

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S



Health & Wellness[®]

MAGAZINE

December 2016

Marion Edition - Monthly

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**THE LATEST
BREAKTHROUGHS**

**In MRI Technology
Are at RAO**

**HEALTHY
HOLIDAYS**
To You!

STAYING FIT
Through the Holidays

SEA SALT:
Nature's Gift To
Our Skin

NAPLES
SOAP COMPANY
NATURALLY BETTER
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Naples Soap Company
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**5 WAYS TO BEAT THE
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LUNG CANCER SCREENING CAN HELP LONGTIME SMOKERS BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER

STOP LUNG CANCER BEFORE IT STOPS YOU

Are You a Longtime Smoker? This Simple Scan Can Save Your Life.

Lung cancer is the #1 leading cause of cancer death in the US, above breast, prostate and colorectal cancers. The vast majority of cases occur in heavy smokers.

Who is Considered a Heavy Smoker?

The American Cancer Society considers someone to be at high risk of developing smoking-related lung cancer when they share the following traits:



Ages 55-77



Currently smokes or has quit within the past 15 years



Has smoked tobacco for 30 or more "pack years," which is the number of packs smoked per day times the number of years smoked

Unfortunately, by the time symptoms appear, lung cancer has usually spread outside the lung, making it difficult or impossible to treat.

Early detection is the key to surviving lung cancer.

If you're 55 or older and a heavy or longtime current or former smoker, talk to your doctor about a screening chest scan called Low Dose Computed Tomography (LDCT). This painless, noninvasive test uses up to 90% less ionizing radiation than standard CT scans, and can capture lung cancer in its earliest stages when it is easiest to treat.

With your doctor's referral, your scan may be 100% covered by Medicare.

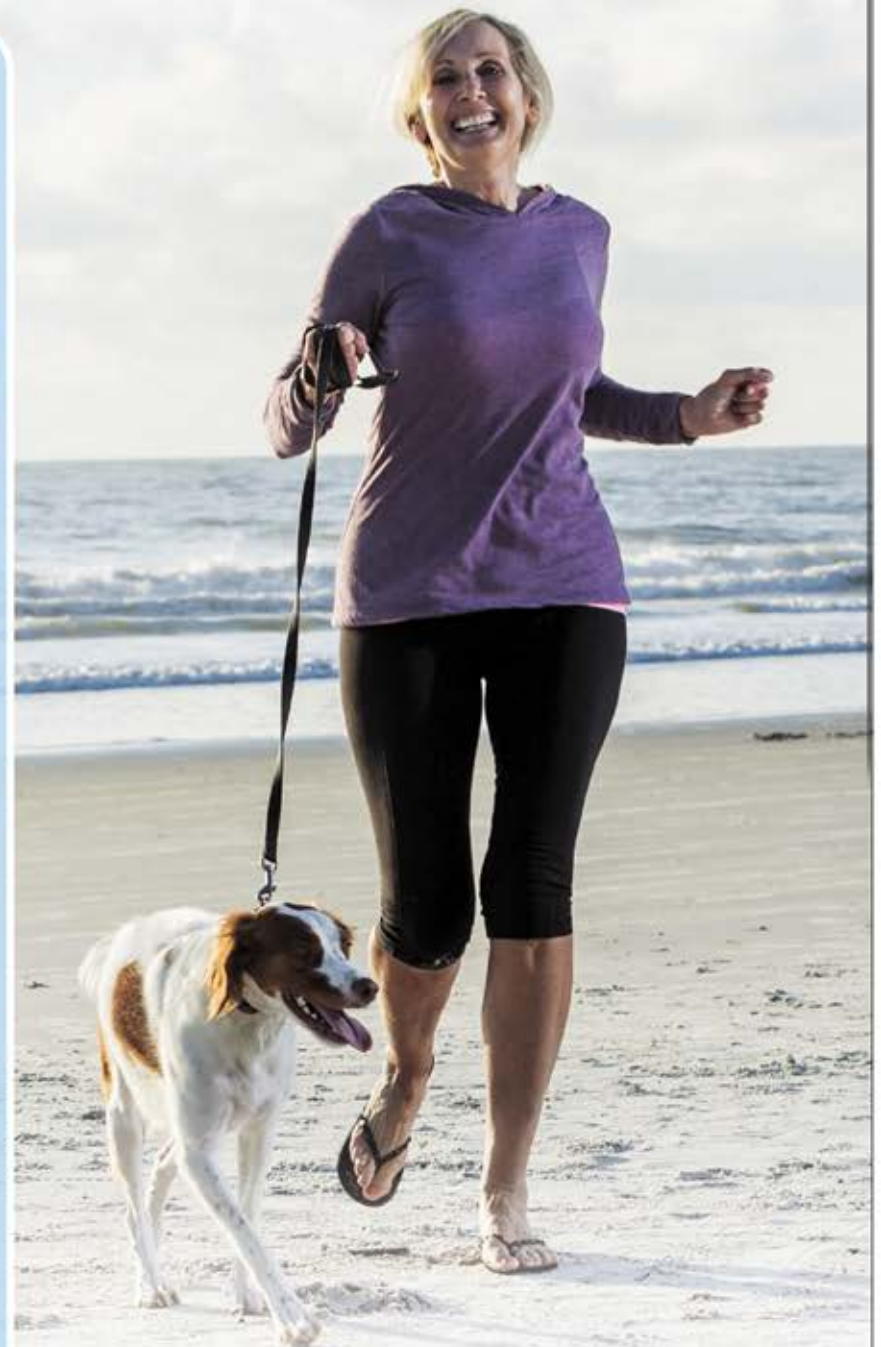
COVERED

People 50 and older with a 20-pack-year smoking history combined with at least one other risk factor, such as a personal or family history of lung disease, **are also considered high risk**. Talk honestly with your doctor. If LDCT is right for you, your doctor can refer you to RAO for advanced LDCT services. Our team of Board Certified radiologists will work directly with your doctor to review your results and ensure you're getting the best possible care.



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The American Cancer Society predicted 96,830 cases of colon cancer in 2014.

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DENAS PCM 6 is a superior advanced SCENAR device that is a compact portable solution that fits in your hand at home or on the go. No special medical education is required for effective use of the device. Denas technology helps you overcome acute or chronic health issues and restore body's lost functions from conditions that started years ago. The DENAS PCM 6 has many natural healing capabilities without the use of drugs.

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The DENAS device uses a mild electrical signal that's placed over a person's skin on areas of pain. The dermal nerve receptors in the skin send these signals through the central nervous system to the brain. The neuro-electrical impulse mirrors the body's natural nerve signal so the body accepts it as organic and natural which explains the rapid and effective results. The brain reacts by releasing neuropeptides natural healing and regulatory substances, including some of the strongest known painkillers such as endorphins. It differs from TENS machines, because it encourages the body to heal itself, whereas TENS uses electrical signals to temporarily block pain signals from reaching the brain.



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While the FDA has approved SCENAR for muscle re-education, biofeedback, and the treatment of pain. Russian physicians have long used SCENAR to treat virtually all organ systems: musculo-skeletal, nervous, digestive, pulmonary and cardiovascular.



With over forty years of published research and proven results in hospitals and clinics throughout Russia, Europe, and the United Kingdom. Russian experience demonstrates SCENAR effectiveness in close to 90% of all patients treated, with full healing noted in two out of every three patients, and significant improvement and recovery in the rest. DENAS SCENAR is now available so you can enjoy the benefits of this affordable pain relief device that is Drug free, safe & effective.

OMI PEMF Therapy a Healthier Body

Oxford Medical Instruments (OMI) PEMF Therapy System is an affordable home use and professional device. This system utilizes the same pulsed electromagnetic field technology as the more expensive systems like the Medithera, QRS, Bemer and IMRS2000 and is just as effective at a fraction of the cost thus saving you thousands of dollars over the other PEMF companies that pay MLM distributors high sales commissions. (OMI) PEMF Therapy Systems are available as a Full Body Mat, PulsePad or Therapy Ring.

The Benefits of PEMF

Many research studies have demonstrated that magnetic fields have the potential to reduce the sensations sensed by the nerve cells and eventually ward off pain. The damaged nerve cells can repair itself when in influence of magnetic fields.

