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

March 2024

Collier Edition - Monthly

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## THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM



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## NUTRITION'S VITAL ROLE IN BREAST CANCER

## DECODING A COUGH

WHAT DOES ALL THAT  
HACKING MEAN &  
WHAT HELPS

## FROM GARDEN TO TABLE

CULTIVATING A FRESHER,  
HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

## FAMILY HISTORY & HEREDITARY COLON CANCER

## NURTURING EYE HEALTH

DURING NATIONAL SAVE  
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## UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIALS OF KIDNEY FUNCTION

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### April: Parkinson's Awareness Month

Friday, April 5, 2024

9am to 3pm • The Isles Yacht Club  
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9:00 am to 9:45 am .....Registration and Refreshments  
9:45 am to 10:00 am .....Opening Remarks  
10:00 am to 11:00 am .....Hospitalizations and PD  
Ramon Gil, M.D., Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL  
11:00 am to 12 noon .....Sleep Apnea and REM Sleep Behavior Disorder in PD,  
Ernesto Eusebio Morales, M.D., Sleep Medicine Dept., Lee Health  
12 noon to 12:45 pm ..... Lunch Break  
12:45 pm to 1:45 pm ..... The History of Treating PD  
Jean Hubble, M.D., former Medical Director of the Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence & Movement Disorders Clinic, Ohio State University Medical Center  
1:45 pm to 2:45 pm .....Deep Brain Stimulation: Who, Why and When?  
Adolfo Ramirez Zamora, M.D., Movement Disorders Program, UF, Gainesville  
2:45 pm to 3:00 pm ..... Raffle and Closing Remarks

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# It's Never Too Late To IMPROVE Your SMILE

By Dr. Ana Scopu

**B**ette Dirksen is a snowbird who spends half the year in Naples and half the year in Michigan. Bette initially visited Dr. Ana Scopu at Park Dental for a missing crown. Bette had always feared dental work and was reluctant to see a new dentist. However, Bette states, "Dr. Scopu removed all my fears and anxiety and made me feel at ease." At her initial visit, Bette said Dr. Scopu's proactive teaching made her want to continue treatment and return to see Dr. Scopu for more corrective dentistry. Bette states, "No other medical professional I have ever visited took the time to educate me on my problem and my options. I am so lucky to have found Dr. Scopu and I trust her fully. In fact, I was so impressed with Dr. Scopu's big heart and kindness, that I stepped out of my comfort zone and agreed to give Invisalign a try."

Bette's treatment at Park Family Dental started with replacing a crown. Porcelain crowns are tooth-shaped caps placed over existing teeth to restore their function, strength, and appearance. They are commonly used to address a variety of dental issues, including:

- 1. Tooth Decay:** When a tooth has significant decay that cannot be effectively restored with a dental filling, a porcelain crown may be recommended to repair its structure and function.
- 2. Fractured or Cracked Teeth:** Teeth that are cracked, fractured, or otherwise damaged due to trauma or injury can be strengthened and protected by placing a porcelain crown.
- 3. Large Fillings:** Teeth with large fillings or extensive damage may benefit from the added support and protection a porcelain crown provides.
- 4. Cosmetic Enhancements:** Porcelain crowns can also be used for cosmetic purposes to improve the appearance of misshapen, discolored, or poorly aligned teeth, enhancing the overall aesthetics of the smile.

Like Bette, are you looking to achieve a straighter, more confident smile without the hassle of traditional braces? Invisalign Clear Orthodontics could be the perfect solution for you. Invisalign offers numerous benefits over conventional metal braces, making it a popular choice among patients of all ages. Here are some key advantages of Invisalign:



Bette Dirksen

- 1. Discreet Appearance:** One of the primary benefits of Invisalign is its virtually invisible appearance. The aligners are made from clear, medical-grade plastic, making them much less noticeable than traditional braces. This lets you straighten your teeth discreetly without paying unnecessary attention to your orthodontic treatment.
- 2. Removable Aligners:** Unlike traditional braces, which are permanently fixed to your teeth, Invisalign aligners are removable. You can easily take them out to eat, drink, brush, and floss, allowing for better oral hygiene and fewer dietary restrictions during treatment.
- 3. Improved Comfort:** Invisalign aligners are custom-made to fit your teeth snugly, providing a comfortable orthodontic experience. There are no sharp wires or brackets to irritate your cheeks and gums, making Invisalign a more comfortable option for many patients.
- 4. Predictable Results:** Invisalign treatment utilizes advanced 3D imaging technology to create a customized treatment plan for each patient. This allows for precise tooth movements and predictable results, ensuring you achieve your desired smile.
- 5. Shorter Treatment Time:** In many cases, Invisalign treatment can be completed in less time than traditional braces. While the length of treatment varies depending on the severity of your orthodontic issues, most patients can expect to wear their aligners for approximately 12 to 18 months. This time frame may vary depending on factors such as the severity of misalignment, compliance with wearing the aligners

as directed, and the patient's age. Success with Invisalign relies heavily on patient compliance. It's crucial to wear your aligners for the recommended 20 to 22 hours per day and follow your dentist's instructions closely for optimal results.

Park Family Dental offers a wide range of services, including cosmetic dentistry, teeth replacement, orthodontics, dental implants, dentures, sedation dentistry, emergency dental treatments, pediatric treatments, and dental surgery. Bette Dirksen states that the team at Park Dental is top-notch. "From the check-in at the front office to the hygienists and assistants, I feel at home there. The whole staff cares about each patient, which has changed my outlook on going to the dentist."



Originally from Serbia, Dr. Ana Scopu moved to the United States with her family in 1990. In 2006, Dr. Scopu combined her artistic talent with her academic aptitude to become a dentist. Dr. Scopu struggled with dental fear at a young age due to a childhood memory of seeing another child have teeth extracted at the dentist. As a result of this experience, Dr. Scopu can empathize and comfort patients dealing with dental anxiety. She focuses on developing trusting relationships with her patients to minimize their fear.

Having received extensive training in orthodontics, Dr. Scopu understands the importance of proper alignment in both healthy oral function and aesthetics. She loves to combine orthodontic and cosmetic treatment to restore optimal function while creating beautiful smiles that truly impact her patients' lives.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Dr. Scopu is hosting an Invisalign Smile Event on Saturday, April 27 at the office, only 18 spots available. Amazing promotions available during this event. Call today to reserve yours.**

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# Nutrition's Vital Role in Breast Cancer

**B**reast cancer is a pervasive health concern that affects millions of individuals worldwide. While advancements in medical treatments continue to improve outcomes, there is growing recognition of the crucial role nutrition plays in breast cancer prevention, treatment, and survivorship. This article explores the impact of dietary choices on breast cancer risk, the role of nutrition during treatment, and the importance of a balanced diet for survivors.

**Breast Cancer Prevention: The Power of Nutrition**  
Research suggests that adopting a healthy lifestyle, including a well-balanced diet, can contribute significantly to reducing the risk of developing breast cancer. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins provides essential nutrients that support overall health and may help lower the risk of cancer.

Certain foods have been linked to a lower risk of breast cancer due to their potential protective properties. For example, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and Brussels sprouts contain compounds that have been associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer. Additionally, incorporating omega-3 fatty acids from sources like fatty fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts may have protective effects.

Conversely, it's advisable to limit the intake of processed foods, sugary beverages, and red or processed meats. High alcohol consumption has also been linked to an increased risk of breast cancer, so moderation is key.

## Nutrition during Breast Cancer Treatment

Nutrition becomes even more critical during breast cancer treatment, where the body is subjected to the stress of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Maintaining adequate nutrition is essential for supporting the immune system, promoting healing, and minimizing treatment-related side effects.

Patients undergoing chemotherapy may experience changes in taste, appetite, and digestive function. To combat these challenges, focusing on easily digestible, nutrient-dense foods can help ensure adequate caloric intake. Small, frequent meals that include a variety of colorful fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins can be beneficial.

Protein intake is particularly important during treatment to support tissue repair and maintain muscle mass. Dairy, eggs, legumes, and lean meats are excellent sources of protein that can contribute to overall strength and well-being.

Hydration is another crucial aspect of nutrition during treatment. Staying well-hydrated helps manage side effects such as fatigue and supports the body's natural detoxification processes.

## Survivorship and the Role of Nutrition

After completing breast cancer treatment, survivors often face the challenge of rebuilding their health and wellness. Nutrition continues to play a pivotal role in this phase, supporting recovery and reducing the risk of recurrence.

Maintaining a healthy weight through balanced nutrition is associated with improved outcomes for breast cancer survivors. Regular physical activity combined with a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can contribute to overall well-being and help manage long-term health risks.

Post-treatment, survivors may experience lingering side effects such as fatigue, joint pain, or hormonal imbalances. Tailoring the diet to address these specific concerns, such as incorporating anti-inflammatory foods or foods rich in antioxidants, can be beneficial.

Support groups and nutrition counseling are valuable resources for breast cancer survivors seeking guidance on post-treatment nutrition. These platforms provide personalized advice based on individual health needs and can help survivors make informed choices about their diet and lifestyle.

In the complex landscape of breast cancer, nutrition emerges as a powerful ally in prevention, treatment, and survivorship. Adopting a diet rich in diverse nutrients, combined with a healthy lifestyle, can contribute to lowering the risk of breast cancer. During treatment, a focus on nourishing foods helps the body cope with the rigors of therapy, while post-treatment, a balanced diet supports recovery and reduces the risk of recurrence.

As we continue to unravel the intricate connections between nutrition and breast cancer, the importance of incorporating sound dietary practices into comprehensive cancer care becomes increasingly evident. Empowering individuals with knowledge about the role of nutrition in breast cancer not only promotes better health outcomes but also inspires proactive choices for a resilient and thriving future.

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# THE ULTIMATE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF PROGRAM

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

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

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

## What is the Ultimate Neuropathy Program?

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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## What modalities are used for improvement?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# NOURISHING YOUR BODY:

## A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding and Managing Metabolic Health

By Greer Burcky, MS, RDN/LDN, CPT - Registered Dietician/Performance Coach

**A**s we celebrate National Nutrition Month, we must consider the intricate balance and relationship between diet, metabolism, and overall health. Metabolic diseases, a collective term encompassing conditions like diabetes, obesity, and lipid metabolism disorders, pose significant health risks and require proactive management strategies. Nutrition is more than the food we intake. We must also explore the fundamentals of metabolic health, understand the impact of dietary choices, and empower ourselves with the knowledge and insights to support optimal well-being.

- **Understanding Metabolic Health:** Metabolism is the cornerstone of physiological function, encompassing the intricate processes involved in energy production, hormone regulation, and nutrient metabolism. When metabolic pathways are disrupted, it can lead to a spectrum of health conditions collectively known as metabolic diseases. These include diabetes mellitus, obesity, metabolic syndrome, and lipid metabolism disorders.

- **Diabetes Mellitus:** Diabetes mellitus, a prevalent metabolic disorder, exists in two primary forms: type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes stems from the autoimmune destruction of insulin-producing beta cells, while type 2 diabetes involves insulin resistance and impaired glucose regulation. Both types pose significant health risks, including cardiovascular disease, neuropathy, nephropathy, retinopathy, and foot complications.

- **Navigating the Obesity Epidemic:** Obesity, characterized by excessive adipose tissue accumulation, has reached epidemic proportions globally. Beyond aesthetic concerns, obesity is a metabolic disease associated with numerous health risks, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, dyslipidemia, stroke, sleep apnea, certain cancers, and osteoarthritis. Addressing obesity requires comprehensive lifestyle modifications, including dietary changes, regular physical activity, and behavioral interventions.

- **Deciphering Metabolic Syndrome:** Metabolic syndrome represents interconnected risk factors, including abdominal obesity, elevated blood sugar levels, hypertension, and abnormal lipid profiles. This constellation of conditions significantly increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Lifestyle modifications focusing on weight management, balanced nutrition, and physical activity are crucial for mitigating these risks.

- **Unraveling Lipid Metabolism Disorders:** Disruptions in lipid metabolism, such as hyperlipidemia, hypercholesterolemia, and hypertriglyceridemia, contribute to the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease. Elevated lipid levels can lead to the formation of plaques within arterial walls, impairing blood flow and increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes, dietary modifications play a pivotal role in managing lipid metabolism disorders.

- **Navigating Inherited Metabolic Disorders:** Inherited metabolic disorders stemming from genetic mutations affecting specific metabolic pathways pose unique challenges in diagnosis and management. Conditions like phenylketonuria (PKU), galactosemia, and glycogen storage diseases require specialized dietary interventions to mitigate symptoms and prevent long-term complications. Early detection, genetic counseling, and multidisciplinary care are essential for optimizing outcomes in individuals with inherited metabolic disorders.

- **Empowering Through Nutrition:** National Nutrition Month serves as a timely reminder of the profound impact of dietary choices on metabolic health. Embracing a balanced and nutrient-rich diet forms the foundation of a healthy lifestyle. Portion control, mindful eating practices, and hydration are additional pillars of optimal nutrition.

Embracing a balanced and nutrient-rich diet forms the foundation of a healthy lifestyle. A good rule of thumb is to ensure you have a source of protein and fat with each meal. This should accompany a good amount of green, leafy, and colorful vegetables. Carbohydrates should include colorful berries and fruits, along with more dense sources like starchy vegetables less often, while restricting processed sources like pasta and bread. Portion control, mindful eating practices, and hydration are additional pillars of optimal nutrition.

- **Seeking Professional Guidance:** While dietary modifications play a central role in managing metabolic health, it's crucial to seek guidance from healthcare professionals, including registered dietitians and physicians. Personalized nutrition plans, tailored to individual needs and health status, can optimize metabolic outcomes and improve overall well-being.

As we navigate the complexities of metabolic health, let us embrace National Nutrition Month as an opportunity to prioritize nourishment and well-being. By understanding the nuances of metabolic diseases and adopting proactive lifestyle interventions, we can pave the path toward lasting health and vitality. Let's empower ourselves and our communities to make informed dietary choices, fostering a culture of wellness and resilience for generations to come.

### 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.

**Greer Burky, Registered Dietician/Performance Coach** Greer is a registered dietitian with a Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition with over 1,200 hours of supervised practice in Naples and Miami. During her internship, she worked with registered dietitians in the food service and clinical sector at Physicians Regional Medical Center.

Additionally, she was able to work alongside registered dietitians at the Florida Department of Health and in private practice. With a specialty rotation focused on Integrative Functional Nutrition, Greer is passionate about the power nutrition can provide her patients. Greer aims to deliver quality care and healing through proper nutrition and exercise. She incorporates her dietetic and personal trainer licenses to offer both services seamlessly to her patients at Inspire Exercise Medicine.

You can find Greer cooking new recipes outside the gym, hiking the Great Smoky Mountains, and playing with all her dogs.



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# Your Weight and Your Heart...

## Advancements in Weight Reduction Medication: Promoting Heart Health and Preventing Disease

By Julian Javier, MD

**A**s we celebrate Nutrition Month this March, it's crucial to highlight the significant advancements in weight reduction medication and their profound impact on cardiovascular health. Semaglutide and Tirzepatide, two innovative medications, have emerged as powerful tools in the fight against obesity and its associated cardiovascular risks. As interventional cardiologists, we believe in the importance of preventive measures to safeguard against heart disease, strokes, and other cardiovascular events.

Semaglutide and Tirzepatide belong to a class of medications known as glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists. While initially developed for the management of type 2 diabetes mellitus (DM), recent studies have demonstrated their efficacy in promoting weight loss and reducing cardiovascular risk factors in individuals with and without diabetes. These medications are relatively safe, and the most common complication is an upset stomach. Rare complications include pancreatitis. As with all prescription medications we recommend close monitoring by your health care provider and starting with the lowest therapeutic dose. Dosage can be increased as tolerated and to achieve the patient's goals.

### Benefits for Heart Disease Prevention:

Numerous studies published in the past year have highlighted the cardiovascular benefits of semaglutide and tirzepatide:

**1. Reduced Risk of Heart Attacks:** Research has shown that treatment with semaglutide and tirzepatide is associated with a significant reduction in the risk of heart attacks and other adverse cardiovascular events. These medications help improve cardiovascular outcomes by lowering blood pressure, reducing inflammation, and promoting weight loss.

**2. Prevention of Heart Failure:** Semaglutide and tirzepatide have demonstrated remarkable efficacy in preventing and treating heart failure, a debilitating condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide. These medications help improve cardiac function, reduce fluid retention, and enhance quality of life for patients with heart failure.



**3. Treatment of Obesity:** Obesity is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular complications. Semaglutide and tirzepatide have been shown to induce substantial weight loss in individuals with obesity, leading to improvements in metabolic health and overall cardiovascular risk profile.

**4. Benefit for Individuals Without Diabetes:** While originally developed for the management of diabetes, semaglutide and tirzepatide have demonstrated efficacy in promoting weight loss and improving cardiovascular outcomes in individuals without diabetes as well. This underscores the potential of these medications to benefit a broader population of patients at risk for cardiovascular disease.

### Emphasis on Preventive Measures:

As an interventional cardiologist, we are committed to treating cardiovascular disease and preventing its onset and progression. By focusing on lifestyle modifications, including healthy nutrition, regular exercise, and weight management, we can reduce the burden of cardiovascular risk factors and improve overall heart health.

Semaglutide and tirzepatide represent promising additions to our armamentarium for cardiovascular disease prevention. These medications offer a unique opportunity to address both obesity and cardiovascular risk factors comprehensively, ultimately leading to better outcomes for patients.

The emergence of semaglutide and tripeptide as effective weight-reduction medications have revolutionized the approach to cardiovascular disease prevention. By targeting obesity and its associated risk factors, these medications offer hope for millions of individuals at risk for heart disease and heart failure. As healthcare providers, we must embrace these advancements and integrate them into our comprehensive approach to cardiovascular care. Together, we can work towards a future where heart disease is a preventable and manageable condition for all.



Leandro Perez, MD Tracy Roth, MD Sandraliz Solano, MD

Dr. Julian J. Javier, Dr. Leandro Perez, Dr. Tracey Roth, and Sandraliz Solano 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.

They are affiliated with Physicians Regional Medical Center and Collier Regional and are accepting new patients.

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# Aqualane Clinical Research: Pioneering Advances in Medical Therapies

**A**qualane Clinical Research stands at the forefront of medical innovation, dedicated to advancing therapies across a spectrum of human disease states. With a commitment to patient collaboration, ethical practices, and industry sponsorship, Aqualane Clinical Research plays a pivotal role in the exploration of treatments where none currently exist or where there's a pressing need for enhanced safety and efficacy.

## ADDRESSING UNMET NEEDS

**Alzheimer's Disease** - Alzheimer's Disease, a relentless thief of memories and self-care abilities, remains a formidable challenge in the medical field. Aqualane Clinical Research actively engages in safe and ethical studies of emerging therapies, seeking to slow down, arrest, or halt the progression of this devastating condition.

**Parkinson's Disease** - While less common than Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease poses its own set of challenges, extending beyond its initial perception as a movement disorder. Aqualane Clinical Research recognizes the urgent need for improved treatments, acknowledging the impact of the disease on the entire nervous system and the body as a whole.

**Essential Tremor** - Early-onset tremors present a unique challenge, often remaining stable for years before complications arise. Aqualane Clinical Research delves into genetic associations with tremors, aiming to unravel the mysteries behind this condition and contribute valuable insights that can shape future treatment approaches.

**Multiple Sclerosis** - In the realm of Multiple Sclerosis, Aqualane Clinical Research actively recruits participants for trials focusing on therapeutic molecules penetrating the central nervous system. Integrating cutting-edge imaging and biomarker analysis, these studies aim to redefine monitoring and assessment methods for enhanced treatment effectiveness.

**Migraine** - Aqualane Clinical Research explores the complexities of migraine, a disorder rooted in pain processing. By understanding the multifaceted



nature of migraines, the research group endeavors to discover novel therapies that address not only the pain but also associated symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and sensory sensitivities.

**Neuropsychiatric Conditions** - Recognizing the intertwining nature of psychiatric symptoms with neurological diseases, Aqualane Clinical Research is actively involved in the pursuit of new therapies for conditions like depression and anxiety. Their holistic approach reflects a commitment to addressing the diverse challenges patients face.

## PATIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH

At Aqualane, the patient is always the priority. Aqualane Clinical Research promises to educate potential participants and their families comprehensively, ensuring informed decision-making. Striving to make clinical trials a practical healthcare option, they provide a comfortable and compassionate environment, making the process accessible and supportive.

## TRUST IN EXPERTISE

Founded by passionate individuals dedicated to advancing medicine, Aqualane Clinical Research boasts a team of neurologists and researchers with profound expertise in both research methodologies and the central nervous system. This collective knowledge ensures that participants receive the best possible opportunities for themselves or their loved ones.

In conclusion, Aqualane Clinical Research emerges as a beacon of hope in the medical research landscape. By actively engaging in diverse trials, fostering patient-centric values, and leveraging the expertise of its founders and team, Aqualane Clinical Research contributes significantly to the advancement of medicine and provides valuable opportunities for those seeking new treatment options.

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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# DECODING A COUGH: WHAT DOES ALL THAT HACKING MEAN—AND WHAT HELPS

**R**espiratory illnesses continue to rise with coughs being a common overlapping symptom among them all. Decoding the characteristics of a cough, including its duration, sound and accompanying symptoms, can help patients understand what is going on and how to treat it.

Most people are typically contagious the first three to five days after the initial respiratory infection, according to the CDC. However, a cough can linger around longer. A temporary, acute cough typically lasts less than three weeks and is often associated with short-lived illnesses like the common cold or the flu. But, a cough that lasts longer - anywhere from four to eight weeks - is typically a sign of unresolved inflammation from illnesses like bronchitis, long COVID or other serious conditions.

In addition to the length of a cough, it is important to monitor a dry versus wet-sounding cough. A dry cough, or an unproductive cough, is more commonly associated with the flu or COVID, it doesn't produce phlegm or mucus and it leaves a tickling sensation in the throat. A wet cough is more commonly associated with a cold, RSV or pneumonia, and may feel like mucus is stuck in the chest or back of the throat.

