematic if they grow large enough to compress nerve roots. Treatment may involve anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroid injections, or surgical removal, depending on the severity of symptoms.

## 5. Compression Fracture

A compression fracture occurs when one of the vertebrae in the spine collapses. This is most commonly due to osteoporosis, especially in older adults, but can also result from injury or trauma. Symptoms include sudden, severe back pain, loss of height, or spinal deformity. Treatment focuses on pain relief, bracing, treating the osteoporosis to prevent further fractures, and in some cases, a surgical procedure like kyphoplasty can help to stabilize the fractured vertebra.

## 6. Muscle Strain

Muscle strain, though less severe than other causes, is one of the most common causes of back pain. It can occur due to sudden heavy lifting, awkward movements, or chronic overuse, leading to stretched or torn muscles or tendons. Symptoms include pain that worsens with movement, muscle spasms, and decreased range of motion. Treatment typically involves rest, ice or heat application, over-the-counter pain relievers, gentle stretching, and bracing. Most strains heal within a few weeks.

## 7. Excessive Sitting

In today's increasingly sedentary lifestyle, excessive sitting has emerged as a significant contributor to back pain. Prolonged sitting can lead to poor posture, increased stress on the back, and muscle imbalances, resulting in discomfort and pain. To mitigate these effects, it's recommended to take regular breaks to stand and stretch, maintain good posture, and engage in regular exercise.

## Conclusion

Back pain can significantly impact daily life, but understanding its common causes is the first step towards effective treatment. While some conditions are more severe and may require medical and surgical intervention, many cases of back pain can be managed with self-care and lifestyle changes including exercise and walking. It's important to consult a healthcare professional if you experience persistent or severe back pain to determine the underlying cause and appropriate treatment.

## References

1. *GBD 2021 Low Back Pain Collaborators. Global, regional, and national burden of low back pain, 1990-2020, its attributable risk factors, and projections to 2050: a systematic analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021. Lancet Rheumatol. 2023;5(6):e316-e329.*

## About Amanda Sacino, MD, PhD

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

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

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

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



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# Testosterone Replacement's Impact on Mood, Sleep, and Sexual Performance

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

**T**estosterone, a key hormone in the male body, plays a crucial role beyond physical attributes, affecting mood, sleep, and sexual performance. However, as men age, testosterone levels may decline, leading to various challenges. Addressing this decline through testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) can significantly impact one's well-being.

## Understanding Testosterone's Influence

Testosterone, often linked to virility, contributes extensively to mood regulation. Low testosterone levels might manifest as irritability, fatigue, or mood swings. Research indicates that TRT can enhance mood by restoring hormonal balance, alleviating symptoms of depression and enhancing overall mental well-being.

Sleep disturbances are common among individuals with low testosterone. Restorative sleep is vital for overall health, and disruptions in sleep patterns can be linked to low testosterone levels. Studies suggest that TRT may improve sleep quality, leading to better rest and increased daytime energy levels.

Moreover, testosterone plays a pivotal role in sexual health. Reduced libido, erectile dysfunction, and diminished sexual performance are frequently associated with low testosterone. TRT can revitalize sexual function by enhancing libido, increasing arousal, and improving erectile function, positively impacting intimate relationships and overall satisfaction.

## The TRT Journey and Its Benefits

Before embarking on TRT, consulting a healthcare professional is imperative. A comprehensive evaluation

ensures an accurate diagnosis and a personalized treatment plan. TRT methods vary, including injections, gels, patches, or pellets, administered under medical supervision.

Adhering to prescribed TRT can yield significant benefits. Improved mood stability, increased energy levels, enhanced cognitive function, and a rejuvenated sense of well-being are commonly reported outcomes. Additionally, better sleep quality contributes to improved focus and productivity during the day.

In terms of sexual health, TRT has shown promising results in restoring vitality. Enhanced libido, improved erectile function, and increased sexual satisfaction are observed, fostering more fulfilling intimate relationships.

## Complementary Approaches for Optimal Results

While TRT offers substantial benefits, adopting complementary lifestyle changes further amplifies its effects. Regular exercise, particularly resistance training, can naturally boost testosterone levels. A balanced diet rich in nutrients like zinc and vitamin D supports healthy testosterone production.

Adequate sleep hygiene is crucial for maximizing TRT benefits. Creating a sleep-conducive environment, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, and minimizing screen time before bed can optimize sleep quality.

Stress management techniques such as meditation, yoga, or mindfulness practices can assist in regulating cortisol levels, indirectly impacting testosterone production and overall well-being.