Magnetic fields can reduce pain equivalent to 10 milligrams of morphine. They even have the potential to target pain in specific areas. Whether it is at a local level or any organ of the body or the entire body, magnetic fields can significantly reduce the pain levels in the body. Use of magnetic fields for treating pain can effectively reduce the level of medications.



Magnetic fields just don't come in contact with the damaged cells and heal the pain. They even reduce the swelling associated with the pain. Swelling needs to be treated or else it can cause the natural chemicals accumulate near the damaged cells and can increase the levels of acidity in the area. Magnetic fields also improve the circulation in the area and help in flushing out the excess chemical mediators from the area to be treated. Poor blood flow can also cause pain in the body. Magnetic fields can treat this condition too, by enhancing the circulation of blood.

Magnetic fields are also known to stimulate the acupuncture meridians and are even more beneficial than the therapy itself. They can stimulate the endorphins & bring about hormonal changes in the body. Magnetic fields cause a lot of activities occur simultaneously at the cellular levels within the body. However, even the body decides the activity that needs to take place immediately and ignores the rest. The body decides what needs to happen within the body and what not during the healing process.

The magnetic fields offer several benefits to the body during the treatment process. They reduce the muscle tension, stimulate the immune system, improve circulation, improve the cell function, detoxify the body, improve sleep, enhance the rate of nutrient uptake, balance the endocrine systems, balance acupuncture meridians, reduce stress, reduce inflammation and also regenerate tissues within the body.

For more information about the DENAS PCM 6 visit www.denaspainreliefstore.com or call Coach Jimmy K direct at 503-395-4142. Remember to ask The Villages special bonus gift with your order (\$100.00 Value).



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ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS HELP IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

By Phoebe Brown - Staff Writer

When people are diagnosed with chronic diseases, the challenge of living life fully, navigating the healthcare industry and finding the right treatment options can pose issues. For people with lung diseases, treatment options which address the disease itself are scarce and don't usually go beyond traditional medications, supplemental oxygen or a lung transplant. Even Hollywood has taken notice of how this lack of treatment options affects people.

Movies like *Dallas Buyers Club* illustrate the struggles of being diagnosed with a chronic, progressive disease with few treatment options. The main character, Ron Woodroof, was diagnosed with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in

1986. At the time, there were limited treatment options available. Even with a terminal diagnosis, Woodroof refused to succumb to AIDS without a fight. He started to research various medicine and drug combinations, none of which were available in the United States at the time.

Through his research, Woodroof discovered medications that were available in other countries but not yet available in the United States. Along with his doctor and another patient, Woodroof founded the Dallas Buyers Club in 1988, providing AIDS patients with smuggled medications to help ease their symptoms. Woodroof finally lost his fight with AIDS on September 12, 1992. Because he could see beyond the complacency of the medical community and sought alternative treatment options, he extended his life six years longer than his physicians thought possible.

Like Woodroof, patients with chronic lung diseases are often prescribed the traditional regimen of medications, inhalers, corticosteroids and supplemental oxygen, which only address the symptoms of the disease. Though many patients are left to research alternatives on their own, new medical advancements can now provide people with chronic lung diseases a viable treatment option. A specialty clinic in the United States, the Lung Institute

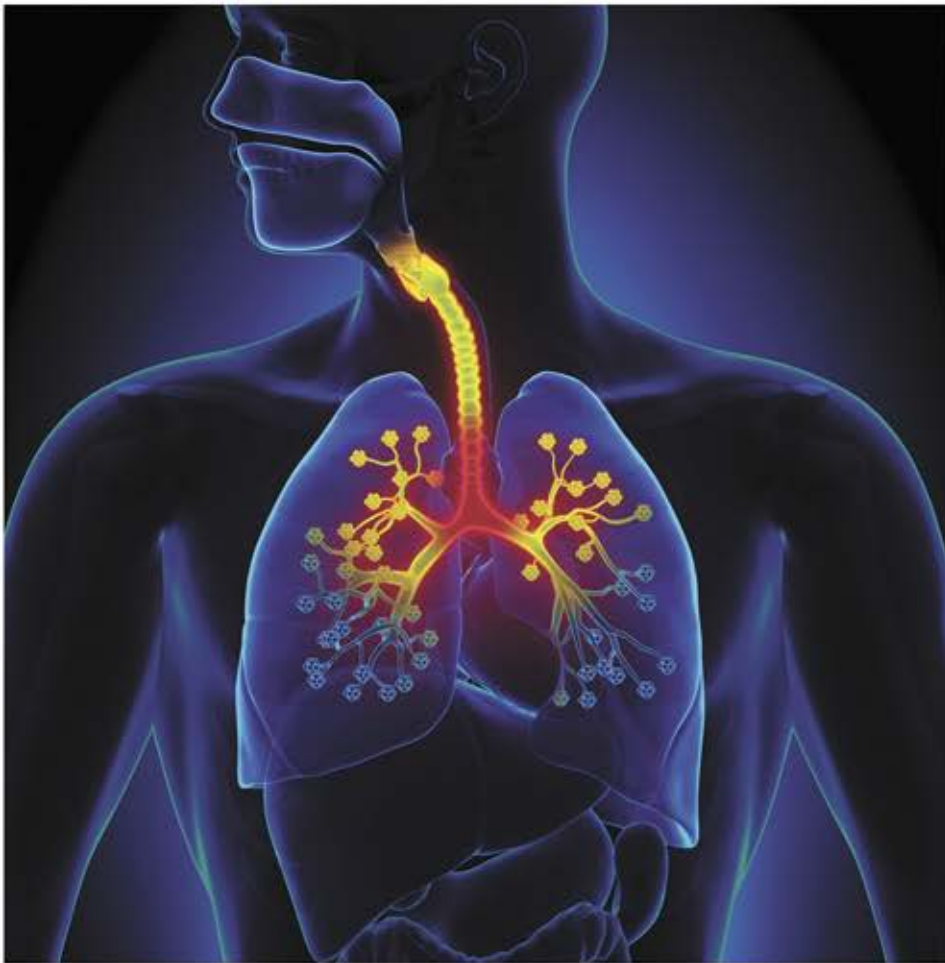
(www.lunginstitute.com), treats people with COPD, emphysema, pulmonary fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and other chronic lung diseases using stem cells from the patient's own body.

Stem cells act as the body's healing system. The body alerts these cells when they are needed and sends them to the place in the body that needs repair. However, stem cells are slow to react, and in the body of someone with a chronic illness, they are even slower. The physicians at the Lung Institute realized this and developed a procedure to help stem cells do their job more efficiently.

Physicians extract stem cells from a patient's blood or bone marrow tissue, separate the stem cells and return them intravenously. The cells then travel through the heart and into the lungs where they are trapped in the pulmonary trap. Once in the lungs, stem cells may do their job by promoting healing in the lungs, potentially improving lung function.

Although Woodroof lacked alternative treatment options in the United States, there are options available for people with chronic lung diseases. With clinics nationwide, the Lung Institute has treated over 3,000 patients. A recent study produced by the clinic indicated that 83 percent of patients saw an increase in quality of life after stem cell treatment, and 49 percent of those who took a pulmonary function test reported an increase in lung function. With medical advancements like stem cell therapy, addressing the disease at its source offers people an alternative that is helping them regain their quality of life.

If you or a loved one suffer from a chronic lung disease, the specialists at the Lung Institute may be able to help. You can contact the Lung Institute at 800-921-4631 or visit lunginstitute.com/Health to find out if you qualify for these new treatments.



Though many patients are left to research alternatives on their own, new medical advancements can now provide people with chronic lung diseases a viable treatment option.

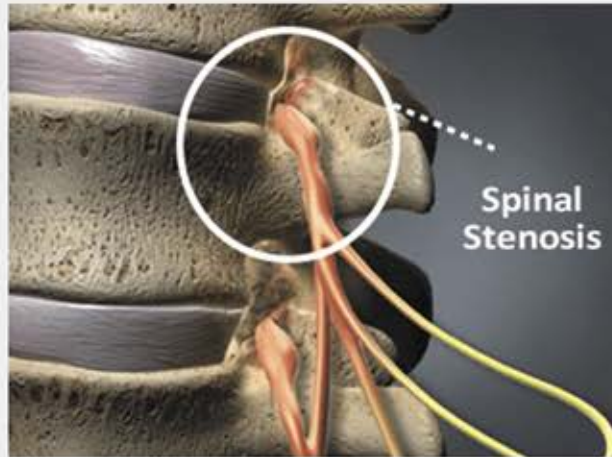
THINK SURGERY IS THE ONLY WAY TO TREAT SPINAL STENOSIS? THINK AGAIN.

