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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

February 2024

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**THE IMPACT OF
EXERCISE AND
NUTRITION ON
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**Delivering Heart
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WHAT CAN COSMETIC DENTISTRY DO FOR YOU?

By Long Huynh, DMD

Cosmetic dentistry is a branch of dentistry that focuses on improving a patient's smile. Having a beautiful smile with strong, healthy teeth is not only aesthetically pleasing, but is good for your overall health as well. When the teeth are worn down, broken, missing, or permanently stained with unsightly discolored fillings, your bite and cosmetic appearance are compromised.

Cosmetic dentistry differs from general dentistry in that a general dentist provides preventative care, like teeth cleaning and restorations like fillings, crowns, and bridges. These treatments restore appearance as well as health and function. On the other hand, a cosmetic dentist's attention is focused on making your smile more beautiful. Their treatments are aimed at improving the appearance of teeth and gums.

Why visit a cosmetic dentist?

A person with damaged or crooked teeth may not only dislike their smile, but he/she may also have trouble eating or even speaking. For some, having an unattractive smile is a source of embarrassment affecting his/her self-esteem.

Reasons to visit a cosmetic dentist might include:

- Crooked, cracked or damaged teeth
- Misshapen teeth
- Decayed teeth
- Discolored/stained teeth
- Missing teeth

Common types of cosmetic dentistry

Teeth whitening is the number one form of cosmetic dentistry. Over the years, our teeth can become stained by food and drink, smoking or even medications. Many people choose to whiten their teeth simply to make their smile brighter. Teeth whitening can be done through over the counter whitening strips (less effective) or through in-office treatments. At-home treatments usually take a couple of weeks while in-office treatments can often be done in as little as an hour.

Veneers improve the appearance of chipped, broken, or misshapen teeth. They are thin, white shells made from porcelain, resin, or ceramic. They are custom made for each patient and are meant to resemble the natural shape of one's teeth. Some types of veneers,



porcelain for example, require removal of enamel to allow the veneer to adhere well to the teeth. Other types, known as prep-less veneers, do not require any procedure before their attachment.

Gum contouring is an option for those who naturally have excess gum tissue. In this procedure, the dentist can actually remove extra tissue and reshape the patient's gum line giving the patient a more symmetrical or balanced smile.

Dental implants are a good choice for those who have lost a tooth. They are usually performed in stages. The cosmetic dentist must first attach a screw to the patient's jaw bone where the tooth is missing. After a period of time, often around 2 weeks, the implant is inserted into the bone socket of the missing tooth. It is important for the bone to heal tightly around the implant. Because of this healing process, the whole procedure can take months to be complete.

American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) Cosmetic dentistry is a popular choice for people who are unhappy with or embarrassed by their smile and should be performed by dentists who are highly trained in the field. AACD is dedicated to advancing excellence in the art and science of comprehensive

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cosmetic dentistry and encouraging the highest standards of ethical conduct and responsible patient care. Its members are committed to responsible esthetics. They strive to maintain the health, function, and appearance of their patients for a lifetime, ensuring that esthetic procedures complement the overall health of their patients. They are committed to making decisions about treatments based on evidence-based protocols and sound clinic judgement. AACD members seek to provide minimally invasive treatment protocols when and where appropriate.

In Southwest Florida there is only one dentist who is an accredited member of the AACD. Dr. Long Huynh of Park Family and Cosmetic Dentistry in Naples.

Dr. Long Huynh, DMD



Dr. Long Huynh achieved Accredited Member status in the AACD - the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. The AACD Accreditation process serves to set the standard for excellence in cosmetic dentistry.

Dr. Long Huynh is one of 426 dentists currently accredited worldwide and the only accredited member of the AACD in Southwest Florida.

It's difficult, and it's life-changing, but Long Huynh, DMD, can tell you that completing the Accreditation process in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) is worth all of the hard work.

Dr. Huynh has earned Accredited status in the AACD-an accomplishment completed by only 426 dental professionals in the history of the association, showcasing his commitment to excellence in the dental profession.

He reached this achievement after completing a rigorous credentialing process including a written examination, the submission of clinical cases for examination and an oral examination.

Dr. Huynh graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina. Before studying dentistry, he received a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Georgia State University, Atlanta. After one year of advanced training in General Dentistry from University of Florida, School of Dentistry, Dr. Long Huynh has undergone extensive postgraduate training from many renowned cosmetic, implant, and general dentistry programs throughout the country. He is bilingual in English and Vietnamese.

Dr. Long was awarded AACD Accreditation Candidacy in 2012, and as of 2023 Dr. Long is the only dentist in the Naples area to hold the AACD Accreditation.

Comprehensive Guide to Breast Cancer Prevention and Screening

Magnolia Breast Center is a beacon of excellence in pursuing optimal breast health, offering a cutting-edge breast health program encompassing every facet of care. At Magnolia Breast Center, we understand the importance of a holistic approach to breast cancer prevention and screening. Our comprehensive breast health program goes beyond routine screenings, providing a spectrum of services that include breast cancer risk assessment, genetic counseling, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship care.

A team of fellowship-trained, board-certified surgeons and oncologists embodies our commitment to excellence. These dedicated professionals collaborate seamlessly to deliver highly effective, personalized, coordinated healthcare for our patients. At the heart of our mission is recognizing that breast health is a priority for both women and men. We take pride in offering customized treatment and care programs designed to exceed our patient's expectations, constantly improve the quality of medical services, and achieve the best possible outcomes.

1. Lifestyle Factors:

Regular Exercise: Regular physical activity has been linked to a lower risk of breast cancer. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity weekly exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming, or cycling.

Healthy Diet: Adopting a nutritious diet plays a significant role in breast cancer prevention. Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit the intake of processed foods, red meat, and sugary beverages.

Moderate Alcohol Consumption: Limit alcohol intake, as excessive alcohol consumption has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. For women who choose to drink, it is recommended to have no more than one drink per day.

2. Medical Screenings:

Mammograms: Regular mammograms are a critical tool for breast cancer screening. The American Cancer Society recommends that women with an average risk of breast cancer start annual mammograms at age 40. However, individual screening plans may vary based on personal and family medical history.

Clinical Breast Exams: Regular clinical breast exams by a healthcare professional are essential for detecting any changes in the breast tissue. Women should discuss the frequency of clinical breast exams with their healthcare provider.

Breast Self-Exams: While not a substitute for regular mammograms, breast self-exams can enhance awareness. Women should be familiar with the normal look and feel of their breasts and report any changes to their healthcare provider promptly.

Genetic Testing: Some individuals may have an increased risk of breast cancer due to genetic factors. Genetic testing may be recommended for those with a family history of breast cancer or specific risk factors. Consult with a healthcare provider to determine if genetic testing is appropriate.

Breast Cancer Risk Assessment: Magnolia Breast Center can determine whether you are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer compared to the average person. Based on our assessment, we will recommend how often you should get checked and what lifestyle changes you must make to reduce your risk of developing cancer. We can determine your risk of developing non-invasive and invasive breast cancers.

3. Statistics:

- According to the American Cancer Society, about 1 in 8 women in the United States will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime.
- Regular mammography screening has been shown to reduce breast cancer mortality by detecting tumors at an earlier, more treatable stage.
- Lifestyle modifications, including maintaining a healthy weight and engaging in regular physical activity, may contribute to a 30-40% reduction in breast cancer risk.

Taking proactive steps to prevent breast cancer involves a combination of lifestyle choices and regular medical screenings. Customizing prevention strategies based on individual risk factors and consulting with healthcare professionals for personalized advice is essential. Encourage readers to prioritize

their breast health by adopting a healthy lifestyle and participating in recommended screenings. Early detection and prevention are powerful tools in the fight against breast cancer.

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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DELIVERING HEART CARE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Seconds count, especially during a heart attack. The risk of damage to the heart increases as time passes without treatment. Naples area residents can now find around-the-clock treatment for heart attacks at two Physicians Regional Health System hospitals.

Physicians Regional – Pine Ridge opened the Heart Center in July 2020 which allows patients to receive a full range of cardiology procedures. The Heart Center, a 24/7 heart attack receiving facility, includes a dedicated cardiovascular intensive care unit for open heart surgery patients and a new recovery space for cardiac and interventional patients. Located in the hospital's newly renovated second floor, the center contains two operating rooms, three cardiac catheterization labs, five intensive-care beds and 15 beds for pre- and post-operative care.

Our Pine Ridge and Collier Blvd. hospitals have received full Chest Pain Center with Primary PCI Accreditations. This means that this location also has percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) available 24/7 on site. Percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) is a non-surgical procedure that improves blood flow to the heart by inserting a balloon catheter into the artery to relieve any narrowing or blockage.

Physicians Regional Heart Center services include:

- Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery
- Balloon Valvuloplasty
- Thoracic Surgery
- Valve Surgery
- Cardiac Catheterization
- Internal Cardiac Defibrillator Placement
- Pacemaker Implantation
- Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI)
- High-risk Electrophysiology Ablations
- Structural Heart Program: Watchman and TAVR



Both campuses will be providing around-the-clock treatment for patients experiencing chest pain and other cardiac emergencies. Working in coordination with Collier County EMS and local first responders, the physicians and staff at Physicians Regional will expedite the diagnosis and treatment of all cardiac emergencies.

The goal is to have a patient receiving comprehensive treatment within 90 minutes of paramedics' arrival - a timeframe known as the Door-to-Balloon Golden Rule, for restoring blood flow in the blocked arteries.

The heart is one of the most important muscles in the body, yet over 84 million Americans suffer from a form of cardiovascular disease. You could be one of them if you don't seek care fast. Whether you need acute emergency treatment due to a heart attack or have a chronic heart condition that requires continued care, Physicians Regional Healthcare System has cardiologists close to your home.

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THE IMPACT OF EXERCISE AND NUTRITION ON CANCER PATIENT OUTCOMES

By Nancy J. Tarbell, MD FASTRO - Director of Health and Wellness

Cancer, a formidable adversary affecting millions worldwide, demands a multifaceted approach to treatment and care. In the United States alone, statistics paint a stark reality: an estimated 1.9 million new cancer cases will be diagnosed in 2024, underscoring the urgency of exploring every avenue to enhance treatment outcomes. While medical interventions are pivotal, this article aims to shed light on the profound impact that exercise and nutrition can have on the journey of cancer patients. Grounded in facts and scientific evidence, our exploration will delve into the transformative power of strength training and dietary modifications, offering insights into how these lifestyle components can increase the chances of survival for individuals navigating the challenging terrain of cancer.

THE ROLE OF EXERCISE IN CANCER TREATMENT:

1. Enhanced Immune Function: Regular strength training has been shown to boost the immune system. For cancer patients, a strengthened immune response is vital in the fight against cancer cells and in preventing the spread of the disease.

2. Reduced Treatment Side Effects: Cancer treatments often have challenging side effects, such as fatigue and muscle weakness. Incorporating structured exercise routines has been proven to alleviate these side effects, enhancing the overall quality of life for cancer patients undergoing treatment.

3. Improved Mental Health: Exercise has profound effects on mental well-being. Cancer patients often experience emotional distress, anxiety, and depression. Regular physical activity has been linked to improved mood and reduced psychological symptoms, providing much-needed support during the challenging journey of cancer treatment.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN NUTRITION AND CANCER SURVIVAL:

1. Optimal Nutrient Intake: To maintain strength and resilience, adequate nutrition is crucial for cancer patients. Consuming a well-balanced diet rich in essential nutrients provides the body with the tools it needs to endure the rigors of cancer treatment.

2. Weight Management: Maintaining a healthy weight is associated with improved outcomes for cancer patients. Nutrition plays a pivotal role in weight management, and dietary modifications can help individuals achieve and sustain an optimal weight during and after cancer treatment.

3. Reduced Risk of Recurrence: Certain dietary patterns have been linked to a lower risk of cancer recurrence. For instance, a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains has decreased the likelihood of cancer returning, providing patients a better chance of long-term survival.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACHES:

1. Consultation with Healthcare Providers: Cancer patients must consult with their healthcare providers before initiating any exercise or nutrition program. Individualized plans tailored to the specific needs and conditions of the patient ensure safety and effectiveness.

2. Monitoring and Adjustments: Regular monitoring of patients' progress and making necessary adjustments to their exercise and nutrition plans are essential to a comprehensive cancer care strategy. Healthcare professionals can guide patients on the appropriate intensity and duration of exercise and help fine-tune dietary recommendations based on individual responses.

The combination of exercise and nutrition holds immense potential to influence cancer patients' outcomes positively. From bolstering immune function and reducing treatment side effects to supporting mental well-being and reducing the risk of recurrence, the evidence supporting these interventions is compelling. However, it is crucial to emphasize that these strategies should be implemented under healthcare professionals' guidance. Cancer patients should work closely with their medical providers to develop personalized exercise and nutrition plans that align with their unique circumstances, ultimately contributing to improved chances of survival and a better quality of life.

For more information, please visit: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaoncology/fullarticle/2807734>
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaoncology/article-abstract/2807733>

THE INSPIRE EXERCISE MEDICINE WAY:

We are not a gym. This is not physical therapy. We are a medical fitness center, and our medical staff prescribes exercise as a complementary treatment in managing chronic conditions, including cancer.

Initially designed to support treating patients living with cancer, our exercise protocol is based on strength training. It focuses on several important metrics that strongly correlate with reducing the risk of cancer recurrence and improving physical function and quality of life.

Our performance coaches carefully guide, adjust, and intensify your exercise dose, progressively loading the body to activate the internal pharmacy within the muscles and prompt healing physiological processes.

Dr. Nancy Tarbell, IEM Health and Wellness Director

Dr. Tarbell's impact extends beyond her expertise; she has inspired students, physicians, and professionals, including myself. As the first female professor in radiation oncology at Harvard Medical School, she led the pediatric radiation oncology program at Boston Children's Hospital. She pioneered the pediatric radiation oncology service at MGH. Her founding directorship of the Center for Faculty Development and the Office for Women's Careers at MGH further reflects her commitment.

Dr. Tarbell has been recognized as one of the best doctors in America and has served on the national Children's Oncology Group Brain Tumor Committee for 30 years. She has authored over 300 original publications and book chapters and is the co-editor of Pediatric Radiation Oncology, now in its 6th edition.

She remains active in medicine. As part of another groundbreaking endeavor, Dr. Tarbell is the health and wellness director for Inspire Exercise Medicine in Naples, FL. She collaborates on clinical strategy and patient experience for this medical practice that prescribes exercise to prevent and manage chronic health conditions, including cancer.



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aqualane Clinical Research has trials open for people with:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Essential Tremor
- Multiple System Atrophy
- Migraine
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Other Neuropsychiatric Conditions



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Revolutionizing Cardiovascular Care: The Power of Precision Medicine

By Sandraliz Solano, MD

PRECISION MEDICINE, ALSO KNOWN AS PERSONALIZED MEDICINE, IS TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE OF HEALTHCARE BY TAILORING MEDICAL DECISIONS AND TREATMENTS TO INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN GENES, ENVIRONMENTS, AND LIFESTYLES. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE DELVE INTO THE KEY COMPONENTS OF PRECISION MEDICINE AND EXPLORE ITS APPLICATIONS IN CARDIOVASCULAR CARE. THE PRECISION CARDIOVASCULAR AND LIFESTYLE INSTITUTE (PCLI) AND THE NAPLES CARDIOVASCULAR AND ENDOVASCULAR CENTER (NCEC) ARE HIGHLIGHTED AS PIONEERS USHERING IN A NEW ERA OF COMPREHENSIVE AND PERSONALIZED HEALTHCARE.

Key Components of Precision Medicine:

Precision medicine incorporates genomics, biomarkers, and data integration to create a comprehensive understanding of an individual's health. Genomic analysis identifies genetic variations influencing susceptibility to diseases, while biomarkers indicate disease presence or predict treatment response. Data integration combines genetic information, clinical records, lifestyle factors, and environmental exposures, enabling more personalized and targeted healthcare.

Applications in the Modern World:

- 1. Customized Treatment:** Precision medicine allows for personalized and targeted treatment plans, optimizing effectiveness and reducing adverse reactions.
- 2. Disease Prevention:** By identifying genetic predispositions and risk factors, preventive measures tailored to individual needs can be implemented.
- 3. Improved Diagnostics:** Enhanced accuracy in disease diagnosis through comprehensive imaging, genetic and molecular information leads to early detection and intervention.
- 4. Optimizing Drug Development:** Pharmaceutical companies can develop drugs targeting specific genetic factors, potentially increasing treatment efficacy.
- 5. Cost-Efficiency:** Tailoring treatments may result in more efficient healthcare resource utilization, reducing unnecessary interventions and costs.
- 6. Patient Engagement:** Precision medicine empowers patients to actively participate in healthcare decisions, fostering a better understanding of their genetic and health information.

Understanding the Heart of the Matter:

Despite advancements in medical science, heart disease remains a global challenge affecting millions. American Heart Month serves as a moment to reflect on innovative approaches, with precision medicine emerging as a personalized solution to cardiovascular care.



The Naples Cardiovascular and Endovascular Center (NCEC):

In Southwest Florida, Dr. Julian Javier, an interventional cardiologist, leads a groundbreaking initiative to introduce precision medicine. Collaborating with board-certified colleagues Dr. Leandro Perez, Dr. Tracy Roth and Dr. Sandraliz Solano, the team integrates precision and lifestyle medicine into primary care and cardiovascular health, addressing root causes rather than symptoms.

The Role of Cardiologists in Precision Medicine:

Cardiologists play a pivotal role in implementing precision medicine by interpreting genetic data, biomarkers, and diagnostic information to formulate personalized treatment plans. American Heart Month emphasizes the importance of regular check-ups and screenings, transformed through precision medicine into tailored assessments considering individual risk factors and genetic predispositions.

Empowering Patients through Knowledge and Personalized Care:

Precision medicine empowers patients through knowledge, encouraging active engagement in their health journey. The Precision Cardiovascular and Lifestyle Institute envisions a future where patients are active participants, making informed decisions about their well-being.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Primary and Cardiovascular Care:

Envisioning a future where precision medicine is integral to routine healthcare. Celebrating American Heart Month becomes an opportunity to embrace precision medicine's principles, paving the way for a heart-healthy tomorrow. In this future, cardiologists become guides on personalized health journeys, and precision medicine ensures each patient receives the attention their heart deserves.

The Precision Cardiovascular & Lifestyle Institute (PCLI), set to open in spring 2024, aims to elevate the standard of care by providing concierge services with round-the-clock accessibility to dedicated physicians. Specializing in primary care, cardiovascular, and lifestyle medicine, the institute emphasizes collaborative efforts among distinguished doctors for unparalleled healthcare. In conclusion, precision medicine emerges as a revolutionary force in healthcare, particularly in cardiovascular care. Pioneering institutes like the PCLI and NCEC are at the forefront, championing personalized and comprehensive healthcare, transforming the way we approach heart health.



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

Dr. Julian J. Javier, Dr. Leandro Perez, 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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WHY YOUR KNEE HURTS, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

REGENERATIVE MEDICINE FOR CARTILAGE WEAR OR TEAR

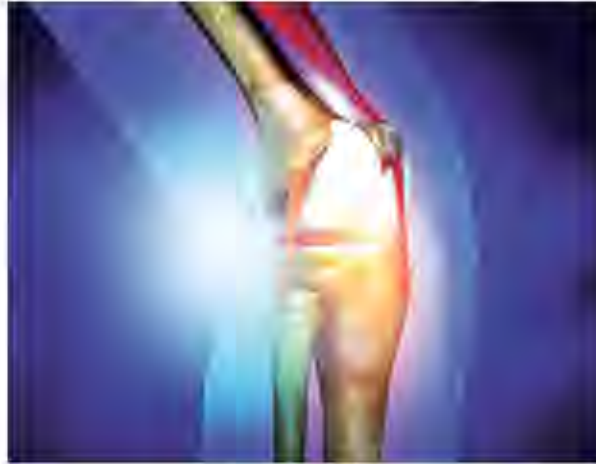
Due to injuries, mechanical issues, or overuse and aging, cartilage may be damaged or lost, Resulting in pain.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Stop Overlooking Signs of Incontinence

By Rolando Rivera, MD, FACS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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By Dr. Michael Shaffer

Sciatica... a Real Pain in the Butt!

Did you know that approximately 40% of people will experience sciatica at some point? A startling statistic underscores the widespread prevalence of this often-debilitating condition. Sciatica is clinically called a lumbar radiculopathy. It is characterized by low back pain that radiates down the leg and is a common condition that affects many individuals.

COMMON CAUSES OF SCIATICA:

- 1. Herniated Discs:** When the soft tissue between spinal vertebrae bulges or ruptures, it can compress nerve roots, typically L4 through S1 nerve roots, leading to sciatic pain.
- 2. Spinal Stenosis:** Narrowing the spinal canal can pressure the nerves, causing pain and discomfort.
- 3. Degenerative Disc Disease:** As discs in the spine wear down with age, they may irritate or compress the sciatic nerve.
- 4. Spondylolisthesis** occurs when a vertebra slips out of place and can contribute to sciatic nerve compression.

SYMPTOMS OF SCIATICA:

- 1. Low Back Pain:** The hallmark symptom is persistent pain in the lower back.
- 2. Leg Pain:** Pain radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, often extending down a leg.
- 3. Numbness and Tingling:** Individuals may experience numbness or tingling in the affected leg.
- 4. Weakness:** Muscular weakness may be observed, especially in the leg.

DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING FOR SCIATICA:

- **X-ray:** This imaging technique provides a detailed view of the bones and can identify issues such as fractures, arthritis, or structural abnormalities.
- **MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging):** It offers a more comprehensive view of soft tissues, including discs, nerves, and ligaments, aiding in the diagnosis of herniated discs or spinal stenosis.

TREATMENT OPTIONS:

1. Conservative Approaches:

- **Chiropractic Care:** Manual adjustments by chiropractors aim to improve spinal alignment and mobility.
- **Acupuncture:** Some individuals find relief through acupuncture, where thin needles are inserted into specific points to stimulate natural healing.
- **Physical Therapy:** Tailored exercises and stretches can improve flexibility and strengthen the muscles supporting the spine, reducing sciatic pain.
- **Anti-Inflammatory Medications:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) may be prescribed to alleviate pain and inflammation.