## Cautionary Considerations and Conclusion

Despite its potential benefits, TRT isn't devoid of risks. Possible side effects include acne, fluid retention, or increased risk of cardiovascular issues. Close monitoring by healthcare professionals helps mitigate these risks and ensures the therapy's safety and efficacy.

In conclusion, testosterone replacement therapy can significantly improve mood, sleep, and sexual performance in individuals with low testosterone levels. However, it's essential to approach TRT under professional guidance, considering individual health circumstances and potential risks.

Combining TRT with lifestyle modifications further augments its positive effects, fostering a holistic approach to well-being. Understanding the potential benefits and risks empowers individuals to make informed decisions, ultimately leading to improved quality of life and overall vitality.

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# WHAT CAN METHYLENE BLUE DO FOR YOU?

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

Introducing Methylene Blue, a versatile compound with a spectrum of applications, from its traditional use as a biological stain and antidote to more cutting-edge medical treatments. Widely recognized in histology and microbiology for its efficacy in staining tissues, methylene blue extends its impact beyond the laboratory. From its role as a crucial antidote for methemoglobinemia, a condition affecting blood oxygenation, to antioxidant, neuroprotective, antimicrobial, and anti-cancer properties, methylene blue is an old, new drug with many exciting possibilities.

## METHYLENE BLUE'S NEW HORIZONS:

**1. Antioxidant Properties:** As an antioxidant, methylene blue scavenges free radicals and reduces oxidative stress. This property has potential applications in mitigating damage associated with various conditions, including ischemia-reperfusion injuries, cardiovascular diseases, long-COVID, and age-related disorders. Ongoing research is exploring how methylene blue's antioxidant effects can be harnessed for therapeutic purposes.

**2. Neuroprotective, Psychiatric, & Cognitive Benefits:** One of the most promising developments in methylene blue research is its potential as a neuroprotective agent. Studies have shown that methylene blue may have a positive impact on neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, as well as possibly improving cognitive performance and memory in patients without these conditions. The compound's ability to enhance mitochondrial function and reduce oxidative stress in neurons has generated interest in its neuroprotective effects. It may also affect neurotransmitter systems, therefore having a positive impact on mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder.

**3. Antimicrobial Properties:** Methylene blue has demonstrated antimicrobial properties, making it a candidate for combating various infections. Researchers are exploring its potential as an alternative or adjunct therapy in the treatment of bacterial and fungal infections. The compound's ability to inhibit the growth of microorganisms has sparked interest in its application in wound care and infectious disease management.



**4. Anti-cancer and Photodynamic Therapy:** Preliminary studies suggest that the compound may have potential in cancer treatment by inhibiting tumor growth and inducing apoptosis (programmed cell death) in cancer cells. Future investigation aims to help reveal the mechanisms behind these anti-cancer effects and explore the compound's role in combination therapies. Another method of cancer treatment is photodynamic therapy (PDT). PDT involves the administration of a photosensitizing agent, such as methylene blue, followed by exposure to light. This activates the compound, leading to the production of reactive oxygen species that can destroy targeted cells, including cancer cells. Researchers are refining and expanding the applications of methylene blue-based PDT for more precise and effective cancer treatments.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Dosage and Administration:** The appropriate dosage of methylene blue depends on the treated condition. It is crucial to follow healthcare provider recommendations regarding dosage and administration. Toxicity may occur if dosing guidelines are not followed closely.

- **Adverse Reactions:** Methylene blue may have side effects like any medication. Common side effects include urine discoloration, agitation, nausea and vomiting, and dizziness / lightheadedness to name a few. Serious side effects are rare but can occur, emphasizing the importance of medical supervision. Contact your physician or pharmacist if you notice anything out of the ordinary when taking any medication.

- **Drug Interactions:** Avoid use with medications used to treat depression or other mental health conditions. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), Selective Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs) and Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOis) are examples of these types of medications. Methylene blue may interact with other medications as well. Patients should inform their healthcare provider of all their medications to avoid potential interactions.

## PURITY IS CRITICAL WITH METHYLENE BLUE:

The stringent testing for purity with low heavy metal content in methylene blue is crucial. The safety and efficacy of the medication are contingent upon its purity. Many companies can provide methylene blue, but only ethical companies provide certificates of analysis (C of A) on every lot. In medical treatments, impurities or elevated levels of heavy metals pose health risks for patients, necessitating a commitment to high purity standards to guarantee patient safety and minimize adverse reactions. Here at Creative Scripts, we ONLY source methylene blue from PCCA, an international compounding pharmacy wholesaler which tests each lot and provides that documentation to ensure the highest quality medication.

Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy custom builds medication, one patient at a time. We use the highest quality pharmaceutical-grade ingredients, state-of-the-art bases, equipment, and technology. Continual training on the newest techniques, advances in therapy, and regulations allows our pharmacists and technicians to provide the safest, most effective medications for you AND your pets. In addition to compounded medications, we offer pharmaceutical-grade nutritional supplements, health advice, and hormone consults. Creative Scripts specializes in veterinary compounding, dermatology, bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), pain management, and more. Doctors of Pharmacy (PharmD's) Jerry and Lisa Meloche have served Naples and surrounding communities since 2005.

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

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



### The Journey to Self Renewal

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# SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS: What to Expect and How to Prepare

By Dr. Anne Marie Tremaine

**W**hat does it mean if you call and schedule a "skin check" with me? That term can be interpreted in many ways. To a dermatologist, a skin check signifies a head-to-toe examination looking for skin cancers, precancerous growths, and atypical moles. Most of the time and effort of the visit is dedicated to this detailed examination. I also attempt to address other skin concerns (acne, rashes, sunspots, warts) during the visit, however, it can be difficult to fully address multiple concerns, in addition to, the full body skin cancer screening. Multiple skin concerns often require separate visits, so that each concern gets the attention it deserves. I can better prioritize our time together if I know your concerns and objectives at the beginning of the visit.

There are some important details to know before your skin cancer screening. First and foremost, I want you to feel at ease during your visit, but of course, the less you wear during the exam the better! My nurse will give you a gown and you can undress to your comfort level, but please understand that clothing/undergarments/socks do obscure the skin. It is best to come to your exam with a minimalist, au naturel approach.

**Here are my tips to make your visit smooth and comprehensive:**

- Wear easy to remove clothing and shoes



- Do not wear any makeup. Even light makeup camouflages the skin. The same applies to eyeliner or lipstick. I really cannot see under makeup, and it can easily obscure a skin cancer.
- Avoid hair products as I will examine your scalp during the exam
- Skip the jewelry and watches
- Leave off the perfume, moisturizers, and sunscreen (yes, even sunscreen!). All these products get in the way of a thorough exam.
- Remove nail polish or artificial nails. I cannot assess for nail changes, nail fungus, or growths under the nail if there is anything covering the nail.

The bottom line is this: anything covering your skin blocks both my visual and tactile senses. I take your skin health very seriously and I aim to provide you with the most thorough exam possible. See you soon!

## Anne Marie Tremaine, MD



*Dr. Anne Marie Tremaine is a board-certified dermatologist who enjoys taking care of all patients, from newborns to geriatric patients. Dr. Tremaine provides the full spectrum of dermatologic care from skin exams, skin cancer treatments, acne, rosacea, eczema, psoriasis, birthmarks, cosmetic procedures, and skin care regimens. Her goal is to treat each individual patient with a customized treatment plan, rather than treating the disease state alone or approaching treatments with a cookie cutter approach.*

*Dr. Tremaine settled in Naples, Florida, in 2016 after 15 years of traveling around the country for her education and training. She grew up in Western New York, but relocated to Washington, D.C., for her undergraduate training in biology. She moved back to New York for medical school, then met her husband. Before starting her dermatology residency in Irvine, California, Dr. Tremaine spent several years as a clinical investigator on numerous clinical drug trials.*

*After her residency, Dr. Tremaine felt compelled to continue her education in cosmetic dermatology. She moved to Boston to complete a fellowship at Harvard Medical School in laser and cosmetic surgery. This intensive year of training has allowed her to become an expert in cosmetic and laser procedures, including BOTOX®, injectable fillers, spider vein treatments, photo-rejuvenation, and options to address scarring, brown spots, and broken blood vessels. After practicing dermatology in private practice in Southern California, she and her husband made the decision move back east to be closer to family.*

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# TOP 4 Reasons Chefs for Seniors Might Be The Right Choice For You

## #1 Shopping is Challenging

In light of our global pandemic, shopping has proven to be challenging for all ages, but if you have an underlying medical condition or are over 65, the risk of infection has become a significant concern. Along with COVID-19, shopping at the grocery store heightens the risk of other communicable illnesses such as the flu or the common cold.

In addition to these concerns, many seniors find it taxing or may not be able to drive themselves safely to the store due to mobility issues, diminished eyesight, cognitive issues, or other aspects that might make driving, parking, shopping, walking, or calculating a genuine challenge.