Spinal stenosis is a condition in which the open spaces within the spine become narrowed, irritating or pressing on the nerves along the spinal cord and causing neck, back, arm or leg pain, muscle weakness, numbness, tingling or hot/cold sensations in the back, neck or extremities. It is typically caused by arthritic changes due to aging, heredity, injury or overuse, or by thickening of the ligaments supporting the spine. Spinal stenosis tends to occur in people 50 and older in areas of the spine that get the most use, such as the neck and lower back. Spinal stenosis can refer into the arms or legs, causing pain, numbness or loss of coordination, and into the bowels, causing bladder or bowel control problems. Left untreated, muscle weakness and loss of sensation in the extremities may become permanent, so early treatment is important.

People suffering from stenosis of the spine obviously want to know what can be done to limit symptoms and prevent worsening of the condition. Luckily, there are effective treatments for spinal stenosis, most of which are non-invasive. "Most people don't need to have surgery for spinal stenosis," says Dr. Antonio DiSclafani, a neurosurgeon with Ocala Neurosurgical Center (ONC). "Pain and other symptoms can be effectively managed using other proven techniques."

Treatments include medication, steroid injections and physical therapy to build strength and stability and improve flexibility. "Patients are often surprised by the relief they can get by sticking to a prescribed regimen of simple exercises combined with pain relief protocols," says Dr. DiSclafani.

In the less-common situations where surgery becomes necessary, there are highly effective operations designed to reduce pressure on the spinal cord and nerve roots, including those that create more room within the spinal spaces, decompress



vertebrae, or fuse bones together to improve spinal stability and strength. Complications from these surgeries are uncommon and usually temporary, but patients should note that recuperation time for spinal stenosis surgery can be anywhere from six months to a year. "Because it involves a rather lengthy recovery time, we at ONC always elect to start with the most conservative treatment options available, and perform surgery as a last resort," says Dr. DiSclafani. "Most patients experience a big improvement in their mobility, stability and comfort without surgery, which is what it's all about. Surgery can be a tremendous relief for people who don't respond to other therapies, but most folks are surprised by what a little guidance and care can do to get them back to living comfortably and fully."

If your doctor has diagnosed you as having spinal stenosis and you're looking for safe, proven symptom relief as well as treatments focused on preventing the worsening of your symptoms, call the experienced and dedicated professionals of Ocala Neurosurgical Center. It's one small step that can produce big relief.

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ANTONIO DISCLAFANI, MD

- In practice of neurosurgery since 1988. Joined Ocala Neurosurgery Center in 1993
- Board Certified in Neurological Surgery by the American Board of Neurological Surgery
- Medical Degree from the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston
- Residencies at the University of Tennessee & St. Jude Hospital in Memphis
- Member, Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
- Fellow, American College of Surgeons
- Fellowships in neuro-oncology, University of California at San Francisco & St. Jude Hospital in Memphis
- Certified by the National Board of Medical Examiners
- On staff at Munroe Regional Medical Center & Ocala Regional Medical Center

Dr. Antonio DiSclafani, his partner neurosurgeons, Dr. Mark Oliver and Dr. Daniel Robertson, and their talented support team are dedicated to providing unsurpassed diagnostic and therapeutic care for a range of neurological and spinal disorders. Our foremost mission is to help you return to a life of health, comfort and vitality.



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The Latest Breakthroughs in MRI Technology are at RAO

Each year, millions of Americans present with an injury or health issue that requires a Magnetic Resonance Imaging test, or MRI, to get to the root of the problem, making MRI one of the most common diagnostic tests utilized by medical professionals today. MRI delivers uniquely precise interior views for accurate diagnoses without exposing patients to ionizing radiation, making it a go-to test for everything from brain scans to breast exams to bone, muscle and tendon injuries. Among its many attributes, MRI has proven to be a safe, painless, non-invasive way to pinpoint the tiniest abnormality while eliminating potentially dangerous and distressing exploratory surgeries for countless patients worldwide.

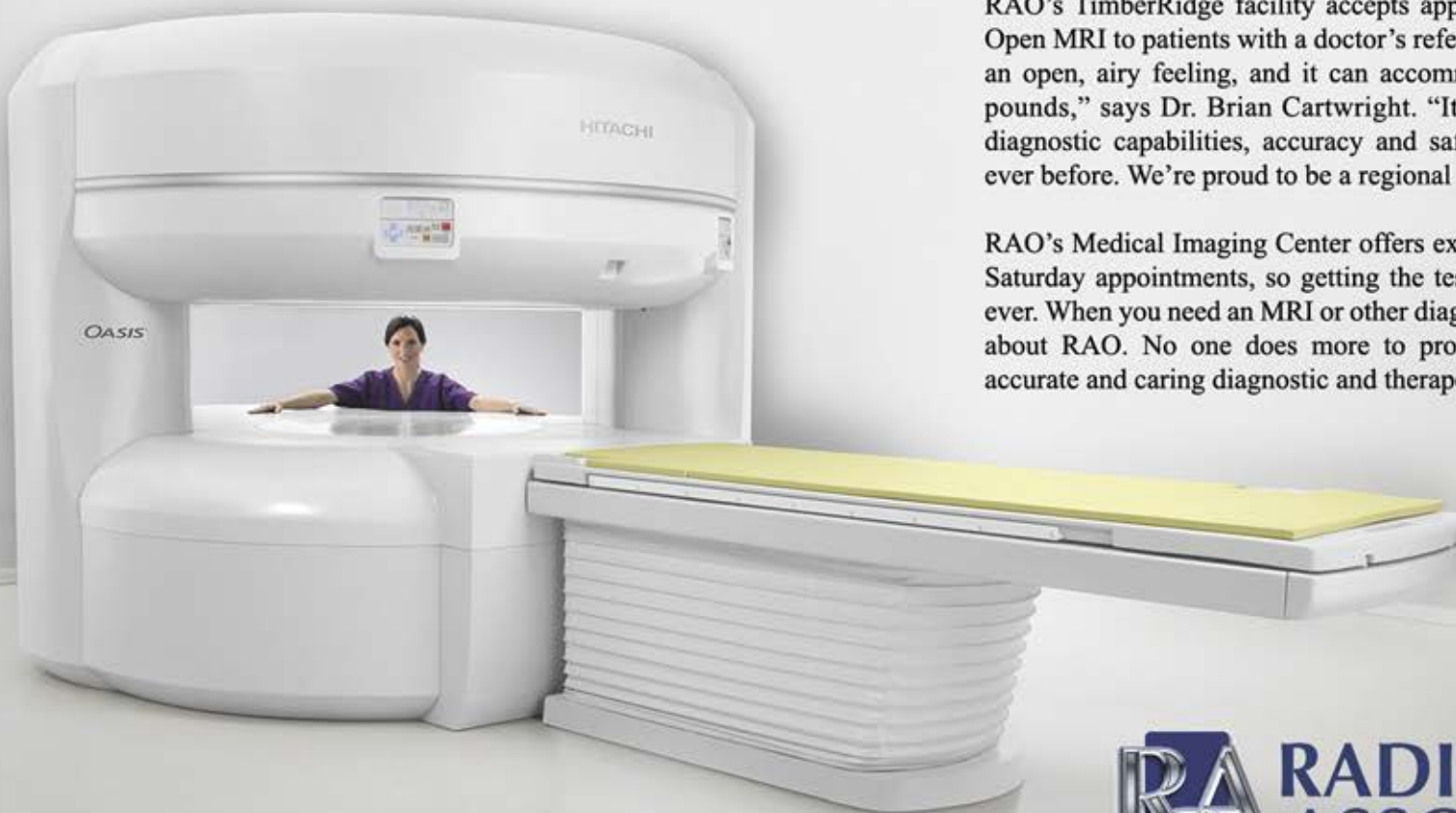
"MRI uses a sophisticated combination of magnetic fields and radio waves to capture highly detailed cross-sectional images of internal tissues and structures," says RAO radiologist Dr. Ryan Tompkins. "These are sent to a computer screen for review by your radiologist and rapidly delivered to your doctor for his or her analysis."