2. Lifestyle Modifications:

- **Exercise:** Regular, low-impact exercises such as walking or swimming can promote overall spine health.
- **Ergonomic Changes:** Adjusting workstations or daily activities can reduce strain on the lower back.

3. Epidural Steroid Injections:

- **How It Works:** Injections deliver corticosteroids directly to the affected nerve root, reducing inflammation and providing temporary relief.
- **Effectiveness:** Studies have shown that epidural steroid injections can reduce pain for some individuals.

4. Spinal Decompression:

- **Mechanism of Action:** Non-surgical spinal decompression allows disc bulges or herniations and nutrients to be pulled back into the disc.
- **Non-Invasive Nature:** Unlike surgical interventions, spinal decompression is non-invasive, minimizing risks and downtime.
- **Patient Experience:** Patients typically experience a gentle stretching sensation during sessions, finding the procedure comfortable and well-tolerated.

5. Surgery (in Severe Cases):

- **Microdiscectomy:** A surgical procedure to remove a portion of a herniated disc that may be pressing on the sciatic nerve.
- **Laminectomy:** Involves removing part of the vertebral bone to relieve pressure on the nerve.
- **Effectiveness:** Surgical interventions are considered when conservative treatments have not provided relief, and they can be highly effective in some cases.

ADDITIONAL FACTS ABOUT SPINAL DECOMPRESSION:

- **Targeted Relief:** Spinal decompression specifically targets the affected spinal segment, providing a focused approach to pain management. Specialized equipment, the Hill DT table, uses precision actuators to deliver the most sophisticated and advanced decompression technology available.
- **Promotes Healing:** By creating a negative pressure within the disc, spinal decompression facilitates the influx of nutrients and oxygen-rich blood, promoting natural healing.
- **Non-Pharmaceutical Solution:** It offers a drug-free alternative for individuals seeking pain relief without relying on medication.

In the realm of sciatica treatment, a personalized approach is crucial. Consulting with a healthcare professional such as Dr. Michael Shaffer, Chiropractic Physician, will help determine the most practical combination of treatments tailored to an individual's unique condition.

Spinal decompression is gaining popularity as an innovative and practical approach to treating sciatica. This therapy aims to create a negative pressure within the disc, reducing nerve root compression. By relieving pressure in the spine, increased circulation also occurs in the disc which is a vital aid in the healing process. The procedure is non-invasive, and patients typically experience a gentle stretching sensation during the session.

Sciatica could be the culprit if you're experiencing persistent low back and leg pain. Understanding the common causes, recognizing symptoms, and exploring advanced treatment options like spinal decompression can pave the way to a pain-free and healthier life.

Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation. For a complimentary consultation, please call (239) 793-3200.



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LEAP INTO HEART HEALTH THIS LEAP YEAR WITH PHYSICIANS REGIONAL

It's a leap year, and that means we all can look forward to an extra day in February – an extra day to enjoy life, be well, and pursue the things that make us happy. And, while an extra day is nice, what if you could add more years to your life?

Caring for your heart is one of the best ways to increase longevity. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States, responsible for one in five adult deaths in the U.S. each year. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) estimates one person dies every 36 seconds from cardiovascular disease. But there are actions you can take right now to reduce the risk of heart disease.

This February, Physicians Regional is marking American Heart Month and the 2024 leap year with its Leap into Heart Health educational email series. People who sign up will receive short, fun-filled, fact-filled, potentially life-saving emails designed to help improve heart health. Topics include ways to “spring” into action, “skip” past stress, “hurdle” over harmful habits, “hop” into bed earlier for better rest and other “steps” anyone can take toward a stronger, healthier heart.

Dr. Ronald Caputo says “Most people can reduce the risk of heart disease by adopting a healthy lifestyle, not smoking, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol and treating high blood pressure. And while this may sound like a lot to manage, in many cases, small adjustments can lead to measurable improvement in heart health.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the first American Heart Month in February 1964. Several years before that, when he was Senate Majority Leader, Johnson was a 60-cigarette-per-day smoker and suffered a near-fatal heart attack. He was only 46 years old. Every U.S. President has since recognized February as American Heart Month and a time to educate Americans about ways to prevent heart disease.

The Leap into Heart Health email series will be delivered to inboxes every other day in February with a short article and heart health tips you can try right away. The series also includes warnings about symptoms and conditions that may indicate you should see a doctor, especially high blood pressure, high cholesterol and genetic predisposition to heart disease.

“At Physicians Regional, we are committed to helping people live healthier and, for most of us, that should start with taking better care of our hearts,” says Scott Lowe, CEO. “People who Leap into Heart Health with us this February will find the email content takes only a couple of minutes to read each day, but the advice is fun, sometimes surprising, always informative, and it can be life-saving. I hope everyone will sign up.”

To “Leap into Heart Health,” sign up at PhysiciansRegional.com/Leap



Physicians Regional Healthcare System invites you to **LEAP INTO HEART HEALTH** this February by signing up for a fun-filled, fact-filled, potentially life-changing email series.

Since it is a “leap year” we are going to show you how to skip past stress, jump for joy, kick start good habits and kick some bad ones for good. So, hop to it and make this the year you leap forward to better heart health.

Visit PhysiciansRegional.com/Leap or scan the QR code to sign up today.

 **PHYSICIANS REGIONAL**
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Holistic Solutions to Commonly Asked Health Concerns

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

People ask: *I get awful sinus headaches in the fall and winter. They are so bad that decongestants don't help. Why?*

Dr.Kogan answers: There is a good chance the medications are not helping because sinus trouble is not the source of your pain. In one recent study of 2,991 adults who thought they had sinus headaches, 88% actually had migraines. The confusion is understandable. During a migraine, the trigeminal nerve (one of the brain's pathways for migraine-related pain signals) fires overtime. This can also cause congestion. And incidence of migraines peaks in the fall – the shorter, darker days can result in serotonin dips, which can cause blood vessels to swell. Fortunately, 5-HTP, an amino acid that converts to serotonin, may help. Typically, 50mg taken once daily, is highly effective in reducing frequency and severity of migraines. I like 5-HTP by Douglas Labs or Biotics Research. Both vegetarian and No-GMO – available here: <https://us.fullscript.com/welcome/skogan> In addition to 5-HTP, try organic Feverfew extract by Herb Pharm, one full squeeze of the dropper bulb, dissolved in 2 oz of water 3 times /day. Also available at the above link.

People ask: *I battled a nasty cold last week, and now there is a protruding pea-sized lump in the front of my neck. It does not hurt, but it does seem to be getting bigger. Should I just chalk it up to swollen glands from being sick?*

Dr.Kogan answers: While swollen lymph nodes can be triggered by the common cold, they generally occur on either side of the neck, under the jaw, or behind ears. Plus they are tender and usually remain swollen only for as long as a virus lasts. On the other hand, a lump located on the throat that does not cause pain is likely a thyroid nodule. This type of solid or fluid-filled lump affects an estimated 10-15% of general population. There are various underlying causes of nodules, including iodine deficiency, an autoimmune condition called Hashimoto's thyroiditis, or rarely even thyroid cancer. The great news is that more than 95% of thyroid nodules are totally benign and have zero malignant potential.



It is important to see your primary care physician, who can determine the cause of your nodule with a physical exam, ultrasound, and blood tests. Most benign nodules will dissipate on their own but your doctor may recommend specific lifestyle and dietary changes to hasten this recovery.

People ask: *While doing some mindless exercises at my desk, I noticed a lump the size of nickel on my wrist. It is sore to the touch, and it seems to bulge even more after a long day of typing. I am a little freaked out – what is this thing?*

Dr.Kogan answers: Don't worry: this sounds like a ganglion cyst, a harmless lump that grows out of a capsule of the joint or from the sheath of a tendon, similar to balloon on a stalk. Ganglion cysts are very common, especially in women, and often occur when repetitive exercises (like typing) cause the tissue surrounding the joint to bulge out of place. As you've noticed, the more active the joint, the larger the cyst often becomes. Your doctor can confirm the diagnosis with a physical exam. He or she may recommend wearing a thin wrist brace like

an elastic ACE bandage for a few weeks to curb unnecessary movement of the wrist. You can still type while wearing it, but try to rest your wrist as much as possible. Also smart: using ergonomic keyboard setup at work, which will also minimize strain on the wrist. If these measures fail to shrink the cyst within three weeks, your doctor may be able to drain it or refer you for low frequency pulsed electromagnetic wave therapy.

People ask: *Exercising in my target heart rate zone exhausts me. I thought I was in shape. Why is it so difficult?*

Dr.Kogan answers: Don't feel disappointed in your stamina – you may just be pushing yourself too hard. Researchers at Northwestern College of Medicine in Chicago reveal that heart rate monitors (like those often used in conjunction with programmable treadmills) are likely to be inaccurate because they were programmed using an outdated formula. This results in a target number that is too high for many women, leading them to exhaustion. The good news: The researchers devised a new formula for determining target heart rate. Calculate 220 minus your age, and multiply the difference by 80%. So, for a 45 year old person, the target heart rate range is $(220-45) \times 80\% = 140$ bpm. So you want to be somewhere around that number. But since it is tough to take your pulse while exercising, here is an easier gauge: If you can carry on a conversation, you are likely in the low –to middle range of your target. If you are breathing too hard to talk, you may be working too hard. If you slow your pace and still tire easily – then see your doctor. She or he will look at your lifestyle (poor sleep and eating habits can cause breathlessness even in athletes), and possibly run tests to check lung capacity and cardiovascular health.



Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

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

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NURTURING WELLNESS TOGETHER: SENIOR COMMUNITIES CAN STRENGTHEN BONDS

By Jenny Bradley

As couples embark on the journey of life together, prioritizing health becomes paramount for a vibrant and fulfilling partnership. Here are a few practical tips for couples to bolster their well-being while shedding light on the advantages of a senior living community, where shared experiences are cherished and support is readily available.

1. Prioritize Regular Physical Activity

Healthy couples are active couples. Incorporate enjoyable physical activities into your routine – whether it's brisk walks, dancing or exploring new hobbies together. The benefits extend beyond physical health; they contribute to emotional well-being and deepen connections.

A senior living community amplifies this by providing onsite fitness programs. From group exercises to scenic walking trails, these communities ensure that staying active is not just a health goal but a shared experience, fostering unity in the pursuit of wellness.

2. Embrace Nutrient-Rich Diets

Cultivate a love for wholesome meals. Plan and prepare nutritious dishes together, exploring a variety of colorful fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Sharing the joy of cooking not only enhances your diet but also strengthens your bond.

At senior living communities, couples can relish chef-prepared meals designed with nutritional needs in mind. This takes the hassle out of meal planning and allows them to savor culinary delights without compromising health goals. At The Carlisle Naples, for example, the active retirement community offers a rotating menu, incorporating everything from traditional comfort foods to delicious yet nutritious FreshZest options, highlighting a plant-based diet.

3. Prioritize Mental Health

Engage in activities that promote mental well-being, such as meditation, mindfulness exercises, or even pursuing shared hobbies that bring joy.



Senior living communities offer wellness programs that focus on mental health, providing couples with resources to enhance cognitive well-being. From art classes to meditation sessions, these communities empower couples to prioritize mental health as a key element of their overall wellness journey. Plus, beyond the warmth of their own partnership, couples can find a wealth of opportunities to forge friendships with fellow residents.

4. Quality Time Amidst a Supportive Community

Cherish your moments together. Senior living communities provide an ideal setting for couples to enjoy each other's company without the stress of home maintenance. With amenities and services at their fingertips, couples can focus on creating lasting memories.

From spaces for shared activities to landscaped gardens for tranquil strolls, these communities are designed to facilitate quality time. And, with a "lock and leave" lifestyle, couples may find they now have more time to travel or visit family more often.

5. Supportive Care When Needed

Relieve the burden of caregiver responsibilities. In the event of health challenges, a dedicated team in senior living communities is ready to provide additional care. This allows couples to navigate health concerns without the added stress of caregiving duties.

The assurance of professional care in senior living communities not only ensures peace of mind for couples but also strengthens their bond. Knowing support is readily available provides additional peace of mind and enables the couple to focus on what truly matters: spending quality time together.

"Whether you're part of a loving couple or navigating life independently, The Carlisle offers a wealth of health and wellness opportunities," said Executive Director Bill Diamond. "It's a place where we celebrate health together, appreciating the unique stories each person brings."

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.



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NAVIGATING THE SHADOWS:

Understanding and Confronting Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) poses a growing threat to the aging population, casting shadows on the clarity of vision and altering the landscape of countless lives. This degenerative eye condition, affecting the macula – the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision – demands our attention and understanding as we explore its intricacies and potential avenues for intervention.

The Silent Onset: Unveiling the Progression of AMD

AMD often begins its subtle assault without overt symptoms, leading to a silent progression that catches many by surprise. As we age, the cellular structure of the macula undergoes changes, contributing to the onset of AMD. Two main types, dry AMD and wet AMD, present distinct challenges. Dry AMD typically advances slowly, marked by the accumulation of drusen, small yellow deposits beneath the retina. In contrast, wet AMD involves abnormal blood vessel growth beneath the macula, leading to faster and more severe vision loss.

The Aging Factor: Unraveling the Demographics of AMD

Understanding the demographics of AMD reveals a stark reality – this condition predominantly affects the elderly. As our global population ages, the prevalence of AMD is on the rise, with individuals over the age of 50 facing an increased risk. Environmental factors, genetics, and lifestyle choices contribute to this complex interplay, underscoring the importance of a multifaceted approach to tackle the root causes of AMD.

The Battle for Sight: Current Treatment Landscape

While a complete cure for AMD remains elusive, advancements in research and medical technology offer hope for managing the condition. Treatments vary based on the type of AMD diagnosed. Anti-VEGF medications, injections that inhibit abnormal blood vessel growth, have become a cornerstone in managing wet AMD. Additionally, lifestyle modifications, including a diet rich in antioxidants and protective eyewear, play a crucial role in mitigating the progression of AMD.



The Role of Genetics: Unveiling the Genetic Puzzle of AMD

Identifying an individual's susceptibility to AMD. Identifying specific genetic markers associated with AMD enables a more personalized and targeted approach to diagnosis and treatment. As the field of genetic research expands, it opens new avenues for precision medicine, offering tailored interventions based on an individual's unique genetic makeup.

Breaking Barriers: Emerging Technologies in AMD Research

Cutting-edge technologies are reshaping the landscape of AMD research and treatment. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making strides in early detection through the analysis of retinal images, providing a faster and more accurate diagnosis. Stem cell therapy and gene editing techniques are also emerging as promising frontiers, offering potential avenues to restore damaged retinal tissue and address the root causes of AMD.

Vision for the Future: A Call to Action Against AMD

The fight against AMD extends beyond the realms of medicine and science – it calls for a collective effort to raise awareness, promote early detection, and support research initiatives. By fostering a culture of eye health and advocating for regular eye check-ups, we can collectively contribute to the prevention and early intervention of AMD, ensuring a clearer and brighter future for generations to come.

In conclusion, Age-Related Macular Degeneration casts a significant shadow on the aging population, affecting millions worldwide. As we unravel the complexities of AMD, from its silent onset to the forefront of genetic research and emerging technologies, the imperative is clear – to confront this condition head-on, armed with knowledge, awareness, and a united commitment to preserving the gift of sight.



Hunter Vittone, OD Optometric Physician

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Statins in Older Adults

By Andre Davies, M.D., Board Certified in Internal Medicine & Geriatrics



Heat health is a critical concern for individuals of all ages, but it becomes increasingly important as we age. Geriatric patients are more susceptible to cardiovascular diseases due to age-related changes. Physicians promote a mixture of lifestyle modifications, diet changes, and medications to improve cardiovascular outcomes. One of the most utilized medication classes are cholesterol lowering agents.

Statins are one type of cholesterol lowering medications, and they are most often a first line option for therapy. For certain patients who have elevated levels of cholesterol, or who have other risk factors like type 2 diabetes, for example, taking a statin can reduce their risk of having poor health outcomes related to heart disease or stroke. Many patients begin screening tests for high cholesterol at the age of 40 at their annual physical exam, and there are clear guidelines on when patients should begin taking a statin.

A common question I'm asked in clinic by patients is, "when can I stop taking my statin"? By the time the patient has come to the appointment, they are already tuned into the conversation about indefinite statin treatment: they have digested articles from the internet, they have listened to specials on the topic in the media, and sometimes they know of a friend whose doctor recently stopped their statin. The answer, of course, is "it's complicated."

While the benefits of statins for patients between the ages of 40 and 75 are well established, they are less clear for patients with ages above 75. Many of the earlier studies that looked at the risk-lowering-effects of statins do not include patients older than 75. As a result, it can be challenging to translate the findings for adults with advanced ages. Additionally, the guidelines are not always clear on what to do with those over 75 when it comes to starting and stopping statins. Research also shows that many primary care physicians are uncomfortable with stopping medications like statins.

As a board-certified geriatrician, re-evaluating a patient's medication list and identifying medications eligible for deprescribing is a critical and routine part of my practice. The concept of deprescribing is to review medications that may no longer be helping, or may even be harmful, and discontinuing them. Many



of my patients, by the time they are in their late 70s and 80s, have accrued a long list of medications and supplements, some of which may have been started decades ago. I try to evaluate the patient as a whole. I take into account their medical history, as well as their specific health goals, and then I partner with them to make decisions on deprescribing.

For many of my patients, continuing to take their statin makes sense. Research has demonstrated benefits in continuing to take statins for patients with known cardiovascular disease, a stroke history, or a history of type 2 diabetes, for instance, and so it is an easy decision to make. For other patients, who are taking a statin for primary prevention, they may still have a cardiovascular or stroke risk lowering benefit, even between the ages of 75-85. There are screening tests, like CT calcium scores, that we sometimes do in the clinic to help stratify these patients into different risk categories, and these tests may help us make better informed decisions about deprescribing.

But even in these cases, the conversation can become complex. These same patients may be most at risk for frailty syndrome, declining health, and shortened life expectancy. They may struggle with polypharmacy issues, cognitive impairment, or intolerance to statins. In these situations, there are little

to no guidelines, and I work closely with my patients to make a tailored decision on whether to deprescribe the statin.

Making a tailored plan means listening closely to your patient. In the geriatric's world, we have a philosophy called the 5 M's, and it is a framework for thinking about the whole patient. They stand for assessing the patient's Mind, Mobility, Medications, Medical issues, and importantly, what Matters Most to the patient. What are their goals? What is their functional status? I try to mesh their goals with their personal medical history in order to help them decide what to do with their statin. Luckily, there are ongoing trials looking at statins in the elderly, which will hopefully help to streamline answer to whether to stop statins or not. But until then, the issue remains a complex answer, which requires connecting the dots between your personal medical history, your specific goals, and a little art of medicine.

As a board-certified Geriatrician & Internal Medicine physician, my goal is to promote heart health and provide comprehensive care to all my patients. By focusing on prevention, early detection, medication management, comprehensive care, and promoting a good quality of life, we can help patients maintain optimal heart health. It is through a collaborative and patient-centered approach that we can make a significant impact on the cardiovascular well-being of our older population.



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Nurturing Love: A Guide to Couples Health

In the intricate dance of relationships, couples find myriad ways to connect, building a tapestry of shared experiences and support. Let's delve into the realm of Couples Health, exploring how partners navigate life's journey together.

SHARING THE TAPESTRY OF LOVE

1. Cherishing Moments: Couples weave their unique tapestry by cherishing special moments, creating a mosaic of shared memories and inside jokes that form the backbone of their connection.

2. Parenting as Partners: Embracing parenthood together, couples share the intricate roles of raising children, forming a strong foundation that shapes the future of their family.

3. Mutual Support: Through life's challenges, be it work, relationships, or personal struggles, couples stand as pillars for each other, offering unwavering support and understanding.

4. Celebrating Milestones: Weddings, births, achievements – these milestones become shared victories, reinforcing the bond between partners and creating a tapestry rich with shared joy.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Couples often develop a unique language, with special phrases or even a single word encapsulating something profound. This shared lexicon becomes a testament to the depth of their connection.

NAVIGATING INDIVIDUAL PATHS

How do couples support each other in personal triumphs and tribulations? The answer lies in the delicate balance of understanding and encouragement.

FACING THE UNEXPECTED: PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND RELATIONSHIPS

How does a couple navigate the unexpected? If you are living with a neurodegenerative disorder, such as Parkinson's Disease, how has this impacted your relationship with your partner?

- It's possible that if you are in a committed relationship, your partner is the first person you told when you learned of your diagnosis. It's also probable that receiving the diagnosis became a significant factor within your relationship and much of your combined energies needed to be directed toward managing this disease.



- Parkinson's includes multiple possible symptoms that impact both the person living with the disorder and significant others. Some of these symptoms are directly related to challenges in communication, movement, daily activities and emotional/mental well-being. In other words, impacting and the quality of time spent together. These challenges include activities of daily living/planning and overall health.

- Couples often share a desire to focus on the things necessary to have a continued positive quality of life while managing the disorder. Couples may seek support from others who are coping with these challenges (such as support groups), as well as sharing in approaching new recommendations for living with the disease, such as trying new activities that support maintaining and improving balance, movement, memory and a shared lifestyle.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUPLES HEALTH

Consider these recommendations to cultivate a positive quality of life while managing health challenges:

- **Medical Involvement:** Attend medical visits and informational events together, ensuring mutual understanding and shared responsibility.

- **Holistic Activities:** Explore new activities that promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, contributing to a shared sense of vitality.

- **Preserving Shared Moments:** Continue participating in activities enjoyed together, reinforcing the connection that forms the foundation of the relationship.

- **Expert Guidance:** In the face of communication difficulties arising from neurodegenerative diseases, consult experts such as speech therapists, physical therapists, and mental health counselors.