"While bothersome, a cough is the body's defense mechanism for getting rid of irritants from your lungs," said Dr. Timothy Martin. "However, if you develop other symptoms, such as a high fever, chills or wheezing, it's time to call your doctor."

Dr. Martin suggests these remedies to alleviate discomfort:

**Drink tea with local honey:** Honey acts as a natural suppressant and contains antioxidants to help lower inflammation in your throat.

**Try a saline rinse or steam shower:** Moisture and warmth can open breathing passages and thin mucus to help expel it out.

**Sleep with the head elevated:** Propping the head up at a higher angle can help drain mucus and relieve sinus pressure.



**Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water can also thin mucus and flush out irritants.

**Lastly, take over-the-counter medication:** Cough suppressants can help by controlling the reflex that makes someone cough and provide temporary relief.

"We're still in the thick of a contagious cold and flu season, so now is the time to take extra precautions," adds Dr. Martin. "Wash your hands, avoid touching your face, cover your nose and mouth when you cough, frequently clean surfaces and, most importantly, stay home if you are feeling unwell to help stop the spread."

If your cough is persistent and lasts more than eight weeks, talk to your primary care provider about any underlying issues, such as asthma or allergies, that may be preventing you from healing.

And seek emergency care if your cough is accompanied by blood or pink phlegm, difficulty breathing or tightening in the chest.

Timothy Martin, M.D., is board certified in internal medicine and specializes in outpatient primary care for all adults. He treats multiple areas including hypertension, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, anxiety/depression, rheumatoid processes, and endocrine ailments. Dr. Martin offers annual wellness visits, performs thorough physical examinations and offers pre-operative appointments.

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# MARCH IS WORKPLACE EYE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

## CLEAR VISION – SAFE WORKPLACE

**M**arch marks Workplace Eye Safety Awareness Month, a crucial period dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of safeguarding our eyes in the work environment. As our eyes play a pivotal role in our daily lives, prioritizing workplace eye safety is not only a matter of personal well-being but also a fundamental aspect of maintaining a productive and secure work environment.

The workplace is a dynamic setting where various activities and hazards can pose threats to our eyes. From flying debris and chemicals to digital eye strain caused by prolonged screen exposure, the potential risks are diverse. This month serves as an opportunity to educate individuals and organizations about these risks and promote proactive measures to prevent eye injuries.

One of the key aspects of workplace eye safety is the implementation of proper eye protection. Different occupations demand specific types of eye protection, such as safety glasses, goggles, or face shields. Employers should ensure that employees have access to and consistently use the appropriate eye protection based on the nature of their work. Regular training programs can further reinforce the importance of this practice, fostering a culture of safety within the workplace.

Digital eye strain, commonly known as computer vision syndrome, has become increasingly prevalent with the rise of technology in the workplace. Prolonged exposure to screens can lead to discomfort, dryness, and fatigue. Workplace Eye Safety Awareness Month encourages organizations to address this issue by promoting the 20-20-20 rule – taking a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away every 20 minutes. Additionally, proper lighting, ergonomic workstations, and regular eye examinations contribute to minimizing digital eye strain.

Beyond physical hazards, chemical exposures in the workplace can have severe consequences for eye health. March serves as a reminder to evaluate and update safety protocols related to handling chemicals. Emergency eyewash stations and quick access to first aid are essential components of an effective safety plan. Regular maintenance of equipment and proper storage of chemicals further contribute to a safer work environment.



Creating a workplace culture that prioritizes eye safety involves collaboration between employers and employees. Employers should establish clear safety policies, provide necessary resources, and actively engage employees in safety discussions. Employees, on the other hand, play a crucial role in adhering to safety guidelines, reporting hazards promptly, and participating in training programs.

The consequences of neglecting workplace eye safety can be severe, ranging from temporary discomfort to permanent vision loss.

As Workplace Eye Safety Awareness Month unfolds, let us collectively commit to fostering a safer work environment. Through education, training, and the consistent implementation of safety measures, we can ensure that every individual leaves their workplace with the same clear vision they entered. March serves as a reminder that the path to a safer workplace begins with a shared commitment to prioritizing eye safety for all.



### HUNTER VITTORE, O.D. 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.

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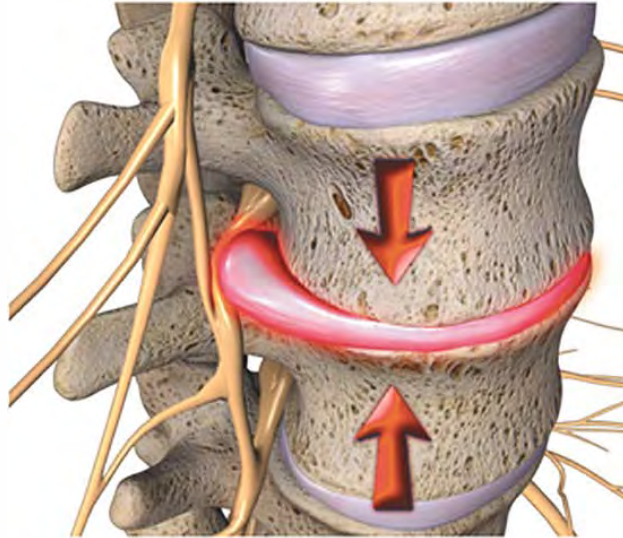
# When Negative is Positive

By Dr. Michael Shaffer

**N**egative pressure within the spinal disc can create healing. The non-surgical Hill DT spinal decompression system is an innovative, state-of-the-art, computerized system that allows pressure change within the disc.

The spinal column consists of strong bones, flexible ligaments and tendons, muscles, and highly sensitive nerves. There are seven cervical (neck), 12 thoracic (mid back), and five lumbar (low back), as well as the fused segments of the sacrum (tailbone) and coccyx. It is remarkably strong, protecting the sensitive nerve roots, yet very flexible, providing motion in all planes. It houses and protects the spinal cord and the 31 pairs of exiting nerve roots. These nerves allow you to move, feel sensations, and control bodily functions.

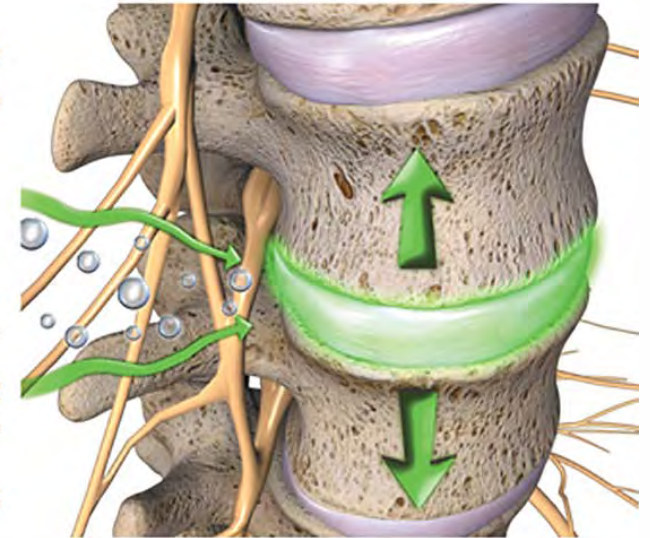
There are a total of 23 vertebral discs in the spinal column. They serve as shock absorbers, providing equal spacing between the vertebrae. The discs can bulge and herniate impinging nerves, commonly referred to as "pinched nerves." Pain can occur at the spine, leg, or arm, depending on a specific disc level. Additional symptoms can include sensation of numbness and tingling as well as weakness. The discs consist of the annulus fibrosus (fibers), nucleus pulposus, and vertebral endplates, which anchor the disc to the vertebrae. The annulus fibrosus is the outer portion of the disc. It forms a solid circular exterior and comprises concentric rings of collagen fibers called lamellae, up to 25, surrounding the inner core, the nucleus pulposus. The nucleus pulposus is the inner gel-like core of the disc. Think of the disc as a jelly-filled doughnut. The annular fibers are the doughnut, and the nucleus pulposus is the jelly portion. A healthy disc comprises approximately 80% water, allowing it to sustain compressive forces and torsion. This can change if discs are subject to overuse, trauma, degenerative (aging) processes, and genetics.



As mentioned, discs can bulge and herniate. There is a difference between a bulging disc and a herniated disc. The annular fibers remain relatively intact with a bulging disc, yet the nucleus pulposus will swell outwardly, much like a car tire that has lost air. However, it does extend into the spinal canal and may or may not cause pain. A herniated disc occurs when the annular fibers tear and the gel-like center (nucleus) oozes into the region of the spinal cord, impinging nerve roots or the spinal cord. This can be called a protrusion or extrusion, and what many individuals often hear is a slipped or ruptured disc. Sometimes, a piece or pieces of the herniated disc might break off, called free fragments. A free fragment, also called a sequestered disc, can break off in the spinal canal and apply pressure on the spinal cord, which can result in severe pain and dysfunction. These typically will require surgical intervention to prevent long-term nerve damage.

When Negative is Positive.

Non-surgical decompression is a non-invasive treatment for those patients suffering from neck and back problems. Decompression treatment slowly and gently stretches/lengthens the spine,



releasing pressure through repetitive movements. The table pulls and releases to create a negative pressure change within the intervertebral disc, surrounding soft tissues, and joints. This can allow herniations and nutrients to be pulled into the disc. This rehydration of the disc and surrounding tissues promotes a physiological change, allowing the body's natural healing process.

If you suffer from neck, arm pain, lower back, leg pain or numbness, nonsurgical decompression may help. Dr. Michael Shaffer is a Chiropractic physician who has been serving Collier County since 1981 and offers nonsurgical spinal decompression in his practice. For a complimentary consultation, please call 239-793-3200 to see if this is something that could help you.



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# Energy Medicine - a road less travelled.

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D.

One of my first encounters with Energy Medicine took place on a cold December day in 2005 – I was scavenging through the aisles of the famous Anti-Aging Medical Conference in Las Vegas looking for something different - I was not even sure what. My gaze plucked a couple of celebrity actors out of the crowd. They were taking turns to receive holistic treatment with an interesting-looking machine. "Oh well, rich people's toys", I thought and walked right by that booth but grabbed a brochure. Once back in NYC, I was going through a suitcase of printed materials for vitamins, supplements, and age-defying technologies. In the industry completely unregulated but generating billions of dollars in revenue for the manufacturers, it takes a doctor's discerning eye and knowledge set to weed the rare good things out of the large pile of nonsense. Disappointed and wistful for something fresh and promising I wish I had found for my holistic practice, I picked up a last brochure from my table.

It said: Ondamed: "A better way to make you better". I quickly recalled the curious-looking contraption surrounded by celebs and looked up Ondamed's website. The website talked about electromagnetic fields and human body and had a short blurb on German physicist Ralph Binder –the inventor. Intrigued by his serious credentials and a solid scientific background for the technology – I had reached out to Ondamed's headquarters office in upstate New York and asked them to come and demonstrate the machine. I had really lucked out because they would normally never do any demonstrations others than at the trade shows and their own offices, but my practice's high end Manhattan location was loaded with glamour, exposure, and celebrity potential – so Ralph himself came out to my office on the Upper West Side. Ralph was a scientist not a medical practitioner so he explained the technology to me the way a physicist would – which was exactly what I was looking for.

Coincidentally, at the time, I was suffering from a bout of throat and lymph node pain and tenderness, and had already put myself through the



holistic "works" as well as the conventional medical diagnostic and treatment modalities. Without any results. So, I quietly continued to suffer and go to work every day – something I am sure many of my colleagues can relate to. While demonstrating to me how Ondamed worked, Ralph took a moment to scan my body and mumbled something to the effect of: "I'm not sure what's going on but there is a problem in your neck." Now he had my attention. How did he know that? I did not tell him I had any health issues. Unlike the psychics, clairvoyants, and others such folk with extra sensory perception or even clever quacks trained in neuro-linguistics, Ralph was just a genuine scientist. He was pure and devoid of any way of understanding my body language or anything else. I then asked him to treat my presumed issue the way the technology called for and he did – it took him a whole lot of 8 minutes of just following the treatment protocol.

I did not feel any different and I politely thanked him for the visit and gave the standard "I will think about it" parting comment. He wrapped up his machine and left and I went back to seeing patients. About 15 minutes into my office hours, I felt a severe discomfort in my throat. Heck, this felt much worse than my original problem. I had mentally cursed Ralph and promised myself to call him, right after seeing the patients and accuse him of all the malice of the world. In the meantime, I clenched my teeth and continued to toil away at my work. The pain in my throat intensified to the point where I felt like ripping my throat out of my body – and then....suddenly – it was gone. 100% gone. Stunned and incredulous, I had finished my

workday and sat down to listen to my body. I was looking for some sort of semblance of the throat and lymph node discomfort I had felt before Ralph's visit. It was all gone. I waited for it to reappear for another 24 hours and when it didn't, I called Ralph and told him that I was buying the machine.

Over the years, Ondamed – a low frequency pulsed electromagnetic fields technology has helped me to treat a variety of ailments: from complicated bone fractures and osteoarthritis pains to depression, insomnia, and stress management. It also taught me that this subtle, painless, and non-invasive energy therapy can often have a profound healing effect on the body. And since the main principle of Medicine is 'do no harm' – it is hard to think of treatment more worthy of research and implementation than this.



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

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# FROM GARDEN TO TABLE: CULTIVATING A FRESHER, HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

By Jenny Bradley

As National Nutrition Month blossoms, The Carlisle Naples is planting seeds of change in the culinary experience for residents. Embracing a "garden-to-table" philosophy, the idyllic senior living community offers a deliciously diverse, plant-forward menu that complements its already extensive selection of dishes.

The FreshZest menu was launched in 2018 after extensive research by The Carlisle's owner and operator, Senior Resource Group. According to a study published in "Neurology," diets higher in healthier foods (mainly fruits, vegetables, and grains) were linked to a significant reduction in the risk of cognitive decline commonly associated with dementia and other cognitive disorders.

"FreshZest is about making healthier choices like replacing white rice with brown rice or quinoa; opting for whole-grain bread instead of white bread; or choosing water instead of sugary drinks," explained Executive Chef Marlon Perez. "It's been a great addition to The Carlisle's menu options, with residents exploring FreshZest signature dishes such as Artichoke with Cremini Mushroom Eggplant Cannelloni, Crispy Bean Chimichanga, Potato and Spinach Gnocchi, Pad Thai Spaghetti Squash and a Caprese Stuffed Avocado."

New FreshZest menu specials will launch in the next few months and feature seasonal and regional favorites. Chef Marlon said it will encompass the nutrition science of the Blue Zones – geographic regions known for their population's remarkable health and longevity – and focus on ingredients with antioxidants and detoxification benefits and foods promoting gut and immune health.

As FreshZest expands at The Carlisle and across SRG communities, more focus will be on foods that promote cardiovascular health, support mood, mind, brain, memory health, mobility and increased energy.

Thankfully, you don't have to be a resident at The Carlisle to enjoy a garden-to-table lifestyle. Here are a few tips to help you incorporate fresh, nutritious foods into your daily routine, no matter where you live:



**Start Small with Herbs:** You don't need a large space to begin your garden-to-table journey. Start with a small herb garden on your windowsill or balcony. Herbs like basil, cilantro, mint and parsley are easy to grow and can be used to enhance the flavor of various dishes.

**Join a Community Garden:** If space is an issue, look for a community garden in your area. This is a great way to grow your own produce while connecting with neighbors and learning from more experienced gardeners.

**Visit Local Farmers' Markets:** Support your local farmers and get access to fresh, seasonal produce by shopping at farmers' markets. This helps the local economy and reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting food long distances.

**Plan Meals Around Seasonal Produce:** Learn about the seasonal fruits and vegetables in your area and plan your meals accordingly. Eating seasonally tastes better and often means you're eating produce at its nutritional peak.

**Preserve the Bounty:** When you have access to fresh produce, especially in peak season, learn preservation techniques such as freezing, canning or drying. This allows you to enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of your labor throughout the year, ensuring you always have access to garden-fresh nutrients.

"Adopting a garden-to-table lifestyle is not only beneficial for your health but also for the environment," said Chef Perez. "At The Carlisle, we make it convenient for residents to eat locally and seasonally and reduce food waste while enabling them to savor nutritious meals throughout the year, hassle-free, thanks to our maintenance-free lifestyle that prioritizes health and sustainability."

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



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# RELIEF FOR CHRONIC NERVE PAIN

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

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

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

## How do you know if you have Neuropathy?

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

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



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

## Treatments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Naples, FL 34102



# MEET OUR DIGESTIVE HEALTH TEAM

**M**arch is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Of cancers that affect both men and women, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States and the third most common cancer in men and in women. More than 140,000 Americans are diagnosed and more than 50,000 die from the disease each year. Colorectal cancers affect all racial and ethnic groups, it is most often found in people aged 50 years or older, and the risk for developing this cancer increases with age. That being said, it is recommended that patients at average risk get a screening at age 50. Patients with a family history of colon cancer or colon polyps should have a screening done ten years prior to their first degree relatives' diagnosis, which is usually around age 40.

Thanks to prevention, effective treatments, and screenings like a colonoscopy, more people are counting themselves as survivors. Colonoscopies are an excellent screening tool. If you find colon cancer at an early stage, surgical resection is often times curative. About nine out of every 10 people whose colorectal cancer is found early and treated are still alive five years later.

Colorectal cancer symptoms are typically non-specific and might not fully display right away, so any subtle symptoms involving the colon must be taken seriously. If you think you may be at risk, or are looking for a colorectal surgeon or gastroenterologist please contact Physicians Regional Medical Group at 239-348-4221 or visit PhysiciansRegionalMedicalGroup.com for online scheduling.

**Our Colorectal Team consists of Susan Cera, M.D., Anthony Vernava, M.D. and Margaret Avery, FNP**



**Susan Cera, M.D.**

Dr. Cera is board certified in colon and rectal surgery. She attended medical school at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. Completed her residency at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, North Carolina and her fellowship at Cleveland Clinic Florida.

**Anthony Vernava, M.D.**

Dr. Vernava is board certified in colorectal surgery and has been in practice for over 20 years. He attended medical school and completed his residency at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, and his fellowship at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



**Margaret Avery, FNP-BC**

Margaret Avery, FNP completed her master of science at South University, Savannah, GA. She provides care that includes an in-depth knowledge of emergency and critical care, pre and post-operative care, colorectal surgery, cancer screenings, early cancer detection and colon health. Margaret also has a special interest in patient education which includes preventive medicine, lifestyle changes, proper diet and surgical complication prevention.



Our team specializes in performing colonoscopies and laparoscopies, as well as reoperative, minimally invasive, and robotic surgeries. As well as treating colon, rectal, and anal cancers in addition to Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, adhesions, diverticulitis and fecal incontinence. They also treat patients for hemorrhoids, fissures, fistulas, anal infections, constipation, colon, and rectal polyps and abdominal pain.



**Michael Cohen, M.D.**

Dr. Cohen is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine. He attended medical school and completed his residency at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois, and his fellowship at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida. He specializes in colon cancer screening and prevention,

treating Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, acid reflux/GERD, hemorrhoids, and celiac disease/gluten intolerance. Also specializes in nutrition/wellness, gallbladder disease, liver disease, cirrhosis, and Hepatitis C.

**Randall Jacobs, M.D.**

Randall Jacobs, M.D., FACP, FACG, is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. He specializes in gastroenterology and covers all aspects of the field, including gastroesophageal reflux disease, stomach issues, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease and liver disease. He provides care for all gastrointestinal disorders with extensive experience in Barrett's Esophagus and colonoscopy screenings.



**Afshin Khaizer, M.D.**

Afshin Khaizer, M.D., is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology and completed his schooling at University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV. He specializes in colon cancer screening and prevention, pancreatic and gallbladder disease, liver disease, cirrhosis, hepatitis, acid reflux/GERD, celiac/gluten intolerance, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis while maintaining focus on whole-body wellbeing.



**Maria Valdes, M.D.**

Dr. Valdes is board certified in gastroenterology. She attended medical school at St. George's University School of Medicine in Grenada, West Indies. Completed her residency at St. Vincent's Hospital and

Medical Center in New York, New York and her fellowship at The Brooklyn Hospital Center in Brooklyn, New York. She specializes in colorectal cancer screening, reflux, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)

**Roxanne Allen, PA-C**

Roxanne Allen, PA-C, finished PA school at Mercy College, Physician Assistant, Bronx, NY. She specializes in colon cancer screenings and prevention. In addition, she provides treatment for dysphasia, GERD/reflux, peptic ulcer disease (PUD), IBD, IBS, liver disease, pancreatitis and more.



**Vicky Hernandez, APRN**

Vicky Hernandez, APRN, is a board-certified adult gerontology primary care nurse practitioner specializing in colon cancer screening and prevention, as well as celiac disease/gluten intolerance, acid reflux/GERD and hemorrhoids. In addition, she provides treatment for hepatitis, cirrhosis, pancreatitis, IBS, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

**Alicia Sloan, PA-C**

Alicia Sloan, PA-C, Finishing her schooling at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and HealthSciences, Boston, MA. She specializes in colon cancer screenings and prevention, as well as celiac disease/gluten intolerance, acid reflux/GERD and hemorrhoids. In addition, she provides treatment for hepatitis, cirrhosis, pancreatitis, IBS, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. She is board certified NCCPA board certified and ACLS certified.



**Jennifer Wangler, PA-C**

Jennifer Wangler, PA-C, finished her schooling at Gannon University, Erie, PA. She is a certified physician's assistant devoted to diagnosis, treatment and prevention. She specializes in gastroenterology, including colon cancer screenings, as well as esophagus, stomach and pancreaticobiliary disease, anorectal defecatory disorders, and esophageal dysmotility. Jennifer focuses on the management of common ailments of the gastrointestinal tract and liver.