Since MRI technology first began being used in the late 1970s, it has advanced by leaps and bounds, becoming quicker, more accurate and more comfortable for patients. "RAO is a pioneering provider of the latest MRI scanning equipment," says radiologist John Boon, MD, "including the Oasis™ ultra-wide open MRI for larger patients, children and those prone to anxiety or claustrophobia. Our TimberRidge facility is one of the few local offices to feature High Performance Open MRI for enhanced accuracy and faster image production without enclosing patients in a tight space, which makes it much more comfortable and pleasant."

"And that's important," adds Dr. Edson Cortes, "because our team of 19 Board Certified radiologists and support staff are concerned about patients' psychological as well as physical well-being, and we do everything in our power to support both."

RAO's TimberRidge facility accepts appointments for the Oasis™ Open MRI to patients with a doctor's referral. "Its wide table gives it an open, airy feeling, and it can accommodate patients up to 660 pounds," says Dr. Brian Cartwright. "It allows us to offer MRI's diagnostic capabilities, accuracy and safety to more patients than ever before. We're proud to be a regional leader in MRI technology."

RAO's Medical Imaging Center offers extended weekday hours and Saturday appointments, so getting the tests you need is easier than ever. When you need an MRI or other diagnostic test, ask your doctor about RAO. No one does more to provide the most innovative, accurate and caring diagnostic and therapeutic services.



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STAYING FIT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

It's that time of year! The time of year where we make glorious memories with friends and family, and it's also the time of year that we inevitably pack on the pounds. Although, that's not necessarily the way that it has to go for you, because Lifestyle Solutions MedSpa has some beneficial tips for maintaining and even possibly losing weight along the way.

A few guidelines to keep you on track

- Drink plenty of water
- Eat the vegetable crudité platter instead of the fried appetizers
- Work out in the morning of a big event or family get together
- Eat a healthy breakfast and lunch before the big meal. Don't wait to stuff yourself full later in the day.
- Eat one plate. Don't reach for seconds
- Enjoy one small dessert if you so desire
- Limit your alcoholic beverages
- Get back on track the very next day!

The biggest tip of all is to go easy on yourself. It's the Holidays, not that it's an excuse to completely overindulge, but it is a time for rejoicing, reflecting, socializing and enjoying family and friends. So, not that you should go "all-out" and ruin all of your hard earned work at staying healthy, but you do deserve to enjoy yourself. Whether that's a glass of wine, a piece of pie, or a boat load of gravy, just remember that the following day, you have to hit the workout routine and healthy eating plan hard. It's all about getting back in the saddle again.

You'll most likely feel a bit sluggish or tired, but that's ultimately the carb and fat pardon that you allowed yourself. This sometimes is a good trick for your metabolism. It's what many people refer to as "The good workout for your metabolism." This absolutely cannot be common place though, otherwise known as, "the downward death spiral of eating." The fact that it may or may not trick your metabolism into burning more fat, is of great debate, and is most likely just an excuse to eat the foods that are normally off limits. But truth be told, in some cases it actually might spike your metabolisms response in just the right way the following day with a better outcome once you resume your normal routine and exercise plan.



So never fear, the holidays are here and your determination and planning ahead, will help you to conquer the battle of the bulge.

At Lifestyle Solutions MedSpa, their philosophy is that successful weight management is the result of simple changes, healthy lifestyle choices and knowledgeable support. By utilizing a medically based multi-disciplinary approach, they have developed a comprehensive program using state-of-the-art techniques combined with tried-and-true weight loss methods to help you achieve your goals and maintain them. Their skilled team of physicians and lifestyle coaches, are led by highly experienced bariatric physician, Michael M. Holloway, M.D., along with Executive Director Shannon M. Holloway, which are both dedicated to providing highly personalized care. They offer weekly consultations with Lifestyle Coaches and customized food and exercise plans created by dietitians that take into account

your preferences and are designed to keep you motivated. Additionally, they offer aesthetic enhancement services including facials, Restylane® and Botox® injectable and other body contouring anti-aging treatments to help you look and feel your best.

For more information, or to schedule a consultation, call Lifestyle Solutions MedSpa at 352-368-2148 today! The only thing you've got to lose is stubborn fat!

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STOP OVERLOOKING SIGNS OF INCONTINENCE

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

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

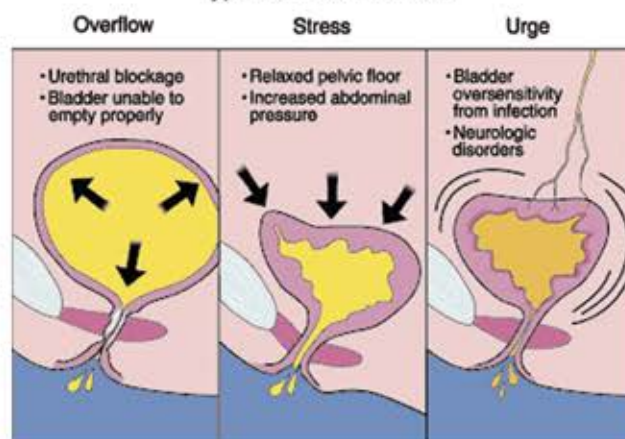
In this article we will address some particular issues about urge incontinence. Urinary urge incontinence (UUI) is defined as a sudden uncontrollable urge to urinate with or without frequent urination and associated leakage of urine. With urge incontinence, the bladder contracts and squeezes out urine involuntarily.

Accidental urination can be triggered by:

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

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

Types of Incontinence



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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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Stem Cells—Setting the New Standard for Treatment of Orthopedic Conditions

WHAT ARE STEM CELLS?

Over the past several years, stem cell and PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma) therapy have soared in popularity and are highly sought after treatment options, as a natural and non-surgical alternative to treat many common orthopedic conditions.

Our bodies naturally produce stem cells. Because micro-damage occurs constantly, all body tissues are struggling to keep up with growth and healing in the face of continual wear and tear. In normal healing, platelets from the blood travel to the injured area to stop the bleeding. They then initiate three phases of healing: inflammation, proliferation and remodeling. Released growth factors from the platelets serve as signals to orchestrate the needed repair to the damaged area and begin to regenerate new tissue. Stem cells are also called to the area. Sometimes this process is impaired and unable to overcome the process of degeneration. As we get older, wear and tear begins to outpace growth and healing. Stem cells become less abundant and less effective.

Stem cells obtained from the patient's bone marrow and concentrated platelets from the blood can be injected into the injured region(s) under precise ultrasound and/or X-ray guidance to assist the body in healing the chronic injury and improving the pain and function.

TREATABLE TISSUES

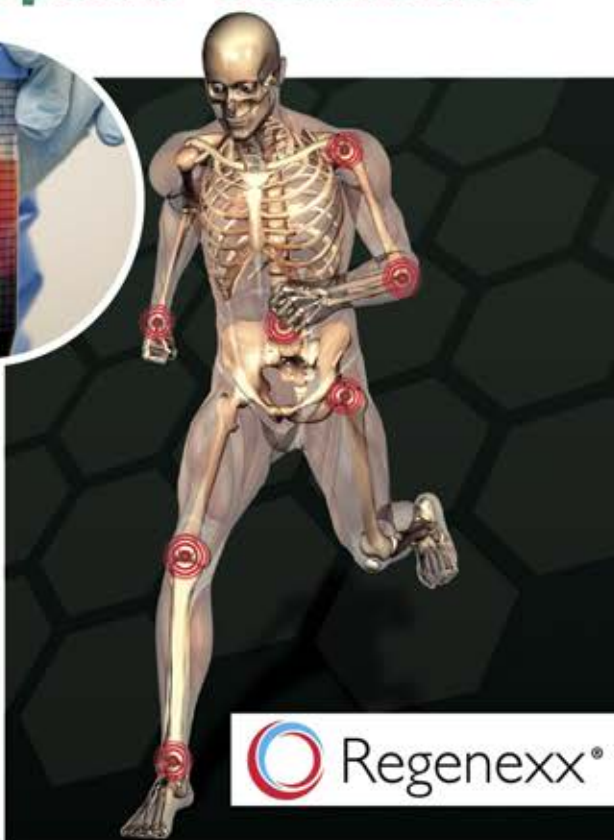
**Ligaments • Tendons • Joints/Cartilage • Muscles
Nerves • Bone • Meniscus/Labrum
Degenerated/Bulging/Torn Discs**

CAUTION—NOT ALL STEM CELLS AND STEM CELL DOCTORS ARE THE SAME

Patients should be vigilant when choosing physicians for this type of therapy. Because patients are requesting stem cell and PRP injections for their orthopedic problems, many medical offices are beginning to offer this treatment strategy. Unfortunately, many practitioners are poorly qualified and misguided. Some of these injectors are doing it blindly, without image-guidance and with inferior laboratory techniques resulting in poorer quality stem cell and PRP solutions. Others are treating everything under the sun with "stem cells". This should be a red flag.