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

In the midst of disease-related difficulties, love and the profound bond between partners emerge as powerful forces, surprising and sustaining even in the face of adversity. Celebrate February as Couples Health Month, a time to cherish and nurture the enduring power of love. After all, who doesn't want more of that?



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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

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Naples Cancer Advisors: Skin Cancer Prevention

As we enter February and focus on cancer prevention, one of the easiest forms of cancer prevention is skin cancer prevention. About 3.3 million people in the U.S. will be diagnosed each year with basal and squamous cell skin cancers (the more common types of skin cancer). Melanoma, a more serious type of skin cancer, will have about 97,000 cases in 2023 in the U.S. Melanoma is considered more serious due to the risk of distant spread to other organs or lymph nodes, and it has a striking death rate of just under 8,000 people per year in the U.S.

With these disconcerting numbers, the focus must be on prevention and early detection. The easiest form of skin cancer prevention is the use of sunscreen. In today's busy world, skin cancer prevention can easily become part of a morning routine. The average person takes about 30 minutes to get ready each morning and the regular application of sunscreen would only add about 3-5 minutes to that daily routine.

When it comes to skin cancer prevention, what is the most common question that we get asked... What SPF should I use? Dermatologists recommend using a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30, which blocks 97% of the sun's UVB rays. Higher-number SPFs block slightly more of the sun's UVB rays, but no sunscreen can block 100% of the sun's UVB rays. For women this practice has gotten a little easier, as most cosmetics are made with built-in sunscreen. However, men have a higher incidence of all types of skin cancer compared to their female counterparts. Clearly, we need to do a better job at getting our men to apply sunscreen, especially when there will be prolonged sun exposure.

Sunscreen isn't just about the initial application - it is also about the reapplication in the appropriate intervals. Generally, sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours, especially after swimming or sweating. The important thing to note is that there is sun exposure even when the person isn't doing fun things like boating, swimming, or chores like working in the yard. There is sun exposure even on a daily commute to work riding in the car. This is why making sunscreen application a part of the morning routine is so important.

It is also important to find a product the person will use. Trying different sunscreen lotions or sprays helps the individual find the product that they will use. Although some people will argue that the sprays are not as effective or don't offer sufficient coverage, it is still better than not using any form of sunscreen at all.

Another form of prevention and early detection is routine dermatology visits. The average person should see a dermatologist for a skin check once a year. Depending on the amount of sun damage the person's skin surface has, the frequency may change to 2-3 times a year. Seeing a dermatologist on a regular basis can prevent early skin cancers from developing into something more serious.

Prevention can also be done with the use of sun protective clothing and wide brim hats. This shields the skin from direct UVA/UVB exposure. If the person is going to have prolonged, direct sun exposure, these items are good choices.

Naples Cancer Advisors Medical Director, Philip D. Leming MD, is widely regarded as a national expert in melanoma and complex skin malignancies.

"Over the years of cancer research and treatment, I find caring for ill patients is my calling. One can never master medicine, but you can always care for people. Listening, understanding, being there, caring and realizing that you can always help are what matters." - Philip D. Leming, MD

With Melanoma as his focus, Dr. Leming was a founding member of The Society for Melanoma Research and founding member of the organization, Melanoma Know More. He has contributed to many of the major new developments in melanoma treatment and has extensive experience in immunotherapy, having been trained by Steve Rosenberg MD, Ph.D., and Don Morton MD, as well as many other leaders in the world of melanoma research and treatment.

During his Internal Medicine Residency at the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Leming was accepted as one of a very small number of physicians in the nation to attend The National Cancer Institute - widely regarded as one of the premier organizations for



Philip D. Leming, MD

oncology - and was appointed to the Medicine Branch. There, he studied under some of the most influential cancer specialists in the world, which shaped his future in cancer medicine and cancer treatment.

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 plan of care. For more information, call 239.846.2273 (CARE) or visit NaplesCancerAdvisors.org.



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Emerging Treatments for Age-Related Macular Degeneration: A Beacon of Hope for Adults Over 50

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

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) remains a prevalent concern for individuals over 50, affecting their vision and quality of life. This progressive eye condition gradually damages the macula, the central portion of the retina, leading to blurred or distorted vision and, in severe cases, vision loss. The impact of AMD on daily life can be profound, affecting activities like reading, driving, and recognizing faces.

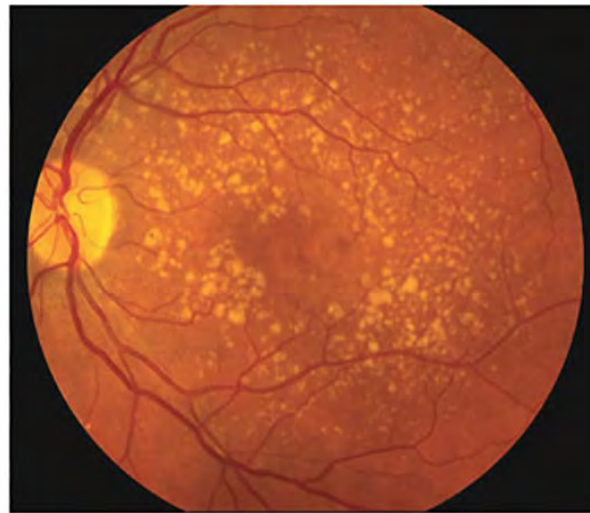
However, in recent years, significant advancements in treatment options have sparked hope for those grappling with AMD. Traditional treatments, such as anti-VEGF injections, remain crucial in managing AMD. These injections target the abnormal blood vessel growth that characterizes the more severe form of the disease, known as "wet" AMD. They have been successful in slowing down vision loss and, in some cases, even restoring vision.

Yet, the landscape of AMD treatments is evolving rapidly, offering new avenues beyond the conventional approaches. One such promising development involves the use of gene therapy. This cutting-edge treatment aims to address the underlying genetic factors contributing to AMD, potentially offering more targeted and long-term solutions.

Another groundbreaking area is stem cell therapy. While still in the experimental stage, researchers are exploring the potential of stem cells to replace damaged cells in the retina, thereby restoring vision. Although this avenue requires further extensive research, it holds immense promise for revolutionizing AMD treatment in the future.

Furthermore, innovative drug therapies are under investigation to supplement or even replace current treatments. These therapies focus on different aspects of the disease, such as inflammation or oxidative stress, offering a multi-pronged approach to combating AMD and potentially reducing the frequency of invasive treatments.

In addition to these medical interventions, lifestyle modifications and nutritional supplements are gaining attention for their role in managing AMD progression. A diet rich in antioxidants, omega-3



fatty acids, and specific vitamins and minerals has been associated with a reduced risk of AMD advancement. Furthermore, lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and protecting the eyes from harmful UV rays may contribute to slowing the disease's progression.

While these advancements are promising, it's important to note that not all treatments might be suitable for everyone, and their effectiveness can vary from person to person. Consulting with an eye care professional is crucial for proper diagnosis and personalized treatment plans.

Moreover, the cost and accessibility of these emerging treatments remain important considerations. As these innovative therapies continue to evolve, ensuring their availability and affordability to a broader population becomes a significant concern for healthcare systems worldwide.

In conclusion, the landscape of AMD treatment is witnessing a remarkable transformation, offering newfound hope for individuals over 50 facing this debilitating condition. From gene therapy and stem cell research to innovative drug therapies and lifestyle modifications, the spectrum of options for managing AMD is expanding. While these advancements hold immense promise, continued research, accessibility, and personalized care are essential to harness the full potential of these emerging treatments and improve the lives of those affected by AMD.

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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Promoting Heart Health: Facts, Infusions, and Lifestyle Tips

February is National Heart Health month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about cardiovascular well-being. At Paragon Healthcare, we are committed to providing you with crucial information to help you prioritize your heart health. As February unfolds, we embark on a journey to prioritize heart health during National Heart Health Month. In the United States, the stakes are high, with cardiovascular diseases claiming a staggering number of lives each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease remains the leading cause of death, responsible for approximately 697,000 deaths annually. These statistics underscore the urgent need for awareness and action. At Paragon Healthcare, we stand at the forefront of the battle against heart disease, arming you with essential facts, innovative treatments like Evkeeza and Leqvio injections, and empowering lifestyle tips to fortify your heart against the challenges it may face. Join us in this vital crusade for heart health.

FACTS AND STATISTICS:

1. Prevalence of Heart Disease:

- Heart disease remains a leading cause of mortality globally.
- According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 17.9 million deaths occur annually due to cardiovascular diseases.

2. Cholesterol and Heart Health:

- Elevated cholesterol levels are a major risk factor for heart disease.
- Evkeeza and Leqvio injections are cutting-edge treatments designed to lower cholesterol effectively.

Evkeeza Infusions: Evkeeza is a groundbreaking medication designed to address high cholesterol, specifically in patients with homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HoFH).

1. Mechanism of Action:

- Evkeeza works by blocking an enzyme called ANGPTL3, which plays a crucial role in lipid metabolism.
- By inhibiting this enzyme, Evkeeza helps lower LDL cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of cardiovascular events.



2. Clinical Efficacy:

- Clinical trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of Evkeeza in significantly reducing LDL cholesterol levels in patients with HoFH.

Leqvio Injections: Leqvio is another innovative injection therapy designed to lower cholesterol levels. It belongs to a class of medications known as PCSK9 inhibitors. Here's what you need to know about Leqvio:

1. PCSK9 Inhibition:

- Leqvio works by inhibiting the PCSK9 protein, a key regulator of LDL cholesterol receptors.
- By blocking PCSK9, Leqvio enhances the liver's ability to remove LDL cholesterol from the bloodstream.

2. Reducing Cardiovascular Risk:

- Clinical studies have shown that Leqvio effectively reduces the risk of cardiovascular events in patients with hypercholesterolemia.

Heart-Healthy Lifestyle Tips: In addition to advanced medical treatments, a heart-healthy lifestyle is crucial for overall cardiovascular well-being. Consider incorporating the following habits into your daily routine:

1. Balanced Diet:

- Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats and added sugars.

2. Regular Exercise:

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week.
- Include strength training exercises to improve overall cardiovascular fitness.

3. Manage Stress:

- Practice stress-reducing techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
- Prioritize adequate sleep to support overall mental and physical well-being.

4. Quit Smoking:

- Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. Seek support to quit smoking and improve heart health.

As we observe National Heart Health month, Paragon Healthcare is dedicated to providing you with the tools and information needed to prioritize your cardiovascular well-being. From innovative infusions like Evkeeza and Leqvio injections to heart-healthy lifestyle tips, taking proactive steps towards a healthier heart is within reach. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice tailored to your unique health needs.

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ASK THE EXPERT

Hearing Loss and Cardiovascular Disorders

By Brittany Colburn, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

Greater emphasis is being placed on hearing health now than ever before. Anyone over the age of 55 should have a baseline hearing test performed by a licensed audiologist. It is important to understand the risks you take if hearing loss and tinnitus are ignored.

"A growing body of research shows that a person's hearing health and cardiovascular health frequently correspond."¹

Studies have shown that a healthy cardiovascular system has a positive effect on hearing.

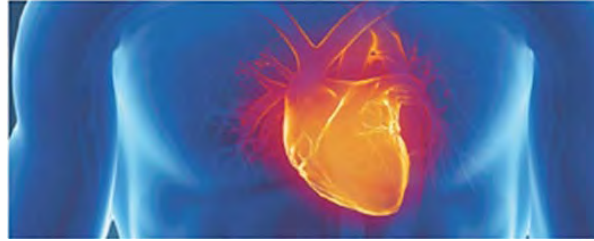
A study of our Brigham and Women's Hospital published online in The American Journal of Medicine found that a higher level of physical activity is associated with the lower risk of hearing loss in women. At the same time, the study found that a higher body mass index (BMI) and larger waist circumference are each associated with higher risk of hearing loss.²

The heart and hearing connection.

Poor cardiovascular health causes inadequate blood flow and blood vessel trauma to the inner ear. The inner ear is so sensitive to blood flow that disorders such as hearing loss, particularly at the lower frequencies, may be an early warning sign of cardiovascular disease.

The two-part Framingham Study³ hypothesized that low-frequency hearing loss was associated with cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular status was determined for approximately 1,000 patients of the audiology department. Associations between their audiogram patterns and cardiovascular variables were tested and controlled for age and gender. Logistic regression models were used to calculate cardiovascular risk factors from audiogram pattern. The models were applied to a separate group of 90 subjects recruited from cardiology and geriatric medicine clinics, who were also given audiograms.

Results indicated a significant association between low-frequency hearing loss and cardiovascular disease risk factors. When controlling for age, hypertension, diabetes, smoking and hyperlipidemia, low-frequency hearing loss was significantly associated with the following cardiovascular disorders:



- Intracranial vascular pathology (stroke and transient ischemic attacks)
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Coronary artery disease
- Myocardial infarction

Ipo facto, low-frequency hearing loss may be considered a marker indicating the presence or potential development of cardiovascular disease.

"We conclude there is a significant relationship between cardiovascular status and audiometric pattern."⁴

"(There is) significant evidence that impaired cardiovascular health negatively impacts hearing ... improved cardiovascular health may contribute to healthier ears, particularly among older adults."⁵

Researchers concluded individuals with cardiovascular disorders may be more prone to hearing loss and therefore in need of hearing evaluations. They also found an association between low-frequency hearing loss and numerous cardiovascular disease events.

The negative influence of impaired cardiovascular health on both the peripheral and central auditory system, and the potential positive influence of improved cardiovascular health on these same systems, has been found through a sizable body of research conducted over more than six decades. The most significant positive relationship between improved cardiovascular health and improvements in those auditory systems has been found in older adults. If that relationship continues to be confirmed, then a potential new avenue for auditory rehabilitation on behalf of adults who possess impaired auditory function may be discovered.

Certain audiogram patterns have been found to correlate strongly with cerebrovascular and peripheral arterial disease. Because of this, audiograms represent a screening test for those at-risk. Patients with low-frequency hearing loss should be regarded as at-risk for cardio or cerebrovascular events, and appropriate referrals should be considered.

Cardiovascular disorder and tinnitus

Another hearing disorder associated with cardiovascular health is pulsatile tinnitus. Due to the number of major blood vessels close by the ear, disorders that affect them sometimes manifest as pulsatile tinnitus that closely matches the heartbeat. Some of these disorders include:

- atherosclerosis
- high blood pressure
- head or neck tumors that press on blood vessels
- turbulent blood flow caused by a narrowing or kinking of the jugular vein or carotid artery
- malformation of capillaries.⁶

Certain medication also causes tinnitus as a side effect. Therefore, patients who are on medication for cardiovascular disorders may also be at higher risk for tinnitus. A recent study found that that hypertension treatment with diuretics, ACE inhibitors, and calcium channel blockers were more prevalent in tinnitus patients, suggesting that an eventual ototoxicity of these drugs may be involved in tinnitus pathophysiology.⁷

If a patient has been diagnosed with a cardio or cerebrovascular disorder, it is important to advise them to have their hearing evaluated regularly and to get any hearing loss treated with hearing aids early, in order to preserve hearing levels and improve quality of life. Older patients should routinely be made aware of how important it is to keep their primary physicians informed of any hearing loss or tinnitus because it could be a harbinger of an as of yet undiagnosed cardiovascular disease.

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What are Hammertoes?

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

Hammertoes are most frequently caused by structural problems in the toe or from wearing poor fitting shoes. It causes the the middle joint to bend. Hammertoe is most frequently caused by structural problems in the toe or from wearing poor fitting shoes. It is important to diagnose and treat hammertoe early because the condition tends to become worse over time. If left untreated, hammertoe can require surgery.

Your toes are part of your forefoot. They help you balance, walk, and move. Your big toe contains two bones. Your second through fifth toes contain three bones. Hammertoe results when the middle joint is bent.

Causes

Hammertoe commonly develops because of structural changes that take place over time in the muscles and tendons that bend the toes. People with certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, are at risk for developing hammertoe. It can be an inherited condition for some people. Other causes include trauma and wearing shoes that are too tight, narrow, or have high heels. The toe next to the big toe is most frequently affected by hammertoe.

Symptoms

The symptoms of hammertoe are progressive, meaning that they get worse over time. Hammertoe causes the middle joint on the second, third, fourth, or fifth toes to bend. The affected toe may be painful or irritated, especially when you wear shoes. Areas of thickened skin may develop between, on top of, or at the end of your toes. Thickened skin may also appear on the bottom of your toe or the ball of your foot. It may be difficult to find a pair of shoes that is comfortable to wear.

Diagnosis

Your podiatrist can diagnose hammertoe by reviewing your medical history and examining your foot. X-rays are typically done.



Treatment

There are many non-surgical treatments to help relieve symptoms of hammertoe. The first step for many people is wearing the right size and type of shoe. Low-heeled shoes with a boxy or roomy toe area are helpful. Cushioned insoles, customized orthopedic inserts, and pads can provided relief as well. Splints or straps may be used to help correct toe position.

Your podiatrist may show you toe stretches and exercises to perform, and can safely remove corns and calluses. You should not try to remove them at home.

Surgery

Surgery is used when other types of treatment fail to relieve symptoms or for advanced cases of hammertoe. There are several types of surgery to treat hammertoe. A small piece of bone may be removed from the joint. The toe joint may be fused to straighten it. Surgical hardware, such as a pin and screws may be used to hold the bones in place while they heal. Other types of surgery involve removing skin (wedging) or correcting muscles and tendons to balance the joint.

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, or call them at (239) 775-0019



COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A.
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SEPSIS UNMASKED

Recognizing the Signs and Embracing Timely Treatment

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

Sepsis, a life-threatening condition triggered by the body's extreme response to infection, demands our attention. In this exploration, we delve into the critical importance of recognizing early signs and understanding the swift, effective treatments that can make a life-saving difference.

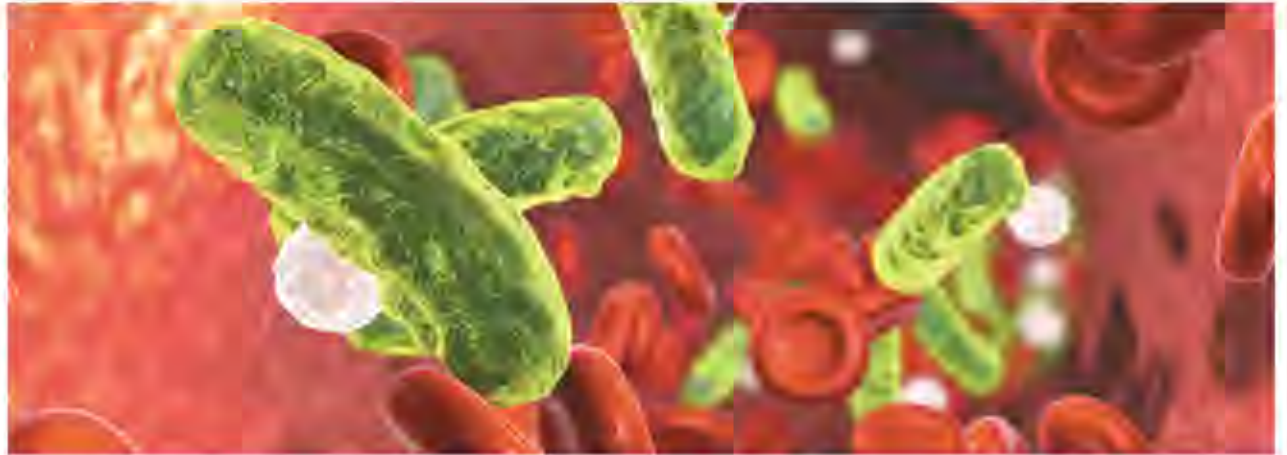
Sepsis is a silent menace, often masquerading as a common infection before swiftly escalating into a medical emergency. Understanding the signs is the first line of defense. Symptoms may be subtle initially, with fever, chills, rapid heartbeat, and confusion creeping in. However, the gravity of the situation becomes apparent as the infection intensifies, causing the body to go into overdrive, triggering widespread inflammation.

One key to recognizing sepsis lies in understanding the SIRS criteria (Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome): an abnormal body temperature, elevated heart rate, increased respiratory rate, and an abnormal white blood cell count. While these indicators can be non-specific, the combination and persistence of these symptoms should raise a red flag.

The urgency in addressing sepsis is underscored by its rapid progression. Once it gains momentum, sepsis can lead to severe sepsis or septic shock, both carrying an alarming mortality rate. Timely intervention is crucial, making knowledge of treatment options equally imperative.

Medical professionals typically deploy a multi-faceted approach to combat sepsis. Broad-spectrum antibiotics are administered promptly to target the underlying infection, but their effectiveness hinges on swift identification of the pathogen. In severe cases, antifungal or antiviral medications may also be incorporated.

Beyond antimicrobial agents, intravenous fluids play a pivotal role in sepsis treatment. Fluid resuscitation aims to counter the drop in blood pressure, a hallmark of septic shock. However, achieving the delicate balance between providing enough fluid to maintain blood flow and avoiding fluid overload is a nuanced challenge.



In addition to fluid therapy, vasopressors may be employed to constrict blood vessels, thereby increasing blood pressure. This step is particularly critical in cases where fluid resuscitation alone is insufficient to stabilize the patient.

While medical interventions are paramount, sepsis management extends beyond hospital walls. Public awareness and education are indispensable tools in the fight against sepsis. Understanding that sepsis can arise from various infections, including common ones like urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, or even skin infections, empowers individuals to seek prompt medical attention.

Moreover, emphasizing the importance of good hygiene practices and preventive measures is crucial. Simple actions such as proper wound care, vaccination, and adherence to prescribed antibiotics can significantly reduce the risk of infections that may lead to sepsis.

The journey from sepsis awareness to effective treatment demands collaboration between healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the public. Initiatives that streamline early detection protocols, enhance medical staff training, and promote community education can collectively contribute to a decisive reduction in sepsis-related morbidity and mortality.