## #2 Cooking is Becoming Difficult or Dangerous

Perhaps you used to love cooking, or maybe you've never been keen on whipping up a meal. Some individuals find that following a recipe and cooking can be difficult, time-consuming, or in some cases, dangerous.

If you'd prefer to have someone else make your meals out of convenience, or you'd rather not unintentionally burn or overcook your food, many people feel the same way. This is especially true for seniors who no longer need to cook for an entire family and those that have issues with getting around easily or are developing neurodegenerative disorders.

## #3 You or Your Loved one Need Special Meals (Low Sodium, Low Fat, etc.)

Have you or your loved one undergone a heart procedure, stroke, or been diagnosed with diabetes? If so, you know the importance of following a strict diet that will help manage and sustain your disease and longevity.

Many people find it challenging to understand which foods are best and how to prepare those foods so that they are delicious and appetizing.

## #4 You Want Nutritious Food Without the Hassle

Combining all of the reasons that so many seniors could benefit from a chef-prepared meal is easily identified in the previously mentioned issues and

conditions. You want to eat the healthiest meals possible, meals that are good for your body, and that taste amazing so that it's easy to stick to eating the way you know you should. That's where Chefs for Seniors can help.

### Chefs for Seniors

Chefs For Seniors is a welcomed answer for many that want nutritious, flavorful foods custom-prepared right in the comfort of your home by a licensed chef that not only provides gourmet-style meals, but also compassionate companionship. They also have specialty meals for low sodium, low fat, and other dietary needs.

- Find peace of mind knowing personal chefs will handle the shopping and cooking
- Feel healthy and rejuvenated with meals for seniors that fit your diet
- Truly affordable and much less expensive than eating out
- All personal chefs are servsafe licensed, undergo background checks, and are fully insured

The company's local professional chefs prepare affordable meals for the week in the home using the freshest ingredients, while offering a fun interactive experience. Chefs for Seniors is a private meal preparation service which specializes in providing companionship with the chefs preparing the meals in the home of the client. Clients select meals from a regional menu which can be customized to the client's dietary preferences and needs. The process aims to be an affordable option for seniors who may want fresh home-cooked meals, but who may be physically unable to cook the meals for themselves.

### Professionally Prepared Meals and Clean Up!

Chefs for Seniors offers rotating menu options, which includes select Chef creations inspired by the region. Clients select their desired meal in advance, allowing the chef to shop and prepare the meals on the designated cooking day. Chefs prepare the meals between two to two and a half

hours. And an added benefit is that after the meal is prepared and stored according to the client's preferences, the chefs clean before leaving the house.

Your chef will bring their own "toolbox" with pots, pans, knives, and utensils into the home. You don't need to have anything on hand except an appetite and working appliances!

### Cost and Insurance Coverage

The price of our services are region-specific and depends on your individual needs. Our goal is to provide an affordable solution that seniors can use long-term. We offer three different service packages to meet a variety of needs: Standard, Custom, and Non-Standard.

Some Long Term Health Insurance Policies may cover certain in-home services like Chefs For Seniors.

### Multiple Meals During Visit

During a 2-hour home visit, your personal chef will prepare 4 different entrées and 10-12 individually-packaged servings of meals. The exact number of servings depending on your appetite and the types of meals ordered and serving sizes can be adjusted with your chef.

Most clients have their personal chef visit their home every week, although some choose to schedule services every 2 weeks or 2x per week. We can work within your budget, appetite, and needs.

### Special Diets

We can accommodate most dietary concerns and diets. Our chefs and menus are particularly well-suited for low-sodium, diabetic friendly, gluten-free, Kosher, and renal diet meals. We also take inspiration from the DASH Diet (Dietary Approach To Stopping Hypertension), when designing our weekly menu rotations. Our Custom Package is well suited for clients with less common diets or dietary concerns.