THE REGENEXX DIFFERENCE

Since 2005, Regenexx has led the way in advancing this new field of Interventional Regenerative Orthopedics with a fervent commitment to researching and publishing the scientific and



clinical data – more than 50% of the world's orthopedic stem cell research has been published by Regenexx. Affiliated doctors are highly trained musculoskeletal experts who are skilled at precise image guided injections utilizing ultrasound and X-ray. This exclusive group of doctors have been hand-picked to be part of this network and then further trained in highly refined procedural and laboratory techniques.

With Regenexx, all patients are tracked by a team of professional researchers in the only national registry database of its kind, containing nearly 40,000 procedures. With this, safety and outcomes can be better analyzed and followed. No other stem cell organization offers this combination of successful persistent effort.

The Regenexx SD procedure can provide 10 to 20 times the amount of stem cells obtained than by any other available techniques. The stem cells are taken from the bone marrow, through a virtually painless harvesting procedure. Beware of doctors offering fat derived stem cell procedures for orthopedic problems. This is a clear violation of FDA regulation. Fat derived stem cells are also much less studied, are less effective than bone marrow derived stem cells for orthopedic tissue, and are associated with more procedural complications. And be very wary of doctors offering "amniotic" or "placental stem cells". Laboratory research by Regenexx has found these products to be devoid of actual living stem cells.

Dr. James Leiber

James Leiber, DO, is the founder and medical director of New reGeneration Orthopedics of Florida. He is a former officer, physician, and educator in the Air Force, including personal physician to the **vice president and president at the White House**. He is triple board certified in: Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (AOBNMM), Pain Medicine, and Family Medicine (ABFM), as well registered in Musculoskeletal Sonography (RMSK).



Dr. Leiber specializes in Interventional Regenerative Orthopedics with years of experience and is honored to have been the **first Regenexx Network Provider in Florida since 2012** offering the nation's most advanced non-surgical stem cell and platelet treatments (PRP) for injuries and arthritis under precise image guidance utilizing ultrasound and fluoroscopy (X-ray).

These types of injections are natural and safe having the potential of re-growing normal tissue and eliminating the need for surgery in many cases. Conditions treated involve ligament, tendon, joint, muscle, nerve and spine related pain. For more information on these procedures, visit www.NewreGenOrtho.com, or make an appointment by calling (941) 357-1773. info@newregenortho.com

In research by Regenexx, patients with knee osteoarthritis showed that greater than 90 % feel major improvement with several years of lasting results, even with "bone on bone" arthritis using Regenexx protocols. Many conditions can be successfully treated, ranging from tendon and ligament tears to arthritis to disc herniations, and avascular necrosis (death of bone).

Additionally, Regenexx performs culture-expanded treatments in which isolated stem cells are grown to much larger quantities before precise placement – and can be cryopreserved, saving them for future treatments. This procedure (Regenexx-C) takes place in Regenexx's Cayman Island facility and can be the best choice for certain advanced conditions.

For patients suffering from pain related to chronic injury, the first step to improving their quality of life is to talk to an experienced Regenexx physician who can provide accurate and realistic expectations regarding these new and exciting treatment options.



New reGeneration Orthopedics of Florida

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COOKBOOKS

to Benefit Cancer Patients in Need Now on Sale

The nonprofit 21st Century C.A.R.E. foundation is proud to announce that cookbooks to benefit cancer patients are now available for purchase. Proceeds from the cookbook will be used to provide financial assistance to cancer patients in need.

The cookbook is titled "Caring Recipes for the 21st Century Volume II" and can be purchased at 21st Century Oncology's offices in Ocala or Beverly Hills, or online for \$15. This is the second cookbook from the foundation, and this volume has all new recipes, illustrations, guides, and a recipe pocket to store your own recipes. The cookbooks are easy-to-read and professionally printed with a spiral bound.

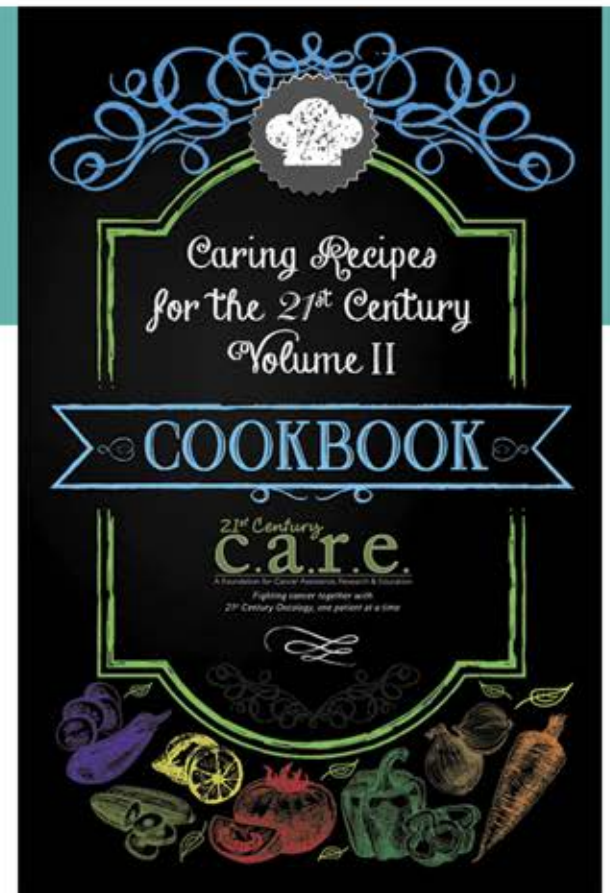
"Our first cookbook was a great success so we are very excited to do this again to further help cancer patients in need," says Solomon Agin, D.D., Chairman of the Board & President of 21st Century C.A.R.E. "This is one way to help patients financially while providing delicious dishes doing it."

21st Century C.A.R.E. is a nonprofit charitable foundation dedicated to helping cancer patients through financial assistance, cancer education and cancer screenings.

Purchasing a cookbook is a great way for the residents of Marion and Citrus Counties to help their neighbors in a practical way while also gaining some favorite homemade recipes.

21st Century C.A.R.E. is anticipating a great demand for this cookbook so be sure to order yours today by calling Helen Greene at (352) 615-5600 or visiting www.21stcenturycare.org/fundraising-cookbook.

For more information, visit: www.21stcenturycare.org



About the 21st Century C.A.R.E. Foundation: Started in 1996, the mission of this nonprofit charitable foundation is to provide financial aid to cancer patients in need, and provide cancer education at the community level to patients, care providers and the general public.

Throughout the year, 21st Century C.A.R.E. visits communities across the country to conduct a number of cancer screening programs, including for skin, head and neck, colorectal and prostate cancers. 21st Century C.A.R.E. is well known for its financial assistance program that provides help for cancer patients through basic expenses like transportation to appointments, groceries, medical supplies, temporary housing and childcare. The foundation's belief is that by not having to worry about these necessities, cancer patients can concentrate on what is really important – beating their disease.

21st Century
c.a.r.e.

A Foundation for Cancer Assistance, Research & Education

*Fighting cancer together with
21st Century Oncology, one patient at a time*

www.21stcenturycare.org

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WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS?