In conclusion, sepsis, with its insidious nature, demands vigilance from us all. Recognizing the signs and symptoms is the first crucial step in the battle against this silent killer. Swift and targeted treatment, coupled with ongoing efforts in public education and

infection prevention, is our arsenal in preventing sepsis from claiming more lives. Let us unite in the fight against sepsis, armed with knowledge and a commitment to swift, effective action.

Are you ready for a consultation?

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

KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

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



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OPTIMIZING HEART HEALTH:

A Comprehensive Approach to Weight Loss with IV Therapy, Semaglutide, and Tirzepatide

Maintaining a healthy heart goes beyond mere aesthetics; it is a crucial component of overall well-being. In the pursuit of weight loss for heart health, an integrated approach involving IV therapy, Semaglutide, and Tirzepatide emerges as a promising strategy.

The burgeoning concern over obesity's impact on heart health has led to innovative approaches that extend beyond traditional diet and exercise. This article explores the synergy between IV therapy and novel medications like Semaglutide and Tirzepatide in achieving effective weight loss and promoting cardiovascular well-being.

Understanding the Significance of Heart Health

A healthy heart is paramount for a thriving life. Excess weight can strain the cardiovascular system, leading to conditions like hypertension and high cholesterol. Targeting weight loss is not only about shedding pounds but also about reducing the risk factors associated with heart diseases.

The Role of Semaglutide and Tirzepatide

Semaglutide and Tirzepatide are medications that have shown remarkable efficacy in weight management. By acting on appetite-regulating centers in the brain, they promote satiety and aid in weight loss. When integrated into a comprehensive approach, these drugs can significantly enhance the effectiveness of a weight loss regimen.

IV Therapy as a Catalyst for Weight Loss

Intravenous (IV) therapy is gaining recognition for its role in weight management. IV treatments can deliver essential nutrients and compounds directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system's limitations. This targeted approach ensures that the body receives the necessary elements for optimal function, enhancing the effectiveness of weight loss efforts.



Semaglutide and tirzepatide are peptides approved by the FDA, demonstrating safety and efficacy for weight loss. These innovative treatments have shown significant reductions in patients' laboratory markers, including cholesterol levels, A1c for diabetes management, and thyroid function. Their approval marks a notable advancement in addressing multiple health aspects, contributing to improved overall well-being.

Balancing Nutrient Intake with IV Therapy

IV therapy can be tailored to include a balanced mix of vitamins, minerals, and amino acids essential for metabolism and energy production. This supplementation ensures that the body receives the necessary nutrients during the weight loss journey, preventing deficiencies that may hinder progress.

Personalized IV Therapy Plans

One size does not fit all when it comes to IV therapy. Tailoring treatments to individual needs ensures that the body receives the specific nutrients required for optimal function. Customized IV therapy plans, when combined with Semaglutide and Tirzepatide, allow for a personalized and effective approach to weight loss, promoting heart health.

Monitoring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

Regular check-ups and monitoring are vital components of this integrated approach. Adjusting IV therapy components and medication dosages as needed ensures that the weight loss plan remains effective and safe. A collaborative effort between healthcare professionals and individuals seeking weight loss is crucial for long-term success.

In the pursuit of weight loss for heart health, embracing a multifaceted approach is key. IV therapy, Semaglutide, and Tirzepatide, when integrated into a personalized plan, offer a comprehensive solution. This synergy not only aids in weight loss but also addresses the underlying factors contributing to cardiovascular risks. As the landscape of weight management evolves, this integrated strategy stands at the forefront, paving the way for healthier hearts and vibrant lives.

Liquvida Wellness Center in Naples, FL

Located in The Egret Plaza, we're equipped to offer you IV Therapy, Sexual Wellness, Weight Loss, HRT, Peptides, and Facial Aesthetics services.

Let's start your Vida Journey®

Optimal health and wellness is what keeps you living life to the fullest - so we want to keep you healthy and strong for as long as humanly possible. At Liquvida, we're your one-stop-shop for all of your health, wellness, and anti-aging needs. If this is your first-time visiting our site, we'd love to meet you to show you how to get a thrill from everything life has to offer!



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Ladies, If You Are Looking for a New Urologist, Consider a Urogynecologist

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

What is Urogynecology?

Many women experience problems that overlap between the fields of gynecology and urology, and they often bounce back and forth between the two specialties. Urogynecology bridges that gap and allows for both of these issues to be addressed by one physician. The field of Urogynecology is a subspecialty within Obstetrics and Gynecology and is dedicated to the study and treatment of pelvic floor disorders in women. Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (a.k.a. Urogynecology) is a subspecialty that incorporates the tremendous advancements made in the last decade in the diagnosis and treatment of female pelvic floor disorders. If you suffer from any of the following symptoms, you may benefit from a consultation with a Urogynecologist.

Expert treatment for the following symptoms:

- **Incontinence:** Loss of bladder or bowel control (accidental loss of urine or stool).
- **Prolapse:** Displacement of the pelvic organs (uterus, bladder and rectum) beyond the normal position of the vaginal walls. Symptoms include a visible bulge and pelvic pressure. These conditions are sometimes referred to as a "dropped bladder", "dropped uterus" or "dropped rectum".
- **Overactive bladder symptoms:** Frequent need to urinate, urgency, incontinence and night-time frequency.
- **Emptying Disorders:** Difficulty urinating or moving bowels.
- **Pelvic (or bladder) Pain:** Discomfort, burning or spasm within the bladder, urethra or vagina. May also manifest as pain with sexual intercourse.
- **Bowel Control Conditions:** Constipation and bowel control issues/incontinence.
- **Recurrent urinary tract infections.**

Board certification means that a Urogynecologist has obtained training and experience beyond that of a general OB/Gyn or Urologist. Urogynecologists deal only with the evaluation and treatment of conditions that affect the female pelvic organs, nerves,



muscles and connective tissue that support these organs. The additional training focuses on the surgical and non-surgical treatment of noncancerous gynecologic problems.

When Should I See a Urogynecologist?

If you're struggling with pelvic floor dysfunction, pain, or incontinence, you should seek treatment immediately. Consulting with a Urogynecologist can help to achieve an accurate diagnosis of your condition and provide information on the full spectrum of treatment options available. Specialized training enables a Urogynecologist to blend elements of gynecology, urology and gastroenterology to treat the entire pelvic floor.

Treatments may include conservative (non-surgical) or outpatient surgical therapy to cure or relieve your symptoms. While your primary care physician, Urologist or OB/Gyn may have knowledge about these problems, a Urogynecologist can manage all these pelvic floor conditions simultaneously.

Urogynecology Treatment Options

A Urogynecologist can recommend a variety of therapies to cure or relieve symptoms of prolapse, urinary, gas or fecal incontinence, or other pelvic floor dysfunction symptoms. He may advise treatments based on your personal needs and lifestyle, the severity of your condition and your general health. Conservative options include medications, pelvic exercises, behavioral and/or dietary modifications and vaginal devices (also called pessaries).

Biofeedback and Electrical Stimulation are two newer treatment modalities that your Urogynecologist may recommend. Safe and effective outpatient surgical procedures are also utilized by the Urogynecologist to treat incontinence and prolapse. A Urogynecologist will discuss all of the options that are available to treat your specific problem(s) before you are asked to make any treatment decisions.

It's easy to become embarrassed by pelvic and bladder disorders, but you do not have to suffer with these problems or associated pain. Florida Bladder Institute provides compassionate, thorough urogynecological care for all women. Whether you face pelvic issues as a result of aging, delivering babies, illness, or trauma, we can provide proper treatment and counseling so you can enjoy an active, healthy life-style.

Call 239-449-7979 today to schedule an appointment with Joseph Gauta M.D. to learn how proper urogynecological care can benefit you. Don't suffer in silence any longer; there is help available.



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C


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The State of Cardiac Advanced Imaging – ProScan NCH

By Dr. Stephen Pomeranz, Founder & CEO, ProScan Imaging

Advanced imaging has assumed a major role in the diagnosis of heart disease. For instance, cardiac CT has received a class 1 (level of recommendation is strong) and evidence level A (randomized clinical trials yield the highest level of clinical evidence) for use in both stable and acute chest pain settings according to the American Heart Association and American College of Radiology chest pain guidelines.

Thus a targeted precision planned cardiac CT can greatly influence patient care and outcomes. The DISCHARGE trial (Diagnostic Imaging Strategies for Patients with Stable Chest Pain and Intermediate Risk of Coronary Artery Disease) randomized 3561 patients to either cardiac CT or invasive coronary angiography (ICA) as an initial testing strategy. No significant difference in major events was found 3.5 years later. Here are some relevant and timely facts.

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S
- Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death globally, taking an estimated 17.9 million lives each year
- Heart disease causes 2x as many deaths as cancer and causes more deaths than all the other causes of death combined.

The best way to approach heart disease is “not to get it” or, said another way, do what you can as early in life as you can, to prevent it.

In other words, the noninvasive CT tests performed similarly to the invasive angiography test.

Life’s Essential Preventative & Prevention tenets include Diet; Exercise; Sleep; Lipid Level; Weight; Blood Sugar; Blood Pressure; Smoking Avoidance



As an aside, the Mediterranean diet with generous amounts of virgin olive oil is the only diet shown to diminish heart disease.

ProScan at NCH now provides multiple state of the art “best in class” fast CAT (CT) scanners; cardiac PET and multiple cardiac capability MRI scanners.

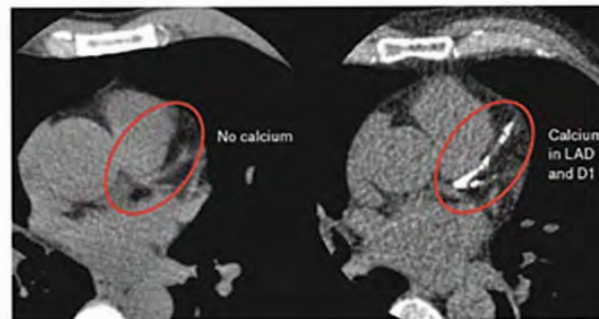
Who should consider cardiac evaluation and/or screening in general:

- Smokers
- Family History of Heart Disease
- “Peace of Mind”
- Typical (HTN, Diabetes, Age, Hormones, Cholesterol, LDL-C, etc.) or Atypical labs like (Lp(a) or Factor V Leiden)
- Equivocal Other or Positive Stress Test

CT Cardiac Calcium Score

Atherosclerosis is the disease that affects the arteries that nourish the heart. When the “plaques” or ulcers work their way into the wall of these vessels, inflammation ensues. At this point, the inflammation may subside and “heal” producing calcium in the healing process. So, in a sense, these are the “good” plaques.

However, these calcified plaques serve as a biomarker or predictor of plaques that are inflamed, ulcerated and noncalcified. In other words, they haven’t healed. These soft plaques are made of fat and scar/ fibrous tissue. It is these lesions that may produce potential heart attack, chest pain, and other symptoms. They are known as “vulnerable” plaques.



The calcium cardiac score test:

- takes less than two minutes to perform
- requires no contrast
- delivers little radiation

Therefore, the test is simple, fast, and safe. It is also inexpensive at \$75.00.

The test must be interpreted based on patient age, gender, and history. A score of 5 in a 45-year-old woman is very significant. The same score in an 80-year-old is not.

FACT: Lowering LDL-c by 38.7 mg/dL and lowering SBP by 10 mmHg results in a relative risk reduction of major CV events of 78%

The results can be divided into nominal, mild, moderate and severe levels:

Nominal: 1-10

Mild: < 100

Moderate: 100-400

Severe: Greater than 400

For any positive score, consult your physician, concierge doctor or cardiologist. If the test is positive, you have several diagnostic options discussed below. Many physicians will look at the cardiac score as a determinant of whether their patient should be aggressively treated with statins and other cholesterol lowering medications.



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

PROSCAN.COM

Stephen J. Pomeranz, M.D.
Founder & CEO, ProScan Imaging

Dr. Pomeranz is renowned as a world leader in the field of diagnostic imaging, particularly MRI. His experience interpreting hundreds of thousands of MRI examinations (including MSK, Neuro, Body, Breast and Prostate studies) and his passion for education and mentoring come together to provide an excellent learning experience for physicians and healthcare professionals.

Dr. Pomeranz has written, co-authored, or edited numerous MRI texts, including the essential three-volume reference The MRI Total Body Atlas, as well as many multimedia teaching materials. He is also the founder of MRI Online, the world’s largest collection of online MRI Education videos available for Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.



Cardiac CT Angiography (CCTA). Normal Study

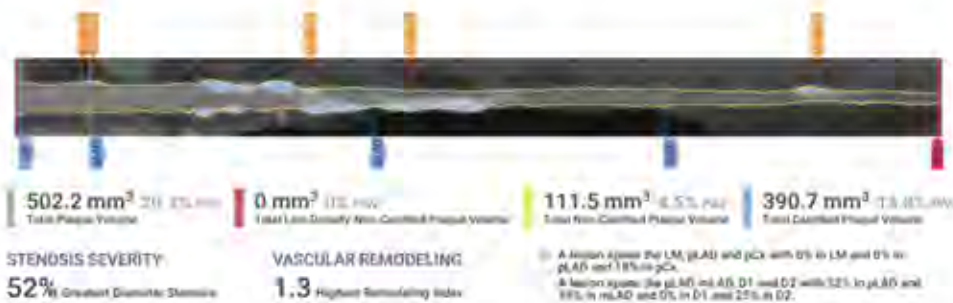
The CCTA is a test that uses a CAT scan (CT) and an injection of iodinated contrast to make an angiogram like image of the heart that shows the coronary arteries heart and aorta. It "sees" the nonhealed/noncalcified plaques. The plaques are visually graded based on depth,

percent narrowing, shape and even length. If the narrowing is significant based on the interpretation there are several options:

- Applying AI to your CCTA (with CLEERLY; or HEARTFLOW) Cardiology consultation
- Cardiac PET scanning

CLEERLY (artificial intelligence)

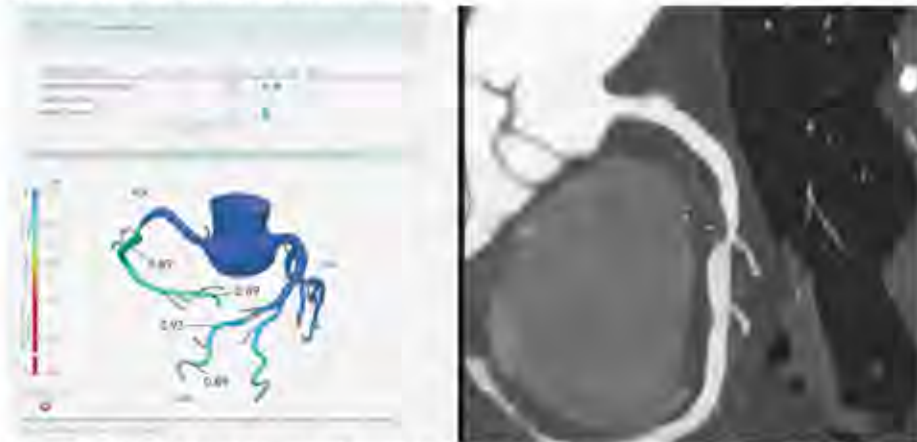
Left Main and Left Anterior Descending (LM+LAD)



Cleerly is an artificial intelligence (AI) technique which analyzes the CCTA retrospectively. It looks with a computer at plaque: Composition; volume of plaque; shape; length; width; depth. In other words; it creates a "google map" of the coronary arteries that nourish the heart.

With regard to "type of plaque", the SCOT-Heart (Scottish CT of the Heart) trial showed that low-attenuation plaques resembling fat or vulnerable plaque was a stronger predictor of heart attack than: stenosis severity; coronary calcium; or cardiac risk score calculation on a risk calculator model.

HEARTFLOW (artificial intelligence)



Once the CCTA has been performed, the areas of narrowing are assessed by the reader in each major coronary vessel. However, with some areas of narrowing, it may be difficult to assess whether the narrowing is significant or, in other words, compromises the flow of blood to the heart muscle downstream. Heartflow is an AI algorithm that looks at how fast the contrast appears downstream to an area of narrowing. In calculating this, the AI can tell if the narrowing of rate is flow limiting, thereby raising awareness and aggressiveness in diagnosis and management. Simply stated, if the number applied to the vessel downstream is < 0.8, than the narrowing is significant and requires additional attention. This patients heart flow was negative downstream from the narrowing.

Cardiac PET (positron emission tomography)

Cardiac PET is phasing in as a higher quality, faster, safer tool that is replacing the cardiac stress test. It uses a radioactive injection of a substance called Rubidium that has to be delivered in a special generator each day.

Cardiac PET is:

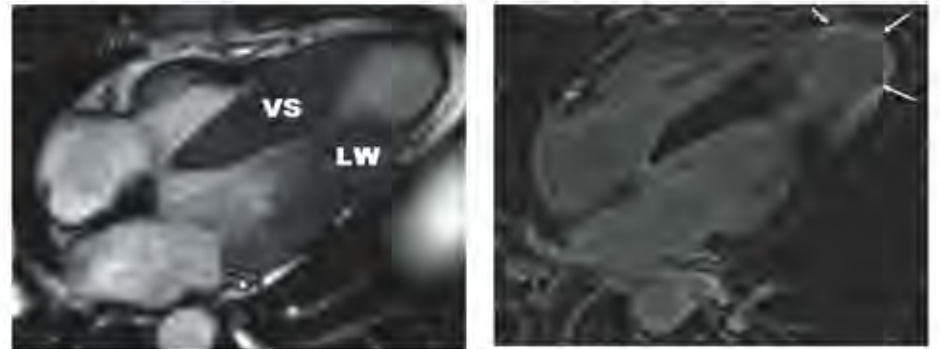
- 9X faster than regular stress testing
- 7X lower radiation dose
- More accurate
- Has fewer artifacts

The study looks at both the overall circulation to the heart as well as for microvascular dysfunction. This can help identify disease early on, allowing physicians to employ medical therapy for improved prevention of myocardial ischemic events. Stress and rest imaging of the heart takes place in only 20 minutes, much shorter than the standard SPECT scan that takes 3-4 hours. This test can be used to decide if the patient needs medical therapy or interventional cardiology consultation.

Simply stated, Cardiac PET is a superior diagnostic test to standard stress testing.

Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (genetically induced thick heart) with VS= ventricular septum and LW = Left "free" wall and an apical ventricular aneurysm, arrows.



ProScan at NCH now provides cardiac MRI at three locations in Collier County (Ninth Street, Sierra Meadows and Crosspointe). MRI or magnetic resonance imaging provides anatomic, functional, and blood supply information about the heart. The radiology/ cardiology interpreting team has deep experience for almost 2 decades in performing and reading cardiac MR (as well as CT). The applications of MRI of the heart have been regularly expanding and is now used to diagnose a wide variety of cardiovascular conditions.

MR delivers:

- No radiation
- Usually requires a small volume of injection
- Takes approximately 45 mins - 1 hour to perform

Some indications for cardiac MRI include:

- Congenital heart disease
- Inflammation or myocarditis (as in COVID)
- Evaluation for causes of an enlarged or "thick" heart
- Evaluate the cause of decreased heart function
- To determine the cause of an arrhythmia
- To determine whether and how much muscle damage has occurred from prior heart attack or other various disease
- Tumors and masses

The Significance of Pulmonary Rehabilitation for Oxygen-Dependent Patients

Living with oxygen dependence can be challenging, but the transformative impact of pulmonary rehabilitation offers a beacon of hope. Pulmonary rehab is a comprehensive program designed to enhance the well-being of individuals relying on supplemental oxygen, fostering not just physical strength but also emotional resilience.

The cornerstone of pulmonary rehab lies in tailored exercise routines. These exercises, overseen by healthcare professionals, are crafted to improve lung function, strengthen respiratory muscles, and boost endurance. Engaging in a structured exercise regimen can significantly enhance the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood, enabling patients to navigate daily activities with greater ease.

Beyond the physical benefits, pulmonary rehab addresses the psychological toll of oxygen dependence. The sense of community within these programs provides a supportive environment where individuals can share experiences and encouragement. This camaraderie not only alleviates feelings of isolation but also serves as a motivational force, inspiring participants to persevere in their journey toward better health.

Nutritional guidance is another integral component of pulmonary rehab. Maintaining a balanced diet is paramount for individuals with respiratory challenges. A nutrition plan, tailored to specific needs, aids in sustaining energy levels, promoting overall health, and ensuring optimal oxygen utilization. Education on dietary choices empowers participants to make informed decisions that positively impact their well-being.

Education extends beyond nutrition to include insights into managing oxygen therapy effectively. Pulmonary rehab equips patients with the knowledge to operate and troubleshoot their oxygen equipment, fostering independence and confidence in their daily lives. Understanding the nuances of oxygen therapy promotes adherence to prescribed treatments, a crucial aspect of managing respiratory conditions.



The holistic approach of pulmonary rehab extends to addressing anxiety and depression often associated with chronic respiratory conditions. Mental health support, including counseling and stress management techniques, is integrated into these programs. By acknowledging and addressing the emotional aspects of oxygen dependence, pulmonary rehab contributes to a more comprehensive and sustainable improvement in the quality of life.

One of the distinctive features of pulmonary rehab is its adaptability to individual needs. The programs are designed to accommodate various levels of fitness and diverse respiratory conditions. This inclusivity ensures that participants receive personalized attention, fostering an environment where progress is celebrated, regardless of starting points.

In the broader context of healthcare, pulmonary rehabilitation has demonstrated its cost-effectiveness by reducing hospitalizations and emergency room visits. By enhancing the overall health of oxygen-dependent individuals, these programs contribute to a decrease in healthcare expenditures associated with chronic respiratory conditions.

In conclusion, pulmonary rehabilitation stands as a beacon of hope for those navigating life with supplemental oxygen. From tailored exercise regimens

to nutritional guidance and mental health support, these programs address the multifaceted challenges of oxygen dependence. By fostering physical and emotional well-being, pulmonary rehab empowers individuals to reclaim control over their lives and embrace a future filled with vitality.

Panakeia is a certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and nationally accredited by The Joint Commission's Home Care Accreditation program. We specialize in marketing, training, and distributing advanced medical products to the military, prehospital care and EMS, law enforcement, fire/rescue, Veterans Administration, hospital critical care, and home care.