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# Achilles Tendon Ruptures and Getting You Back in the Game

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

**A**chilles Ruptures are more common in men than women and the typical age group that is affected is between the ages of 30-50. Some other risk factors include race, genetics, medical conditions, musculoskeletal disease, ankle and foot alignment (pronation/hyper-pronation), obesity, sports, exercise, medication and smoking.

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body. It is connected to both the calf muscle and the heel bone and is a fibrous tissue that somewhat resembles twine. It is used when you walk, run, stand, jump and is especially stressed when you move quickly from side to side.

Although the Achilles tendon can withstand great stresses from running, twisting and jumping, it is extremely vulnerable to injury. A rupture of the tendon is a tearing and separation of the tendon fibers, so that the tendon can no longer perform its normal function.

People that are athletic and play sports or do extreme workouts are often times more frequently affected by Achilles tendon injuries. This is because they have jarring, ballistic movements. Sports like tennis, basketball and football all create these airborne movements. Also, exercises or workouts like jumping rope, or other high intensity movements can rupture the Achilles tendon. Corticosteroids and some other pain deterring injectables have been studied for their negative effect on the tendons, due to the medications actually breaking down the tissues and weakening the Achilles tendon.

When the tendon is ruptured, most notably, people remark of the popping sound they hear at the onset. It causes a tremendous amount of pain and unfortunately takes a very long time to heal.

There are several types of treatment options, both surgical and nonsurgical. The nonsurgical approach is to cast the foot in a pointed toe position and then gradually recasting to stretch the tendon back into



## Achilles Tendon Rupture

place very slowly. The nonoperative repair has a much greater re-rupture rate than with surgery. We also use laser therapy in conjunction with stem cells as to repair the Achilles tendon.

The surgical repair of the Achilles rupture involves several different options. All of the options will reconnect the two ends of the tear back together by suturing them back into place. Sometimes this is done with a flap drawn down from the gastrocnemius (calf muscle), while other times its achieved with a donated graft, or simply sewn back together with a specific suturing method that ties both sides down and reconnects the sutures in the midline of the tear.

Whichever of the treatment options that your physician may choose, expect the rehabilitation to be quite long. There is no weight bearing activity allowed for several weeks, and then from there

their will be many weeks of therapy. The length of healing for the average person is usually around 4 to 6 months.

At week 8 after your treatment, your Achilles tendon will be primarily healed, but not strong enough to put undue stress on it. It must be over-protected for several months to insure that it is not reinjured. For competitive and exercise, or sports enthusiast, they can expect a good 6-9 months before being back to their normal extreme routines

At Collier Podiatry, Dr. Petrocelli is highly experienced in treating Achilles tendon ruptures both surgically and non-surgically, depending on your unique circumstances. And they offer great options and routines for the most beneficial rehabilitation and healing.

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

Dr. Petrocelli is Board Certified in Surgical and Wound Care by the American Board of Wound Management. He is also the staff Podiatrist at Naples Community Hospital Wound Healing Center.



**COLLIER PODIATRY, P.A.**  
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# CARE-DRIVEN LEGACY:

## Community-Owned Funeral Homes & Cemeteries

In a world often characterized by rapid change and evolving traditions, the concept of community-owned funeral homes and cemeteries is gaining momentum, driven by a commitment to compassionate service and transparent practices. At the heart of this movement is a profound belief that care should be the driving force in handling our final goodbyes.

### Embracing Community Ownership

The shift towards community-owned funeral homes marks a departure from the conventional model, where corporate entities often dominate the industry. These community-driven establishments operate with a distinct purpose — to serve their neighbors with a genuine sense of care. By being owned and operated locally, these establishments foster a sense of belonging and trust within the community.

### Compassion as the Cornerstone

The motto "Care Drives Us" serves as the guiding principle for these community-owned funeral homes and cemeteries. Unlike larger, profit-driven corporations, these establishments prioritize compassion over commercial interests. Every step of the funeral process is infused with empathy, offering solace to grieving families during their most vulnerable moments.

### Transparent Practices

Transparency is the cornerstone of community-owned funeral homes. Families are provided with clear information about services, costs, and options. There are no hidden fees or surprises, as these establishments believe that an informed family can make decisions that align with their values and financial capabilities. This commitment to transparency builds trust, reinforcing the notion that caring for the departed and their families extends beyond the physical act of burial.

### Personalized and Meaningful Services

Community-owned funeral homes excel in crafting personalized and meaningful services that celebrate the unique lives of the departed. From customized ceremonies to unique memorialization options, families are encouraged to participate in shaping an experience that reflects the individuality of their loved ones. This personal touch distinguishes these establishments, creating an atmosphere that goes beyond a mere transactional relationship.

### A Sense of Community and Belonging

Beyond the funeral services, these community-owned establishments play a pivotal role in creating a sense of community and belonging. Grieving families find support not only from the dedicated staff but also from fellow community members who understand the cultural and social nuances that make each farewell unique. This communal aspect adds a layer of comfort during times of grief, emphasizing that no one walks alone on this journey.

### Challenges and Rewards of Community Ownership

While community-owned funeral homes offer a compassionate and community-centric approach, they do face challenges. Competing with larger corporations and navigating complex regulations require resilience and adaptability. However, the rewards are profound, as the satisfaction of providing heartfelt services to neighbors outweighs the challenges.

### Looking Towards the Future

As the movement of community-owned funeral homes continues to gain traction, the future looks promising. More communities are recognizing the value of having a locally-owned and operated funeral home that prioritizes care and transparency. This shift signifies a return to the roots of communal support during life's most challenging moments.

In conclusion, the rise of community-owned funeral homes and cemeteries is a testament to the enduring power of care. In a world that often feels disconnected, these establishments are anchoring communities with compassion, transparency, and a commitment to honoring lives in a way that transcends the conventional funeral experience. "Care Drives Us" is not just a motto; it's a promise to communities that their loved ones will be handled with the utmost respect, empathy, and personalization, creating a legacy that echoes the values of the community itself.

### Palm Royale Funeral Home & Cemetery

Palm Royale Funeral Home was built on the beautiful grounds of Palm Royale Cemetery to offer the community a funeral home and cemetery co-located on the same property to provide families with a continuity of care and services.

Families find value in being able to work with a single provider, interface with one staff, and safeguard their personal information and documents under one roof.

Palm Royale Funeral Home & Cemetery is the newest funeral home in Naples and offers burial, entombment, and cremation service options that range from highly personalized to time-honored traditional.

Our brand-new facility has a light and airy feel to it and was designed to offer a serene, yet uplifting and supportive place to gather and honor.

Inside is a contemporary chapel, reception room, and catering café that are adjacent, yet separate, providing flexibility in the types and styles of services we can offer. There is also easy access to a covered, wrap-around veranda, that provides additional seating in an open-air setting.

A high-quality digital platform enables us to offer sophisticated services such as recording and live streaming, allowing distant family and friends the opportunity to "stay connected", "say good-bye", and view services either "live or later". To learn more, please visit our Recording & Live Streaming page. You're also welcome to call and speak with one of our funeral directors to learn more details, have any questions answered, or to arrange for your loved one's service.

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# KIDNEY AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that 37 million adults have kidney disease and the majority of people do not know they have it? One out of 3 three people are at risk for kidney disease. The kidneys are our primary source of detoxification. These two small organs clean the blood and filter waste products and toxins from the body through the urine.

The National Kidney Foundation Explains How The Kidneys Work Below:

- Blood enters the kidneys through an artery from the heart
- Blood is cleaned by passing through millions of tiny blood filters
- Waste material passes through the ureter and is stored in the bladder as urine
- Newly cleaned blood returns to the bloodstream by way of veins
- Bladder becomes full and urine passes out of the body through the urethra.<sup>1</sup>

The kidneys perform their life-sustaining job of filtering and returning to the bloodstream about 200 quarts of fluid every 24 hours. Approximately two quarts are eliminated from the body in the form of urine, while the remainder, about 198 quarts, is retained in the body. The urine we excrete has been stored in the bladder for approximately one to eight hours.<sup>1</sup>

There are several key warning indicators of kidney disease. While many of these get confused with other conditions or get ignored completely, if you have any of the following symptoms, it's imperative to see your healthcare provider and to get additional testing done.

According the National Kidney Foundation, these are the 10 most common signs of kidney disease:<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Fatigue**—You're more tired, have less energy or are having trouble concentrating. A severe decrease in kidney function can lead to a buildup of toxins and impurities in the blood. This can cause people to feel tired, weak and can make it hard to concentrate. Another complication of kidney disease is anemia, which can cause weakness and fatigue.
- 2. Trouble Sleeping**—When the kidneys aren't filtering properly, toxins stay in the blood rather than leaving the body through the urine. This can make it difficult to sleep. There is also a link between obesity and chronic kidney disease, and sleep apnea is more common in those with chronic kidney disease, compared with the general population.

- 3. Dry, Itchy Skin**— Healthy kidneys do many important jobs. They remove wastes and extra fluid from your body, help make red blood cells, help keep bones strong and work to maintain the right amount of minerals in your blood. Dry and itchy skin can be a sign of the mineral and bone disease that often accompanies advanced kidney disease, when the kidneys are no longer able to keep the right balance of minerals and nutrients in your blood.

- 4. Frequent Urination**—If you feel the need to urinate more often, especially at night, this can be a sign of kidney disease. When the kidneys filters are damaged, it can cause an increase in the urge to urinate. Sometimes this can also be a sign of a urinary infection or enlarged prostate in men.

- 5. Blood in Urine**—Healthy kidneys typically keep the blood cells in the body when filtering wastes from the blood to create urine, but when the kidney's filters have been damaged, these blood cells can start to "leak" out into the urine. In addition to signaling kidney disease, blood in the urine can be indicative of tumors, kidney stones or an infection.

- 6. Foamy Urine**— Excessive bubbles in the urine – especially those that require you to flush several times before they go away—indicate protein in the urine. This foam may look like the foam you see when scrambling eggs, as the common protein found in urine, albumin, is the same protein that is found in eggs.

- 7. Puffy Eyes**— Protein in the urine is an early sign that the kidneys' filters have been damaged, allowing protein to leak into the urine. This puffiness around your eyes can be due to the fact that your kidneys are leaking a large amount of protein in the urine, rather than keeping it in the body.

- 8. Swollen Feet and Ankles**— Decreased kidney function can lead to sodium retention, causing swelling in your feet and ankles. Swelling in the lower extremities can also be a sign of heart disease, liver disease and chronic leg vein problems.

- 9. Poor Appetite**—This is a very general symptom, but a buildup of toxins resulting from reduced kidney function can be one of the causes.

- 10. Muscles Cramps**— Electrolyte imbalances can result from impaired kidney function. For example, low calcium levels and poorly controlled phosphorus may contribute to muscle cramping.

Reference:

1. The National Kidney Foundation, Kidneys and Your Health, <https://www.kidney.org/phi/form?version=health>

## Advanced Urology Institute

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

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

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

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Jonathan Jay, M.D.



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# Prostate Artery Embolization:

## A Minimally Invasive Solution for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia

By Paul Hulsberg, MD

**B**enign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a common condition that many men face as they age. BPH can lead to bothersome urinary symptoms, such as incomplete bladder emptying, increased urinary frequency, intermittency, urgency, weak stream, straining and nocturia. This can have a significant effect on patients' quality of life. While traditional treatments like medications and surgical procedures have been the standard of care, a minimally-invasive option called Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE) is gaining attention as an effective alternative.

### Understanding BPH

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate. The prostate gland surrounds the urethra, which is the tube that carries urine from the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it can compress the urethra leading to urinary symptoms such as frequent urination, weak urine flow, and incomplete emptying of the bladder. These symptoms can significantly interfere with men's daily activities and sleep.

### Traditional Treatment Options

Medications such as alpha blockers (tamsulosin/Flomax, terazosin/Hytrin, doxazosin/Cardura, alfuzosin/Uroxatral, and silodosin/Rapaflo) and 5-alpha reductase inhibitors (finasteride/Proscar, Dutasteride/Avodart) can help manage the symptoms of BPH, but they may come with side effects and they may not be effective for all patients. When medication is not effective, several procedural options are available for treatment of BPH. Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) or holmium laser enucleation of the prostate (HoLEP) are more minimally invasive options, but can sometimes be complicated by side effects such as sexual dysfunction and incontinence. Surgical resection of the prostate is a more invasive option for massively enlarged prostates, but typically requires a more extended recovery period.

### The Emergence of Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE)

Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE) is a relatively new and minimally invasive treatment option for BPH. Performed by an interventional radiologist, this procedure can provide relief from lower urinary tract symptoms with reduced risk, shorter recovery times, and no need for a hospital stay.

### How PAE Works

The entire procedure is typically performed through a small pinhole puncture in the groin or the wrist, as the

interventional radiologist uses live X-ray imaging (fluoroscopy) to guide catheters and wires from the accessed artery into the bilateral prostate arteries. After confirming position of the catheter with contrast injections and cone-beam CT imaging, the radiologist injects microscopic particles into the prostate arteries, which work by blocking the blood flow to the prostate. This causes the abnormal prostate tissue to shrink, which relieves the obstructive pressure on the urethra, allowing urine to flow more easily from the bladder to the penis.

### Benefits of PAE

- **Minimally Invasive:** no incisions or surgical resection involved
- **Shorter Recovery Time:** typically an outpatient procedure. Patients may have some post-embolization pain related to inflammation that is self-limiting and managed with oral medications.
- **Preservation of Sexual Function:** PAE has shown a lower risk of sexual side effects compared to some traditional treatments.
- **No need for general anesthesia:** typically performed with local anesthetic and light IV sedation, making this an excellent option for patients with multiple comorbidities who may not be candidates for more invasive surgical procedures

### Risks and Limitations

Like any medical procedure, PAE isn't without risks. Some potential complications include access site bleeding, infection, and non-target embolization.

With advancements in imaging and technique, these risks are minimal in expert hands. In the initial post-procedural phase, there is a small risk of complete bladder obstruction related to prostate inflammation. This is typically managed with Foley catheterization for a few days until the inflammation subsides.

### Who is a Suitable Candidate for PAE?

PAE is not suitable for everyone, and a thorough evaluation and multidisciplinary discussion between a urologist and interventional radiologist is essential in determining eligibility. Patients with prostates larger than 100cc are typically better candidates for this procedure because the arteries supplying the prostate are much larger and easier to catheterize. Patient with significant atherosclerotic disease may have more technically challenging arterial anatomy,

but it is usually not a contraindication to PAE. Patients with a history of aortic endograft or previous pelvic artery embolization may also pose difficulties in arterial catheterization. Careful consideration of prior procedures by the urologist and the interventional radiologist is an important factor in deciding on a treatment approach.

### Conclusion

Prostate artery embolization represents a significant advancement in the treatment landscape for benign prostatic hyperplasia. For referring providers, understanding PAE and its benefits ensures that patients are offered the most comprehensive care options. For potential patients, knowledge is empowerment. The more you know about your treatment options, the more confidently you can make decisions about your health. If you or someone you know is struggling with the symptoms of BPH, it may be worth discussing PAE with your urologist to determine if this option may be right for you.



**Paul Hulsberg, MD** is board-certified in both diagnostic and interventional radiology. He completed his diagnostic radiology residency at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH and completed his fellowship at University of Florida in Jacksonville, FL.

*Dr. Hulsberg and his family have lived in Naples since 2019. He has been instrumental in building and growing the interventional radiology practice at NCH and Proscan along with his partners Scott Peterson, MD, Ashley Wood, MD and Bruce Bordlee, MD. The Proscan team of talented physicians, together with the caring and professional technologists and nurses at NCH, provide compassionate and comprehensive care to their patients using the latest imaging technology and procedural innovation.*



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# The Florida Bladder Institute is Growing

The news is out. Until recently, women who had complex pelvic disorders didn't know where to turn. The Florida Bladder Institute, a specialty Urogynecology clinic, was created to give options to these women and help them regain control of their lives.

To meet the needs for specialized health care for women in Southwest Florida, the Florida Bladder Institute has added two more providers to the practice. Dr. Mark has joined our team from southeast Florida and has over 25 years of experience treating women with complex pelvic and gynecologic disorders

Amy Goetz, PA-C, moved from Northeastern Florida to join our team for her "dream job" as our surgical liaison. Amy assists Dr. Gauta during surgery and can answer any patient questions pre- or post-operatively.

### Areas of Expertise for Dr. Gauta

This doctor provides the following types of care. The more often a doctor has treated a particular condition or has performed a particular surgery, the more expertise they may have in treating patients with similar needs. Based on three years (2020-2022) of Medicare data, each scale below indicates the volume of episodes compared to other doctors who treat the same condition.

#### Surgical repair of vaginal prolapse



#### Pelvic organ prolapse



#### Hysterectomy



#### Urination/bladder dysfunction



When choosing any healthcare provider you want to make sure they are experienced and frequently treat the condition you have. At the Florida Bladder Institute we've been treating women from around the world for over 25 years and providing exceptional care for their complex pelvic disorders.

Source: <https://health.usnews.com/doctors/joseph-gauta-20582>

### PATIENT TESTIMONIALS

*"Dr. Mark is a sweet and loving person. She listened to me intently, and that is rare. Her great knowledge and way of explaining my problem were very comforting. I would not want to see anyone but her. Loved her."*

*"I am two weeks post-op and extremely pleased with the results of my surgery. Amy did an excellent job patiently explaining the procedure and answered all my questions today. I feel very comfortable checking in with her if needed in the next few weeks."*

At the Florida Bladder Institute, we now have the "A TEAM" to treat female pelvic disorders such as pelvic organ prolapse, urinary and fecal incontinence, bladder dysfunction, endometriosis, fibroids, pelvic pain, vaginal dryness, sexual disorders, and cosmetic gynecology.

When choosing any healthcare provider, you want to ensure they are experienced and frequently treat your condition. At the Florida Bladder Institute, we've treated women worldwide for over 25 years and provided exceptional care and relief for their complex pelvic disorders.

To learn more, call 239-449-7979 to schedule an appointment today.



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Lisa Mark, MD



Amy Goetz, PA-C

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# The Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screening

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

In the month of March, we focus attention on colorectal cancer awareness. This is a disease that affects the colon (also known as the large intestine or bowel), and the rectum, (which is the portion that connects the large intestine to the anus). The colon has an important job in our gastrointestinal tract; it works to resorb fluid and nutrients back into our system, helping to form stool that we then excrete. Abnormal overgrowth of cells in our colon and rectum can become small polyps, and over time, these polyps can turn into cancer. Interestingly, colorectal cancer is the fourth most common type of non-skin related cancer in the US. Given the high prevalence, awareness is crucial to help save lives.

As a physician, I spend a lot of time in clinic talking with patients about the various risk factors of colorectal cancer. Some risk factors are not in our control, such as age and family history. The incidence of colorectal cancers increases as we age. Also, there are specific hereditary diseases, like inflammatory bowel disease, Lynch Syndrome, and familial adenomatous polyposis which predispose a person to getting colorectal cancer. A lot of the counseling I do surrounding these unavoidable "risks" involves being attentive and proactive. Once I am aware of a patient's family history, for instance, together we can ensure the timing and frequency of screening is appropriate.

In conjunction with age and family history, lifestyle choices also factor into a patient's colorectal cancer risk. Evidence demonstrates that a low fiber diet, deficient in fruits and vegetables and high in processed foods, is associated with higher rates of colon cancer. I work with patients to analyze what they eat and encourage them to make healthier dietary choices. Being overweight and having a sedentary lifestyle also increases risk. In addition, tobacco use is a forgotten risk factor; patients do not often connect gastrointestinal cancers with smoking. Through education, screening, and collaboration, I work with my patients to reduce these modifiable risk factors.

In addition to mitigating risk, I provide counseling about proactive screening tests. I commonly hear from patients that there is not anything currently bothering them, and so they would prefer not to do any tests. I stress the key point that we do screening tests for cancer BEFORE there are symptoms, and this strategy produces the best results and saves lives. Virtually all colon cancer develops from mushroom-like growths (called adenomatous polyps) that form on the inside of the wall of the colon. These



polyps vary in size, but the larger the polyp is, the greater the likelihood that it will become cancerous. Since the majority of colon cancer grows from polyps, this makes the role of screening tests very important. Some of these screening tests include a colonoscopy, which has been the gold standard test for decades, and newer tests, such as stool DNA testing. I spend time with my patients explaining the various screening tools available, helping them understand the risks and benefits, the frequency of the tests needed, and ultimately choosing together the appropriate preventative screening.

The recommended age to start screening is 45 years old. Based on an individual's risk factors, however, a patient may need to start screening earlier. Choosing when to stop screening, however, is less clear. Most guidelines recommend screening from 45 years old until 75 years old. After the age of 75 until 85, current literature suggests a case-by-case review of the patient to determine if screening should continue.

As a board-certified physician, I am often asked in clinic, "do I really need to do this again?" "I thought I was finished with screening test." My answer to my patients older than 75 years old is, "It depends." Newer studies have shown that screening in adults over the age of 75 to 85 can reduce the risk of dying from colorectal cancer by more than 33% when compared to adults who did not have screening tests. On the other hand, screening tests like colonoscopies have risks. These risks include the chance of bowel perforation, potential bleeding, along with potential side effects and risk of the sedation used during the procedure. Furthermore, there are rigors and challenges posed with the pre-colonoscopy prep. When we are deciding whether to continue screening tests, we discuss the patient's functional health status, their health goals, their previous screening history, and their risk profile. This information is then reviewed together and synthesized to make an informed decision.

Year round, and especially in the month of March, my goal is to spread awareness about colorectal cancer and the importance of screening. By focusing on prevention and early detection, we can help save lives. It is through a collaborative and patient-centered approach that we can make a significant impact on this deadly disease.

To learn more about our Internal Medicine Concierge services and Dr. Andre Davies, visit our website at [GCmedicine.com](http://GCmedicine.com). If you would like to schedule a complimentary meet and greet with Dr. Andre Davies, please email [Christina@GCmedicine.com](mailto:Christina@GCmedicine.com) or contact our office at 239-566-3100.