By Jennifer Toro-Galarza, M.D.
Internal Medicine - Munroe Regional Medical Center

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne disease that was first documented in a human in 1952. Nowadays the virus has made its way to the Caribbean, South America and now has arrived to the United States. In order for us to be prepared against it we should know how this virus spreads, its manifestations, possible complications and what to do to decrease its incidence. The first identified outbreak in United States is documented in Florida Miami Dade and Broward counties this June 2016. Recently the CDC announced advisory to people who are traveling to South Florida in regards to blooming Zika virus in the area. Florida health department has confirmed around 783 cases of this virus involving all the counties of Florida. So what should we know about zika virus in order to be prepared?

It can be transmitted due to a bite of an infected mosquito, mother to fetus transmission, sexual intercourse, blood transfusions, organ transplant and laboratory worker exposure. We need to be paying attention to the transmitter of this disease which is the Aedes species mosquito which is also known to be the vector for dengue and chikungunya which are very similar to Zika. If we all take the precautions recommended by the CDC we could limit the spread of it.

Now we know how it is transmitted, what if you have been exposed? Most people who contract Zika Virus may be asymptomatic, however carry the infection. Symptoms of Zika are very similar to those from a dengue virus, which are: low grade fever that typically lasts from 2-7 days, a rash, pain in your small joints (hands and feet), muscle aches, headache and red eyes. Adults and children may present with similar symptoms and immunity occurs following infection. In order to be informed we need to recognize these symptoms and seek help with our provider in order to get tested. At this moment there are no vaccines for it and to treat the condition is mainly done so through symptom relief. The FDA has approved several diagnostic tests which are based on molecular testing. Now is



even recommended that all pregnant women who have recently spent any time near the Miami-Dade county be tested for Zika virus even if asymptomatic.

The reason why this virus is worrisome is not the actual disease which is self-limited but it's complications which can be very serious. It has been associated with a congenital malformation called microcephaly. Microcephaly means that a fetus head is not fully developed and in consequence may have smaller brain that will result in developmental delays. Other complications of microcephaly are: hearing loss, seizures, speech problems, vision problems, balance and coordination problems. Also pregnant women might be at risk of fetal loss secondary to this infection. Due to this a lot of warnings have been made in regards to pregnant females traveling on their first trimester to any area below 6500 feet which have mosquito transmission ongoing. The list of territories with warnings of Zika virus keep on growing so it is wise to visit the website of the CDC to get the full list before traveling.

A more serious complication associated to Zika virus is Guillain-Barre syndrome. This is an autoimmune mediated neuropathy which manifests as fairly symmetric ascending muscle paralysis. The weakness that develops in Guillain-Barre can vary from leg weakness that can make it difficult to walk, to more serious extent where there is complete paralysis of our diaphragm which is one of the muscles that helps us to breathe. In other

words this paralysis may lead to death or other complications. This is a medical emergency that needs to be taken promptly to an ER. Other serious conditions associated with Zika are meningoencephalitis and brain ischemia.

What should we do to prevent an epidemic?

This is where we as an individual play our part to decrease its incidence. First of all, since we know this disease is mainly transmitted by a mosquito we can start by decreasing the likelihood of a mosquito bite. Use EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) registered insect repellent, when outdoors wear long sleeved shirts, use air conditioning when available, use screens on windows and doors, remove standing water container and cover tightly water storage containers. If you have to travel make sure to check for travel notices and plan ahead. Since it has been found that the virus can be transmitted through sexual intercourse it is also recommended to practice safe sex using barrier contraception which can decrease incidence of zika virus. Pregnant women should avoid traveling to areas where zika contact is a possibility and if they have to do so they should contact their healthcare provider. In conclusion, we should all be informed in the developments of these virus and how it can affect us.



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f t p i

5 Ways to Beat the Holiday Frenzy

By Dana Hall McCain

Around December 15th of last year, a mom at my kids' school looked at me, with hollow eyes, and said, "It's official: December is worse than May." The jam-packed schedule of holiday school festivities, church events, neighborhood gatherings, and the ever-growing list of what it takes to make Christmas "special" for your family had sapped her of all its intended joy. For many families, December has turned into an endurance test, rather than a season of rest, reflection, and celebration.

Here's the deal: You're in charge of you. Period. Most of the crushing busyness of Christmas is made up of things we can simply say "no" to. How do I know? I've been doing it for a couple of years, and my family's life is better for it.

Will someone occasionally do a double take when you're bold enough to say, "Thank you, but we won't be able to make it this year." or "My child won't be participating in the children's choir holiday extravaganza." (with its 15 rehearsals)? Maybe. Does it matter? Only if you value *appearing* to enjoy the celebration of the birth of Christ over actually *enjoying* the celebration of the birth of Christ. If they think you're nuts, you're probably doing something right.

Bottom line: We've all participated in the creation of this negative cultural phenomenon, and we're the only ones who can turn it around.

1. Scale back the gift-giving this year.

Are you, like me, guilty of turning the practice of giving a token of Christmas generosity to loved ones into a time-consuming and expensive train wreck? Every extra gift on that list is one more thing to pay for, one more thing to drive to the store to pickup, and one more thing to wrap. Here are some ways you might scale back:

- A few years ago, I talked with my brothers and sisters-in-law about the challenge. I suggested that we let our children participate in a gift exchange by drawing a name out of a hat and buying one gift for that person, rather than each family buying something for every niece and nephew. The kids love it.



It also created a new Thanksgiving tradition — as that's when they have the big drawing to see who will buy for whom! Gifts marked off my list: Four.

- Rather than receiving a litany of small and large gifts from "Santa," our children receive three each year — no more, no less. When they were children, we explained that Santa brings three gifts to children to remind them of the wise men who brought gifts to Baby Jesus. Gifts marked off my list: An infinite number that mathematicians speak of with reverence.

- No matter how short or long your list, keep your gift budget in check. To download our Money-Saving Christmas Gift Planner, go to imom.com.

2. Scale back the decorating.

Confession: I'm a Christmas decor snob. I don't like artificial greenery and much prefer to have wreaths and garland made from fresh material. The problem? Buying fresh greenery is expensive, unless you do lots of prep work yourself. I used to do this year-after-year and, all the while,

my heart was shrinking to Grinch-like proportions under the weight of the task. One day, while sitting on my back porch surrounded with piles of evergreen branches and floral wire, whispering bad words under my breath, I had a moment of clarity: I don't have to do this! Even if the garland is fake or doesn't exist at all, Christmas will still come! I made a nice bonfire out of the remaining branches and watched my evergreen anxiety drift away like the sparks in the crisp December air.

3. Scale back the need to accept invitations.

Let's revisit what an invitation is, shall we? It's just a little piece of paper letting you know that if you'd *like* to attend an event, your company would be welcomed. You're not obligated or required by law to go to any social gathering. Afraid of offending your host? Don't be. Just practice the art of the very gracious decline. It sounds something like this: "Thank you so much for inviting us for dinner. It sounds like so much fun! Unfortunately, we have a conflict that evening and won't be able to make it. I do hope we can do it another time. Thanks again for including us!" (If this seems like overkill, you should know that I'm Southern. Our communication and our tea are insanely sweet.) Besides, scheduled time on the sofa with your husband and kids is a legitimate conflict. Perhaps the most legitimate one you'll ever have.

4. Don't let the Church Ladies intimidate you.

I remember the first year I decided the "Children's All-Star Christmas Extravaganza/Play/Concert With Live Goats in the Manger" at my church was more than we could really handle. When I emailed the children's choir director to let her know (weeks in advance) that my grammar school daughter wouldn't be able to participate, she was shocked. Disappointed. Saddened by our abject lack of love for Baby Jesus. For a time, I tried to explain that we really do love Baby Jesus, and that He was the reason we were trying to make our holiday more contemplative and less action-packed. But she didn't want to hear it. In her mind, we didn't care much for the Baby Jesus and held a chilling disregard for small farm animals. I knew in my heart that I do love Jesus *and* goats, and if she didn't understand, it was fine. With the 15 extravaganza rehearsals off the books, we had time for some family Christmas devotions and more. It was...perfect.