Our mission is to provide the medical community with unique solutions and innovative products that transform patient care and save lives. We bring medical innovations to life.

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FROM NAPLES TO ETHIOPIA: Marcie Erickson's Journey of Grace, Hope, and Family

Marcie Erickson, native of Naples, began a life-changing journey at 18, answering God's call to become a missionary in Ethiopia. In 2006, she founded Grace Center Foundation after adopting her first three children. Now, alongside her husband Sefinew, they lovingly raise a family of 12 children. What began with a vision and five foster children has evolved into a mission impacting over 50,000 individuals annually.

Unlike many projects addressing specific needs, Grace Center recognizes each person as an individual with unique gifts, callings, and goals. Their mission extends across various programs and services, providing daily meals for over 1,000 people and clean water to all those in need. The foundation operates a tuition-free private Christian school, a preschool, the sole special needs school and day program in Ethiopia, supporting children with disabilities. Additionally, they offer business starting programs for adults and pioneered the first infant daycare program in the country. Grace Center extends its assistance to women and children in prison, where children often accompany their mothers to keep the children safe from revenge killing.

Eyob was found outside the back wall of Grace Center. His mother gave birth, unaware of the help within, and didn't know what to do, so she left him. Sadly, it's not uncommon that newborn babies are left alone and abandoned. These moms are often young, and many have conceived their children through rape.



When he was found, his arm was swollen from being in the cold night. You can see Eyob just a few months later. His life was saved. Grace Center always tries to locate the immediate family or relatives, and there are times where the child is reunited with a family member. However, there are many times where no family can be found.



Here is Eyob meeting his new adoptive family. Grace Center pioneered the entire adoption program within Ethiopia, a population of over 110 million people. This couple, married for 17 years and unable to have children, have met the child they always dreamed of, and this sweet baby Eyob now has a family of his own.

In efforts to prevent abandoned babies, Grace Center initiated the first emergency hotline in Ethiopia. With no equivalent to 9-1-1, mothers who feel desperate can call or text for help and receive the life transforming support they need. The impact of this hotline became evident immediately, with over 500 calls within the first few days. Hundreds of lives are being saved through this phone line.



Eyayu Genet is a world renown artist with showings in the US, Europe, Brazil and UAE. One of his paintings auctioned for \$50,000 in the US. At the Experience Ethiopia event on March 2, 2024, Eyayu's artwork "Reconciliation" and another one of his paintings will be available in the silent auction. "Reconciliation" envisions Eyayu's dream to see an end to this brutal war and see peace in Ethiopia. Bidding is possible before and during the event through the Qr code in our event add.

YOU'R INVITED! MARCH 2, 2024

Please join Grace Center in saving and transforming lives in Ethiopia. *Join us at our Experience Ethiopia event* and enjoy African Dance and Drumming by Delou Africa, Chad Craig and The Sea Gate Malleeters, Live Auction by Rick Gallo, Silent Auction, Ethiopian marketplace, hear touching stories from Marcie Erickson and more.

Or go to www.GraceCenterFoundation.org to give.



239-465-6435
GraceCenterFoundation.org

EMBRACING SELF-LOVE:

Thoughtful Self-Care Gifts for a Blissful Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is often associated with romantic gestures and expressions of love towards others. But here's a thought. In addition to expressing your love and appreciation for others, you should also celebrate the most important relationship of all – the one with yourself. Embracing self-love is a powerful and empowering act, and what better way to do it than by giving yourself thoughtful self-care gifts?

Below, we've highlighted some Valentine's Day gift ideas for you and your loved ones to pamper the mind, body, and soul.



A Relaxing Spa Day at Home: Enjoy a self-care moment by creating a spa-like atmosphere from the comfort of home. Try aromatic bath salts, scented candles, and luxurious body oils. Treat yourself or someone you love to a long, relaxing bath, and let the stress of daily life melt away. This simple yet indulgent self-care ritual can be a perfect way to unwind and relax.



Mindfulness and Meditation Tools: Gift yourself and your loved ones the tools to cultivate mindfulness and inner peace. Consider items like a meditation cushion, a guided meditation app subscription, or a beautiful journal for reflective writing. Engaging in mindfulness practices can help someone connect internally, reduce stress, and promote a sense of overall well-being.

Comfortable Loungewear or Pajamas: There's something undeniably comforting about slipping into cozy loungewear or pajamas. Treat yourself or special someone to a set of high-quality, comfortable clothing to feel pampered and relaxed. This simple act can make a significant difference by encouraging restfulness and peace.

Nourishing Skin Care: Show your skin (or theirs) some love with nourishing, natural skin care products. Invest in a good quality face mask, moisturizer, and serums that cater to specific skin needs like wrinkle-care, acne prevention or sensitive skin. Taking care of the skin is not only a physical self-care practice but can also contribute to a boost in confidence and self-esteem.

Fitness and Wellness Accessories: Prioritize physical well-being by purchasing fitness and wellness accessories. This could include a new yoga mat, resistance bands, or a fitness tracker. Regular exercise is not only beneficial for the physical body, but it also has positive effects on mental health.

A Good Book or Personal Development Course: Feed the mind with knowledge and inspiration. Give yourself or a friend a captivating book or enroll in a personal development course that aligns with your (or their) interests. Continuous learning and personal growth are essential aspects of self-care, contributing to a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

Mind-Body Practices: Consider activities that integrate both the mind and body, such as yoga, tai chi or pilates. These practices not only enhance physical flexibility but also promote mental clarity and emotional balance. Investing time in mind-body activities can be a holistic approach to happiness and joy.



This Valentine's Day, let's skip the traditional chocolates and roses and focus on self care. Whether it's a spa day at home, mindfulness tools, comfortable loungewear, skin care products, fitness accessories, a good book, or mind-body practices, the options for creating and gifting self-love are limitless. Remember, self care is not a luxury. Go ahead and shower yourself and your loved ones with thoughtful self-care gifts. Happy Valentine's Day!



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UNLOCKING LUXURY LIVING: THE INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF EXPERIENCED REALTORS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S GATED COMMUNITIES

Choosing the right realtor is crucial when navigating the competitive and exclusive real estate market of Southwest Florida, particularly when considering gated communities and luxury properties. Southwest Florida, known for its pristine beaches, vibrant cultural scene, and luxurious lifestyle, attracts discerning homebuyers seeking the epitome of upscale living. In such a dynamic environment, the expertise of an experienced realtor becomes indispensable.

The allure of gated communities in Southwest Florida lies not only in the added security they offer but also in the sense of exclusivity and community living. Experienced realtors in the region understand the intricacies of these gated neighborhoods, possessing insights into the unique features and amenities each community provides. From golf courses and private beaches to state-of-the-art amenities, they can guide prospective buyers to the enclave that aligns seamlessly with their preferences and lifestyle.

Luxury properties within these gated communities present a myriad of options, each with its own distinctive charm. An experienced realtor brings a wealth of knowledge to the table, helping buyers navigate the complexities of the luxury real estate market. They are adept at identifying properties that match not just the buyer's budget but also their specific criteria for opulence, architectural style, and preferred amenities.

In a market where timing is often of the essence, seasoned real estate agents possess the ability to stay ahead of trends and fluctuations. They are well-versed in the Southwest Florida market's ebbs and flows, enabling them to provide valuable insights on when to buy or sell. This foresight is especially crucial in the luxury real estate sector, where timing can significantly impact property values.

Furthermore, an experienced realtor can facilitate a smooth and efficient buying or selling process. Navigating the paperwork, negotiations, and legalities of real estate transactions requires a level of expertise that can only be gained through years of

hands-on experience. Buyers and sellers alike benefit from the guidance of a real estate professional who can streamline the process and mitigate potential challenges.

In the realm of luxury real estate, discretion is often paramount. Seasoned realtors in Southwest Florida understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of their clients. This level of professionalism is particularly crucial when dealing with high-profile individuals or celebrities who seek refuge in the exclusive gated communities of the region.

Beyond their knowledge of the local real estate market, experienced realtors also boast an extensive network of industry connections. From architects and interior designers to legal professionals and contractors, these connections can prove invaluable when it comes to enhancing and maintaining a luxury property. The ability to tap into this network ensures that clients receive top-notch service at every stage of the real estate process.

Ultimately, the importance of using experienced realtors in Southwest Florida when exploring gated communities and luxury properties cannot be overstated. Their expertise, market knowledge, and network of connections distinguish them as invaluable partners in the pursuit of a dream home. In a region renowned for its upscale living, entrusting the guidance of a seasoned real estate professional is not just a wise decision – it's a key to unlocking the doors of Southwest Florida's most exclusive residences.

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LONG COVID AND ITS EFFECT ON ESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE LEVELS

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

C OVID-19 is most notably known for its effects on the respiratory system, specifically the cough it can cause and how some people experience shortness of breath. However, less well-known is that it can also influence your hormone levels and, in some cases, last weeks or months after your infection. This condition is termed long COVID, and it is becoming a topic of greater discussion as people connect their new or lingering symptoms with previous COVID-19 infection.

What Is Long COVID?

Long COVID is a term coined to describe the side effects that last after someone has been infected by COVID-19. It may also be referred to as long-haul COVID or post-COVID conditions as it relates to the new, returning, or ongoing health problems that those infected by SARS-CoV-2 can experience for weeks or even months after infection.

The timeline for COVID-19 looks like this for most people: they are infected by SARS-CoV-2, develop COVID-19, and then, after a couple of weeks, recover and feel better. For those with long COVID, though, symptoms may linger, or, in some cases, entirely new symptoms can develop.

Some of the most common symptoms associated with long COVID include fatigue and brain fog, although other symptoms can include:

- changes in taste and smell
- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- insomnia
- dizziness
- anxiety
- depression

Causes of Long COVID

The interesting thing about long COVID is that it can affect anyone, no matter how severe their COVID-19 infection. For instance, some people with a mild infection experience long COVID, while others with severe infections requiring hospitalization do not.



As such, there is no known cause of long COVID, but there are some speculations. Some scientists hypothesize that long COVID results when the virus or viral remnants, such as viral RNA or protein, linger in tissues and cause chronic inflammation. Others cite how acute respiratory infections can induce autoimmune conditions, which may be the cause of long COVID symptoms. Finally, there is speculation that some long COVID symptoms come from a dys-regulated gut microbiome, which can result from infection.

While the cause of long COVID remains uncertain, research has shown that it can have lasting effects that extend further than expected, and this includes its impact on your hormones.

How Does Long COVID Affect Estrogen and Progesterone?

Considering how instrumental balance is for hormone production, it should come as minimal surprise that something as disrupting as COVID-19 can also affect your hormones. However, not only

can it affect your hormones, but the sex hormones in your body (or lack thereof) may also influence whether or not you are more likely to develop long COVID.

Long COVID has been shown to be more common in women compared to men, and women between the ages of 40-60, in particular, are at the highest risk of long COVID. Period changes are a common symptom reported by women who have long COVID, and one study found that one-third of their surveyed women reported changes in their periods that began after their COVID infection. These changes included how frequently their periods occurred, their length, and the heaviness of their flow. In some women, their periods stopped entirely.

Furthermore, the study revealed that 77% of women notice their symptoms of long COVID worsen right before their period. Of note, this is the time of the menstrual cycle when the estrogen levels are at their lowest.

These discoveries have caused researchers to question if there is a link between female hormones and long COVID, but when looking into this connection, it is helpful to understand the mechanism of action of SARS-CoV-2.

The COVID-19 virus binds to angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) receptors, and it is this binding that allows the virus to enter the cell. While COVID-19 is most well-known for affecting the respiratory system, there are also ACE2 receptors in the ovaries. When the virus enters the cells in the ovaries, this impedes the ovary's ability to work at its full functionality, and the result may be a lower production of hormones, particularly estrogen. This may explain why women experience more severe menopausal symptoms when infected with COVID-19.

Interestingly, research has shown that progesterone may offer some protection from COVID-19, which could also explain why men fare worse off than women. In particular, it is the anti-inflammatory properties of progesterone which show promise.

However, it has also been shown that hypoxia, or low blood oxygen levels common in COVID-19, can decrease progesterone synthesis. Low progesterone synthesis could then lead to greater inflammation in the body, which could incite long COVID symptoms.

Another Gender-Based Difference

As previously discussed, researchers have three hypotheses for how long COVID occurs, and the autoimmune hypothesis may explain the higher incidence of long COVID in men compared to women. This is because women have a higher immune response, making autoimmune reactions more frequent.

This could also explain why men are more likely to have a severe COVID-19 infection (their immune system is weaker), but women are more likely to develop long COVID (they are more likely to have autoimmune reactions).

How To Combat Hormone Imbalance from Long COVID

When it comes to low hormone levels due to the lasting damage of COVID-19, they tend to persist because the ovaries become vulnerable and less likely to recover from infection. This creates a cycle where the ovaries cannot produce enough estrogen and then continue to be vulnerable.

However, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can help to break this cycle by giving women the correct amount of hormones and returning their estrogen and progesterone levels to normal. With the female hormones back in balance, the ovaries can finally heal.

In many cases, it can be helpful to start HRT as soon as a woman experiences COVID-19 infection not only because it can help reduce mortality by more than 70% but also because it can help determine which symptoms are due to low hormone levels and which require an alternative method of treatment.

Recovering from Long COVID

In addition to the use of HRT to combat the hormonal deficiencies that can arise during long COVID, there are other steps you can take to help mitigate your symptoms and feel better.

Focus On Your Sleep

Sleep is crucial for allowing your body to fight illnesses, repair itself, and feel better. Unfortunately, sleep problems can be common in those with long COVID, which can make symptoms such as brain fog, fatigue, and anxiety worse. Because of this, it's critical that you focus on getting enough good, quality sleep.

To improve your sleep, it's best to focus on your sleep hygiene, or the habits you complete to help promote a good night of sleep. These include following a sleep schedule, getting physical exercise during the day, and avoiding caffeine before bedtime.

Help Your Gut

Your gut houses trillions of bacteria, some good and some bad. However, the most important thing for this microbiome is the balance between the two, namely that the good bacteria outweigh the bad.

The beneficial bacteria in your gut have many vital roles, including their aid in digestion, the absorption of nutrients, and the immune system. Their influence is wide-reaching, so a disruption to your gut microbiome can have significant consequences.

Research into COVID-19 has shown that it can affect the gut microbiome by reducing the number of good bacteria and increasing the number of bad bacteria. This can lead to symptoms such as bloating and diarrhea. Furthermore, this bacterial imbalance can also cause inflammation throughout the body.

If you're recovering from COVID, it's often best to focus on a diet that promotes gut health. This includes eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, seeds, and nuts along with fermented foods (e.g., kimchi, sauerkraut) as they are rich in probiotics.

Other Hormones Affected by COVID-19

It's not just estrogen and progesterone that relate to long COVID; other hormones can also factor in.

For example, men may experience low testosterone levels. In some cases, low testosterone precedes COVID-19 infection and is what increases the risk of infection, while in other cases, it can develop as a result of the virus's effect on the body.

Research has also shown that those with long COVID have lower cortisol levels than those without. While cortisol is the body's stress hormone, and it's good to keep it from getting too high, there can be consequences of having it low as well, including headaches, weakness, and low blood pressure.

While research into long COVID is ongoing, the findings already made show just how much this virus can disrupt your hormonal balance, and the side effects that can result.

Navigating the Hormonal Implications of Long COVID Having COVID-19 is no longer the sole object of our concerns; for some people, the implications of this infection linger weeks or even months afterward, severely declining their quality of life.

Women, in particular, are more susceptible to long COVID, and research suggests that this is because of their hormones and the way that COVID-19 affects them. Namely, COVID-19 can cause a decline in estrogen levels and, should hypoxia occur, in progesterone. Unfortunately, these imbalances don't tend to fix themselves, and temporary HRT is often needed to correct them.

Other hormones can also be influenced by COVID-19, including testosterone and cortisol. Furthermore, these hormonal imbalances may share symptoms with other complications of COVID-19, making it difficult to ascertain the true cause of the symptoms. As such, the best way to treat your long COVID and get your health back on track is by meeting with a hormone specialist to determine if you are experiencing any hormonal imbalances and what can be done to correct them.

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FUELING A STRONG HEART:

The Crucial Connection Between Diet and Heart Health

Maintaining a healthy heart is a lifelong commitment, and what we put on our plates plays a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of our cardiovascular well-being. As we celebrate American Heart Month, it's imperative to delve into the profound impact of diet on heart health, unraveling the key dietary choices that can fortify our hearts and promote longevity.

The cornerstone of a heart-healthy diet lies in embracing a diverse array of nutrient-rich foods. Incorporating fruits and vegetables into your daily meals not only infuses your body with essential vitamins and minerals but also provides a rich source of antioxidants, which combat oxidative stress and reduce the risk of heart disease. Think vibrant greens, berries, and citrus fruits to pack a powerful punch of heart-loving nutrients.

Whole grains stand as stalwarts in the battle for heart health. Opting for whole grains over refined counterparts ensures a steady supply of fiber, a dietary superhero that aids in managing cholesterol levels and promoting a healthy weight. Quinoa, brown rice, and oats can seamlessly integrate into your meals, elevating both taste and heart health.

Navigating the landscape of fats requires a discerning eye. While saturated fats and trans fats can pose a threat to heart health, unsaturated fats, especially the omega-3 fatty acids found in fatty fish like salmon and trout, contribute to reducing inflammation and maintaining optimal cardiovascular function. It's a matter of balance — choosing olive oil over saturated fats, and incorporating nuts and seeds for a heart-boosting dose of unsaturated fats.

Protein, an essential building block for our bodies, can be sourced from a variety of options. Lean meats, legumes, and plant-based proteins like tofu and tempeh offer diverse choices to cater to different dietary preferences. A balanced approach ensures that your heart receives the nutrients it needs without overburdening your system.

The nemesis of heart health often lurks in the hidden realms of our diets — excessive salt. Reducing sodium intake is a critical component of



promoting heart health, as high sodium levels can contribute to hypertension. Embracing herbs and spices as flavorful alternatives can transform your dishes, allowing you to savor the taste without compromising your heart's well-being.

As we traverse the intricate terrain of nutrition, it's essential to acknowledge the impact of lifestyle choices on heart health. Regular physical activity synergizes with a heart-healthy diet, forming an alliance that fortifies cardiovascular resilience. Strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, whether it's brisk walking, cycling, or engaging in activities that elevate your heart rate and invigorate your cardiovascular system.

American Heart Month serves as a poignant reminder to assess our dietary habits and make informed choices that contribute to our heart's longevity. Small, sustainable changes can yield significant results. Consider meal prepping to ensure that nutritious options are readily available, making it easier to resist the allure of processed and unhealthy foods.

Beyond the nutritional realm, stress management and adequate sleep weave themselves into the tapestry of heart health. Chronic stress can trigger unhealthy habits that impact the heart, emphasizing the need for mindfulness practices such as meditation or yoga. Quality sleep, an often underestimated ally, plays a crucial role in the body's ability to repair and rejuvenate, contributing to overall cardiovascular well-being.

In conclusion, the journey to a healthier heart involves a harmonious interplay of nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle choices. American Heart Month provides a timely opportunity to reflect on our habits and make conscious decisions that prioritize the well-being of our hearts. By cultivating a heart-healthy diet, embracing an active lifestyle, and incorporating stress-reducing practices, we pave the way for a robust cardiovascular future, celebrating the resilience of our hearts throughout the year.



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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Health Insurance – Important Dates!

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

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 to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

Individual/Family Health Insurance – Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government 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 directly with the insurance carrier, so why would you not seek free professional help with an agent that sells all or most of the companies in your area?

Travel Insurance – Did you know that most health insurance does NOT cover you outside of the country and that includes a cruise, in international waters (4 miles out). Travel insurance is not just about trip cancellation but most importantly what if you got sick or had an accident on your trip. Medical Trip insurance is very important and most of the time not very costly when you weigh the benefits.

Pet Insurance – Your 4-legged family members need insurance as well, especially for the big sudden emergency room services. The younger the pet the less the cost of insurance and there are unlimited benefits as well.

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ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR RETIREES AND PROFESSIONALS

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

Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services located at 708 Goodlette Frank Rd. Naples FL 34102, offers a unique treatment program designed for retirees and professionals who wish to address their drinking or drug use, and seek to make an improvement in their lives. In the arena of health and wellness, addiction is a challenge, transcending age and circumstance. For many retired professionals who are grappling with addiction, this battle often unfolds in confounding secrecy, hidden behind a cloak of defensiveness and denial. Within the family, reactions range from concern to exasperation, anger and resentment. The emotional toll exacted by addiction for the individual and the family further complicates the situation, as those affected grapple with feelings of shame, stigma, denial, and isolation. In this fragile emotional ecosystem, hopelessness casts doubt on the possibility of ever breaking free from the relentless cycle of addiction.

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

The Rise of Substance Abuse among Seniors:

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

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

Upward Trends in Alcohol Abuse in Older Adults:

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

Negative Effects of Alcohol Use in Older Adults:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Confidentiality: Retirees and professionals in high-profile positions are often hesitant to seek treatment for addiction in traditional rehab or outpatient programs due to concerns about confidentiality. A separate program specifically designed for these individuals provides a more discreet and confidential environment, which increases the likelihood that they will seek and receive treatment.

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

3. Supportive Environment: Crossroads provides a supportive environment with other clients who are facing similar challenges and experiences. This helps individuals in recovery feel less isolated and increases their motivation to engage in treatment and maintain their sobriety.

4. Tailored Treatment: Crossroads professional track IOP programs provide tailored treatment that addresses the specific needs and challenges of retirees and professionals in recovery. The program includes components such as stress management, grief counseling, and relapse prevention strategies that are tailored to the unique needs of each individual.

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, particularly retirees and professionals 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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Florida Ends Permanent Alimony

By J. Christopher Lombardo, Florida Family Law Attorney

Florida is no longer one of a handful of states allowing Judges to grant permanent alimony in divorce proceedings. Prior to the change, former spouses could be awarded permanent alimony, which was ongoing financial support intended to continue indefinitely until certain circumstances changed. Though other forms of alimony will be available, there will no longer be an option of indefinite duration.