## Andre Davies, MD

Dr. Andre Davies is a highly qualified Ivy League trained board-certified physician in both Internal Medicine and Geriatrics. He brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge to his practice. Specializing in adult primary care for both men and women, he focuses on preventive health, managing chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. Dr. Davies excels in pre-op exams, annual physical, diabetic screenings, immunizations, cancer screenings, weight management, and nutritional deficiencies. As a fellowship trained Geriatrician, he adeptly addresses complex health issues, emphasizing cognitive evaluations and mental well-being. Dr. Davies aims to educate patients on maximizing brain function and preventing cognitive decline. With a background in various prestigious medical roles, including at NCH Healthcare Group and Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, he stands as one of the top providers in the area.



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# Nurturing Eye Health During National Save Your Vision Month

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

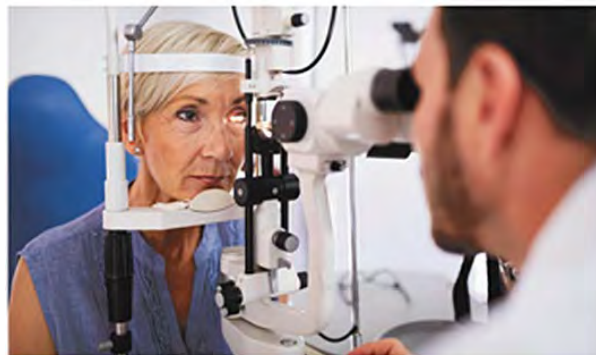
In March 2024, we embark on National Save Your Vision Month, a crucial annual observance that encourages individuals to prioritize eye health and adopt practices that safeguard their precious gift of sight. As we navigate the demands of the modern world, where screens dominate our daily lives and environmental stressors abound, taking proactive measures to maintain optimal vision becomes paramount.

Our eyes are the windows to the world, allowing us to witness its beauty, colors, and wonders. However, in the hustle and bustle of our fast-paced lives, it's easy to overlook the significance of eye health until problems arise. National Save Your Vision Month serves as a timely reminder to incorporate habits that promote and preserve visual well-being.

One of the key aspects of maintaining healthy eyes is regular eye examinations. Comprehensive eye exams not only assess vision acuity but also screen for a myriad of potential issues such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration. In 2024, let's prioritize scheduling these examinations, ensuring that any underlying problems are detected early and addressed promptly.

Digital eye strain has become increasingly prevalent in our screen-centric society. With the majority of work, education, and entertainment occurring on digital devices, prolonged screen time can contribute to eye discomfort, fatigue, and headaches. This National Save Your Vision Month, consider implementing the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break, and focus on something 20 feet away. This simple practice can alleviate strain and promote better eye health in the digital age.

The importance of proper nutrition in maintaining healthy eyes cannot be overstated. Nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, lutein, zeaxanthin, and vitamins A, C, and E play crucial roles in supporting eye function. Include foods rich in these nutrients, such as leafy greens, fish, nuts, and colorful fruits, in your diet. Additionally, stay well-hydrated, as adequate water intake contributes to overall eye health.



In the spirit of National Save Your Vision Month, let's not forget the significance of protecting our eyes from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Prolonged exposure to UV rays can lead to conditions like cataracts and macular degeneration. Invest in quality sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays, and make them a staple accessory when outdoors. This small yet impactful measure contributes to long-term eye health.

While physical well-being is crucial, mental health also plays a role in preserving vision. Stress and lack of sleep can contribute to eye strain and other visual issues. Prioritize self-care practices, including sufficient sleep and stress management techniques, to promote overall wellness and support your eyes in the process.

National Save Your Vision Month is an opportune time to reassess lifestyle choices that impact eye health. If you're a smoker, consider quitting, as smoking is a significant risk factor for various eye conditions, including macular degeneration and cataracts. By making positive lifestyle changes, you not only protect your vision but also enhance your overall health and well-being.

In conclusion, National Save Your Vision Month 2024 beckons us to embrace a holistic approach to eye health. From regular eye examinations to mindful digital habits, proper nutrition, UV protection, and overall well-being, the choices we make today can significantly impact our vision for years to come. Let's celebrate this observance by committing to the preservation of our sight, recognizing that the gift of vision is truly worth safeguarding.



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.

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If you are experiencing any changes in your eye health, whether it is blurry vision, pain, impaired vision, or any other visual irregularities, you should see an ophthalmologist right away. The earlier a disease is detected, the better the outcome and treatment options are for you. You will find a friendly and warm environment at Retina Group of Florida.

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



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# HIRING AN EXPERIENCED REALTOR FOR YOUR REAL ESTATE JOURNEY MATTERS

In the dynamic world of real estate, the decision to buy or sell a property is a significant milestone, laden with both excitement and complexity. Amidst the myriad of tasks and considerations, one critical choice can make or break your real estate experience – the selection of a seasoned and experienced realtor. In this article, we delve into the reasons why hiring an experienced realtor matters and how their expertise can be a game-changer in achieving your property goals.

## Expertise That Transcends Transactions

An experienced realtor is not merely a facilitator of transactions; they are seasoned professionals equipped with a wealth of industry knowledge. From understanding market trends and pricing strategies to navigating intricate legal nuances, their expertise extends beyond the surface. When you engage an experienced realtor, you gain a strategic partner who can provide valuable insights and guidance throughout the entire real estate process.

## Navigating the Complex Landscape

The real estate landscape is multifaceted, marked by intricate processes and regulations. An experienced realtor has weathered the storms of various market conditions and witnessed the evolution of legal frameworks. This wealth of experience empowers them to navigate complexities seamlessly, ensuring that your transactions adhere to all legal requirements and regulatory standards. Their ability to foresee potential challenges and proactively address them adds an extra layer of security to your real estate endeavors.

## Market Knowledge: A Competitive Edge

Markets are dynamic, with fluctuations in demand, supply, and pricing. An experienced realtor is akin to a living repository of market knowledge, attuned to the pulse of the industry. Their ability to analyze trends, anticipate shifts, and identify strategic opportunities provides you with a competitive edge. Whether you are buying or selling, having a realtor with a finger on the market's pulse can maximize your returns and optimize your investment.

## Negotiation Prowess

The art of negotiation is a crucial aspect of any real estate transaction. Seasoned realtors hone their negotiation skills over years of dealing with diverse



clients, fellow agents, and market conditions. When you have an experienced realtor by your side, you benefit from their adept negotiation prowess. Whether securing the best price for your property or navigating a competitive bid to secure your dream home, their ability to negotiate effectively can be the differentiating factor in a successful deal.

## Access to a Robust Network

Establishing connections is paramount in the real estate realm, and experienced realtors boast an extensive network of professionals. From mortgage brokers and inspectors to contractors and legal experts, their connections can streamline the entire process. This network not only expedites transactions but also ensures that you have access to trusted professionals, enhancing the overall quality of your real estate journey.

## Personalized Guidance and Support

Buying or selling a property is a deeply personal experience, often laden with emotions and aspirations. An experienced realtor recognizes the individuality of each client's needs and tailors their approach accordingly. Their ability to offer personalized guidance and support goes beyond the transactional aspects, fostering a sense of trust and reliability. This personalized touch is particularly invaluable in mitigating stress and ensuring a smooth, enjoyable real estate experience.

In conclusion, the decision to hire an experienced realtor is an investment in the success of your real estate journey. Their expertise transcends the transactional nature of real estate, offering a holistic approach that encompasses market knowledge, negotiation prowess, and a robust network of professionals. As you embark on your property endeavors, partnering with an experienced realtor is not just a choice; it's a strategic decision that can make all the difference in achieving your real estate goals.

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# UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIALS OF KIDNEY FUNCTION

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

**T**he kidneys, two bean-shaped organs located on either side of the spine, play a vital role in maintaining the body's overall health. Their primary function involves filtering waste and excess fluids from the blood to form urine. To truly comprehend the intricacies of kidney function, it is essential to delve into the various aspects that contribute to their crucial role in our well-being.

## Filtration and Excretion

At the core of kidney function is the process of filtration. The renal arteries supply blood to the kidneys, where it undergoes filtration in tiny units called nephrons. Each kidney consists of approximately one million nephrons, acting as microscopic filters. Here, waste products, excess salts, and fluids are separated from the blood to create urine. This meticulous filtration ensures that the body maintains a delicate balance of electrolytes and fluid levels.

## Regulation of Blood Pressure

Beyond waste elimination, kidneys play a pivotal role in regulating blood pressure. They achieve this by releasing the enzyme renin, which stimulates the production of angiotensin, a substance that constricts blood vessels. This vasoconstriction helps elevate blood pressure, ensuring a stable flow of blood throughout the body. Moreover, the kidneys actively manage sodium levels, impacting blood volume and pressure regulation.

## Acid-Base Balance

Maintaining the body's acid-base balance is another critical function of the kidneys. They excrete hydrogen ions and reabsorb bicarbonate ions to control the pH of bodily fluids. This delicate balance is vital for optimal cellular function and overall metabolic stability.

## Erythropoiesis Stimulation

The kidneys produce erythropoietin, a hormone that stimulates the bone marrow to produce red blood cells. This process, known as erythropoiesis, is essential for ensuring an adequate supply of oxygen to body tissues. Imbalances in erythropoietin production can lead to conditions such as anemia.



## Electrolyte Balance

Electrolytes, such as sodium, potassium, and calcium, play a crucial role in various physiological processes. Kidneys meticulously regulate the levels of these electrolytes to ensure proper nerve function, muscle contraction, and maintenance of fluid balance. Any disruptions in these levels can lead to serious health issues.

## Detoxification and Waste Elimination

One of the primary functions of the kidneys is to detoxify the body by filtering out waste products and toxins. This includes the byproducts of metabolism, drugs, and environmental pollutants. Efficient kidney function is paramount in preventing the accumulation of harmful substances that can compromise overall health.

## Common Kidney Disorders

Understanding kidney function also involves awareness of common disorders that can affect these vital organs. Conditions like chronic kidney disease (CKD), kidney stones, urinary tract infections, and polycystic kidney disease can impact the kidneys' ability to function optimally. Regular health check-ups, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and staying hydrated are crucial in preventing and managing these disorders.

## Risk Factors and Prevention

Several risk factors contribute to kidney dysfunction, including hypertension, diabetes, and a family history of kidney disease. Lifestyle choices such as maintaining a balanced diet, staying physically active, and avoiding excessive alcohol consumption can significantly reduce the risk of kidney-related issues. Adequate hydration is also key in supporting optimal kidney function.

## Symptoms of Kidney Dysfunction:

Being aware of potential signs of kidney dysfunction is crucial for early detection and intervention.

Symptoms may include changes in urine color or frequency, swelling in the legs and ankles, fatigue, and high blood pressure. Recognizing these indicators can prompt timely medical attention, potentially preventing the progression of kidney disorders.

In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of kidney function goes beyond their role as mere filters. From regulating blood pressure to maintaining electrolyte balance and stimulating erythropoiesis, kidneys are intricately woven into the fabric of our well-being. Awareness of common disorders, risk factors, and proactive measures for prevention is essential for ensuring the optimal health of these vital organs. By grasping the complexities of kidney function, individuals can take proactive steps towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle and safeguarding their overall well-being.

## Are you ready for a consultation?

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## KATHY VERDES APRN, A-GNP-C

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



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## ASK THE EXPERT

# WILL MY SIGHT BE AFFECTED BY MY HEARING LOSS?

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

**D**id you know that March is “Save Your Vision Month”? Does hearing loss affect vision? Absolutely. If you lose your hearing, your sight becomes much more important because any loss of visual acuity makes it harder to read lips and use sign language.

Conversely, those with visual impairment rely heavily on their sense of hearing to assist with everyday activities such as maintaining their balance and avoiding obstacles while walking. For example, research shows that blind people are better at identifying the source of a sound than people who can see.

### How exactly are vision and hearing linked?

The brain uses inputs from both the eyes and ears to make sense of the world, so the loss of one can impact its ability to interpret signals from the other. A 2016 study from UCLA found that the amount that hearing and vision interact varies by the individual as well as the situation, and combining the senses may help in certain tasks.

### What causes vision and hearing loss?

*A variety of factors:*

**GENETIC CONDITIONS:** There are a variety of genetic conditions that can lead to a child being born deaf or blind or developing hearing or sight loss over time.

Deafness and blindness themselves are hereditary, and conditions such as Down syndrome and Cogan’s syndrome are associated with impaired hearing and/or vision.

Usher syndrome, which affects less than 20 people per 100,000, is the most common condition that affects both hearing and vision, according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). About half of all hereditary deaf-blindness cases are attributed to Usher syndrome.

**ILLNESS:** There are some diseases that can result in hearing loss, vision loss or both.

Complications from chicken pox or measles, for example, can result in hearing or vision loss. Meningitis, brain tumors, diabetes and certain cancers can also cause hearing loss, vision loss or both.



**MEDICATIONS:** Some drugs — including common antibiotics, pain relievers and cholesterol medications — can cause short- or long-term hearing or vision loss.

**INJURIES:** Brain injuries and physical injuries to the eyes or inner ears can result in permanent vision or hearing loss.

**AGE:** It’s normal for both hearing and vision to decline with age, a result of wear and tear as well as the bevy of additional health conditions that affect the elderly. While all five senses tend to decline over the years, deterioration of sight and hearing are often the most acute.

### How are vision and hearing affected by age?

Vision loss is common in older adults as they age. Sometimes it’s caused by an easily treated condition, such as presbyopia (corrected with reading glasses) or cataracts (corrected with minor surgery). It’s also normal for older adults to experience hearing loss, and to feel like they can hear better with one ear than with the other. According to the NIDCD, one in three Americans, ages 65-74, experiences hearing loss, along with nearly half of those 75 and older. Age-related hearing loss often reflects long-term exposure to noise, but it can also be due to conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes.

### How else does hearing or vision loss affect a person?

The loss of hearing and sight have been linked individually to lower social interaction and higher rates of depression, cognitive decline and dementia. Hearing and vision loss also can make such conditions worse since it can be harder to make sense of your surroundings without full use of all your senses.

New research shows that interventions that can improve sight or hearing may also have an impact on cognitive function.

How eye exams can diagnose and slow vision loss While hearing and vision loss present individual challenges to those affected, the loss of one sense can have a profound impact on the other. That’s why it’s so important for everyone — and especially older adults — to make regular visits to vision and hearing specialists. Medical professionals may be able to help slow the progression of your loss or provide tools or interventions to mitigate any damage.

### WHEN WAS YOUR LAST Hearing TEST?

Studies have shown a strong association between age-related eye conditions and hearing loss, which suggests common risk factors or biological aging markers for the onset of both. The association between hearing loss and both cataracts and age-related maculopathy (macular degeneration) is especially clear from multiple studies done on patients between the ages of 60 and 90. Age-related vision problems may occur gradually, which is why an annual eye exam is so important for seniors. However, hearing loss may be even harder to detect, so it’s a very good idea to schedule a hearing exam along with your annual eye exam.

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# Multiple Sclerosis Awareness and Breakthrough Treatments

In 2023, Paragon Healthcare emerged as a beacon of hope, administering over 7,500 infusions of cutting-edge treatments for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients. This marked a pivotal moment in the ongoing battle against MS, shedding light on the importance of awareness and the strides made in medical advancements.

Multiple Sclerosis, a chronic autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system, continues to pose challenges for those diagnosed. However, the year 2023 witnessed a remarkable surge in awareness campaigns, spearheaded by organizations like Paragon Healthcare, dedicated to transforming the lives of individuals grappling with this complex condition.

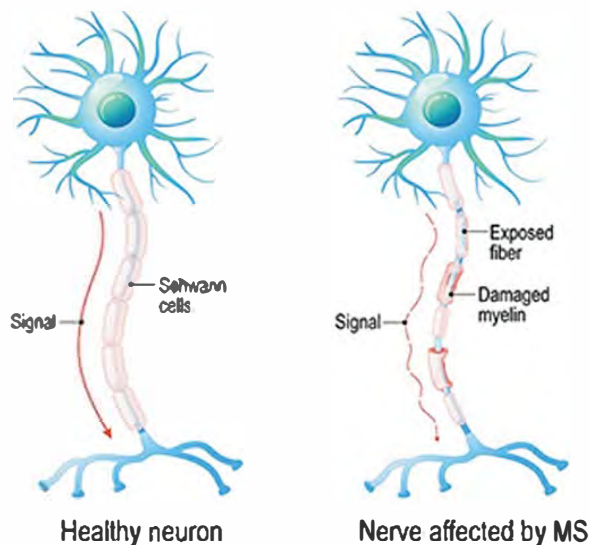
Paragon Healthcare's commitment to MS patients was underscored by the administration of various infusion therapies, including Briumvi, IVIG, Lemtrada, Ocrevus, Rituximab (and biosimilars), Steroids, and Tysabri. These treatments have proven instrumental in managing symptoms, slowing down disease progression, and improving the overall quality of life for MS patients.

Briumvi, a relatively new addition to the MS treatment arsenal, garnered attention for its innovative approach. Paragon Healthcare's administration of Briumvi infusions represented a significant leap forward in providing patients with more options for personalized care, offering a glimmer of optimism for those navigating the challenges of MS.

IVIG (Intravenous Immunoglobulin) infusions have long been a staple in MS treatment, showcasing their effectiveness in modulating the immune system and alleviating symptoms. Paragon Healthcare's dedication to administering these infusions exemplifies a commitment to holistic care and tailored treatment plans for each patient.

The infusion of Lemtrada, known for its disease-modifying capabilities, was another stride in the battle against MS. Paragon Healthcare's involvement in delivering Lemtrada infusions underscored the importance of staying at the forefront of medical advancements, ensuring that patients receive the most advanced and effective treatments available.

## Multiple Sclerosis



Source: <https://www.ohsu.edu/brain-institute/understanding-multiple-sclerosis>

Ocrevus, a groundbreaking medication designed to target specific aspects of the immune system, found prominence in Paragon Healthcare's repertoire of MS treatments. Its infusion marked a turning point for patients, providing renewed hope and resilience in the face of a challenging disease.

Rituximab and its biosimilars, administered by Paragon Healthcare, showcased the continuous pursuit of precision medicine. Tailoring treatments to the individual needs of MS patients is essential in mitigating the complexities associated with the disease, and Rituximab infusions symbolized this commitment to personalized care.

Steroids, a conventional yet crucial component in managing acute MS relapses, were administered with precision and expertise by Paragon Healthcare. These infusions played a pivotal role in reducing inflammation and mitigating symptoms, contributing to the overall well-being of MS patients.

Tysabri, renowned for its efficacy in preventing relapses and disability progression in MS patients, further strengthened Paragon Healthcare's comprehensive approach to treatment. The administration of Tysabri infusions reflected a dedication to exploring diverse therapeutic options, ensuring that patients receive the most suitable interventions for their unique circumstances.

In conclusion, the year 2023 witnessed a transformative chapter in Multiple Sclerosis awareness and treatment, with Paragon Healthcare leading the charge. The administration of over 7,500 infusions underscored a commitment to personalized care, groundbreaking treatments, and unwavering support for MS patients. This collective effort serves as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path toward a future where the impact of Multiple Sclerosis is not only understood but effectively managed, offering a better quality of life for those affected by this complex condition.

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# Family History and Hereditary Colon Cancer

By Andy Guinigundo, Director of Precision Oncology, Naples Cancer Advisors

So, you have a family history of colon cancer and are nervous about how to minimize your risk of the disease. You have questions. When should you get cancer screening? What kind of cancer screening should you be doing? How often should you do it? Do I or anyone in my family need genetic testing? And, what the heck is genetic testing anyway? Answers to these questions and more, keep reading!

Before we talk about being at high risk of colon cancer, let's first talk about what people with an average risk of colon cancer should be doing. The new age of first colonoscopy is 45 years old. In 2018, the American Cancer Society made this recommendation in response to research finding an increase in colon cancer diagnosed among younger individuals. If you are average risk, you do have options regarding how to screen. The gold standard remains the traditional colonoscopy. The advantage of colonoscopy is that it examines the entire colon and polyps can be removed. Polyps are most often a tiny clump of cells found in the lining of the colon. Given enough time, polyps sometimes become cancers. By removing them, a cancer might be prevented. The other advantage of colonoscopy comes if no polyps are found. Your next colonoscopy would be 10 years later! Other screening options include stool testing (blood or DNA), sigmoidoscopy, or CT colonography (CTC) sometimes called "virtual colonoscopy". Unfortunately, the bowel prep required for a traditional colonoscopy is still required for CTC.

How do I know if I have a higher than average risk for colon cancer? If you happen to fall in this category,

colonoscopy is the recommended test to get. First off, if you have a history of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's colitis, you are higher risk. I suspect, if you have one of those disorders, you are already getting frequent colonoscopies. If you have a personal history of the genetic disorder, cystic fibrosis, you need colon screening quite a bit earlier than 45 years. You may need a colonoscopy as early as 30 years old if you have undergone an organ transplant as a result of this disease. If you have a history of a childhood or young adult cancer, and received chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy, colonoscopy may be recommended to you as early as 30 years old and every 5 years thereafter. If you have had a colonoscopy and have a history of polyps, it may be recommended that you have a repeat colonoscopy as soon as a year later! There are pages within the guidelines devoted to describing polyps and re-screening recommendations. In general, how quickly you need your next colonoscopy depends on the type of polyp found, the number of polyps found, and the size of the polyp. In general, the more abnormal (compared to normal bowel tissue) it appears, the more in number, and the larger the polyp dictates how quickly you will need to repeat the colonoscopy. Finally, if you have a first degree relative (parent, sibling, child) with a history of colorectal cancer, you will need to get a colonoscopy earlier. The age at first colonoscopy should be 40 years old or 10 years before the earlier colorectal cancer, whichever is earlier. For example, if your dad had colon cancer at age 45, your first colonoscopy should be at 35 years old. It is also recommended that you get colonoscopy every 5 years even if your test does not find anything instead of the usual 10 years.