5. Don't pretend to be Martha if you're not.

For some people, all things baking and crafty come very naturally. They love to scour Pinterest for neat ways to package Christmas treats for neighbors and happily hum eighteen verses of "Angels We Have Heard on High" while putting it all together. It's their native language. But for those of us who speak other languages, let's drop the need to pretend. Rather than stressing yourself out giving the kinds of gifts to friends and neighbors you think they expect, figure out what comes naturally to you. For instance, my neighbor, Rhoda, gives a small gift to the local food bank in

our honor each year, and they provide her with a card to give us, making us aware of the contribution. We love it. I have another friend who writes a personal note to nearby families and includes a unique scripture chosen just for us in each one. Christmas cheer can look like many different ways, so don't be afraid to get outside the box!



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GETTING THE MOST FROM RELATIONSHIPS AS WE LIVE LONGER

You know the saying, "Only the good die young," but that's just an old wives tale. Being one of the leading plastic surgery offices in the Tampa Bay area, this "Getting the Most out of Relationships" article may sound like a strange topic to address for Image Lift Facial Plastic Surgery. After all, they typically deal with making people more beautiful, addressing cosmetic concerns, like making noses straighter, creating facial balance, plumping with fillers, neck lifts and tackling anti-aging. Nevertheless a good deal of their practice includes medically necessary plastic surgery. They have an all-encompassing practice and they proudly do it with the utmost care and expertise.

The issue at hand is not just to look younger, or to improve upon a preexisting cosmetic issue, but it's how can we live longer, and how can we get the most out of the relationships in our lives? Isn't that essentially what most of us want? If you ask yourself the ultimate question, your answer most likely is that you want to live to a good ole age, not too old, but old enough to see the important things in your families lives, and to make a difference in this world.

The latter is of extreme importance for most people. They want to believe that they've made a difference in the world's advancement somehow. They want to be loved and to have given love. But do you want to know what's the most beneficial thing for your overall health and longevity? It's being able to give to the needy, show love and compassion to others, and to connect with people through genuine acts of kindness. That's it! It's a simple model of what life is about. You give and you most likely receive, even though the receiving part is discretionary, of course.

There are multiple studies on individuals that have lived past the age of 100. Although very important for overall health, these individuals usually were not that focused on eating well, or vigorously exercising daily. What they all typically have in common is that they were great humanitarians, and they were well loved, because they showed love.



It's a simple cause and effect. Most of these people did not set out to be loved and receive it in return, and that's the key! They just wanted to be a resource for others around them and to make the world a better place right in their own backyards with selfless ambition.

Do something great today—love someone that doesn't necessarily fit your normal criteria. Make a difference in someone's life. It's the perfect time of year to offer up your talents, your comforting words or your empathy. Do something that will bless you more than you intended, because you just might be surprised at how internally good it makes you feel to help someone in need. The longer you live, the more good you can do! You'll not only feel better, but you'll look more beautiful to others as well.

Rich Castellano, M.D. is an experienced facial rejuvenation artist, whose specialties include the latest laser and filler techniques. He has developed a specialized approach for effective results, giving him a reputation as a highly referred facial plastic surgeon.

Attending the University of South Florida for both his undergraduate degree and medical school, he completed his surgical training at the prestigious Indiana University School of Medicine.

He went on to complete a fellowship year in Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery studying with some of the world's greatest experts in the field.

Dedicated to delivering world-class care to his patients, he utilizes his extensive experience in office-based facial plastic surgery to ensure the best outcomes. He has performed over 10,000 cosmetic procedures of the face and neck, making him one of the most experienced facial plastic surgeons in the U.S. today.

Rich Castellano, M.D. is a native of Tampa, Florida and is a family man blessed with a wonderful wife and three beautiful children. He is a practicing student of meditation and an avid reader. He and his wife also participate in mentoring efforts with an extensive list of worldwide contacts.

To find out more, or to book a consultation, please call 877.346.2435, or visit their website at ImageLift.com



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Health & Wellness SPOTLIGHT

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Sea Salt: Nature's Gift To Our Skin

by Deanna Renda

There is a natural product derived from evaporating small amounts of ocean water where the process leaves behind a loose crystalline substance. These crystals are coarse, irregularly shaped, yet potent with minerals and vitamins. These powerful crystals are what we call sea salt.

Known to be the healthier alternative to table salt, sea salt does not undergo any sort of processing, thus retaining its mineral content. Undoubtedly one of nature's best gifts, sea salt offers numerous health benefits like boosting immunity, keeping blood pressure in check, inflammation reduction, as well as balancing sugar levels in the bloodstream. Its positive effects do not apply only on the inside — externally, sea salt helps push toxins out of and provide nourishment to the skin. Thanks to its crystalline structure, sea salt is also a perfect natural exfoliator.

As somebody who has lived with psoriasis all her life, I personally swear by the powers of sea salt. Growing up with this skin condition and having tried almost all the available treatments out there, I must say nothing is as consistently effective as sea salt. This experience has led me to develop

our sea salt products such as the Sea Salt Scrub, Sea Salt Soap, and Pinch Of Mud Soap. Thousands of our customers rave about them for having helped ease their own skin issues and improve their overall wellness.

“Nothing is as consistently effective as sea salt.”

Our Sea Salt Soap is perfect for use as a cleanser on the face and body. It's good for all skin types, but it is especially ideal for those with eczema, psoriasis, and acne-prone skin. It gently exfoliates and detoxifies the skin, and balances pH levels. It contains no hardening agents, no laureth or lauryl sulfates.

The Sea Salt Scrub from Naples Soap Company is an exfoliation must-have. Our special blend of sea salt, shea butter, beeswax, grapefruit seed extract, and vitamin E, helps improve circulation in the extremities and reduces water retention while doing its core job removing dead skin.

Pinch Of Mud is one special product to have as it's a soap and a treatment mask in one. Made from Dead Sea mud, it removes toxins and pollutants accumulated on the skin and promotes the formation of new skin cells.



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DEANNA RENDA
Naples Soap Company
Founder & CEO

Combining her passion for people and products, Deanna Renda has taken Naples Soap Company from a tiny 300 square foot shop to a footprint of eight retail locations throughout Florida. Her passion, style, and client commitment has created a cult following for her products. Travelers come from all over the country to visit her unique stores and experience the fun, coastal, upscale ambiance which she has created. The stores are a reflection of her hometown of Naples' healthy lifestyle and attitude. The Naples Soap Company brand has become widely known throughout the US, Europe, and Japan. Daily shipments speed out of Renda's recently purchased 11,000 square foot warehouse and corporate office. The Company is poised to continue its phenomenal growth, and on track to complete a 20 store footprint within 5 years. Renda attributes the success of the Company to loyal clients who appreciate quality products and superior customer experience.



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Dr. Anand Kesari Offers Innovative Full Spectrum Endoscopy Procedure for Improved Early Detection of Colon Cancer

Gastro-Colon Clinic is one of the first in the nation to use EndoChoice's Fuse™ endoscope system to reduce the 'miss rate' of lesions during colonoscopy



Although colonoscopy exams prevent many colon cancer deaths¹ and are the gold standard, for detecting colorectal cancers,² the procedure is not completely effective in preventing cancer cases.³ For this reason, Gastro-Colon Clinic has invested in an innovative technology that significantly improves the accuracy of colonoscopy exams and can greatly reduce the number of potentially pre-cancerous lesions missed by standard, forward-viewing endoscopes.

The Fuse™ endoscope system from EndoChoice®, Inc. uses three small cameras at the tip of a flexible GI endoscope. "Unlike standard, forward-viewing endoscopes that use a single camera, the Fuse system lets doctors see nearly twice as much surface area," said Dr. Kesari.

"The Fuse endoscope is all about seeing more of the GI tract. It projects the expanded view on three screens to give physicians previously unseen views, such as behind colonic folds and difficult anatomy. We are pleased to offer this important new technology to our community."

1 Zuber AG, Winawer SJ, Waye JD, et al. Colonoscopic Polypectomy and Long-Term Prevention of Colorectal-Cancer Deaths. *N Engl J Med* 2012; 366:687-696

2 Rockey DC, Paulson E, Niedzwiecki D, et al. Analysis of air contrast barium enema, computed tomographic colonography, and colonoscopy: prospective comparison. *Lancet*. Jan 22-28 2005;365(9456):305-311

3 Brenner H, Chang-Claude J, Seiler CM, Sturmer T, Hoffmeister M. Potential for colorectal cancer prevention of sigmoidoscopy versus colonoscopy: population-based case control study. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. Mar 2007;16(3):494-499.