Types of Alimony in Florida

With the removal of permanent alimony, Florida residents now have four financial spousal support solutions: temporary, bridge-the-gap, rehabilitative, and durational alimony.

Temporary Alimony – is granted during the divorce proceedings and is intended to provide financial assistance to a spouse until the final divorce settlement is reached.

Bridge-the-Gap Alimony – is a short-term form of support and cannot exceed two years. It is designed to help a spouse transition from being married to being single and self-supporting.

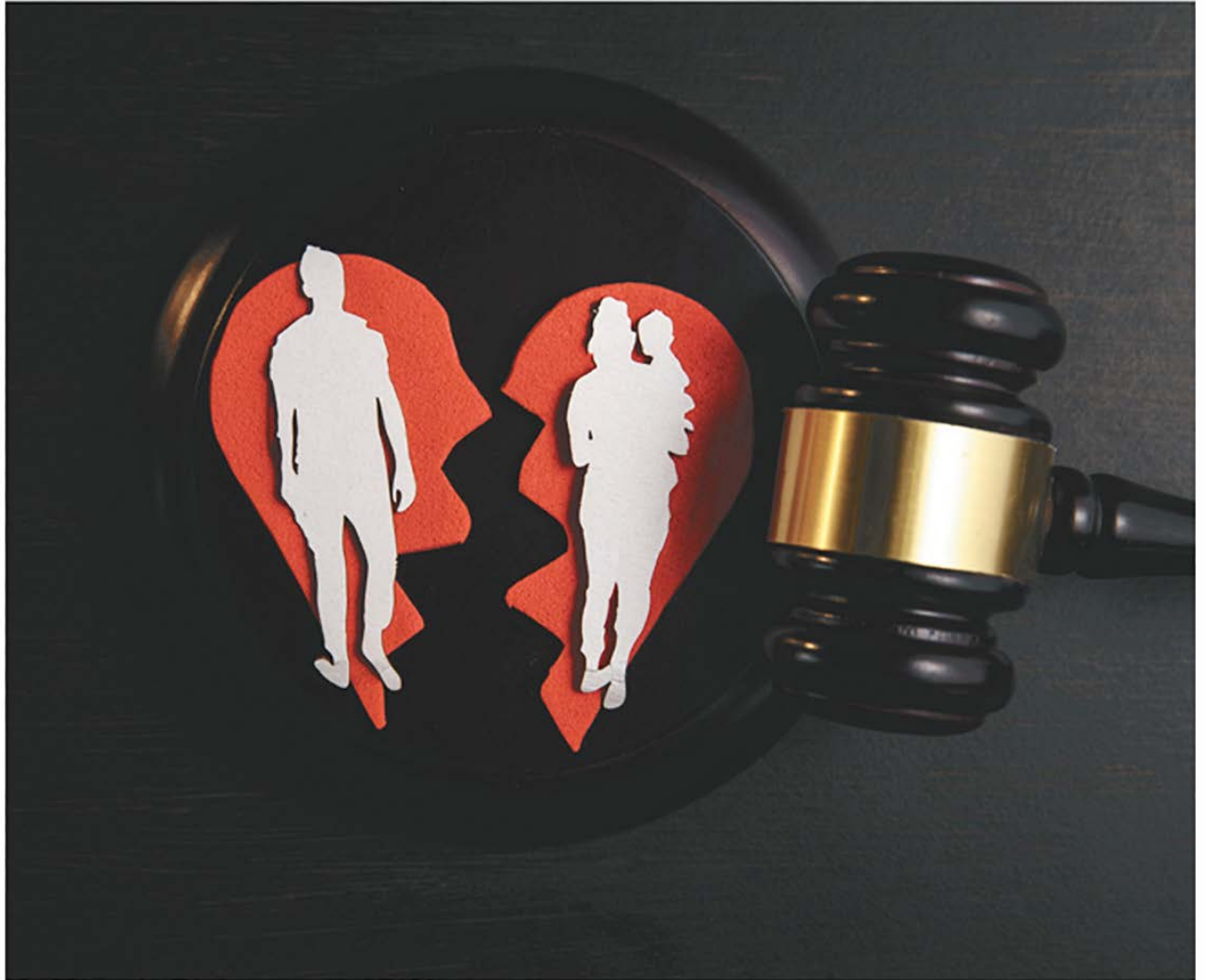
Rehabilitative Alimony – provides financial support to a spouse while they undergo education, training, or other programs to gain the skills necessary to become self-supporting.

Durational Alimony – is awarded for a specific period of time that cannot typically exceed the length of the marriage.

Spousal support and alimony always have the potential to be a contentious part of divorce and family law. The new legislation, which became effective on July 1, 2023, impacts the initial alimony determination and extends to alimony modifications.

New Law Also Impacts Durational Alimony

In addition to ending permanent alimony as a spousal support option, the new legislation restricts the duration and amount of “durational” alimony.



Judges can now reduce or terminate payments based on certain factors, including the payer’s age, health, retirement plans, and the existence of a “supportive relationship.” The bill introduces a five-year limit on rehabilitative alimony and sets eligibility for payments between 3 to 20 years of marriage.

For those currently paying alimony, a process will be created to seek modifications to the agreement upon retirement.

Does Florida’s New Legislation Affect Existing Alimony Payments?

The new law is not retroactive for ex-spouses with non-modifiable alimony plans and will not change your current agreement. Alimony plans that could be modified before July 1, 2023, are subject to the new statutes.

Speak with an Alimony Lawyer

Eliminating permanent alimony is a significant revamp of Florida’s divorce laws and marks the culmination of more than a decade of efforts to reform Florida’s divorce process. If you have questions about how the new law impacts your alimony agreement, we encourage you to contact a Florida alimony lawyer. Arrange a consultation by calling Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A. on 239-649-6555.



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Acupuncture's Complementary Therapies Help with Physical and Mental Wellness

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

Within holistic healing, acupuncture has long been celebrated for its effectiveness in promoting physical and mental well-being.

But, the true magic unfolds when acupuncture is seamlessly woven into a tapestry of complementary therapies such as Qigong, Reiki, and massage.

This harmonious integration and holistic approach is a part of my signature therapy, Acu-healing.

This article will explain how Qigong, Reiki, massage therapy, and acupuncture are woven together.

Qigong: Nurturing the Ebb and Flow of Energy

Qigong, an ancient Chinese practice, focuses on cultivating and balancing vital energy, or Qi. When combined with acupuncture, Qigong amplifies the energy flow initiated by acupuncture needles.

Qigong is comprised of four elements: physical training, active relaxation, focused attention, and controlled breathing.

Studies show that while each element may have a different effect and benefit, they must be used together to bring the most benefits.

The short- and long-term effects, such as lowered blood pressure, decreased levels of cortisol, and decreased stress levels, Qigong provides compound the benefits of acupuncture seamlessly.

Qigong also improves cognitive functioning, decreases anxiety for both chronic and momentary states of anxiety, and improves sleep quality, which in turn decreases fatigue and exhaustion.

An exciting benefit of Qigong is its ability to increase parasympathetic activity, which helps the body rest and digest and directly contrasts the sympathetic system. The sympathetic system responds to threats and prepares the body for strenuous physical activity, that fight or flight feeling. There is a direct way to combat the sympathetic system without using pills or supplements.¹



In the simplest terms, the parasympathetic system reverses the work the sympathetic system does.

What makes activating the parasympathetic nervous system exciting is that Reiki, massage, and acupuncture *all do the same thing*.

Reiki: Channeling Universal Energy

Reiki enhances the energy transfer initiated by acupuncture needles when integrated with acupuncture.

A practitioner's gentle touch serves as a conduit for additional healing energy, intensifying the therapeutic effects of acupuncture.

Research indicates that Reiki effectively stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, as evidenced by quantifiable outcomes such as lowered heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and heightened heart rate variability.²

Another dimension of holistic care—is massage therapy, which extends beyond a mere self-care day to intricately address muscular tension, promote relaxation, and synergize with acupuncture for comprehensive physical and mental well-being.

Massage Therapy: Relaxing and Releasing Tension
Massage therapy is more than a self-care day; it alleviates muscular tension, promotes relaxation, and complements acupuncture by addressing your physical and mental health.

By itself, massage therapy can lower the amount of cortisol, the hormone produced when your body is stressed, in your body³ and promote the release of serotonin.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that diminishes depressive feelings and enhances the body's capacity to combat pain, anxiety, and sadness.

Relaxing the body with massage therapy makes it more receptive to the benefits of acupuncture.

The synergy between these modalities results in a comprehensive approach to pain relief, stress reduction, and overall well-being.

Harmony in Healing

Incorporating Qigong, Reiki, and massage into acupuncture sessions creates a powerful synergy beyond the sum of its parts.

The holistic approach addresses the physical symptoms and the energetic and emotional aspects of health. As practitioners and clients embrace this integrative approach, the potential for healing and transformation becomes boundless.

The combination of acupuncture, Qigong, Reiki, and massage is a testament to the profound impact of holistic healing when diverse therapeutic approaches work in harmony.

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

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Shoulder Injuries and Your Treatment Options

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

Driving along the beach, nearby parks or in many communities, you'll notice that people of all ages are living active lifestyles. Here in Florida, we have gorgeous weather throughout the entire year, which allows for more activities like jogging, tennis, pickleball, kayaking, pushing grandchildren on the swing, and the list goes on and on; but with all of this healthy activity, many individuals are more prone to injury and wear and tear.

One of the most common injury sites is the shoulder. The shoulder is a combination of bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles that provide an extensive range of motion in common everyday tasks, as well as in advanced athletic performance. Whether you're using a walker, picking up a heavy grocery bag, or driving the ball 200 yards, an optimal range of motion is key to healthy living. However, many times shoulder pain is due to advanced arthritis or degenerative joint disease. If you have tried pain medications, alternative methods, physical therapy and are still experiencing difficulty with range-of-motion or impingements and discomfort; it may be time to speak to your orthopedic surgeon about shoulder replacement surgery, also known as shoulder arthroplasty.

Most tears of the rotator cuff occur slowly over time as the tissue wears out, and they commonly occur in those 50 years and older. Any force strong enough to tear tendons also damages and weakens

the surrounding ligaments. Shoulder pain is multifactorial, and rotator cuff results in instability, frozen shoulder, and severe discomfort. Many rotator cuff tears can be treated nonoperatively. However, painful tears and tears that interfere with shoulder function should be treated with surgical repair.

An MRI, and an evaluation of the overall shoulder stability, which is essential if the individual wants to return to their normal activities, is determined, and the best option for that specific patient is planned out, including rehab and physical therapy.

For full tears of the rotator cuff, surgery is almost always necessary, and this can be done through a standard incision or by arthroscopy. If the person can use their arm with some mobility, the tear may be partial and, in that case, arthroscopic repair may suffice.

How is arthroscopic surgery performed?

Your surgeon begins the procedure by inserting the arthroscope through a small incision made near the treatment area. A sterile liquid is used to help open up the area, making it easier to see the joint.

Your surgeon then uses specialized miniature instruments to cut, shave, and apply stitches to the affected area. Additional incisions may be required to insert the surgical instruments. Once the joint has been treated, the incisions are bandaged, and you're off to recovery.

Recovery

After surgery, the initial recovery time usually takes about six weeks as the tendon heals back to bone. Full recovery can take a few months up to a year. Many patients report feeling no pain, and also having an increased range-of-motion very soon after surgery. Your surgeon will also provide you with an exercise and stretching program, along with physical therapy for an allotted period of time.

Although arthroscopic surgery can be used to treat any joint in the body, it's most commonly performed on joints in the knee, shoulder, elbow, ankle, hip, and wrist. If arthritis develops in a shoulder joint, and after conservative treatment options such as physical therapy, oral medications and injections fail, shoulder replacement is a successful option.

Shoulder Replacement Surgery

During a traditional shoulder replacement procedure, the surgeon will remove part of the top of the humerus bone, which is located in the joint of the shoulder. The surgery consists of reshaping the shoulder joint and placing a metal stem (a few inches long) into the shaft of the humerus bone. A metal or plastic plate is then attached to the glenoid socket. These two connected devices will then take the place of the "ball and socket" in the upper shoulder area. Over time, the new joint replacement will allow the shoulder to move more freely, and it will substantially alleviate the pain that the individual was accustomed to on a daily basis. This procedure is for patients with normal rotator cuff tendons.

There are several types of shoulder replacements. If you need one you may be a candidate for a resurfacing type replacement.

Finally, if you wear out your rotator cuff muscles and tendons, and also develop arthritis, you would be a candidate for a reverse total shoulder replacement.

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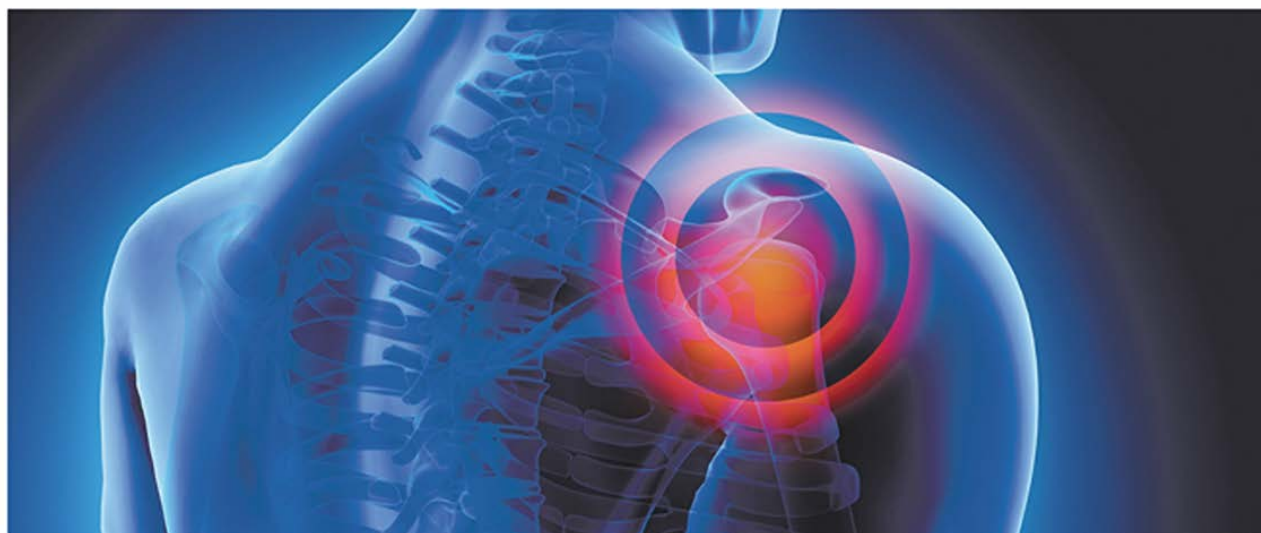
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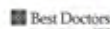
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UNVEILING THE THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL: The Benefits of Medical Marijuana for Cancer Patients

This month is National Cancer Prevention Month and in recent years, the landscape of cancer treatment has witnessed a paradigm shift, with researchers exploring alternative therapeutic avenues to alleviate the physical and psychological burden on patients. Among these emerging options, medical marijuana has garnered attention for its potential benefits in managing symptoms and side effects associated with cancer and its treatment. While the debate surrounding the use of marijuana persists, accumulating scientific evidence suggests that its medicinal properties could play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients.

Alleviation of Chemotherapy-induced Symptoms

One of the most debilitating aspects of cancer treatment is the aggressive nature of chemotherapy, which often induces severe side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Medical marijuana, particularly its active compounds like THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol), has shown promise in alleviating these symptoms. Studies have demonstrated that cannabinoids interact with the endocannabinoid system, modulating neurotransmitter release and providing relief from chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

Moreover, the appetite-stimulating properties of medical cannabis can counteract cancer-related anorexia, promoting weight gain and improving overall nutritional status. This is particularly crucial for cancer patients undergoing treatment, as maintaining a healthy weight is often associated with better treatment outcomes and reduced complications.

Pain Management

Cancer-related pain is a pervasive and challenging aspect of the disease, affecting patients both during and after treatment. Traditional pain medications, such as opioids, carry the risk of addiction and numerous side effects. Medical marijuana, however, offers a potentially safer alternative. The cannabinoids in marijuana interact with pain receptors in the brain and peripheral tissues, providing analgesic effects.



Several clinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of medical marijuana in managing cancer-related pain. The combination of THC and CBD has been found to be particularly effective in reducing pain intensity and improving the overall pain experience for cancer patients. This not only enhances the quality of life but also reduces the reliance on potentially addictive opioid medications.

Anxiety and Depression

A cancer diagnosis and the subsequent treatment journey often lead to heightened levels of anxiety and depression among patients. The psychological toll of facing a life-threatening illness, coupled with the physical challenges of treatment, can significantly impact mental well-being. Medical marijuana has shown promise in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression, offering patients a potential tool to cope with the emotional challenges of cancer.

CBD, a non-psychoactive component of marijuana, has been the focus of much research in this area. It interacts with serotonin receptors in the brain, influencing mood and promoting a sense of calm. Some studies suggest that CBD may have antidepressant and anxiolytic effects without the adverse side effects associated with traditional psychiatric medications.

Anti-inflammatory and Anti-cancer Properties

Beyond symptom management, cannabinoids found in medical marijuana have demonstrated potential anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. These cannabinoids exert their effects by interacting with the endocannabinoid system, which plays a crucial role in regulating inflammation and immune responses. Some studies have suggested that cannabinoids may inhibit the growth of cancer cells and induce apoptosis, the programmed cell death that helps control abnormal cell proliferation.

While more research is needed to fully understand the anti-cancer potential of medical marijuana, preliminary findings are promising. Additionally, the anti-inflammatory properties of cannabinoids can contribute to the overall well-being of cancer patients by reducing inflammation associated with the disease and its treatment.

Conclusion

The benefits of medical marijuana for cancer patients extend beyond mere symptom relief. From alleviating the side effects of chemotherapy to managing pain and improving mental health, the therapeutic potential of cannabinoids is increasingly recognized in the medical community. As the scientific understanding of marijuana's mechanisms of action continues to evolve, it is crucial to approach its use in cancer care with an open mind and a commitment to evidence-based medicine. The integration of medical marijuana into comprehensive cancer care plans holds the promise of enhancing the quality of life for patients and providing them with more holistic and personalized treatment options.



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WHAT IS ALL THE RAGE ABOUT EXOSOMES?

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

In recent years, a groundbreaking innovation has taken the skincare and hair restoration industry by storm – exosomes. These tiny extracellular vesicles, derived from stem cells, have proven to be 100 times more potent for rebuilding collagen, enhancing elasticity, and thickening the skin than any other product on the market.

Since 2020, numerous clinical trials have substantiated the safety and efficacy of exosomes in the realms of rejuvenation and hair loss. Positioned at the forefront of innovation, these naturally derived products are cultivated in specialized labs equipped with bioreactors, often using stem cells sourced from umbilical tissue. However, caution must be exercised in selecting reliable and identifiable labs to ensure the correct cellular messages are delivered.

Exosomes, sometimes referred to as messengers of the body, are not mere fillers like hyaluronic acid. They play a pivotal role in stimulating the building blocks for the skin, acting as a subtype of membrane vesicles containing microdroplets secreted by cells and their surroundings. Their functions range from maintaining cellular homeostasis to removing older tissue and improving communication between cells and tissues through proteins, genetic material, and lipids.

The key benefits of exosomes are diverse, including the stimulation of collagen production, increased elasticity, wrinkle reduction, and skin thickening. Administration methods vary, with exosomes being injectable through tiny needles or delivered into



tissues via microneedling. While applicable to various areas, such as joints for arthritis reversal, the primary focus currently remains on the head and neck.

The price point for this revolutionary treatment is typically around \$3,000 for the face and neck. To undergo the procedure, patients can expect a topical numbing medication for comfort, with minimal downtime. While temporary redness may occur for a day or two, noticeable improvements in skin texture and tone can be anticipated within 2-5 weeks, with ongoing enhancement.

But who is an ideal candidate for this transformative treatment? The success of exosome therapy extends to balding men and women, making it a beacon of hope for those grappling with hair loss. The scalp, in particular, benefits from microneedling as the preferred delivery method. Beyond hair concerns, individuals with maturing and thinning skin also make excellent candidates for exosome treatments.



In the broader spectrum of medical research, exosomes are not limited to skincare and hair rejuvenation. Ongoing studies are exploring their potential for treating various diseases, including cardiovascular dysfunction, neurodegeneration, and cancer. This versatility underscores the immense promise that exosomes hold for the future of regenerative medicine.

In conclusion, the advent of exosomes has ushered in a new era of skincare and hair restoration, offering unprecedented benefits that extend beyond conventional methods. As the science evolves, exosome therapy stands as a testament to the remarkable possibilities that stem from harnessing the body's natural messengers for healing and rejuvenation. Whether seeking to reverse the signs of aging or combat hair loss, exosomes emerge as a beacon of hope, promising transformative results that transcend traditional expectations.

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All the Rage with Celebrities, The Vampire Facelift and Facial Can Give You Your Youthful Appearance Back

As we age skin can become dull, lose elasticity and droop. There are of course surgical options and hyaluronic acid fillers, but the procedures that are topping everyone's wish list are the Vampire facelift and the vampire facial.

Naturally found in your blood, platelets are a rich source of proteins called growth factors, which promote healing and regeneration. Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) contains a higher concentration of platelets than the amount normally found in your blood. To create PRP a sample of your blood is drawn and placed in a centrifuge, which separates out the platelets. These concentrated platelets are recombined with your blood plasma to make PRP. Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) is then reinjected into the problem areas.

PRP injections are an alternative to Botox and fillers. Platelet Rich Plasma is taken from the patient's own blood, spun down and reintroduced into the face just like a filler to create and stimulate your body's own growth factors. PRP produces collagen, hyaluronic acid, elastin, and plumps the skin. PRP injections with the vampire facelift maintain the facial contours of the natural look of the patient.