*For any questions, please contact Chefs For Seniors at 239-776-1758.*



**CHEFS FOR SENIORS**

[chefsforseiors.com](http://chefsforseiors.com)

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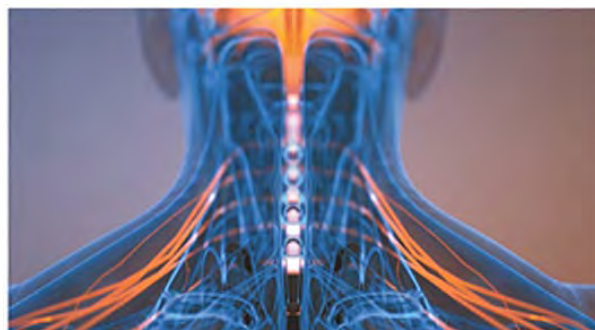
# The Matterhorn Method: A Seamless Integration Between Pain Relief and Performance

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

**T**he leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naples-based Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat thousands of active seniors, over 70 professional athletes and 11 Olympians, in as little as two weeks. Through 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 still live with pain. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again," says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

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



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

### WHY IT WORKS

The reason why Matterhorn Fit has been able to consistently relieve pain in two weeks is credited to their proprietary process called the Matterhorn Method. The Matterhorn Method identifies the root cause of the issue from a neurological level and allows for muscles that were inactive to support the body again which eliminates the pain response from the brain.

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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# IS YOUR INDOOR ENVIRONMENT MAKING YOUR PET SICK?

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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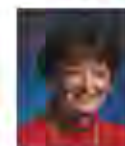
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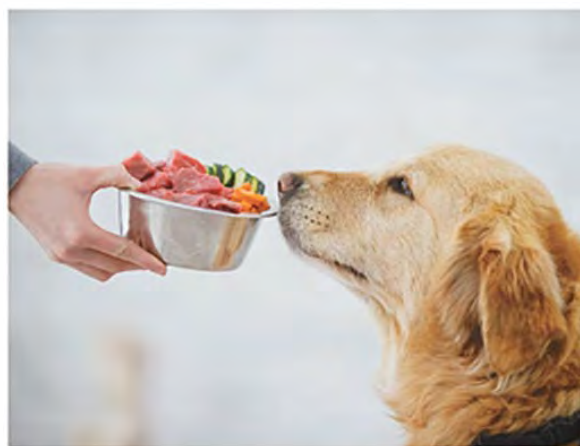
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# Nourishing Companions: Unveiling the Vitality of Diet and Nutrition for Pets

**O**ur furry, feathery, and scaly friends are not just pets; they are beloved companions who deserve the utmost care and attention, especially when it comes to their diet and nutrition. Just like us, their human counterparts, animals thrive when provided with a balanced and nourishing diet. The importance of diet and nutrition for pets cannot be overstated; it serves as the cornerstone for their overall well-being and longevity.

Adequate nutrition forms the bedrock of a pet's health. Essential nutrients such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals are vital for their growth, energy, and immune system. Each species and breed have specific dietary needs, and meeting these requirements ensures their bodies function optimally. For instance, carnivorous pets like cats need high protein diets to support their muscle maintenance and overall health, while herbivorous animals such as rabbits require a diet rich in fiber to maintain healthy digestion.

The quality and source of pet food are pivotal. Opting for high-quality, well-balanced commercial pet food or preparing homemade meals under veterinary guidance can significantly impact an animal's health. Quality food choices can prevent common health issues like obesity, dental problems, and skin conditions. Moreover, specialized diets can cater to specific health conditions like allergies, diabetes, or renal issues, enhancing the pet's quality of life.



Beyond physical health, nutrition influences a pet's behavior and mental well-being. A nutrient-rich diet can foster better cognition, improved mood, and reduced stress levels. Behavioral problems in pets can often be linked to inadequate nutrition, highlighting the intricate connection between diet and mental health.

However, navigating the realm of pet nutrition can be challenging amidst the vast array of options available. Consulting a veterinarian or a certified animal nutritionist is paramount to tailor a diet suitable for an individual pet's needs. They can provide guidance on portion sizes, dietary restrictions, and the appropriate balance of nutrients, ensuring that pets receive a diet aligned with their specific requirements.

In recent years, the trend of holistic and natural diets for pets has gained momentum. Owners are increasingly recognizing the significance of whole, unprocessed foods and organic ingredients for their furry companions. While these options can be beneficial, it's crucial to ensure they meet the nutritional standards necessary for the pet's health.

Ultimately, the significance of diet and nutrition for pets transcends mere sustenance; it directly influences their quality and longevity of life. Responsible pet ownership involves providing not just love and shelter but also a well-rounded, nutritious diet that caters to their individual needs. As guardians of these cherished beings, it's our responsibility to ensure they receive the best possible nutrition, enriching their lives and fostering a stronger bond between pets and their human counterparts.

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# Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**R**emember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

*2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.*  
Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, *"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"* Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:



- My life is a rat race.
- I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.
- I am just so exhausted.
- I don't know how much more of this I can take.
- I just want to escape.

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.



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



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

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

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

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

## Five critical sets of questions to ask:

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

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

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



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