Who then should undergo genetic testing for hereditary colorectal cancer? Colon cancer is a cancer that has moved toward what we call "universal genetic testing". This is testing for anyone with a diagnosis of the disease. If you have a history of colorectal cancer and have not had genetic testing, discuss having testing

with your cancer care provider. If you don't have cancer, but there is a known genetic colorectal cancer syndrome in your family, i.e. a known gene mutation, you should be tested. Your risk of having the same mutation is as high as 50%.

If you do not have a personal history of colorectal cancer, testing is based on family history. In general, the younger the folks with colorectal cancer were diagnosed, the closer to you genetically, and the higher the total number, the more chance you should be tested. See chart, but really a genetics professional should assist you with this assessment. There are several providers of genetics services in the Naples area. The cancer care professionals at Naples Cancer Advisors are able to perform a full genetic risk assessment for you.



**Andy Guinigundo**  
MSN, RN, CNP, ANP-BC

Andy Guinigundo brings more than 25 years of experience as an advanced provider in oncology services and as a cancer genetic risk assessment specialist and an ICU registered nurse. Andy's areas of focus include lung cancer, breast cancer and overall improvement in quality cancer care. His advanced knowledge as a cancer genetics specialist allowed NCA to launch its genetic counseling service, further bolstering its lineup of free services provided to Southwest Florida cancer patients.

Andy's passion to help cancer patients started when he was an undergraduate. He participated in a student nurse externship where he worked in the bone marrow transplant unit. He discovered that the relationships he developed with his patients were very rewarding, and that he had the ability to make a positive impact in their lives. Andy's special interests include lung cancer, breast cancer, cancer research, and quality care improvement. He has advanced his profession and now serves as a cancer genetics specialist. He has a wide range of interests, including spending time with his family, serving as a member of the National Ski Patrol, visiting theme parks and writing about them.



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**NCCN** National Comprehensive Cancer Network  
**NCCN Guidelines Version 2.2023**  
**Lynch Syndrome**

**CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF LYNCH SYNDROME BASED ON PERSONAL OR FAMILY HISTORY OF CANCER<sup>a</sup>**  
• Known LS pathogenic variant in the family

- An individual with a LS-related cancer<sup>b</sup> and any of the following:
  - ▶ Diagnosed <50 y
  - ▶ A synchronous or metachronous LS-related cancer<sup>b</sup> regardless of age
  - ▶ 1 first-degree or second-degree relative with an LS-related cancer<sup>b</sup> diagnosed <50 y
  - ▶ ≥2 first-degree or second-degree relatives with an LS-related cancer<sup>b</sup> regardless of age
- Family history<sup>c</sup> of any of the following:
  - ▶ ≥1 first-degree relative with a colorectal or endometrial cancer diagnosed <50 y
  - ▶ ≥1 first-degree relative with a colorectal or endometrial cancer and a synchronous or metachronous LS-related cancer regardless of age
  - ▶ ≥2 first-degree or second-degree relatives with LS-related cancers<sup>b</sup> including ≥1 diagnosed <50 y
  - ▶ ≥3 first-degree or second-degree relatives with LS-related cancers<sup>b</sup> regardless of age
- Increased model-predicted risk for LS
  - ▶ An individual with a ≥5% risk of having an MMR gene pathogenic variant based on predictive models (ie, PREMM<sub>5</sub>, MMRpro, MMRpredict)
    - ◊ Individuals with a personal history of CRC and/or endometrial cancer with a PREMM<sub>5</sub> score of ≥2.5% should be considered for MGPT.
    - ◊ For individuals without a personal history of CRC and/or endometrial cancer, some data have suggested using a PREMM<sub>5</sub> score threshold of ≥2.5%, rather than ≥5% to select individuals for MMR genetic testing. Based on these data, it is reasonable for testing to be done based on the ≥2.5% score result and clinical judgment. Of note, with the lower threshold, there is an increase in sensitivity, but a decrease in specificity.
- Personal history of a tumor with MMR deficiency determined by PCR, NGS, or IHC diagnosed at any age<sup>b,d</sup>



# Hip Fractures After a Fall: What I Learned From My Hip Fracture

By Susan Keller, BSN, MPH

**O**n election day, 2022, I enthusiastically rode my bicycle to the local voting precinct to cast my vote. After quickly stopping bicycle, my foot failed to clear the bicycle seat, sending me crashing onto my left hip.

I lay in the street motionless, in childbirth like pain, unable to properly move my left leg.

I didn't wait for someone to ask if they should call an ambulance, I begged bystanders to call an ambulance, I asked every minute, where was the ambulance? Two guys lifted me up. The pain and abnormal position of my dangling leg was a sure indication something was wrong.

The ambulance ride to the hospital seemed to take hours, yet ER triage time seemed to take just minutes. There was a flurry of healthcare team introductions, forms to sign and then preparation for an x-ray.

My belt wasn't even unbuckled when the nurses knew my new pair of J Crew shorts would have to be cut off. I was in significant pain and didn't care.

I was fortunate to have fallen mid-day, as the hospital had an orthopedic surgeon on call and readily accessible.

Dr. Robert Swift, my orthopedic surgeon addressed the fracture head on, preparing me for surgery, which I surely thought could wait at least three days. He informed me this was not the case, as the situation was an urgency.

Two hours later, my sedation had worn off and I was welcomed to the orthopedic unit. I thought surely an indwelling catheter would have been inserted so I wouldn't have to get out of bed to pee, but there was none. Getting out of bed, if to just go to the bathroom, was instrumental in the recovery process.

**My mindset changed from "I can't move" to how to "how can I move so it's not painful"?**

During my week stay at the hospital, the nursing staff inspected the surgical dressing, assessed my pain and recovery progress. Physical therapy taught me how to reposition myself, get me out of bed and how to walk using a walker.

The goal of the healthcare team was to ensure I was healing and to provide me with the knowledge, motivation and tools to have a successful recovery at home. I was transferred to an inpatient rehabilitation

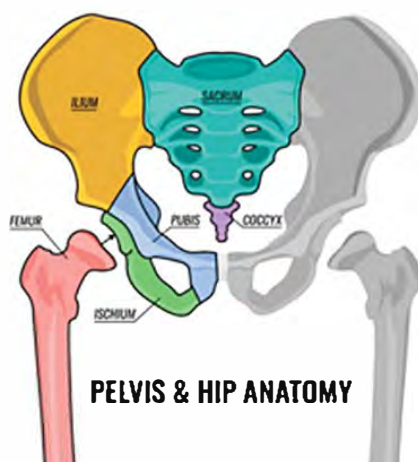
program at a local rehabilitation hospital. Physical therapy was scheduled daily, progressing from two sessions a day, increasing to four times a day by week's end.

Home physical therapy was scheduled before the hospital discharge. Physical therapy reinforced the leg exercises taught in the hospital. I progressed from using a walker to using a rollator. While I was sometimes uncomfortable performing the exercises, they were instrumental in my healing process. Ice, pain medication and my mantra "I can do this" helped the healing process even more.

The partnership between my health care provider and orthopedic surgeon gave me peace of mind that progress was being made.

Almost two months after my hip surgery successfully completing physical therapy. I rode my bike past my neighbors, only to find her sprawled in her driveway, in obvious pain. We elected to drive to the hospital. While she was fortunate not to need surgery, the CT scan revealed she had a pelvic fracture. Fortunately, Dr. Swift was her orthopedic surgeon as well.

There is confusion about what exactly a hip fracture is. Is it a femur fracture? Is there a hip bone? Is a pelvic fracture worse? The hip is made up of the femur and the pelvis. When there is a fall onto the side all of those structures are at risk. There can be fractures of the femur through the top part of the bone. There can be fractures that separate the ball of the femur through the neck. There can be surrounding fractures around the pelvis on the front and even into the back of the pelvis. Many of these fractures are referred to as "hip fractures."



Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bone's mineral density and mass is decreased, thereby negatively impacting bones strength, thereby increasing the risk of bone fracture (broken bones).

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Race
- Women greater then.
- Age (age 50 and over)
- Men with low testosterone levels
- Smokers and heavy drinking (more than two drinks a day on most days)
- Weight (less than 125 pounds)
- Previous bariatric surgery
- Previous fragility fracture as a senior
- Kidney failure, inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, liver disease or an eating disorder
- Taking oral corticosteroids on a daily basis, or other high-risk medications (e.g., thyroid hormone replacement, immunosuppressant drugs, warfarin)

Osteopenia is a loss of bone mineral density (BMD) that weakens bones, normally this occurs first and if untreated can progress to Osteoporosis.

Signs and risk factors, including:

- Height loss
- Receding gums
- Curved, stooped forward shape of the spine
- Lower back pain
- Prior fragility fractures with mild impact can occur at the shoulder, elbow, wrist, spine and ankle.

My hip fracture motivated me to reduce my osteoporosis risk factors that I could control, including maintaining a proper weight, working on flexibility and range of motion exercise, performing resistance exercises, eating a healthy diet, and participating in daily weight bearing activities.

A fall is just not a fall, see your Orthopedic Surgeon or go to the ER. In my case Dr. Swift worked to get me to the operating room urgently. This prevented me from lying in a hospital bed in pain waiting to go to the Operating room. Early intervention got me out of bed and on to a speedy recovery. Early intervention was a key to my early recovery, and a hallmark of Dr. Swift's commitment to care.

*Feel free to contact Dr. Robert Swift or ask for him in the Emergency Department if you fall and have concern for a fracture.*

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# UNRAVELING THE TANGLED WEB OF ADDICTION WITH COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

By Gregory J. Finer LCSW, MCAP- Clinical Director Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services Group.

In the painful and challenging journey of addiction, whether it's alcoholism, drug abuse, or any other addictive behavior, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) stands out as a beacon of hope for personal transformation in addiction recovery.

**Crossroads Behavioral Health Center and Crossroads Substance Abuse Services located at 708 Goodlette Frank Rd. Naples FL 34102,** offers a unique treatment program and curriculum modeled strongly in the evidenced based therapies of CBT.

In the IOP program at Crossroads, the initial goal of our team is to have our clients see the real benefits of CBT. In CBT, thoughts refer to the beliefs, interpretations, and internal dialogue that individuals have about themselves, others, and the world around them. Thoughts are seen as powerful determinants of emotions and behaviors.

The good news is, and perhaps why CBT is so effective, is that thoughts are something that we can in fact change. Certainly, it is a lot easier than many of our immediate situations. Take for example the Serenity Prayer, a good example of CBT in its own right: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." This prayer encapsulates a powerful lesson in what is referred to in CBT as cognitive restructuring, helping individuals shift their focus from dwelling on uncontrollable circumstances to taking proactive steps to address what is within their control.

Individuals in therapy at Crossroads learn to accept that life is indeed challenging but not insurmountable. They begin to really adopt the stance that everyone faces difficulties and setbacks, and that struggles do not define worth as a person. Clients at Crossroads learn to become more aware and challenge their negative thought patterns as their CBT practice strengthens.

Remember however this is not easy. Falling back into old thought patterns can happen quite easily. CBT requires daily practice. You are changing in a big way. You are changing and challenging old perceptions of how you used to see things. You must challenge deep seated negative core beliefs. This shift is difficult but essential to recovery.

Clients at Crossroads begin to understand that the language they use to describe their experiences is often a form of conditioned negative bias characterized by limiting absolutes like "always" and "never," or "all or nothing". When they see that thoughts are the primary source of their emotional pain, they are motivated to change them.

The content of our thoughts is important. It reflects what is important to us. It is our "story". What we think about is after all our world. The problem happens when that world becomes a scary and unforgiving landscape of fear, avoidance, despair, loneliness, even hatred and self-loathing. This is not a pleasant place. Who would not want to escape and run, or drink and drug it all away?

The goal of CBT is to get you to understand that you are - to a very large degree- the landscape architect of your inner world, and that you have a greater choice than you have come to believe. You have the choice to plant flowers and water them with practical thinking or you can return to the distortions.

At Crossroads, our therapists would rather have you identify that you "slipped" into negative thought patterns without it being an actual slip back into drinking or drugging. This is a kind of fail-safe that happens with good CBT practice. Through a very clear awareness of what is happening, you don't feel the strong urge to act out. Rather you are only observing. You are not overwhelmed because you have seen these patterns before. The difficult emotions will subside while you do not allow the thoughts you are having to attach as strongly as they used to. There is a space between awareness and action. The larger this space the better.

We all want to see reality for what it is, but it is difficult. We often shade it with something it is not. So, what is the truth? Of course, it is difficult to define and different for all of us. But when shading reality, it is certainly better to do it being neutral or positive and certainly not negative.

For we cannot be deluded into believing, but many of us are, that life "should be more" and "should not be this way". In CBT practice, using the word "should" is highly discouraged- otherwise, as we therapists say, "you should yourself" and this only dirties your parents. (By the way humor is another form of CBT, when used delicately). Experiment for yourself. Stop using the word should in your internal dialogue and see if you feel any better.

CBT is not just a therapeutic technique; it's a roadmap for unraveling the tangled web of distorted thinking that leads individuals into addiction and other severe emotional problems. At the heart of CBT lies the goal of empowering individuals to rewrite their stories and reclaim agency over their lives. By challenging distorted thinking and replacing it with more balanced perspectives, individuals gain the clarity and resilience needed to navigate life's challenges and improve their behaviors and choices.

The motivation to finally stand up and challenge these faulty patterns is often met with strong roadblocks and resistance. We want to hold on to our familiar negative thought patterns. We have reinforced them for many years. They have left an indelible impression on us. But there is always a breaking point of too much pain, and this is where the motivation for change happens.

In the tumultuous journey of battling addiction and other mental/emotional struggles, know that you are not alone. If you or someone you care about is grappling with these challenges, please, reach out for help. At Crossroads we understand the depths of your pain and the heaviness of your burden. Our team stands ready to offer you the compassionate, insightful, and evidence-based care and support you need to reclaim your life. You deserve to feel whole again, to rediscover joy, and to embrace the best version of yourself. Let us walk this path with you, guiding you toward healing and hope. You are worth every step of this journey.



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# EXPLORING THE PROS AND CONS OF ARM LIFT (BRACHIOPLASTY) AND LIPOSUCTION

By Gunnar Bergqvist, MD

**B**rachioplasty is a surgical procedure that is performed on the upper arm to reduce excess, sagging skin; it aims to tighten and smooth the supportive tissue that defines the shape of the upper arm and can reduce pockets of fat deposits. Often during midlife, the upper arm is difficult to correct through diet and exercise. The options are liposuction with Renuvion, or a surgical brachioplasty. Each has pros and cons.

**Consultation:** During the consultation, I always explain what the patient should expect during this procedure, which is performed in a same day surgery center. I offer patients the surgical option which will give the best result; however, it will result in a scar. Scarring is impossible to avoid. Many patients refuse to go with this option because they do not want a scar.

A second choice, is the **liposuction**. This results in fat reduction of the site, however, loose skin may still show even after Renuvion skin tightening. This can happen more commonly in older patients and after extreme weight loss.



Surgical Brachioplasty



If a patient undergoes the liposuction option and they are over a certain age then loose 40 lbs., they will have loose skin, thus a brachioplasty is best. While liposuction can be done in the office setting, if you really want a good result, the brachioplasty surgery is a sure way to get smaller upper arms and tightened skin, but you will have a scar. Scars can be managed and reduced with lasers treatments from a V-beam pulsed dye laser and with micro needling.

Communication is key as well as having a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, by the American Board of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery perform the procedure.

You also want to be sure you are a candidate for a surgical procedure, and discuss the risks. The recovery period, as with any surgery takes time. You need to move less and care for the area. I usually show before and after photos of both procedures so the patient can evaluate. Many patients under 50 do very well with liposuction/renuvion option. With the liposuction, compression-wear after the procedure is required for a month.

In conclusion, the choice between brachioplasty and liposuction with Renuvion involves careful consideration of individual preferences, tolerance for scarring, and desired outcomes. Open communication with a qualified plastic surgeon, coupled with a realistic understanding of the procedure's implications, is crucial for a successful and satisfying outcome in arm contouring.

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# THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TYPE 2 DIABETES: TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

By Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC

Formerly referred to as "adult-onset diabetes mellitus," Type 2 Diabetes has long been associated with high blood sugar, insulin resistance, and a deficiency in insulin production. Traditionally, this condition primarily affected adults over the age of 45. However, with the alarming rise in childhood obesity in the United States, Type 2 diabetes has become increasingly prevalent across all age groups, although it remains most common among older adults.

## CAUSES OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

The primary causes of Type 2 diabetes are obesity and a lack of physical activity, with genetic factors also playing a role. Notably, this type of diabetes is largely preventable, and there are several strategies individuals can adopt to reduce their risk of a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

## PREVENTING TYPE 2 DIABETES

**1. Lose Excess Weight:** The American Diabetes Association recommends individuals with prediabetes to shed 7-10% of their body weight, significantly reducing the risk of developing diabetes. Greater weight loss yields even more substantial benefits.

**2. Get Moving:** Regular exercise aids in weight loss, lowers blood sugar levels, and enhances the body's insulin utilization. Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic activity daily.

**3. Eat Healthy:** Cultivating a lifelong habit of healthy eating involves choosing nutritious foods and managing portion sizes. A recommended dietary approach includes dedicating half the plate to fruits and vegetables, one-fourth to whole grains, and one-fourth to proteins like fish or lean meat.

## TREATING TYPE 2 DIABETES

For individuals already diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, effective treatment involves the management of blood sugar levels. Many patients can accomplish this by adhering to the prevention measures outlined above. Nevertheless, in cases where diet and exercise prove insufficient, medications may be necessary.



## DIABETES MEDICATIONS

There are over 100 different diabetes medications available today. One of the most commonly prescribed oral medications is Metformin, a time-tested treatment for Type 2 diabetes. If Metformin does not suffice, various other oral and injectable medications are at a physician's disposal. Recent advancements have introduced weekly injectable medications that assist in weight loss and hemoglobin A1C reduction.

## INJECTABLE MEDICATIONS: GLP-1 RECEPTOR AGONISTS

Among these innovations are GLP-1 receptor agonists, non-insulin medications prescribed in combination with exercise and other diabetes medications. These medications not only lower blood sugar levels and hemoglobin A1C but also aid in weight loss. Furthermore, they offer additional health benefits by improving blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and beta-cell functions.

**Common medications in the GLP-1 agonists class include:**

- Dulaglutide (Trulicity) (weekly)
- Exenatide extended release (Bydureon bcise) (weekly)
- Exenatide (Byetta) (twice daily)
- Semaglutide (Ozempic) (weekly)
- Liraglutide (Victoza, Saxenda) (daily)
- Lixisenatide (Adlyxin) (daily)
- Semaglutide (Rybelsus) (taken orally once daily)

## RESULTS

Studies conducted by the Mayo Clinic have demonstrated the efficacy of these GLP-1 drugs. Weight loss can vary depending on the specific drug used and the dosage. On average, individuals using liraglutide lost approximately 10.5 to 15.8 pounds, while those taking semaglutide, alongside lifestyle changes, achieved a remarkable 33.7-pound weight loss, compared to a mere 5.7 pounds in the control group.

Type 2 diabetes is a condition closely associated with obesity and a lack of exercise. While these newly developed medications offer promising results in managing the disease, it is essential to emphasize that they are most effective when integrated into a holistic approach that includes a healthy diet and regular exercise. As we navigate the changing landscape of Type 2 diabetes, a multi-faceted strategy remains the most effective means of prevention and treatment.

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



**Lisa Gonzalez, APRN-BC**

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

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

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# MARCHING TOWARDS HEALTH:

## National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

**M**arch is not just a month of changing seasons; it's also a time to focus on health and awareness. National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, observed annually in March, serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of early detection, prevention, and education surrounding colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer, which includes cancers of the colon and rectum, is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. Despite its prevalence, colorectal cancer is often preventable and highly treatable when detected early. National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month aims to shed light on this issue and encourage individuals to prioritize their health through screenings and lifestyle choices.

The significance of this awareness month lies in its potential to save lives. Colorectal cancer often develops from precancerous polyps, which can be identified and removed during screenings before they turn cancerous. Regular screenings, such as colonoscopies, are instrumental in catching colorectal cancer in its early stages, making successful treatment more likely. By spreading awareness about the importance of screenings, this month plays a crucial role in preventing the development and progression of colorectal cancer.

One of the key messages of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is the encouragement of early detection through timely screenings. The American Cancer Society recommends that individuals at average risk start regular screenings at age 45. However, those with a family history or other risk factors may need to begin screenings earlier. Creating awareness about the age recommendations and risk factors is essential to ensure that people take the necessary steps for their health.

Beyond screenings, lifestyle factors also play a significant role in colorectal cancer prevention. Healthy habits, such as maintaining a balanced diet rich in fiber, exercising regularly, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption, contribute to overall well-being and reduce the risk of



developing colorectal cancer. National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month serves as a platform to educate the public about these preventive measures, empowering individuals to make informed choices for a healthier lifestyle.

One aspect often emphasized during this awareness month is dispelling myths and reducing the stigma associated with colorectal cancer. Open conversations about symptoms, screenings, and the importance of early detection help break down barriers that may prevent individuals from seeking timely medical advice. By fostering a culture of openness and awareness, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month strives to make discussions about colorectal health more commonplace and less intimidating.

Supporting organizations and healthcare providers play a crucial role in promoting colorectal cancer awareness. They often use this month as an opportunity to offer educational resources, host events, and collaborate with communities to provide information about screenings and prevention. By

working together, these entities amplify the impact of the awareness month and contribute to a broader dissemination of crucial information.

In conclusion, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a pivotal time for individuals, healthcare professionals, and organizations to come together in the fight against colorectal cancer. By promoting early detection through screenings, encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, and fostering open conversations, this month contributes to the ongoing effort to reduce the impact of colorectal cancer on individuals and communities. Taking steps towards a healthier future starts with awareness, and March serves as a beacon, guiding us towards better colorectal health and well-being.