With just four to six PRP treatments over a two to four-week period, patients are seeing results that last for up to 2 years, so over the long-term, it's very cost effective and 100% safe. You don't have to be concerned about toxins or chemicals with your own PRP.



Vampire Facelift

For the "facelift", the PRP is injected into various areas of the face to create a plumping effect. The procedure is safe because it's utilizing the patient's own blood and it's free of toxins. The body begins to "repair" itself and regenerates collagen, elastin and healing properties, which create a youthful appearance.

Vampire Facial

The facial works in much the same way as the "facelift", but with tiny perforations in the skin as opposed to injections. The tiny perforations allow the PRP to penetrate into the dermal layers, and the results continuously improve the glow of the skin within two to three months. Many patients report plumped skin, a brighter complexion and seeing less noticeable dark circles.

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

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

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

Understanding Semaglutide Drugs

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

Mechanism of Action for Weight Loss

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

Clinical Trials and Findings

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

Impact on Cholesterol Levels

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



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

Considerations and Potential Side Effects

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

Integration into Lifestyle Changes

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

Future Directions and Implications

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

Conclusion

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

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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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UNVEILING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN HEART HEALTH

In the intricate dance of maintaining cardiovascular well-being, physical therapy emerges as a powerful partner, contributing significantly to the prevention and management of heart-related issues. This article delves into the nuanced ways in which physical therapy serves as a beacon of hope, offering tailored interventions that extend beyond rehabilitation to actively enhance cardiac health.

Understanding the Heart-PT Connection

The heart, a tireless organ powering the body's every move, demands meticulous care. Physical therapy becomes a linchpin in this care, focusing on strengthening the heart muscle, improving circulation, and enhancing overall cardiovascular function. Through targeted exercises, patients embark on a journey of revitalization, reinforcing their hearts and mitigating potential risks.

Tailored Exercise Regimens

Physical therapists craft personalized exercise regimens that go beyond the conventional. Aerobic exercises, such as walking or cycling, are seamlessly integrated to boost endurance. Strength training exercises not only fortify muscles but also contribute to the heart's efficiency in pumping blood. Importantly, these exercises are calibrated to each patient's unique health status, ensuring a safe and effective path to cardiac well-being.

Lifestyle Modifications for Heart Health

Beyond the confines of the clinic, physical therapists act as educators, guiding individuals on lifestyle modifications crucial for maintaining a healthy heart. From dietary recommendations to stress management techniques, patients receive comprehensive support in cultivating habits that promote cardiac wellness. This holistic approach addresses the multifaceted nature of heart health, recognizing the interplay between physical activity, nutrition, and stress levels.

Managing Chronic Conditions

For individuals grappling with chronic cardiac conditions, physical therapy is a beacon of hope. Conditions such as heart failure or post-heart attack recovery often necessitate specialized rehabilitation. Physical therapists, armed with expertise,



design rehabilitation programs that gradually reintegrate patients into physical activities, fostering recovery and improving overall quality of life.

The Impact on Risk Reduction

Cardiovascular diseases are often linked to risk factors such as obesity, hypertension, and diabetes. Physical therapy not only addresses existing issues but plays a pivotal role in risk reduction. Through weight management programs, blood pressure control strategies, and diabetic care initiatives, physical therapists collaborate with patients to create a robust defense against potential heart-related risks.

Empowering Patients for Long-Term Success

One of the remarkable facets of physical therapy in cardiac care is its emphasis on empowering patients. Education becomes a cornerstone, with individuals gaining insights into their conditions, understanding the importance of adherence to therapy, and acquiring tools to maintain cardiac health independently. This empowerment creates a lasting impact, fostering a proactive approach to heart health.

Adapting to Technological Advances

The landscape of healthcare is continually evolving, and physical therapy is no exception. Integrating technological advancements, such as telehealth options and wearable devices, physical therapists extend their reach beyond the clinic walls. This not only facilitates remote monitoring but also enhances the continuity of care, ensuring that patients receive support wherever they are on their cardiac health journey.

In the symphony of cardiac care, physical therapy stands out as a harmonious force, orchestrating a melody of exercises, lifestyle modifications, and education to promote heart health. From rehabilitation to risk reduction, the impact of physical therapy on cardiac well-being is profound and far-reaching. As we navigate the intricate pathways of cardiovascular health, the role of physical therapy shines bright, offering a beacon of hope and healing for hearts in need.

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5 Common Spinal Injuries Related to Pickleball

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

Pickleball is increasingly recognized for its health benefits and social aspects. However, as with any physical activity, it carries risks, particularly to the spine. A notable concern is compression fracture, a severe injury requiring heightened awareness among pickleball enthusiasts. Pickleball's court size and play style require agility, quick reflexes, and frequent directional changes. These movements, while part of the sport's appeal, can place significant stress on the player's spinal column. The potential for injury, especially in the unprepared, is substantial.

COMMON SPINAL INJURIES IN PICKLEBALL

1. Compression Fractures: Often occurring in the lower back, these fractures result when the vertebral bone collapses. They are more common in older adults, particularly postmenopausal women and those with osteoporosis. Symptoms include sudden, severe back pain that worsens with twisting or bending. The seriousness of these injuries lies in their ability to cause lasting pain and significant changes in lifestyle.

2. Muscle Strains and Ligament Sprains: These injuries are prevalent due to the sport's stop-start nature. They can range from mild discomfort to severe, debilitating pain and can occur in any part of the spine. Proper warm-up routines and stretching are crucial in preventing these injuries.

3. Herniated Discs: This injury is characterized by a disc protruding out between the vertebrae and pressing on a nerve. Symptoms include localized back pain with radiating, shooting leg pain. Herniated discs in pickleball can result from sudden twists or poor posture during play.

4. Spondylolisthesis: This condition, where a vertebra slips out of place onto the bone below it, can be exacerbated by the sport's repetitive twisting and bending motions. It can cause lower back pain, muscle tightness, and nerve pain in the legs.

5. Spinal Stenosis: Typically seen in older players, this condition involves the narrowing of the spinal canal, which can lead to nerve pain and numbness in the arms and/or legs. The repetitive motions in pickleball can aggravate this condition.

RISK FACTORS

A deeper look into the factors increasing the risk of spinal injuries in pickleball players:

- **Age-Related Changes:** As players age, the spine naturally degenerates, losing flexibility and bone density.

This biological process makes the spine more susceptible to injuries.

- **Previous Spinal Conditions:** Individuals with a history of back problems, such as previous injuries, surgeries, or chronic conditions like arthritis, have a heightened risk. The weakened structures in the spine are more prone to re-injury, especially under the physical demands of pickleball.

- **Inadequate Physical Preparation:** Proper preparation goes beyond simple warm-ups. It includes maintaining overall physical fitness, ensuring flexibility, and building core strength. Lack of preparation leaves the spine vulnerable to strains and other injuries.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The following concepts help to effectively minimize the risk of spinal injuries:

- **Prioritizing Bone Health:** For older players, focusing on bone health is crucial. This includes adequate calcium and vitamin D intake, possibly through supplements, and engaging in weight-bearing exercises to maintain bone density. Avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption also plays a significant role in bone health. Patients should consult with their primary care physicians about regular bone density scans and treatment for osteoporosis if necessary.

- **Mastering Proper Techniques:** Correct playing techniques can significantly reduce the strain on the spine. This includes learning the right way to twist, bend, and strike the ball. Working with a coach or taking lessons can be beneficial in mastering these techniques.

- **Regular Physical Fitness Routines:** Engaging in a regular fitness regimen that includes exercises for flexibility, core stability, and overall muscle conditioning is vital. Activities like yoga, pilates, and targeted strength training can enhance spinal stability and reduce injury risk.

- **Utilizing Appropriate Equipment:** Shoes designed for court sports provide better grip and support, reducing the risk of falls and awkward movements that can lead to injury.

TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT

- **Immediate Care for Minor Injuries:** For less severe injuries like strains and sprains, the first line of treatment often involves rest, ice, over-the-counter pain medications, and bracing. This conservative approach is usually effective for minor soft tissue injuries.

- **Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation:** For injuries that are more severe but non-surgical, physical therapy plays a crucial role. Tailored exercise programs help in strengthening the back muscles, improving flexibility, and restoring range of motion.

- **Pain Management:** Chronic pain from spinal injuries may require medical interventions like pain relievers, anti-inflammatory medications, and muscle relaxants. In some cases, corticosteroid injections may be administered to reduce inflammation and pain.

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGICAL PROCEDURES

- **Kyphoplasty:** This is particularly effective for treating compression fractures. In kyphoplasty, a balloon-like device is used to gently elevate the fractured vertebra to return it to the correct position. Bone cement is then injected to stabilize the fracture. This procedure not only helps in relieving pain but also restores height and spinal alignment.

- **Other Minimally Invasive Procedures:** Depending on the nature and location of the injury, other minimally invasive surgeries like microdiscectomy or laminectomy may be considered. These procedures aim to relieve pressure on spinal nerves while minimizing damage to surrounding tissues.

CONCLUSION

Pickleball players must be aware of the potential spinal injuries associated with the sport, particularly compression fractures and herniated discs. By understanding these risks and employing prevention strategies, players can enjoy the benefits of pickleball while safeguarding their spinal health. Should injuries occur, prompt and appropriate treatment is key to a successful recovery.

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UNDERSTANDING LARYNGOMALACIA AND STRIDOR IN NEWBORNS: SIGNS, CONCERNS, AND TREATMENT

By Dr. Michel Saaloukeh - MD, FAAP, IBCLC

Laryngomalacia and stridor can be unsettling for parents of newborns, but being informed about these conditions is crucial. Laryngomalacia is a common cause of stridor, a high-pitched sound during breathing. While often benign, it's essential to recognize signs of concern and understand potential treatments.

What is Laryngomalacia?

Laryngomalacia is a condition where the soft tissues of the larynx (voice box) are floppy, causing them to collapse inward during breathing. This collapse leads to partial airway obstruction and the characteristic stridor – a musical or harsh noise when the baby inhales.

Recognizing Stridor: What to Look For

Stridor is the primary indicator of laryngomalacia. It's typically noticeable during inhalation and may sound like wheezing, snoring, or high-pitched breathing. While many infants exhibit mild stridor, persistent or worsening symptoms could be a cause for concern.

Signs of Concern

1. Increased Effort in Breathing: If your newborn is working hard to breathe, with visible retractions (sucking in of the chest or ribs), it might indicate a more severe airway obstruction.

2. Poor Weight Gain: Laryngomalacia can sometimes interfere with feeding due to breathing difficulties, leading to poor weight gain. Regular check-ups with the pediatrician can help monitor your baby's growth.

3. Cyanosis: Bluish discoloration of the lips, face, or extremities may suggest inadequate oxygen intake, indicating a need for prompt medical attention.

When to Seek Medical Advice

If you notice persistent or worsening stridor, especially accompanied by signs like increased breathing effort, poor weight gain, or cyanosis, consult your pediatrician promptly. Early detection and intervention are crucial for managing laryngomalacia effectively.

Diagnosis and Evaluation

Diagnosing laryngomalacia involves a thorough examination by a pediatrician or an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist. In some cases, additional tests like a flexible laryngoscopy may be performed to visualize the airway structures.

Possible Treatments

1. Observation: Many cases of laryngomalacia improve on their own as the baby grows. In mild cases, healthcare providers might recommend a "watch and wait" approach, monitoring the condition regularly.

2. Positioning: Keeping your baby in an upright position during and after feeding can minimize symptoms, as gravity helps keep the airway open.

3. Thickening Feeds: For infants experiencing feeding difficulties, adding a thickening agent to breast milk or formula may ease swallowing and reduce symptoms.

4. Surgical Intervention: In severe cases where conservative measures are ineffective, surgical options like supraglottoplasty may be considered. This procedure involves reshaping the tissues of the larynx to alleviate airway obstruction.

Understanding laryngomalacia and its association with stridor empowers parents to recognize potential concerns early on. Regular check-ups, prompt medical attention for concerning symptoms, and collaborative decision-making with healthcare professionals are vital for ensuring the well-being of newborns affected by these conditions. While many cases resolve over time, proactive management can provide the best outcomes for both the infant and their caregivers.

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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Shockwave Treatments with Storz

By Dr. Carolina Young

Joint and muscle pain affects a significant portion of the U.S. population, with nearly one in four adults experiencing daily discomfort. Orchidia Medical Group is dedicated to addressing this widespread issue, offering cutting-edge shockwave therapy as a transformative solution for chronic joint and muscle pain sufferers.

The prevalence and impact of musculoskeletal pain are the root causes of various ailments for patients of all age categories. In numerous countries, lower back pain stands as a leading cause of adult disability. Factors such as injuries, autoimmune conditions, and lifestyle habits contribute to the persistence of pain, emphasizing the need for effective treatments.

Muscle and joint degeneration, often beginning in middle age and worsening over time, necessitates interventions like shockwave therapy. This innovative approach utilizes acoustic waves generated by the Storz machine to stimulate the body's natural healing processes, comprehensively addressing chronic musculoskeletal pain.

During shockwave therapy sessions at Orchidia Medical Group, the Storz machine delivers acoustic waves precisely to the areas of pain, enhancing the body's ability to heal. The Storz machine's application, coupled with a specialized gel, ensures efficient transmission of waves for optimal therapeutic effects.

Musculoskeletal pain is a prevalent concern affecting most of the U.S. population. At Orchidia Medical Group, we take pride in introducing our cutting-edge Storz Machine, a revolutionary tool designed to target and alleviate joint pain in various body parts.

Our Storz Machine is particularly effective in addressing specific conditions, making it a versatile solution for individuals with Achilles tendonitis, knee pain, osteoarthritis, and shoulder issues, among other joint-related problems. The precision and targeted nature of the Storz Machine's acoustic waves ensure optimal therapeutic effects, providing relief where it's needed the most.

For runners and those experiencing hamstring discomfort, the Storz Machine promotes recovery and enhances performance. It's a game-changer for



athletes preparing for their next event, offering a proactive approach to joint health and mobility. For runners seeking optimal hamstring health and performance, the Storz Machine proves invaluable. Its ability to stimulate healing responses in the targeted areas contributes to faster recovery times and increased flexibility, ensuring that athletes are well-prepared for upcoming events.

Understanding the impact of musculoskeletal pain on daily life, our focus on the Storz Machine reflects a commitment to advanced and effective treatments. The Storz Machine delivers acoustic waves to the affected areas, initiating the body's natural healing processes and promoting comprehensive relief.

The Storz Machine's application, coupled with a specialized gel for efficient wave transmission, ensures that conditions like Achilles tendonitis, knee pain, osteoarthritis, and shoulder issues are specifically targeted. This precision allows for a tailored approach, addressing each patient's unique needs.

Shockwave therapy is grounded in scientific principles, distributing pain mediators throughout the affected tissues. These mediators interfere with pain signals, offering significant relief by blocking the processing of discomfort in the brain. The therapy also targets trigger points, releasing tension in tight muscle fibers and promoting enhanced flexibility and mobility.

Furthermore, shockwave therapy proves effective in reducing inflammation, a common contributor to chronic pain. It addresses overactive inflammatory responses, preventing long-term complications and

loss of mobility. The Storz machine is particularly adept at breaking down calcified tissues, relieving discomfort associated with hardened areas, and restoring natural movement.

Collagen production, vital for connective tissue flexibility, is stimulated through shockwave therapy. The Storz machine creates micro-injuries, initiating the body's collagen production process and promoting healing. Additionally, the therapy supports angiogenesis, encouraging the formation of new blood vessels for improved blood flow and nutrient delivery to affected areas, enhancing the overall healing process.

Good candidates for shockwave therapy include hip pain, heel spurs, Plantar fasciitis, tennis elbow, shoulder pain, Achilles tendonitis, jumper's knee, tissue calcification, chronic tendinopathy, musculoskeletal injuries, medial tibial stress syndrome, and chronic pain and inflammation. Orchidia Medical Group offers individualized consultations, guiding patients toward customized treatment plans tailored to their chronic pain and mobility issues.

If you've been enduring chronic joint and muscle pain, consider the scientifically backed benefits of shockwave therapy with the Storz machine at Orchidia Medical Group. Book a consultation in Naples, FL, and explore how this advanced treatment can harness your body's natural processes to bring the relief you've been seeking.

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Nurturing Pet Dental Health Amidst Chocolate Hazards

February marks Pet Dental Health Month, a time dedicated to the well-being of our beloved furry companions. Simultaneously, the sweet delights of candy season beckon, accompanied by the looming threat of chocolate toxicity for pets. In this delicate dance between dental care and chocolate safety, responsible pet ownership takes center stage.

Pet Dental Health Month: A Spotlight on Smiles

Pet Dental Health Month is an annual reminder to prioritize the often-overlooked aspect of our pets' overall health – their dental hygiene. Beyond the endearing wag of tails and playful barks, a healthy smile is indicative of a thriving pet. Dental issues can impact an animal's quality of life, causing discomfort and affecting their ability to eat. Hence, this designated month encourages pet owners to take proactive steps in caring for their furry friends' teeth.

Routine dental care involves a combination of professional cleanings by veterinarians and at-home practices. Introducing pets to toothbrushes and pet-friendly toothpaste is a positive step. Additionally, dental treats and toys designed to reduce plaque and tartar buildup contribute to oral health. Pet Dental Health Month serves as an annual check-in, urging guardians to schedule vet visits for comprehensive dental examinations.

Chocolate Toxicity: A Hidden Menace in Sweet Indulgence

Amidst the festivities, the allure of chocolates is omnipresent. However, many pet owners may not be fully aware of the potential danger chocolate poses to their animals. Chocolate contains theobromine, a stimulant that affects the central nervous system and cardiovascular system in pets. Dogs and cats metabolize theobromine more slowly than humans, making them susceptible to toxicity.

Dark chocolate and baking chocolate contain higher theobromine levels, intensifying the risk. Symptoms of chocolate toxicity include restlessness, increased heart rate, vomiting, diarrhea, and, in severe cases, seizures. The urgency in addressing chocolate ingestion cannot be overstated – immediate veterinary attention is crucial.

Balancing Treats and Safety: A Pet-Approved Approach

As pet owners, finding the equilibrium between indulging in candy season and safeguarding our pets demands thoughtful consideration. Opting for pet-friendly treats that mimic the festive spirit without the harmful ingredients is a creative approach. Engaging pets in the celebration with safe alternatives, such as pet-friendly toys and treats, ensures they feel included without compromising their health.



Prevention becomes paramount in avoiding emergencies related to chocolate ingestion. Pet-proofing living spaces by storing chocolates securely and educating family members, especially children, about the risks associated with sharing human treats with pets is fundamental. Vigilance during festive periods can avert potential hazards and contribute to a joyous, worry-free celebration for both pets and their owners.

In conclusion, Pet Dental Health Month serves as a timely reminder to invest in our pets' smiles, promoting overall well-being. Simultaneously, navigating the risks of chocolate toxicity during candy season necessitates a vigilant and responsible approach to pet care. As guardians of these loyal companions, our commitment to their health extends beyond festivities, ensuring a lifetime of happiness and health.

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CRYSTAL PERSONALIZATION AT HEALING CRYSTAL TUNNEL

What is the meaning of crystal personalization? Personalizing a crystal consists of aligning the vibrational frequencies of the crystal or in some cases a certain range of frequencies of the crystal with the frequencies of a specific person. All crystals, just like everything that exists in this and all universes, are fundamentally based on vibrational frequencies. From their unimaginable small beginnings, starting their process of alienation and transformation, more infinitely unimaginable small fractions of time. This "time" is nothing like we know here on earth. These vibrations are already pure energy, magnetism, existence and non-existence, creation and negation, in addition to being components of the whole in and of themselves.

During the process of crowding, combination, adaptation, mixing, alignment, and harmonic condensation, the vibrations increase their density. They share information to create the visible and invisible, the perceptible and the imperceptible. Within one of these billions of vibrational paths one can identify and define crystals. The crystals are capable of receiving, storing processing, and sharing information, which in turn is vibration moving at different frequency scales. All these crystals, even in their extremely pure form, already accumulate information. This information comes in the form of exploitation, recollection, transportation, storage, and all the extensive manipulation. The crystals ultimately absorb an especially wide range of emotional impressions contributed mostly unconsciously by those who came into direct contact with them. In our existence and within the immense dimensionality of vibrations of which we are composed, we share specific vibrational frequencies with each and every one of the crystals.

Crystals are possible to manipulate by creating a direct alignment with the vibrations of a specific imbalance due to multiple circumstances. It is also possible to program crystals so they interact directly by collecting, accumulating and processing low-density vibrations, which could be affecting an organ and/or organism. For this it is necessary to **FIRST:** perform an Energetic Cleanse,

eliminating all possible vibrational contamination collected previously, during this process, communication with the crystal begins by opening one of its vortices, thus being able to enter the interior of his library, which is composed of multiple hallways, levels and sub-levels. Reading, visualizing and identifying the crystal's content. Once this intervention has been carried out, it is necessary to equalize the vibrations that are not its own. In this case we could assimilate as surgical energy blockages, proceeding to remove and eliminate all that unwanted information.

SECOND: Energization; which consists of raising the level of resonance through the spiral application of frequencies of the same intensity. As a result, the expansion or amplification of its energy level will be expressed in the form of sensory resonance so one can feel between other things during the alignment or personalization process.

THIRD: Personalization; consists of synchronizing the vibrational memory of the crystal with the cellular memory of the energy fields with whom the crystal has possession, specific and according to each particular case. Multiple steps taken through each case the harmonic alignment of high-frequencies vibratory impulses of the crystal, with the vibrational frequencies of an organic being that oscillate at the same energy levels of the crystal, creating a protective field that surrounds the organism or part of it with the crystal. Giving the crystal a specialized and specified ability, depending on the necessity for collecting, blocking, minimizing and/or canceling possible negative interactions that could be influencing the individual's magnetic field.