**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.



**239-315-7801**

**[www.well-beingmedicalcenter.org](http://www.well-beingmedicalcenter.org)**

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# NAD<sup>+</sup> AND ITS MULTIFACETED ROLE IN CELL DETOXIFICATION, DNA REPAIR, ENERGY, AND METABOLISM

**N**AD<sup>+</sup>, or nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide, is a critical molecule found in every living cell. This coenzyme plays a pivotal role in various cellular processes, acting as a key mediator in maintaining cellular health. Its importance extends to functions such as DNA repair, energy production, and metabolic regulation, making it a crucial component for overall well-being.

## Cell Detoxification

One of the primary functions of NAD<sup>+</sup> is to serve as a co-substrate for enzymes involved in cellular detoxification processes. NAD<sup>+</sup> participates in redox reactions, facilitating the removal of harmful substances and reactive oxygen species (ROS) from cells. This detoxification role is essential for protecting cells from oxidative stress and damage, thereby contributing to the overall maintenance of cellular integrity.

## DNA Repair

NAD<sup>+</sup> is closely linked to DNA repair mechanisms within cells. The DNA repair process is crucial for preventing mutations and maintaining genomic stability. Poly(ADP-ribose) polymerases (PARPs), a family of enzymes that utilize NAD<sup>+</sup>, play a key role in detecting and repairing damaged DNA. By activating PARPs, NAD<sup>+</sup> supports the cell's ability to respond to DNA damage, ensuring genomic fidelity and preventing the accumulation of mutations that could lead to various health issues, including cancer.

## Energy Production

In cellular respiration, NAD<sup>+</sup> acts as a coenzyme in the transfer of electrons during the breakdown of glucose to produce energy. The process involves glycolysis, the citric acid cycle, and the electron transport chain. NAD<sup>+</sup> is reduced to NADH during these reactions, carrying high-energy electrons that ultimately contribute to the production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the cell's primary energy currency. This vital role in energy production highlights NAD<sup>+</sup>'s significance in sustaining cellular activities and maintaining overall vitality.



## Metabolic Regulation

NAD<sup>+</sup> plays a crucial role in metabolic pathways that govern nutrient utilization and energy balance. Sirtuins, a class of NAD<sup>+</sup>-dependent enzymes, regulate various metabolic processes, including glucose homeostasis, lipid metabolism, and insulin sensitivity. By modulating these pathways, NAD<sup>+</sup> influences how cells use and store energy, contributing to the regulation of body weight and metabolic health. This connection between NAD<sup>+</sup> and metabolic processes underscores its potential as a target for interventions in conditions related to metabolic dysfunction.

## NAD<sup>+</sup> Deficiency and Aging

As individuals age, NAD<sup>+</sup> levels tend to decline, leading to potential disruptions in cellular functions. This decline is associated with age-related conditions, including impaired DNA repair, decreased energy production, and altered metabolic regulation. Researchers are exploring the use of NAD<sup>+</sup> precursors, such as nicotinamide riboside (NR) and nicotinamide mononucleotide (NMN), as potential interventions to boost NAD<sup>+</sup> levels and mitigate age-related cellular dysfunction.

In summary, NAD<sup>+</sup> stands as a fundamental molecule with far-reaching implications for cellular health. Its involvement in cell detoxification, DNA repair, energy production, and metabolic regulation underscores its significance in maintaining the delicate balance required for optimal cellular function. As research continues to unravel the intricate mechanisms governed by NAD<sup>+</sup>, there is growing potential for leveraging its properties in therapeutic interventions to address various health challenges, particularly those associated with aging and cellular dysfunction. Understanding and harnessing the power of NAD<sup>+</sup> may pave the way for innovative approaches in promoting longevity and enhancing overall well-being.

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# TAURINE AND ITS POTENTIAL BENEFITS IN THE TREATMENT OF LONG COVID

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

**W**ith how long COVID-19 has been a part of our lives, you may be surprised to learn that your symptoms might not end with the initial infection. Some people are reporting lingering or new-onset symptoms that last weeks or even months after they had COVID-19, and the cause behind them remains unknown.

This phenomenon, termed long COVID, can differ from person to person and does not always occur. However, for those unfortunate enough to develop it, the relentless symptoms can severely decrease their quality of life, creating a need for long COVID treatment.

## Possible Causes of Long COVID

Long COVID, also known as long-haul COVID or post-COVID conditions, can have the following symptoms:

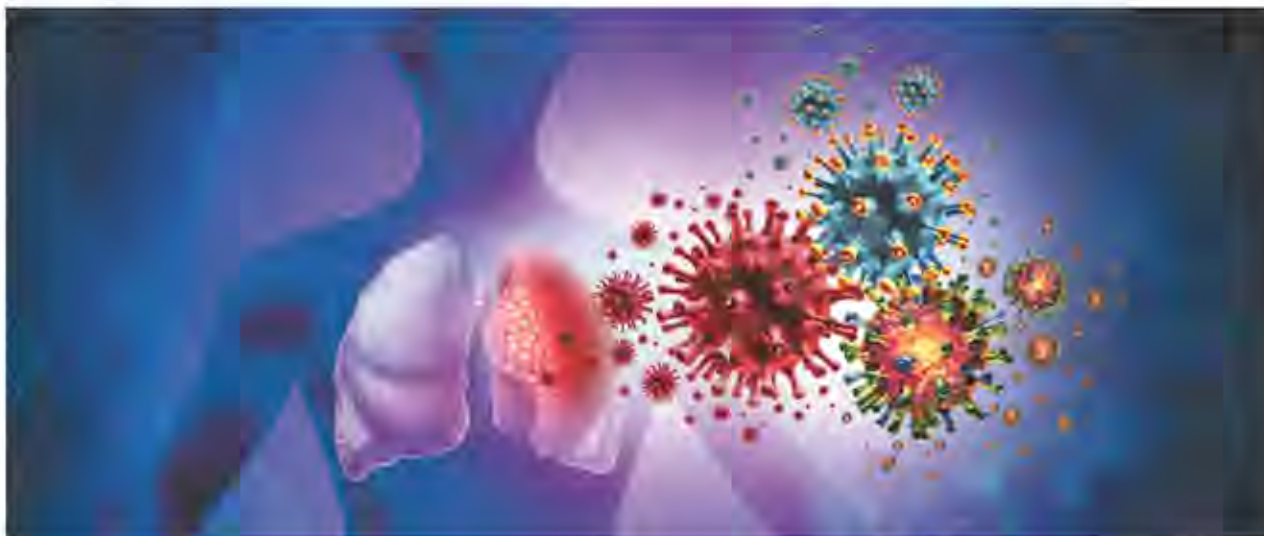
- fatigue
- brain fog
- insomnia
- changes in taste and smell
- anxiety
- depression
- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- dizziness

While many of these symptoms may seem minor, they can be a significant burden on your quality of life when they persist day after day. This is why treatment for long COVID is a new area of research. However, before getting into the potential treatments, it is first helpful to discuss the possible causes of long COVID, which are currently theories within the scientific community.

The first hypothesis is that long COVID results from lingering viral remnants, such as viral protein or RNA. These pieces of the virus can remain in the tissues and cause chronic inflammation.

Another theory is that long COVID results from an autoimmune reaction, which can occur with acute respiratory infections.

Finally, scientists speculate that long COVID symptoms can result from dysregulation in the gut microbiome, which can occur during infection.



With there being three possible causes, it can be hard to determine who may develop long COVID and who won't. However, predictive tests are in development.

## The Power of Taurine

Taurine is an amino acid the human liver produces, and it is also found in meat and fish. It plays a vital role in regulating various physiological functions, including the immune system.

Researchers from the University of Alberta have found that long COVID patients with lower levels of taurine had more symptoms, were hospitalized more often, and were at a higher risk for mortality. However, the purpose of their study was not to analyze taurine's role in long COVID, but to create a predictive model.

Of the 117 patients enrolled in the study, the researchers analyzed blood samples for each, looking for changes in various proteins, metabolites, and markers of inflammation. Utilizing the results obtained on 20 molecules, they then created a predictive model that had an 83% accuracy rate when predicting adverse clinical outcomes after discharge from acute infection.

While 20 molecules were used in the predictive model, the researchers did find that the difference in taurine levels among the patients was the most prominent. Beyond the poorer clinical outcomes seen in those with low taurine levels, those with high taurine levels had much fewer ongoing symptoms.

The results of this trial suggest that there may be promise in taurine supplementation when it comes to treating long COVID. However, further study is

needed to gauge the impact of taurine supplementation.

What is exciting about this discovery is that the treatment for long COVID may not require fancy drugs but instead simple supplementation to return balance in the body. This also matches up with the hormonal imbalances that can occur due to COVID-19, potentially evolving into long COVID. In these cases, restoring balance through hormone replacement therapy can also help to relieve symptoms.

## Other Benefits of Taurine Supplementation

Taurine supplementation may offer the potential to help with more than just long COVID.

### Taurine helps with the following:

- forming bile salts, which help with digestion
- maintaining hydration and electrolyte balance in the cells
- supporting the central nervous system and eyes
- regulating immune system health and the function of antioxidants
- regulating minerals in the cells

Taurine deficiency on its own is rare because of the body's ability to produce it. Still, when you're ill or under stress, it is possible that your body needs more taurine, which is why supplementation may help.

Research has shown that taurine supplementation can help regulate blood pressure in those with heart conditions, enhance insulin sensitivity, and increase the amount of oxygen taken in by the body.



These findings show great promise in taurine supplementation, and as research into it continues, it may soon be a viable treatment for those with long COVID.

**Hormonal Imbalance, Another Need for Supplementation**

Women, in particular, are more susceptible to long COVID, and researchers speculate that this is because of their hormones or, more specifically, the way that the COVID-19 virus can potentially infiltrate the ovaries and lower estrogen production.

Unfortunately, this side effect will persist unless an effort is made to correct the amount of estrogen in the body, such as through hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Similar to taurine supplementation, HRT helps to bring estrogen back to normal levels. This not only relieves the resulting symptoms (which are often indicative of long COVID) but also allows the ovaries to heal so that they can resume normal estrogen production.

**Recovering From Long COVID**

With how persistent long COVID can be, it's essential to think of your recovery as a shift in your lifestyle. There is no overnight fix, which can be frustrating to many. However, if you keep in mind that your recovery will take time, it can be easier to push through it and, eventually, feel better.

You can make the following holistic lifestyle changes to ease your long COVID recovery and help your body return to balance.

**Promote Gut Health**

Within your gut are trillions of bacteria, most of them having crucial roles in your digestion and immune health. However, when we get sick, the balance of bacteria in our gut can shift, lowering the amount of helpful bacteria and allowing the number of harmful bacteria to increase. The result can be digestive troubles, such as diarrhea or bloating, alongside difficulty recovering from illness.

One of the theories around long COVID is that it results from dysregulation in the gut, so those looking to recover from long COVID should focus on improving and promoting their gut health. Nothing fancy is needed to do this, either; simply focus on consuming more plant-based foods such as fruits, veggies, nuts, and seeds, and prioritize getting a variety of different foods. The more variety, the more types of vitamins and nutrients you get, and thus, the healthier your body.

Alongside a balanced diet, it's also best to focus on consuming probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt or fermented foods like kefir or sauerkraut. Probiotic supplements are also available if you do not get enough probiotics from your diet.

By prioritizing the food you put into your body, you can help return balance to your gut, healing your body from the inside out.

**Relax**

One of the most common symptoms of long-COVID is fatigue. Even more frustrating is that this fatigue is often accompanied by sleep problems, meaning not only are you tired, but even when you try to sleep, you can't.

Relaxation techniques can help you to minimize your fatigue and finally get some much-needed sleep. Not only will sleep help minimize your daytime fatigue, but quality sleep also gives your body time to heal and repair itself, which can help fight any lingering infection or heal the damage sustained by your cells while sick with COVID-19.

**Go Easy on Yourself**

When you have long COVID, it's most important to remember that it's not something that will quickly get better. It's a process, but each healthy habit you implement can help you to feel better.

With long COVID, it's common for people to try to push through the symptoms and return to normal activity levels before their body is physically ready. No one wants to feel as though they are out of commission for too long, but pushing your body can cause more harm and increase the length of time that you are ill.

Instead, remember that you're healing, and your body doesn't need to be worked as strenuously. This can mean opting for low-impact workouts instead of something demanding; you can still move your body, but in a gentler way. This might also mean going to bed earlier each night to help you get more sleep.

Recovering from long COVID is a journey, so take note of what activities help you feel better and try adding more of them to your day.

**Long COVID and Future Treatments**

Long COVID is a health condition that follows COVID-19 infection in some individuals. It is characterized by continued or new onset symptoms that last weeks or months after infection. It does not affect everyone, and those who develop long COVID often experience different types of symptoms.

New research into predictive markers of long COVID revealed that taurine levels are dramatically different between those experiencing long COVID symptoms and those without. Specifically, those with low levels of taurine were more likely to experience severe symptoms, be hospitalized, and have a higher rate of mortality.

After seeing this potential connection between low taurine levels and long COVID, a logical conclusion would be that supplementing taurine can help treat long COVID. While this is not a verifiable treatment at this time, researchers are looking into its promise.

If you are suffering from long COVID, it's only natural to wonder what you can do to help ease your symptoms. Various lifestyle habits can help, such as eating a balanced diet, relaxing, and getting enough sleep and physical exercise. However, other interventions can also work, especially if you are experiencing a deficiency.

If your long COVID symptoms are not getting better, reach out to your doctor to schedule an appointment and go over what options you have to treat this condition and restore balance to your body.

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# APRIL: "PARKINSON'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH"

By Ramon A. Gil, M.D., Medical Director, Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL

**D**r. James Parkinson was born on April 11, 1765, in London, England. He was a highly educated man, who not only became a surgeon, but he was also a geologist, apothecary, paleontologist and a political activist. He was the author of "An Essay on the Shaking Palsy", published in 1817, describing the disease that many years ago received his name: "Parkinson's Disease". Honoring his birthday, we celebrate April as "Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month".

Back in the early 1990's, Dupont, makers of Sinemet and Sinemet CR, gave some of us a copy of its famous essay with a note that reads: "For those who search for ways to make life better for people living with Parkinson's Disease. A gift of appreciation". Those words continue to be a simple source of inspiration for many of us. Today, more than ever, we see the fruits of so many years of research leading to remarkable progress in this field, helping to enhance the quality of life of our PD patients and easing the load of the care partners.

Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL, in association with the Charlotte County Medical Society proudly presents our 2024 Spring Symposium. It will be held on Friday, April 5th. Admission is FREE, but registration is strongly recommended, as seating is limited. Those attending the program will enjoy four interesting and educational presentations. I will open the program with a lecture to help you with the challenges of being hospitalized. Tips to help you how to survive your hospitalization will be shared with you and your care partners.

Sleep disturbances are part of PD. Sleep Apnea and REM Sleep Disorders (RBD) will be presented by Dr. Ernesto Eusebio, Sleep Medicine specialist from Lee Health. Untreated, Sleep Apnea will cause excessive daytime somnolence and tiredness, tends to worsen depression and most important it will accelerate cognitive decline leading to dementia. RBD (acting your dreams) is associated with injuries sometimes not just to you, but to your bedpartner.



We are delighted to have Dr. Jean Hubble with us. At this point she is a medical consultant, and she is a former medical director of the Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence & Movement Disorders Clinic at the Ohio State University Medical Center. She has a vast experience in the pharmaceutical industry, since upon retirement from medical practice, she worked in the medical divisions of several companies, participating in the development of new drugs in the field of Neurology, particularly in movement disorders. She will review for us the history of treating PD, highlighting the great progress achieved over the past 5 decades.

Finally, Dr. Adolfo Ramirez Zamora, Associate Professor of Neurology, Program Director and Division Chief of Movement Disorders at the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases at the University of Florida in Gainesville will present the surgical treatment of PD, illustrating who, why and when patients should consider surgery (deep brain stimulation) as part of the treatment of PD.

Let's celebrate the special birthday, let's all learn together. Let's quote Dr. Rana in our final line: "Those who fight Parkinson's with knowledge always find solutions."

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April: Parkinson's Awareness Month

Friday, April 5, 2024

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**Ramon A. Gil, M.D.**

Diplomate, American Academy of Psychiatry and Neurology  
Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine  
Medical Director, Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL

### AGENDA

9:00 am to 9:45 am...Registration and Refreshments

9:45 am to 10:00 am...Opening Remarks

10:00 am to 11:00 am...Hospitalizations and PD  
Ramon Gil, M.D., Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of SWFL

11:00 am to 12 noon...Sleep Apnea and REM Sleep Behavior Disorder in PD,  
Ernesto Eusebio Morales, M.D., Sleep Medicine Dept., Lee Health

12 noon to 12:45 pm...Lunch Break

12:45 pm to 1:45 pm...The History of Treating PD  
Jean Hubble, M.D., former Medical Director of the Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence & Movement Disorders Clinic, Ohio State University Medical Center

1:45 pm to 2:45 pm...Deep Brain Stimulation: Who, Why and When?  
Adolfo Ramirez Zamora, M.D., Movement Disorders Program, UF, Gainesville

2:45 pm to 3:00 pm...Raffle and Closing Remarks



**For more info or to register contact Jennifer at Dr. Gil's Office:**

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# DOES MEDICAL MARIJUANA HELP REDUCE CHRONIC PAIN?

**A**ccording to the CDC, over 50 million adults live with chronic pain in the United States.

Chronic pain is a high-impact condition that decreases the quality of life and increases the prevalence of psychiatric issues, such as depression and anxiety. However, medical marijuana has been extensively researched by scientists worldwide to answer the question: *does medical marijuana help reduce chronic pain?*

Below, we'll discuss everything you need to know about medical marijuana and how it works with your mind and body to assist with various forms of chronic pain.

## What is Chronic Pain and How Does Medical Marijuana Help?

Chronic pain is defined as pain that persists for more than 12 weeks and can be caused by various conditions such as arthritis, fibromyalgia, and nerve damage.

Medical marijuana, also known as medical cannabis, is a treatment option that has been gaining attention in recent years for its ability to relieve chronic pain.

One of the main active compounds in medical marijuana is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is responsible for its pain-relieving properties. THC binds to receptors in the brain and spinal cord, known as CB1 receptors, which are involved in pain perception. When THC binds to these receptors, it can reduce the sensitivity to pain and increase the release of natural pain-relieving chemicals in the body.

Another active compound in medical marijuana is cannabidiol (CBD), which has also been found to be effective in reducing chronic pain. Unlike THC, CBD does not bind to CB1 receptors; instead, it interacts with other receptors in the body, such as the vanilloid receptor (TRPV1), which is involved in the perception of pain.

## Studies Reveal How Medical Marijuana Reduces Chronic Pain

A review of studies published in the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* in 2018 found that medical marijuana can effectively reduce chronic pain caused by conditions such as neuropathy, fibromyalgia, and rheumatoid arthritis.



The review included 29 studies involving more than 2,500 patients and found that, on average, medical marijuana reduced chronic pain by 30%.

Another study published in the *European Journal of Pain* in 2017 found that medical marijuana can effectively reduce chronic pain caused by nerve damage. The study included 57 patients and found that those who received medical marijuana significantly reduced pain compared to those who received a placebo.

Lastly, a study published in the *Journal of Pain* in 2016 found that medical marijuana can effectively reduce chronic pain caused by conditions such as multiple sclerosis. The study included 48 patients and found that those who received medical marijuana significantly reduced pain compared to those who received a placebo.

Overall, these three medical studies are only a drop in the bucket regarding medical marijuana research.

## What are the Best Medical Marijuana Strains for Chronic Pain?

If you live in a state that allows medical marijuana — you'll notice everything is sold under a medical banner.

However, not all cannabis strains are created equal. With this in mind, you'll want to search for specific marijuana strains geared toward chronic pain relief. To the surprise of many, it's not the highest THC content you should seek — it's the terpene content.

Below, we'll dive into the basics of terpenes and how they can assist you in finding the best medical marijuana strain for chronic pain.

## How to Use Terpenes to Find the Best Medical Marijuana Strains for Chronic Pain

Terpenes are a class of organic compounds found in many plants, including cannabis.

Although terpenes are responsible for the unique aroma and flavor of different cannabis strains — they have a hidden characteristic that's catapulted them in importance among medical marijuana patients.

Some studies have shown that certain terpenes, such as caryophyllene and linalool, have anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties. These terpenes interact with the body's endocannabinoid system, which helps regulate pain, inflammation, and other physiological processes.

## Should You Consume Medical Marijuana for Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is a life-altering condition that forces individuals to choose — to take prescription medication or try medical marijuana.

The downsides of prescription painkillers are:

- Increased risk of dependency/addiction
- Overdose
- Sedation
- Nausea
- Depression

Alternatively, medical marijuana is not linked to dependency or overdose risk. Furthermore, medical marijuana sold in Florida is natural and lab-tested, making it a much less risky option for reducing chronic pain.

Ultimately, it's your decision to consume medical marijuana for chronic pain. From consulting your primary physician in Florida to contacting a medical marijuana doctor, you'll gain everything you need to make an informed decision.

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# Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

## The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

## PKD Treatment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# ARTHRITIS AFFECTS THE MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

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

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

### What is arthritis?

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

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

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

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

So, how do you treat your arthritis?

### Medication alone isn't the best anymore

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

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

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

### But, which treatment comes first?

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

### Acu-Healing starts with Acupuncture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Finally, cold laser therapy

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

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

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

Particularly when your body is trying to do the opposite!

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

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

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

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

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLORIDA PRODUCT LIABILITY LAWS

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

**A**ccidents involving dangerous and defective products are extremely common. While product designers and manufacturers have a legal duty to ensure that the products they sell are safe for use as intended, it is clear that far too many companies prioritize their profits over their customers' safety. Dangerous and defective products are responsible for countless serious injuries every year, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that these products result in tens of thousands of deaths annually.

This is where Florida's product liability laws come into play.

These laws allow victims and their families to hold product designers, manufacturers, and other companies accountable when they sell dangerous and defective products. Under Florida's product liability laws, victims and their families can file lawsuits in court—and they can do so on various grounds. Crucially, while proof of negligence is required for most types of personal injury and wrongful death claims, this isn't the case for claims based on product defects.