Next, low energy levels; by intersecting the high energy sources of the clean and energized crystal with the vibrational imbalances of an organism or one of its organs, it is possible to raise the degree of energy by channeling the amplified emissions of the energetic level of the crystal. To summarize, in order to **PERSONALIZE** a crystal, it must go through the process of alignment, channeling, attunement of energy levels and intensity of vibratory frequencies of the crystal, which is connected with those of any organic being.

The Journey to Self Renewal

HEALING CRYSTAL TUNNEL will provide the skills and benefits of being present, focusing your energy, and reconnecting with yourself. Slow down your mind, bring clarity to your thoughts, and experience personal growth. Are you still struggling for answers? Give us a try. We have many patients who have been all over the world getting treatment the traditional way with no resolution. We strive to transform your current life into a new beautiful life path, which you never knew existed!

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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Promoting Vision Health:

Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month in Home Healthcare

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is a prevalent eye condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide, particularly as they age. In an effort to raise awareness and promote proactive eye care, the month of May has been designated as Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month. For home healthcare providers, this observance serves as a crucial opportunity to educate, support, and empower individuals in their homes.

AMD is a progressive eye disease that primarily impacts the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. As the population ages, the incidence of AMD rises, making it essential for home healthcare professionals to play a proactive role in its prevention and management.

In the home healthcare setting, the focus extends beyond traditional medical care. It involves creating an environment that fosters eye health awareness and offers practical strategies for maintaining good vision. One key aspect is education—informing both patients and their families about the risk factors associated with AMD and the importance of regular eye examinations.

Regular eye check-ups are crucial for early detection of AMD, enabling timely intervention to slow its progression. Home healthcare providers can facilitate these examinations, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive eye care without the need to leave the comfort of their homes. By incorporating preventive measures, such as promoting a healthy diet rich in vitamins and antioxidants, home healthcare professionals contribute significantly to AMD management.

In addition to clinical care, emotional support plays a vital role in addressing the challenges associated with AMD. Vision loss can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, and home healthcare providers are uniquely positioned to offer empathetic support. This may include assisting with adaptive technologies, coordinating support groups, or providing resources that enhance independence and well-being.



Beyond the immediate care of those affected, home healthcare professionals can advocate for AMD awareness at a broader level. Collaborating with community organizations, participating in outreach programs, and utilizing digital platforms for educational campaigns are effective ways to amplify the importance of vision health during AMD Awareness Month.

Moreover, embracing technological advancements in telehealth allows home healthcare providers to extend their reach and deliver specialized eye care services. Through virtual consultations and remote monitoring, they can ensure that individuals with AMD receive ongoing care, fostering a holistic approach to managing this condition.

In conclusion, Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month serves as an opportunity for home healthcare providers to shine a spotlight on vision health. By combining education, preventive care, emotional support, and technological innovation, these professionals play a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of individuals affected by AMD. This month-long observance is not only a reminder to prioritize eye health but also a call to action for home healthcare to be at the forefront of promoting comprehensive care for those at risk of or living with AMD.

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SETTING BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

In the intricate tapestry of life, maintaining a delicate balance between personal and external demands is vital for mental well-being. Setting and negotiating personal boundaries is a cornerstone for creating a harmonious and stress-resistant lifestyle. As a mental health provider, Dr. Capiola understands the significance of cultivating boundaries that align with individual needs, values, and priorities. In this guide, Dr. Capiola lists steps to empower you to establish boundaries effectively. From self-reflection to assertive communication and consistent enforcement, these steps guide you toward reduced stressors, improved relationships, and enhanced mental resilience. Let's embark on this transformative exploration of boundary-setting for a healthier and more fulfilling life.

HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES TO REDUCE STRESSORS IN YOUR LIFE:

1. Self-Reflection: Reflect on your needs, values, and limits. Identify areas of your life where you feel overwhelmed or stressed. Consider past situations that have caused discomfort and recognize patterns that indicate a need for boundaries.

2. Identify Stressors: Pinpoint specific stressors in your life, whether related to work, relationships, or other aspects. This could include excessive workload, intrusive requests, or emotional demands. Understanding the sources of stress helps in creating targeted boundaries.

3. Clarify Your Values: Clearly define your values and priorities. This clarity will guide you in setting boundaries that align with your core beliefs. For example, if family time is a priority, establish boundaries around work hours to ensure dedicated time for your loved ones.

4. Communicate Effectively: Practice open and assertive communication when setting boundaries. Clearly express your needs, feelings, and limits to others. Use "I" statements to convey your perspective without sounding accusatory. For instance, say, "I need some quiet time in the evenings to relax and recharge."

5. Learn to Say No: Recognize that declining requests or commitments that exceed your capacity is okay. Saying no is not a rejection; it's a healthy acknowledgment of your limitations. Prioritize your well-being by avoiding overcommitment.

6. Set Clear Limits: Establish clear and specific boundaries. Whether designating work hours, specifying personal time, or defining expectations in relationships, ensure that your limits are well-defined. This clarity helps others understand and respect your boundaries.

7. Consistent Enforcement: Be consistent in enforcing your boundaries. When others witness your commitment to maintaining limits, they are more likely to respect them. Consistency also reinforces the importance of these boundaries for your mental health.

8. Utilize Technology Mindfully: Set boundaries around technology use in the digital age. Designate specific times for checking emails or social media and

create technology-free zones in your home. This helps prevent the intrusion of work-related stressors into personal time.

9. Seek Support: Share your boundaries with trusted friends, family, or colleagues. A support system that understands and respects your limits can provide reinforcement and encouragement.

10. Regularly Assess and Adjust: Periodically assess the effectiveness of your boundaries. Life circumstances may change, and what worked before might need adjustments. Be flexible and willing to modify boundaries to align with evolving priorities.

11. Prioritize Self-Care: Make self-care a non-negotiable part of your routine. Whether it's dedicating time for relaxation, exercise, or hobbies, prioritize activities that contribute positively to your mental and emotional well-being.

Remember, setting and negotiating boundaries is an ongoing process that requires self-awareness and commitment. Establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries empowers you to create a more balanced and fulfilling life. Schedule a visit with Dr. Capiola to discuss further how to apply these principles to your situation.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of depression or anxiety, there is help in SWFL. Dr. Richard Capiola, MD, is a board-certified psychiatrist with specialty certifications in addiction and forensic psychiatry and over 31 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1990. Be sure to call ahead with Dr. Capiola to book an appointment.

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



Custom Medications for Your Favorite Feline

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

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

Behavioral Issues Treated with Transdermal Medications in Cats

Marking and Spraying

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

Aggression

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

Sedation

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

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



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

Medical Conditions Treated with Transdermal Medications in Cats

Heart Problems

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

Kidney Problems

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

Gastrointestinal Problems

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

Allergies and Inflammation

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

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

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The Matterhorn Method: Eliminating Pain and Inspiring Hope

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

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

Naples based Matterhorn Fit, has a solution. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat over 70 professional athletes, 11 Olympians, and thousands of SW Florida residents in as little as two weeks. In their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it quickly, and prevent it from returning.

“Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods and are still in pain.. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are fast and our clients become hopeful again,” says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain. The team spent the next five years compiling various



techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan’s rehabilitation. The results were fast and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.

“When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered,” says Vesce. “We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method

worked so well that our clients told all of their family and friends about it. That’s when we knew we had something really special. Within 2 weeks, virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today.”

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

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

To schedule an initial evaluation visit
matterhornfit.com or call the office at
239.676.5342.

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Three Factors That Improve Your Heart Health and Reduce the Risk of Alzheimer's

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

When embarking on the journey of wellness in your golden years, it's crucial to remember and protect the intricate relationship between your cardiovascular health and cognitive well-being. February, known as American Heart Month, provides us with the perfect opportunity to shed light on a topic close to our hearts - the connection between Alzheimer's and heart health. Research has shown a compelling connection between cardiovascular health and the risk of developing Alzheimer's or other dementias.

The Heart-Brain Axis

Often, we think of our organs as separate, but they all exist in the same eco system; the intricate network of blood vessels that nourishes the brain is influenced by the same factors that impact heart health. Picture the heart and the brain as interconnected hubs of vitality, working in harmony to sustain our overall well-being. The heart pumps oxygen-rich blood to every nook and cranny of the body, including the brain. This symbiotic relationship is commonly referred to as the "heart-brain axis." When disruptions occur in the cardiovascular system, they can reverberate through this axis, potentially affecting cognitive functions.

Alzheimer's and Cardiovascular Risk Factors

Several shared risk factors contribute to both Alzheimer's disease and cardiovascular issues. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity are among the culprits that can compromise both heart health and cognitive function. By addressing these risk factors, individuals can potentially reduce their susceptibility to both conditions.

Now, let us explore how lifestyle choices play a pivotal role in safeguarding our heart and brain. Engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a heart-healthy diet, and getting adequate sleep, are all proactive steps towards supporting overall well-being.

Movement Matters

Physical movement is one of the greatest things you can do for your heart and brain health. But what if you are not in good health already? Often,



people give up because the odds seem greater than the potential impact. Nevertheless, research has shown that any physical activity improves cardiovascular health and brain health. Of course, it is ideal to aim for movement every day. It is more important, however, to remember that all movement, even minimal movement, is better than no movement at all. To get started, look at your existing amount of physical activity and ask how can you move just 1% more today than you did yesterday? You might be wondering, what about our family and friends who use assistive technology, like wheelchairs or walkers? Considering the movement they can do is important. Can they raise their arms or do leg raises while seated? Doing what you can, with what you have, where you are is a great way to build stamina.

Food Matters

It is not just physical activity that makes great heart and brain health. Food matters, too. Every food that is good for your heart is also good for your brain. Much like we can build stamina in exercise, we can also build better food habits. If you are someone that does not eat a lot of fruits or vegetables, practice adding one to a meal. Sometimes getting more vegetables and fruit can be as simple as chopping the lettuce for a salad or slicing the apple instead of eating it whole. Meat is not always bad,

but instead of having a plate full of meat, try eating equal amounts of fruits, vegetables and meat. In the later stages of life, many people become disconnected to their food because someone else is preparing it. They lose touch with the diversity of all the amazing food options. If variety is the spice of life, it can also literally be the spice on your food. If you have control over the food you eat, try a new recipe, add a new spice to your repertoire. Even these little changes bring big results and not just to our physical body. The more we take care of ourself, the better our self-esteem and sense of adventure.

Get Your ZZZZ's

Sleep is critical to heart and brain health. It might also be the one thing we can improve which has the greatest leverage on our health. When we sleep, our body may be still, but our brain is highly active. Our lymphatic system is busy removing toxins which are responsible for neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's. Quality sleep also improves heart health by lowering blood pressure, which is a common risk factor for Alzheimer's. If you are having trouble falling or staying asleep, talk to your doctor. There may be simple solutions.

In Conclusion

As we celebrate American Heart Month, let's embark on a journey of self-care that encompasses both heart and mind. By understanding the intricate relationship between cardiovascular health and brain health, we empower ourselves to make informed choices that contribute to a vibrant and fulfilling life. Together, let's embrace the wisdom of age with grace, ensuring that our hearts and minds continue to beat in harmony for years to come.

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



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UNDERSTANDING HOW SKIN CHANGES WITH MENOPAUSE

By Dr. Anita Grassi

While menopause is commonly associated with hot flashes and night sweats, it can also be a time of significant changes in the skin. The decline in levels of the hormone estrogen leads to multiple effects on both skin and hair including dryness, wrinkling, laxity, thinning hair on the scalp but increased facial hair and even acne. These midlife changes although considered normal are certainly undesirable so adjustments to your skin care regimen may be helpful.

Estrogen promotes the retention of water and production of lipid in skin, so lower estrogen levels cause dryness and flaking. The skin may become itchy as a result, especially on the back and legs. Increased moisturization is necessary to restore skin hydration. Estrogen also promotes dermal collagen which supports skin thickness. Its loss adds to wrinkling, sagging and easier bruising.

Perimenopausal women can also see a resurgence of facial acne. Estrogen drops but androgenic hormones such as testosterone remain steady thus acting as a stimulus for sebum production and plugged pores. Conventional over-the-counter acne medications often contain ingredients such as benzoyl peroxide that are too drying for adult skin. Talk to your dermatologist about prescription alternatives that may be better tolerated.

Likewise, the relative increase of androgen to estrogen levels can thin scalp hair but paradoxically stimulate growth of facial hair. Androgenic alopecia, otherwise known as female pattern hair loss, causes decreased density of hair on the crown with a wider part. Non-prescription topical minoxidil may help stabilize thinning hair. Medical conditions such as thyroid disorders and iron-deficiency anemia can also contribute to hair loss so it is best to consult your doctor first. Facial hair can be removed with chemical depilatories or waxing although these methods may not be tolerated by more sensitive adult skin. Laser hair removal is a more permanent option but is only effective for dark rather than blonde or gray hair.

Consider the following measures to lessen the skin changes experienced in menopause:

- Take warm rather than hot showers. Steamy hot showers may feel wonderful but they will dry out skin more. Use gentle cleansers for both face and body. Avoid antibacterial or deodorant soaps.
- Moisturize daily. Moisturizers are best applied after a bath or shower when the skin is still damp. Facial moisturizers with hyaluronic acid are especially effective to restore hydration and plump the skin.
- Consider adding rejuvenation products to your daily facial regimen to counteract

collagen loss. Nighttime retinol creams help prevent fine wrinkling. Vitamin C serums act as antioxidants and may be better tolerated by sensitive skin. Glycolic acid lotions exfoliate and smooth skin.

- Remember that sun damage is the single largest contributor to aging skin so a daily regimen that includes protection with SPF>30 sunscreen is essential to prevent UV light from compounding the adverse effects of menopause.

For more information or additional questions on menopause's effects to the skin, consult your dermatologist.

DR. ANITA GRASSI

Board Certified Dermatologist



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

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

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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

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

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

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

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

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

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

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

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

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

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

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

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

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

What Is Your Definition of “Enough”?

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

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

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

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

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

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

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STILL FEELING SICK AFTER MOLD REMEDIATION?

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

I often hear with great frustration, "I had mold remediation, but I still feel sick!" There are several reasons this can be true. Firstly, having mold that has produced mycotoxins and created mold toxicity in your body can take years to detox, even if you are working with a doctor familiar with and regularly treating mold toxicity, sometimes referred to as CIRTS (Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome). So, if you are confident you had a successful remediation, be patient with the detox process.

If you are concerned that the remediation was not complete, you should consider more testing that includes *disturbed air*. One of the largest mistakes I see made is a mold assessor walking into a structure, setting up the sampler, and starting the collection during their review and assessment of the property. Research shows that if you have been out of the room for 45 minutes or more, most of the air particulates we want to sample will have settled to the ground. Therefore, it is imperative that a mold assessor uses *disturbed air sampling* so that the sampled air is likely typical when a room is occupied and active. In other words, the air you breathe when the kids are playing, the dog is around, or family members are walking around in the home is the typical air you inhale, and thus, it is the air we should always be sampling. This can easily be accomplished in a quiet/settled room by using a small fan taken around the room, then sampling the air. Research shows *disturbed air sampling* is much more accurate and gives us a better picture of what occupants are exposed to during their normal living conditions.



Lastly, if you have had traditional mold remediation and it was successful in removing not only visible mold but also invisible mold, then your issues may be mycotoxins. Mycotoxins are the byproducts mold produces and, as the name implies, are poisons associated with many health conditions. We have seen homes where mold counts are normal or low, but the home was high in mycotoxins. The latest research presented at the 2023 Experience Annual Restoration Conference in Las Vegas suggests that *traditional mold remediation* actually INCREASES poisonous mycotoxins in the indoor environment. Two things are going on with mycotoxins: firstly, mycotoxins are 0.1 micron in size, so they are not easily removed during a traditional remediation

process and ARE NOT REMOVED with air scrubbers or HEPA filtration because HEPA filtration does not remove particles as small as 0.1 micron. Secondly, in this latest research study, air scrubbers actually strip off the mycotoxin molecules from the mold spore or hyphal fragments, thus creating more measurable mycotoxins in the environment.

Mycotoxin remediation with mold remediation is rather new for most restoration companies. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to info@americanmoldexperts.com.



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AS THE EPA STATES:
"No mold is good and
needs to be removed."

Eating Heart Healthy Meals Just Got a Whole Lot Easier

Eating more plant-based foods doesn't mean you have to be vegan or vegetarian, although those options are good for some individuals. The Mediterranean diet, the MIND or Dash diet are all viable options for individuals that want to have healthy cardiovascular systems but still consume some animal products. Eating plant-based foods while consuming lean proteins like finfish, shellfish or poultry can nonetheless be very healthy. With a heart-healthy diet, the best advice is to load up on fresh produce, limit refined or processed foods, reduce alcohol and sugar, eliminate processed meats and excessive saturated fats. If being vegan or vegetarian is better suited for one's personal preference or needs, that is absolutely a remarkable way to stay healthy and protect the heart. But the one thing we know from various studies and research is that processed carbohydrates, sugars, and trans fats cause inflammation and can exacerbate cardiovascular disorders.



Speaking to a medical professional is essential to learn which foods are best for your condition.

Meal planning, grocery shopping and food preparation can be challenging for seniors. That's why Chefs for Seniors specializes in fresh, nutritious meals that are cooked right in the comfort of your home, AND there is no shopping or planning involved on your part.

What is Chefs for Seniors?

As individuals age, shopping and preparing meals can become a difficult task. With so many other issues to worry about such as being a caregiver, suffering from arthritis, or other disorders that limit mobility, cooking is one thing that many seniors wish they didn't have to do. 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.

Why Chefs For Seniors?

Our Mission is to Provide Amazing Food and Proper Nutrition

- Find peace of mind knowing our personal chefs will handle the 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

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.

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.

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. 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.

What if I Have a Special Diet or Dietary Concerns?

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.

Do I Have to Supply the Cooking Equipment?

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!

You don't have to be a senior to enjoy the professional chef prepared foods! Contact Chefs For Seniors today to find out more.

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

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Cleaning Tips to Keep the Flu Virus at Bay and Out of Your Home

Flu season is among us and with an increase in the number of people in the area for the winter, preventing the flu and other viruses can be difficult this time of year. The muscle aches, fever, chills and fatigue that accompany the virus affect five to 20 percent of the U.S. population each year and hospitalize hundreds of thousands, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Many of us are armed with an array of physical preventatives — from flu-shots to Emergency-C packets, neti-pots to home remedies — but what are we doing to stop the illness from spreading in our own homes, amongst our families and community members?

MaidPro expert cleaners, offer these tips to help you clean for health year-round and to stop the flu virus from invading your home:

1. Wash your hands regularly in warm soapy water. For quick clean-up, use antibacterial hand sanitizer. Make an effort not to touch your mouth or nose without first washing your hands.
2. Wear rubber gloves when cleaning household items to protect yourself. By wearing gloves, you will be less likely to touch your eyes, nose or mouth, which are havens for the flu virus.

3. Spray disinfecting spray on a cloth, wipe toys, door-knobs, appliance handles, keyboards, remote controls, light switches, phones and facial tissue box covers. Viruses can live up to 48 hours on hard surfaces.

4. Wash items like towels and bedding in hot water with soap if someone has been sick in the home. Be sure not to share these items until they are thoroughly cleaned.

5. Change vacuum bags monthly or more frequently.

6. Boil toothbrushes for one minute in water and vinegar, run through a dishwasher cycle or purchase new brushes.

7. Use antibacterial wipes on your keyboard, phone and pens to protect yourself from spreading germs at work.

8. Wash telephones, cabinet handles, doorknobs, light switches and refrigerator door handles using a slightly dampened cloth with a solution of mild detergent and warm water.

9. Wash mop heads in a solution of ¼ cup bleach and one gallon water, dry thoroughly, then store. Not only will mop heads pick up germs and dirt, but they also can also grow mold and mildew if they don't dry out completely.



10. Disinfect the bathroom and kitchen, especially the faucet and toilet handles, daily. The kitchen and bathroom are the most used rooms in the home and possibly the most contaminated.

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What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

Weight-watchers. Nutrisystem. Mediterranean diet. Paleo. Living healthy has become a craze, although obesity in our country, rather legitimizes it. For many people it is about looking and feeling better, living longer, stronger and disease-free. These are all important reasons for eating clean, exercising, and learning to rest our bodies sufficiently.

For Christians, however, trying to maintain healthy habits finds its motivation in more than adopting diet fads to longevity and better quality of life. Taking care of our bodies is stewardship. That is, it is a reflection of our recognition of having been created by God, and how our lives can be instruments in his hands to serve and honor him on earth. Of course, God can use both the healthy and the unfit for his purposes, including the sick, feeble, and dying. Human worth and value is not in question.

The reality is that our earthly lives are only a speck in the sands of eternity. However, Christ followers understand that life doesn't belong to them. It is a gift from a Good Father who entrusted them with a brief span of years that should be invested in loving others and making our world a better place. For those who have believed in Christ and experienced God's forgiveness of sin, the reason for taking care of their bodies goes beyond living longer and healthier. It's about honoring Jesus Christ with all of life, including the way they take care of their bodies.

In his book, *"The Unknown God: Searching for spiritual fulfillment,"* Oxford University professor, Alister McGrath, describes the parable of Plato's Cave, a story about people enslaved inside the cave oblivious to the reality that existed on the outside beyond the flickering shadows which they knew. That is, until the day someone was able to find their way out and discover a world beyond description, a world of beauty and splendor. McGrath writes, "Our desires have become attached to things that are little more than shadows, when they are meant to be attached to something which cannot decay or disappoint" (32).

How does this relate to healthy living? Focusing on living healthier and longer, like any other pursuit we might obsess about, really reveals a spiritual longing in our souls for something more: *eternity*. Whether is it longing for a "perfect" relationship that often disenchant, earthly riches that can quickly vanish, or a healthy and strong body that is suddenly brought to a standstill due to an unexpected medical report, our hearts are longing for something beyond what this world can provide.

McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfillment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfillment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

May you achieve physical well-being and wholeness. But may you also discover the gift of eternal life which Jesus promises to all who believe and trust in him alone. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). I would enjoy exploring with you the meaning of life and God.



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