## Florida's Product Liability Laws: An Overview

So, how do Florida's product liability laws protect you? To understand your legal rights, we can look at the definition of a "product liability action" under Section 768.81(1)(d) of the Florida Statutes:

"Products liability action means a civil action based upon a theory of strict liability, negligence, breach of warranty, nuisance, or similar theories for damages caused by the manufacture, construction, design, formulation, installation, preparation, or assembly of a product."

If we break this down, we can see that there are four main types of product liability claims in Florida:

**Strict Liability** – In cases involving product defects, designers, and manufacturers (and potentially other companies) can be held liable without proof of negligence.

**Negligence** – When a product is dangerous but not necessarily "defective," victims and their families can file claims based on negligence.



**Breach of Warranty** – Regardless of whether a product is defective, if a warranty applies, a breach of that warranty may provide grounds to seek just compensation.

**Nuisance** – In some cases, victims of harmful products can file claims based on the doctrine of public nuisance.

Each type of claim is an option in different circumstances and determining which claim (or claims) you should file requires a detailed understanding of the facts surrounding your (or your loved one's) product-related accident. While this is important to understand, the key takeaway is that there are multiple ways an experienced product liability lawyer may be able to seek just compensation on your behalf.

## The Statutes of Limitations for Product Liability Claims in Florida

How long do you have to file a product liability claim in Florida? The short answer is, "It depends." The statutes of limitations for the different types of claims discussed above vary. In any case, it is important to take action promptly; and, if you think that you may have a claim, we encourage you to contact us as soon as possible.

## Request a Free Consultation at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A.

Do you need to know more about your legal rights after a product-related accident in Florida? If so, we invite you to get in touch. To request a free consultation with a lawyer at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A., please call 239-649-6555 or get in touch online today.



### About the Author

F. Scott ("Scott") Pauzar, III is a litigation and personal injury law attorney in Woodward, Pires & Lombardo's Naples office. He has a broad base of

legal knowledge and skills cultivated through over 19 years of experience as a litigator in complex litigation in both state and federal courts. Previously, Scott was an Assistant State Attorney at the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office in Fort Myers. During his five years as a Prosecutor, Scott conducted over 30 jury trials. After leaving the Office of the State Attorney, Scott served as an insurance defense attorney for 11 years, where his practice focused on litigation of complex cases and catastrophic injuries. Scott now combines his jury trial and defense experience to successfully represent his clients in litigation and personal injury law matters.

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



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# Health Insurance – Important Dates!

By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dae) 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](mailto:info@logicalinsurance.com) to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is [www.Medicare.gov](http://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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As time passes, our hair naturally undergoes changes. Factors like genetics, hormonal shifts, and lifestyle can contribute to thinning hair or a loss in volume. However, embracing extensions made from high-quality virgin or Remy hair presents a game-changing solution.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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# DIABETES AND NEUROLOGY: The Unseen Impact on Brain Health

**W**hen we hear the word "diabetes," our thoughts often drift toward blood sugar management, dietary changes, and diligent monitoring of what we consume. However, what might come as a surprise to many is that diabetes has a profound impact on our brain health. It's a connection that is often underestimated and under-treated, yet it plays a significant role in our overall well-being.

## Diabetes and Brain Health: A Complex Relationship

Diabetes, both type 1 and type 2, is a complex condition that affects multiple systems in the body. One of the lesser-known aspects of this condition is its intricate relationship with neurological health. Here are some essential points to consider:

**1. Increased Risk of Stroke:** For those with diabetes, the risk of stroke is not just elevated; it is doubled. This alarming statistic underscores the importance of managing diabetes effectively to reduce the risk of this life-altering event.

**2. Greater Risk of Dementia:** Another startling connection between diabetes and neurology is the increased risk of dementia. Research has shown that individuals with diabetes are more likely to develop cognitive impairments and neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

### Taking Control of Your Brain Health

While the connection between diabetes and neurology may seem daunting, there are several proactive steps you can take to protect your brain health.

**1. Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is vital in diabetes management. It can significantly reduce the risk of complications, including those affecting your brain.

**2. Follow a Healthy Eating Plan:** Adhering to a balanced, diabetes-friendly diet can help stabilize blood sugar levels and positively impact brain health. Minimize the consumption of white flour, white sugar, and hydrogenated fats in your diet.



**3. Engage in Regular Exercise:** Physical activity is a key component of diabetes management. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise five times a week, incorporating a mix of aerobic, strength, flexibility, and balance exercises.

**4. Monitor Your Blood Sugar:** Consistently monitoring and managing your blood sugar within recommended levels can have a direct impact on your brain health and reduce the risk of neurological complications.

**5. Take Medication as Prescribed:** If your healthcare provider has prescribed medication to manage your diabetes, ensure you take it as directed. Consistency in medication is crucial for maintaining optimal blood sugar control.

### Nurturing Your Brain: Beyond Diabetes Management

Beyond these fundamental diabetes management strategies, you can take additional steps to protect and enhance your brain health:

- Include protein in every meal to support brain function.
- Control portion sizes to manage caloric intake effectively.
- Embrace a well-rounded exercise routine that combines various forms of physical activity.
- Challenge your brain with cognitive exercises like puzzles, games, or learning new skills, such as playing a musical instrument.

### Lasene Neural Therapeutics: A Beacon of Hope

In the quest to safeguard your brain health while managing diabetes, it's essential to have a reliable ally. Lasene Neural Therapeutics understands the complexities of neurological deficits and offers solutions designed to improve your quality of life. Their commitment to enhancing neurological well-being can provide much-needed support and guidance on your journey.

In conclusion, diabetes is not just about blood sugar – it extends its influence into the realm of neurology. The risks of stroke and dementia are significant concerns for those with diabetes. However, by proactively managing your diabetes, following a healthy lifestyle, and seeking the right support, you can protect and enhance your brain health. Remember, your brain deserves as much attention as your blood sugar levels in your pursuit of a healthier, happier life.

### About Us

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

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\* 4yr warranted medical device, 10,000 rated hrs. Lasene is a resorbable Qrs. care company and does not imply, nor promise to cure, or remedy any complaint, condition or disease. All references and claims are based upon citations obtained through 1. NIH/Library of Medicine, 2. Lasene data studies and 3. Authoritative clinical cases. Lasene data studies support evidence of QoL gains for multiple neural deficits associated with numerous conditions to include Parkinson's, neurop. TBI recovery, cognitive/visual/spatial performance, movement dysfunction, balance, peak physical performance, and a limited list of specific physical problems arising from reported deficits in functional neurology. Copyright 2023 Lasene, LLC



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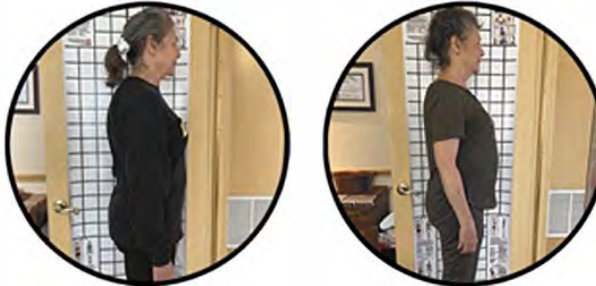
# Elevate Your Beach Life: The Transformative Power of Deborah Korpi's Ballet-inspired Posture Therapy

By Deborah Korpi, BGS, LMT, MMP

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

## The Perils of Poor Posture at the Beach:

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



BEFORE

AFTER

## The Benefits of Improved Posture:

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

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

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

## The Benefits of Deborah's Approach:

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

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

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

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

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# An In-Depth Exploration of Common Cervical Spine Issues: Cervical Stenosis, Radiculopathy, and Myelopathy

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

**T**he cervical spine, comprising seven vertebrae in the neck region, serves as a crucial support structure for the head and facilitates intricate movements. Despite its paramount importance, various factors such as age, injuries, or degenerative changes can give rise to cervical spine issues. This article aims to delve extensively into three prevalent conditions affecting the cervical spine: cervical stenosis, cervical radiculopathy, and cervical myelopathy.

## Cervical Stenosis

Cervical stenosis, characterized by the narrowing of the spinal canal in the neck region, arises from diverse causes, including age-related changes, herniated discs, or the presence of bone spurs. The narrowing of the spinal canal can exert pressure on the spinal cord and nerve roots, resulting in symptoms such as neck pain, stiffness, and numbness or weakness in the arms and hands.

Age-related changes play a significant role in cervical stenosis, marked by the formation of bone spurs and the thickening of ligaments. These alterations gradually reduce the space available for the spinal cord and nerves, leading to compression and associated symptoms. Individuals may also experience a decrease in the range of motion.

Treatment for cervical stenosis encompasses a spectrum of options. Conservative measures include physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications, targeted epidural steroid injections, and lifestyle modifications to alleviate symptoms. However, in cases where patients experience significant symptoms despite these measures, surgical interventions become a viable option. Procedures like decompression surgery or spinal fusion aim to alleviate pressure on the spinal cord and nerves while providing stability to the spine. Notably, studies suggest that surgery need not be prophylactic in patients with stenosis on imaging, but no or mild symptoms.

## Cervical Radiculopathy

Cervical radiculopathy results from the compression or irritation of nerve roots in the cervical spine, often caused by herniated discs, bone spurs, or degenerative changes. The primary symptom is pain radiating from the neck into the shoulder, arm, and sometimes the hand, accompanied by numbness, tingling, and weakness in the affected arm.

Herniated discs, characterized by the protrusion of the soft inner material through the tougher outer layer, can compress nearby nerve roots, causing radiculopathy. Similarly, bone spurs or degenerative changes can impinge on nerve roots, leading to a spectrum of symptoms that significantly impact an individual's daily life.

Non-surgical treatments for cervical radiculopathy offer a range of options. Rest, physical therapy, and targeted epidural steroid injections aim to reduce inflammation and alleviate symptoms. Additionally, medications such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and pain relievers may be prescribed. However, when conservative measures fail to provide relief, surgical options become a consideration to relieve pressure on the affected nerve roots and restore functionality.

## Cervical Myelopathy

Cervical myelopathy involves the compression of the spinal cord in the neck region, often due to degenerative changes, herniated discs, or spinal cord injuries. Symptoms vary but commonly include difficulty walking, coordination problems, hand clumsiness, and weakness.

Degenerative changes, such as ligament thickening or the development of bone spurs, contribute to spinal canal narrowing and spinal cord compression in cervical myelopathy. Herniated discs may also play a significant role if displaced disc material compresses the spinal cord, leading to a cascade of neurological symptoms.

Treatment for cervical myelopathy necessitates a comprehensive approach. Conservative measures, including physical therapy and medications, aim to manage symptoms and improve functional capacity. In cases where conservative approaches prove insufficient, surgical interventions become pivotal. Procedures such as spinal decompression or fusion surgery may be recommended to alleviate pressure on the spinal cord and address the underlying causes. The decision for surgery is carefully considered based on the severity of symptoms, overall health, and individual patient factors.

## Conclusion

A comprehensive understanding of common cervical spine issues, including cervical stenosis, cervical radiculopathy, and cervical myelopathy, is crucial for early

detection and effective management. Individuals experiencing persistent neck pain, radiating symptoms, or neurological deficits should seek consultation with a neurosurgeon to determine the underlying cause and explore appropriate treatment options. Whether through conservative measures or surgical interventions, addressing cervical spine issues promptly can significantly improve outcomes and enhance overall quality of life. In this rapidly evolving field, personalized treatment plans continue to emerge, ensuring that individuals receive the most effective and tailored care for their specific cervical spine conditions. To learn more or to schedule an appointment for you or your loved, call 239-422-2739.

## About Amanda Sacino, MD, PhD

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

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

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

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



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# 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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# Navigating Nutritional Wellness:

## A Guide for Individuals with Chronic Kidney Disease During National Nutrition Month

**N**ational Nutrition Month serves as a timely reminder for everyone to focus on their dietary choices and overall health. For individuals grappling with chronic kidney disease (CKD), this observance holds even greater significance. CKD necessitates a nuanced approach to nutrition, and understanding how to make informed dietary decisions is crucial for managing the condition effectively.

One of the primary considerations for those with CKD is controlling the intake of certain nutrients, especially phosphorus and potassium. High levels of these minerals can pose challenges for kidney function. National Nutrition Month provides an opportune moment to explore low-phosphorus and low-potassium food options, aiding individuals in crafting a kidney-friendly diet that promotes overall well-being.

Protein consumption is another critical aspect for those with CKD. Balancing protein intake is essential, as too little can lead to malnutrition, while excessive protein can strain the kidneys. National Nutrition Month offers a chance to spotlight lean protein sources such as fish, poultry, and plant-based proteins, empowering individuals with CKD to make informed choices that align with their health goals.

Hydration is paramount for kidney health. Adequate fluid intake helps flush out waste products from the body, easing the burden on the kidneys. During National Nutrition Month, individuals with CKD can focus on incorporating beverages like water, herbal teas, and limited amounts of juice into their daily routine, promoting optimal hydration and supporting kidney function.

The importance of portion control cannot be overstated for individuals managing CKD. National Nutrition Month encourages mindfulness about serving sizes, aiding those with CKD in preventing overconsumption of nutrients that may strain their kidneys. Emphasizing a balanced plate with a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables ensures a well-rounded diet that aligns with both the principles of National Nutrition Month and CKD management.



Educational resources play a vital role in empowering individuals with CKD to make informed dietary decisions. National Nutrition Month serves as a platform for raising awareness about the nutritional needs of those with CKD, fostering a community of support and providing access to reliable information that can enhance their well-being.

Moreover, adopting a personalized approach to nutrition is key for individuals with CKD. National Nutrition Month offers an ideal opportunity for healthcare professionals, dietitians, and individuals to collaborate in creating tailored dietary plans. This personalized guidance can address specific nutritional needs, ensuring that individuals with CKD receive the support necessary to navigate their dietary journey successfully.

In conclusion, National Nutrition Month serves as a timely and significant occasion for individuals with chronic kidney disease to prioritize their health through informed dietary choices. By focusing on low-phosphorus and low-potassium options, balancing protein intake, maintaining proper hydration, practicing portion control, and accessing educational resources, individuals with CKD can actively contribute to their overall well-being. This collaborative effort, involving healthcare professionals and the community, underscores the importance of National Nutrition Month as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of those managing chronic kidney disease.

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# Pain Awareness in Senior Pets: Understanding and Managing Your Pet's Discomfort

**A**s our pets age, it's common for them to experience joint pain, arthritis, and other chronic conditions that can cause discomfort. However, many pet owners are unaware of the signs of pain in their pets and may not realize that their furry friends are suffering. It's important to understand the signs of pain in senior pets and to take steps to manage their discomfort.

One of the most common signs of pain in senior pets is a change in behavior. Pets may become less active, reluctant to play, or have trouble getting up or going down stairs. They may also be less interested in their food, toys, or other activities that they used to enjoy. In severe cases, pets may cry or whimper when they are touched or moved.

Physical changes can also be a sign of pain in senior pets. This may include changes in posture, difficulty walking, or limping. Pets may also become less groomed and have a rough or unkempt appearance. In some cases, pets may even develop sores or wounds from lying in one position for too long.

In order to manage pain in senior pets, it's important to have a thorough understanding of their condition. This may involve visiting a veterinarian for a physical exam, x-rays, or other diagnostic tests. The veterinarian can then develop a treatment plan that may include medication, physical therapy, or other treatments to manage the pet's discomfort.



One of the most effective ways to manage pain in senior pets is through weight management. Excess weight puts extra stress on the joints and can exacerbate joint pain and arthritis. By controlling your pet's weight, you can help to reduce the severity of their pain.

In addition to medication and weight management, there are other steps you can take to manage pain in senior pets. For example, providing a comfortable and supportive bed, regular exercise, and regular massage can all help to reduce pain and discomfort. You can also provide a variety of toys and activities to keep your pet mentally stimulated, which can help to distract them from their pain.

It's also important to be aware of the environment and to make changes as necessary to make your senior pet more comfortable. For example, providing a ramp or steps to help your pet get up

and down from furniture, or installing non-slip flooring to prevent slips and falls, can make a big difference in your pet's quality of life.

It's also important to work closely with your veterinarian to manage pain in your senior pet. Regular check-ups and monitoring of your pet's condition can help to ensure that their treatment plan is effective and that any changes in their condition are detected early.

Pain awareness is crucial for senior pets. By understanding the signs of pain and taking steps to manage their discomfort, pet owners can help their furry friends live a comfortable and happy life. Whether through medication, weight management, or environmental modifications, there are many steps that pet owners can take to help their senior pets live their best life. By working closely with their veterinarian, pet owners can help to ensure that their senior pets are comfortable, pain-free, and happy.

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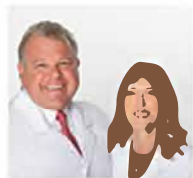
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# bHRT and Cardiovascular Disease

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

**A**t Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy, we are dedicated to fortifying our cardiovascular well-being. Exploring innovative strategies that can safeguard our hearts is paramount. Among these, Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (bHRT) emerges as a compelling contender, offering a spectrum of benefits deserving our attention. A compounding pharmacist is a valuable resource in optimizing medication therapy for heart health. By providing personalized formulations, dose adjustments, combination therapies, alternative delivery methods, and access to specialized medications, compounding pharmacists empower patients to make informed choices tailored to their individual needs, ultimately supporting better heart health outcomes.

Bioidentical hormones are compounds structurally identical to the hormones naturally produced by the human body. Unlike synthetic hormones, which may have different chemical structures, bioidentical hormones closely mimic the molecular structure of endogenous hormones. This similarity allows for a more harmonious interaction with the body's receptors, potentially leading to improved health outcomes and potentially less severe adverse effects than synthetic, commercial medications.

One area where bHRT demonstrates promise is in its impact on cardiovascular health. Hormonal fluctuations, particularly in women during menopause, can contribute to changes in lipid profiles, blood pressure regulation, and vascular function, all of which play pivotal roles in cardiovascular health. By restoring hormonal balance through bHRT, individuals may experience several cardiovascular benefits:

**1. Improved Lipid Profiles:** Studies have shown that bHRT can positively influence lipid profiles by increasing high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol levels, often referred to as "good" cholesterol, while decreasing low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels, commonly known as "bad" cholesterol. This favorable shift in lipid levels may reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and cardiovascular events. (Source: Sood et al., 2012)



**2. Enhanced Vascular Function:** Hormonal changes, such as estrogen decline during menopause, can impair endothelial function, contributing to vascular dysfunction and increased cardiovascular risk. Bioidentical estrogen replacement therapy has been shown to improve endothelial function, leading to enhanced vasodilation and improved blood flow regulation. These effects may help mitigate the development of hypertension and atherosclerosis. (Source: Collins et al., 2014)

**3. Cardioprotective Effects:** Estrogen, a key hormone in bHRT formulations for women, exerts cardioprotective effects through various mechanisms, including antioxidant properties, anti-inflammatory effects, and modulation of vascular tone. These effects may reduce the incidence of cardiovascular events and promote overall heart health. (Source: Mendelsohn and Karas, 1999)

It's important to note that while bHRT shows promise in promoting cardiovascular health, individual responses may vary. As with any medical intervention, bHRT should be prescribed and monitored by qualified healthcare professionals based on individual patient needs, medical history, and risk factors.

At Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy, we can tailor formulations, adjust dosage, provide combination therapies, alternative delivery methods, and access specialized medications not readily available in your "big box" pharmacies. Our pharmacists Jerry, Lisa, and Johnnie, as well as our highly trained technicians, are happy to answer your heart health questions and provide a friendly Florida smile.

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

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# PHOTODYNAMIC THERAPY (PDT): A Method for Managing Precancerous Lesions from a Lifetime of Fun in the Sun

By Renee Deneweth, PA-C

**P**hotodynamic therapy, otherwise known as PDT, is a powerful tool for addressing and mitigating the harmful effects of a lifetime of sun exposure. This targeted treatment offers a relatively convenient solution for addressing actinic keratoses, precancerous skin lesions that may precede squamous cell carcinoma. Beyond PDT, precancerous actinic keratoses have a range of treatment options including the commonly used methods of cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen and topical fluorouracil, each with their own benefits.

The advantages of PDT are vast, including one of the most appealing benefits which is its ability to simultaneously address multiple suspicious lesions. We often describe this as "treating the entire lawn" rather than just "pulling the weeds". Additionally, PDT allows your provider to target lesions even before they become visually apparent or palpable.

We receive a variety of questions from patients who are recommended to undergo this treatment, including:

**How long am I in the office on the day of treatment?**

**A:** Plan for several hours in the office. You can expect 2 and ½ hours, depending on how long your incubation and exposure time is set for.



**How will I look after my treatment?**

**A:** This varies for each patient and largely depends on skin type and amount of sun damage. Patient reactions vary from mild pink to bright red.

**What kind of downtime is expected?**

**A:** As mentioned, each patient's reaction is different. Typically, you can expect 7-10 days during which your skin will undergo a process of turning pink, scaling, peeling, crusting and possibly scabbing. By day 10, most patients are no longer experiencing these symptoms.

Overall, photodynamic therapy is a highly effective method of treatment for managing the consequences of a chronic sun exposure. While it may not guarantee permanent clearance of the skin, it can significantly diminish the number and severity of precancerous and cancerous skin lesions when utilized as a preventative maintenance therapy. For more information on whether PDT is best for you, schedule an appointment with your provider at Skin Wellness Physicians.

## Renee Deneweth, PA-C



Renee Deneweth, PA-C, is a Florida native who was born and raised in Orlando. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from Florida Gulf Coast University where she graduated with Honors. Renee gained experience in adult emergency medicine working at Lee Memorial and Health Park emergency departments and obtained licensure as an Emergency Medical Technician. Soon after, Renee's interest in dermatology was realized as she began working as a medical assistant with Skin Wellness Physicians.

Renee went on to attend PA school at her alma mater, Florida Gulf Coast University, where she graduated with a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree and was inducted into Pi Alpha, the National Honor Society for Physician Assistants. She has since returned to Skin Wellness Physicians as a Physician Assistant and has been personally trained in General Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery by Dr. Wasserman, Dr. Tremaine, and Dr. Wong.

Renee is passionate about diagnosing and treating skin conditions in all age groups and ensuring individualized care for each of her patients. She is excited to work with the growing community of Naples!

In her free time, Renee enjoys traveling, exercising, and spending time with friends and family.



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# THE CRUCIAL LINK BETWEEN NUTRITION, AND HEALTHY LIVING IN GOLDEN YEARS

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

The demographic landscape is undergoing a significant shift worldwide, with a growing proportion of individuals entering their golden years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global population aged 60 and older is expected to reach 2 billion by 2050, doubling from the year 2015. With this demographic shift comes an increased prevalence of conditions like dementia, which poses a multifaceted challenge for individuals, families, and healthcare systems. One of the major challenges which come with the aging population and dementia is nutrition.

Seniors often face unique nutritional challenges, such as decreased appetite, difficulty chewing or swallowing, and changes in taste and smell perception. These factors can contribute to inadequate nutrient intake, leading to deficiencies that may impact physical and cognitive health. As March is National Nutrition Month let us examine the intricate relationship between nutrition and dementia.

## A Little Bit of History

In 1948 the Framingham Heart Study highlighted the connection between cardiovascular health and cognitive function. It set the stage for subsequent research into the impact of nutrition on cognitive health. In the late 20th century, the connection between omega-3 fatty acids and the structural integrity of the brain came to light. In the early 2000's the Mediterranean diet gained attention for its potential protective effects against cognitive decline. In recent years the Gut Brain Axis research has proven yet again the connection between proper nutrition and cognitive health.

## The Brain-Nutrition Nexus

As we eat and age, the brain undergoes a series of transformations that can impact cognitive function. Healthy nutritional choices can positively impact the body and brain. For example, eating foods high in fiber and low in sugar, reduce inflammation in the body and the brain. Drinking too much alcohol and caffeine has the opposite effect; both increase inflammation. Increased chronic inflammation has been linked to tissue damage, hardening of arteries, insulin resistance, and even cancer.



A diet lacking in quality nutrition leads to a diminished number of neurons, slower synaptic connections, and reduced blood flow to the brain. These changes can contribute to a decline in memory, processing speed, and overall cognitive abilities. The poorer the nutrition the more the body experiences shifts in metabolism, muscle mass, and bone density. For these reasons, focusing on the connection between our nutrition and aging process is important.

## Water, Water, Everywhere

Water, often dubbed the elixir of life, plays a central role in the biological processes that govern our bodies. Its influence on healthy aging extends beyond mere hydration, reaching into cellular function, organ health, and disease prevention. A growing body of scientific evidence underscores the profound impact that adequate water intake can have on the aging process.

Dr. Sarah Mitchell, a renowned gerontologist, explains, "Our cells are like tiny machines that require water to operate efficiently. Dehydration can compromise these cellular processes, leading to premature aging and a decline in overall health."

When we drink enough water and all of our cells are hydrated, our joints feel better, our brain works better, and our skin looks better too. On the other hand, dehydration has been linked to impaired cognitive function including lack of focus and poor concentration, both of which affect cognitive function.

## Nutrition in the Home or Community

Ensuring that your elderly loved one receives good nutrition is crucial for their overall health and well-being. Here are some tips different scenarios:

### Living at Home

- **Regular Check-ins:** Visit or call regularly to assess their well-being. Ask about their appetite, any changes in taste or dietary preferences.
- **Meal Planning:** Plan balanced and nutritious meals in advance. Ensure a variety of food groups are included for a well-rounded diet.
- **Stock Healthy Options:** Keep the pantry and refrigerator stocked with healthy, easy-to-prepare foods. Include fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.
- **Meal Delivery Services:** Consider using meal delivery services that provide nutritious meals to their doorstep.
- **Social Interaction:** Encourage social activities, as loneliness or depression can impact their appetite.

### Living in a Senior Living Community

- **Communication with Staff:** Stay in regular communication with staff to discuss dietary needs and preferences.
- **Participation in Community Events:** Encourage participation in community dining and events to foster socialization.
- **Feedback Channels:** Establish open lines of communication to address any concerns or changes in their nutritional needs.
- **Family and Friend Visits:** Coordinate family or friend visits for shared meals, creating a supportive environment.
- **Personalized Care Plans:** Work with the community to create a personalized care plan that addresses their nutritional requirements.

If you have a loved one who does not seem to be thriving we can help. You can call our office at (239) 330-2133 or email us at [info@scanyfl.com](mailto:info@scanyfl.com).



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# The Matterhorn Method: Eliminating Pain and Inspiring Hope

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

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

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

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

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



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

"When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered," says Vesce. "We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method worked so well that our clients told all of their family

and friends about it. That's when we knew we had something really special. Within 2 weeks, virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today."

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

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

To schedule an initial evaluation visit  
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# The Galleri Blood Test is a Valuable Cancer Screening Tool

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

Cancer screenings are pivotal in identifying cancer at its nascent stages, where treatment can be most effective. While several cancers have established screening protocols, many lack efficient screening methods, underscoring the need for innovative approaches to detection.

Some of the most common cancers that have established screening protocols include breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer. However, it's essential to recognize that not all cancers have well-established screening methods, underscoring the significance of exploring innovative approaches to cancer detection.

Despite the availability of screenings for these types of cancer, there are still challenges in detecting certain cancers early enough for effective treatment. Pancreatic cancer, for example, is often diagnosed at an advanced stage due to the lack of specific symptoms and practical screening tests. Similarly, ovarian cancer presents difficulties in early detection, contributing to its high mortality rate. In such cases, developing novel screening methods becomes crucial in improving early detection rates and ultimately saving lives.

**The Galleri Blood Test:** The Galleri Blood Test represents a promising advancement in cancer screening technology. Analyzing specific biomarkers in blood offers a non-invasive approach to detecting cancer at early stages, when treatment is most effective. Galleri test is the first-of-its-kind multi-cancer early detection test that looks for a signal shared by 50+ types of cancer with a single blood test.<sup>1</sup>

## Facts and Statistics:

1. A study published in Cancer Discovery demonstrated the Galleri Blood Test's efficacy in detecting multiple cancer types with high sensitivity and specificity (Zhang et al., 2019).
2. The Galleri Blood Test detected pancreatic cancer with 92% sensitivity and 93% specificity in a clinical trial involving over 1,000 participants (National Cancer Institute).
3. According to the World Cancer Research Fund, early cancer detection increases the five-year survival rate by 25% or more.
4. With a single blood test, Galleri screens for a signal shared by multiple cancers that would otherwise go unnoticed. If a cancer signal is detected,



Galleri predicts the tissue type or organ associated with the cancer signal with 88% accuracy to help guide follow-up diagnostic testing, which may include lab work or imaging to confirm cancer.

## Why Consider the Galleri Blood Test?

1. **Early Detection:** The Galleri Blood Test enables early detection, which is crucial for improving cancer outcomes and increasing survival rates.
2. **Non-Invasive:** Unlike invasive procedures like biopsies, the Galleri Blood Test requires only a blood sample, making it convenient and accessible to patients.
3. **Comprehensive Screening:** With the potential to detect multiple cancer types, the Galleri Blood Test offers a comprehensive approach to cancer screening, particularly beneficial for individuals with a family history of cancer or other risk factors.
4. **Galleri looks for a signal associated with active cancer through a blood sample.** Every time you take the test, Galleri checks more than 100,000 DNA regions and over a million specific DNA sites to screen for a signal shared by 50+ cancers from your blood draw. If a cancer signal is detected, results from the test can predict the tissue type or organ associated with the cancer signal.

The Galleri blood test represents a promising advancement in cancer screening technology, particularly for cancers lacking effective screening methods. This innovative test analyzes specific biomarkers in the blood that may indicate the presence of cancerous cells or abnormalities in the body. By detecting these biomarkers early, the Galleri blood test offers the potential to identify various types of cancer at a stage when treatment options are most effective. Some of the more prominent cancers Galleri screens for include those that affect the male and female reproductive organs, GI tract, Kidney, Leukemia, Lung, and skin.

Early detection is vital to improving cancer outcomes. By detecting cancer in its early stages, patients have a better chance of receiving curative treatment and achieving long-term survival. The Galleri blood test provides an opportunity for early detection, allowing patients and healthcare providers to intervene at the earliest sign of abnormality. The Galleri blood test offers a non-invasive and convenient screening option. Unlike traditional screening methods that may require invasive procedures or uncomfortable tests, such as biopsies or colonoscopies, the Galleri blood test requires a blood sample. This minimally invasive approach makes it more accessible and potentially more appealing to patients who may be hesitant to undergo conventional screenings.

The Galleri blood test can detect multiple types of cancer with a single test. This comprehensive approach allows for the early detection of various cancers, providing patients with a more comprehensive assessment of their cancer risk. Additionally, the Galleri blood test may be particularly beneficial for individuals with a family history of cancer or other risk factors, offering them a proactive means of monitoring their health.

It's important to emphasize that while the Galleri blood test shows promise in cancer screening, it is not a definitive diagnostic tool. If the test results indicate abnormalities or elevated levels of specific biomarkers, further diagnostic evaluation, such as imaging studies or tissue biopsies, may be necessary to confirm a cancer diagnosis. Patients should also consult with their healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate screening options based on their individual risk factors and medical history.

*For a complete list of cancer markers identified by the Galleri blood test, please visit:*  
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# Understanding the Behavioral Manifestations of Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

**M**ild traumatic brain injuries (mTBIs), often referred to as concussions, are commonly evaluated by psychiatrists and neurologists due to their potential impact on mental health and cognitive function. Mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBIs) present a complex spectrum of symptoms that can profoundly affect an individual's daily functioning and overall well-being. While these injuries are often considered less severe compared to moderate or severe brain injuries, they can result in a range of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral manifestations that warrant careful evaluation and management.

Symptoms such as persistent headaches, dizziness, confusion, memory problems, irritability, anxiety, and sleep disturbances can significantly impact an individual's ability to perform activities of daily living, including work, school, and social interactions. Recognizing the subtle yet impactful nature of these symptoms is essential for healthcare professionals in accurately diagnosing and effectively treating patients with mild traumatic brain injuries.

**Causes of Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries:** Mild traumatic brain injuries can occur due to a variety of factors, with the most common causes being falls, sports-related injuries, motor vehicle accidents, and assaults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of mTBIs, accounting for approximately 47% of all reported cases among adults aged 65 and older. Additionally, sports-related activities contribute significantly to mTBIs, particularly among young athletes participating in contact sports such as football, soccer, and basketball.

**Symptoms of Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries:** The symptoms of mild traumatic brain injuries can vary widely among individuals and may not always be immediately apparent. Common symptoms include headache, dizziness, confusion, fatigue, and memory problems. Patients may also experience changes in mood and behavior, such as irritability, anxiety, depression, and impulsivity. Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or excessive drowsiness, are also frequently reported following mTBIs. It is important to note that while these symptoms may initially seem mild or transient, they can sometimes persist for weeks or even months, affecting the individual's overall well-being and functioning.

**When to Seek Treatment for Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries:** Patients who experience any symptoms suggestive of a mild traumatic brain injury should seek medical attention promptly, especially if the injury occurred as a result of a significant impact or trauma to the head. While some individuals may recover fully from mTBIs with rest and symptom management, others may require specialized treatment and rehabilitation to address persistent symptoms and prevent long-term complications. Prompt evaluation by a healthcare professional, such as a neurologist or neuropsychiatrist, is crucial for accurate diagnosis and appropriate management of mTBIs.

**Sources:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021). Traumatic Brain Injury & Concussion. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/index.html>
2. American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

**Diagnosis of Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries through the DSM-5:** The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), provides diagnostic criteria for mild neurocognitive disorder, which may be applicable in cases of mild traumatic brain injuries with persistent cognitive and behavioral symptoms. To meet the criteria for mild neurocognitive disorder, the individual must exhibit evidence of mild cognitive decline from a previous level of performance in one or more cognitive domains, such as complex attention, executive function, memory, or social cognition. Additionally, these cognitive deficits must be evident in clinical assessment or neuropsychological testing and must interfere with independence in everyday activities.

Mild traumatic brain injuries can result in a range of behavioral manifestations that may significantly impact an individual's quality of life and functioning. Prompt recognition and appropriate management of mTBIs are essential to optimize outcomes and prevent long-term complications. Healthcare professionals, including psychiatrists, neurologists, and neuropsychiatrists, play a vital role in evaluating and treating patients with mild traumatic brain injuries, ensuring comprehensive care that addresses both the physical and psychological aspects of recovery.

By staying informed about the causes, symptoms, and diagnostic criteria associated with mTBIs, healthcare professionals can effectively support patients in their journey toward recovery and improved well-being.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of a mood disorder or other mental health issues, there is help in Southwest Florida. 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.



# WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

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

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

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

## HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

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

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

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

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

## FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# HELP, I'M RENTING...HOW TO CREATE A MOLD FREE SANCTUARY

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

**C**reating a mold-safe sanctuary in a rental property requires proactive measures to prevent moisture buildup and mold growth. Here are some steps you can take to minimize the risk of mold:

## 1. Identify and Address Sources of Moisture:

- Inspect the rental property for any signs of water leaks, such as dripping faucets, leaking pipes, or water stains on ceilings and walls. Report any leaks to your landlord or property manager immediately for prompt repairs.
- Ensure that bathrooms and kitchen areas are properly ventilated. Use exhaust fans during and after bathing or cooking to remove excess moisture from the air.
- Keep indoor humidity levels in check by using a dehumidifier, especially in areas prone to high humidity, such as basements and bathrooms.

## 2. Maintain Cleanliness and Proper Ventilation:

- Regularly clean and dry surfaces prone to moisture, such as kitchen counters, bathroom tiles, and shower curtains. Mold thrives in damp environments, so keeping these areas clean and dry can help prevent mold growth.
- Open windows and doors whenever possible to promote air circulation and reduce humidity levels indoors. Use fans to improve airflow in poorly ventilated areas.
- Vacuum carpets and rugs frequently to remove dust and debris, which can provide nutrients for mold growth.

## 3. Monitor and Prevent Condensation:

- Insulate windows and doors to prevent condensation from forming on cold surfaces during colder months.

Use weather stripping or caulk to seal any gaps or cracks where cold air can enter.

- Use moisture-absorbing materials such as silica gel packets or moisture-absorbing crystals in closets, cabinets, and storage areas to help prevent condensation and mold growth on belongings.

## 4. Control Outdoor Moisture Intrusion:

- If possible as a tenant, ensure that gutters and downspouts are clear of debris and properly directed away from the foundation of the building to prevent water from seeping into the property.
- Maintain the landscaping around the rental property by trimming bushes and trees away from the exterior walls to allow for proper airflow and reduce the risk of moisture buildup. When necessary register a need with the property manager or condo association.

## 5. Promptly Address Any Signs of Mold:

- If you notice any signs of mold growth, such as musty odors, visible mold spots, or respiratory symptoms, notify your landlord or property manager immediately.
- Avoid attempting to clean up large or extensive mold growth yourself, as improper remediation can spread mold spores and exacerbate the problem. Instead, request professional mold remediation services to ensure thorough and safe removal.

## 6. Know Your Rights as a Tenant:

- Familiarize yourself with your rights and responsibilities as a tenant regarding mold prevention and remediation. Your lease agreement may outline the landlord's obligations for maintaining a safe and habitable living environment, including addressing mold issues.

- Document any communication with your landlord regarding mold-related concerns, including requests for repairs or remediation, to protect yourself in case of disputes.

## 7. Create a mold safe room sanctuary.

Lastly since you rent it is often hard to get landlords to properly remediate. In this case you can create a sanctuary by having the room you spend the most time, typically your bedroom and remediated yourself or have a professional clean just that room. Keep your door shut and run an air purifier and if needed a dehumidifier to control humidity. Many do not realize the most common mold species that produces poisons called mycotoxins, does not require water but can grow and thrive on just high humidity.

By taking proactive steps to prevent moisture buildup and promptly addressing any signs of mold growth, you can create a healthier and more comfortable living environment in your rental property. Have questions, reach out to [info@americanmoldexperts.com](mailto:info@americanmoldexperts.com).

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**W**hat 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.

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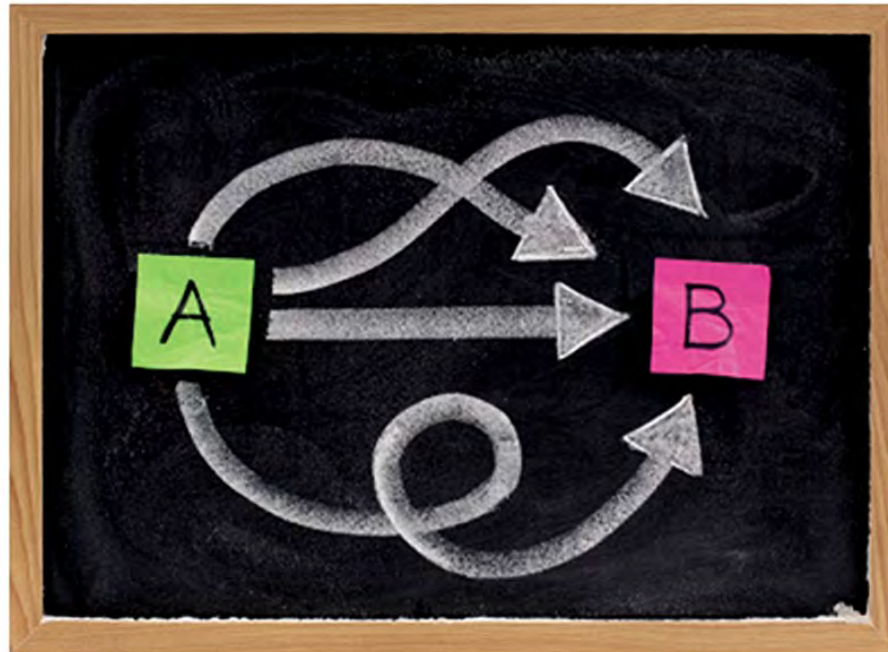
# Spring Cleaning Mental Prep

**S**pring is just around the corner! Sadly, it's also time to start thinking about how you will fit all those big, time-consuming spring cleaning jobs into your life. Consider trying out MaidPro's 49-Point Checklist for your recurring cleaning services (after you have purged and organized) and let them handle the tougher jobs listed below.

**Purge and organize small storage areas (closets, junk drawers, cabinets, vanities, toy boxes, paper and digital files).** These are great places to start before the weather gets too nice. Discard clothes that are worn or don't fit, food, cosmetics and medicines that are past date and be ruthless about shredding old bills and statements and deleting or archiving defunct files, emails and terrible photos from your computer.

**Purge big storage areas (attic, basement, garage).** Spring is a time for church and school fairs. For you, it's an opportunity to donate unwanted stuff AND get a tax deduction.

**Wash walls, clean ceilings and lighting fixtures.** This works wonders to brighten your home especially if you burn lots of candles or fires in the winter. It's also yucky, backbreaking work, requiring proper technique and an assortment of specialized tools (so, definitely worth outsourcing to a professional crew if you plan and budget carefully).



**Large appliances (refrigerator, oven, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer).** Appliances ought to be cleaned and, where appropriate, sanitized at least two to four times a year, so chances are at least some of these appliances are going to require your attention within the coming few months.

**Deep clean carpets/treat hardwood floors.** Being physically lowest, floors are the last thing you want to clean and treat before summer arrives. Be sure to wait until after spring's mud season to get the greatest long-term benefit.

**Clean windows, screens and treatments.** This is another excellent candidate for outsourcing if you budget for it now. Otherwise, plan on dedicating at least an entire weekend and check out MaidPro's Spring Cleaning Survival Guide before turning your attention to the next several items on the list.

**Heavy linens, upholstery, behind and underneath furniture.** The guideline here is to take down and clean anything that lives higher up and is likely to shed dust, dander and other micro debris onto your floors in the process.

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# Maintaining Healthy Friendships

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

The first step is to realize that you really do NEED friends.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived said, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Prov. 27:17

That means that we make each other better. It seems pretty important to God that we have good friendships. The Bible is full of examples of this.

Think about the amazing friendship of Jonathan and David. Jonathan warned David that his life was in danger at the hands of Jonathan's own father, King Saul.

This warning allowed David to take action and avoid harm, and ultimately this act of true friendship allowed David to take the throne.

Friends look out for each other. They should have each other's back. Your friends are the ones who will be there for you when everything in your life is falling apart.

The second step is to be friendly and willing to meet new people. The Bible says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly..." Prov. 18:24

Put a smile on your face, stick out your hand and meet new people. Opportunities abound for making new friends if you are willing to actively pursue new relationships. Get involved in a local church, join a social organization, volunteer at the local schools or another non-profit organization. These are all great ways to meet new people and do good in the community at the same time.

The third step to building relationships is to make yourself vulnerable even at the risk being rejected. The reality is that not everyone is going to like you. And, you are not going to like everyone.

Look for people with similar interests or a common background. If you don't connect with someone, just move on. You will certainly find several good friends if you keep working towards making friends.

You will find the fourth step most helpful if you make it a natural part of your life: put other's needs ahead of your own. The Bible says it like this:

*<sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.* Phil. 2:3-4

Have you ever met people who want you to listen to all of the details about their life but then they never bother to ask about yours? Be interested in other people. In humility, don't try to "one up" their stories. Just listen, smile, and ask genuine questions. Get to know them.

If you want to make friends, get interested in other people. Discover their story. Dale Carnegie writes, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

You might find it helpful to evaluate how you talk with other people. Are you genuinely interested in others or does every conversation revolve around you? Do you make yourself the hero of every story? Do find it necessary to talk about your successes and achievements? Are you trying to impress people or relate to people?

If you really want to make friends, get interested in other people. Learn about them. Listen to their stories and ask questions. If you listen and genuinely care about others, you'll have more friends than you can handle in a short time.

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