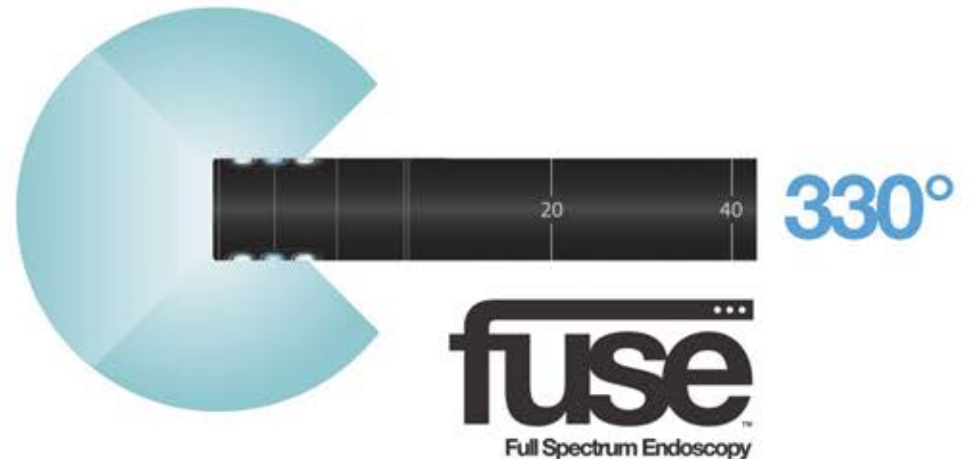
Dr. Anand Kesari



Standard Colonoscope Limited 170° Field of View



Fuse™ Colonoscope Panoramic 330° Field of View



The Fuse system recently received FDA 510(k) clearance for marketing in the U.S. "As an early adopter of the innovative Fuse system, Gastro-Colon Clinic is at the forefront of U.S. healthcare providers offering the best technology and procedures for detecting colorectal cancers," said Dr. Kesari. "Our team is proud to be using the new system in our ongoing effort to reduce cancer and provide the highest quality care to our patients."

In a multi-center trial conducted in the U.S., Europe and Israel, researchers performed a series of colonoscopies comparing standard, forward-viewing endoscopes and the new Fuse system.

The endoscope used in the first examination was selected randomly. After the first inspection, each patient immediately underwent a second colonoscopy performed by the same doctor, but with the competing endoscope. The 185 patient trial showed standard, forward-viewing endoscopes missed 41% of potentially pre-cancerous lesions,

or adenomas, while the Fuse system missed just 7%. Additionally, Fuse found 69% more adenomas when compared to standard, forward-viewing endoscopes. The results of this clinical study were presented at a major medical society meeting earlier this year and recently published in The Lancet Oncology.

"Standard, forward-viewing endoscopes provide up to 170 degrees of forward vision. The advantage of Fuse is that it allows endoscopists to examine twice the anatomy with a wide 330 degree view. This is especially advantageous because adenomas can be missed in difficult to find areas of the anatomy," said Dr. Kesari. "The findings are compelling and support the data from previous studies showing the limitations of standard, forward-viewing endoscopes. EndoChoice's innovative Fuse technology dramatically improves the effectiveness of this life-saving procedure. And improving the effectiveness of every procedure we perform here at Gastro-Colon Clinic is what we're all about."

Patient scheduling with the new Fuse system is now underway at Gastro-Colon Clinic. More than 15 million colonoscopies are performed across the United States each year and most insurance companies cover the costs for those patients over age 50.



Gastro-Colon Clinic Dr. Anand Kesari

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Physio Med's Vestibular Rehab

By Michael B. Smith
Vestibular Certified Physical Therapist

The term Vestibular refers to what is more commonly known as the "inner ear". The Vestibular system is made up of an identical left and right structure which consist of 3 circular canals connected to a chamber like structure. The Vestibular system is one of three key components to our balance system.

Vestibular problems present in two primary ways: Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV) or Vestibular hypofunction.

BPPV occurs when calcium crystals in the main chamber of the Vestibular complex become dislodged and enter into one of the fluid filled circular canals. The symptoms of this are typically an acute case of Vertigo (room appears to be spinning) with any of the following movements, rolling over in bed, lying down, sitting up, and bending over. It can be accompanied by minimal to severe nausea.

Vestibular issues are usually caused by age related changes or head trauma. BPPV can typically be treated in 2-3 treatments by identifying the problematic side and the affected circular canal, and moving the head through a prescribed set of movements to move the crystals out of the circular canals.

The second most common type of Vestibular problems is vestibular hypofunction. The left and right vestibular complexes work together to give the brain information about balance and how we are moving around. A hypofunction occurs when one side is not sending information at the same rate as the other side. The symptoms of a Vestibular hypofunction typically includes increased staggering while



Mike Smith, Vestibular Certified Physical Therapy
Treating a Patient for BPPV

walking, dizziness, and loss of balance when looking from side to side. Some may experience trouble standing with their eyes closed (washing your hair in the shower) and/or difficulty standing and walking in a dimly a room.

Vestibular hypofunction is treated with a combination of strength training, compensatory strategies, and Vestibular adaptation to improve the function of the Vestibular system and improve your other balance systems related to vision and strength.

If either of these conditions sounds familiar, contact your primary care provider to request a referral, or our office for further information.

Wim Vergauwen, MPT, CMT - Owner
Certified Manual Therapist



Wim was born in Belgium and received his Master's degree in Physical Therapy in 1991 from the University of Leuven, Belgium. He also received his European Master's degree of Adapted Physical Activities in 1992 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Wim has more than 25 years experience in outpatient facilities. He is respected throughout his field for his competence and expertise in the treatment of spinal disorders. Wim has been an adjunct instructor for the Physical Therapy program at the University of Central Florida, and as a Certified Manual Therapist, he has also been an instructor of continuing education courses.

Scottie Bull, PT, CLT-LANA - Owner
Certified Lymphedema Therapist



Scottie received her Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy from the University of Central Florida. She has been an outpatient therapist since her graduation on 1997. She has over 20 years of experience in outpatient rehabilitation settings and in 2001 she began specializing in the treatment of Lymphedema. That same year, she implemented a Lymphedema support group which continues to meet monthly. In 2009, Scottie met her professional goal of achieving national certification as a lymphedema therapist from the lymphology Association of North America (LANA). Currently, she is the only LANA certified therapist in Lake County.



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- ...and many more



Are There Side Effects?

There are no long term side effects. Occasionally, some discomfort such as headache, slight nausea or flu like symptoms are apparent. There may even be some increase in pain level at first, fortunately these side effects are rare and usually only follow the first 1-3 sessions.

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Fish Oil, Salmon Oil, Cod Liver Oil, Krill Oil: What's the Difference?

By Bo Martinsen, MD

Today, the omega-3 industry is specializing more than ever. On the supermarket shelf, you don't just find fish oil any longer, but a broad range of products under that main heading.

As we get a greater selection of omega-3 products, how do you decide what to pick? One helpful method is to consider the source of the oil.

Regular Fish Oil

Fish oil is in many ways a wide category term. It's oil made from fish. If you are talking about fish oil, you could mean an oil coming from a particular variety, including cod or salmon. For the rest of this article, however, I'm going to discuss regular fish oil as a specific category, and one that is manufactured in a different way from cod liver and salmon oils.

The great majority of the world's fish oil is a byproduct of the animal feed industry (1). This includes the capsule products sold at Walgreens and Costco, as well as the fish oil used as a base for pharmaceutical omega-3 oils. The oil comes from anchovy, herring, sardines and mackerel, typically fished off the coast of South America, North Africa or China. While the fish meat gets ground into pellet feed, the oil is multi-purposed. Some of it goes towards fish feed and pet food. The rest is refined and encapsulated for human consumption. As the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten explained, there's often no quality control differentiation between the oil destined for people and animals before the refining process (2).

This origin story explains why regular fish oils typically taste and smell bad and often produce fishy burps. Since the main goal is to produce fishmeal, the manufacturers have little interest in maintaining the quality of the fish oil. The oil is usually extracted last and often goes rancid within a short period of time. New techniques enable manufacturers to make the oil taste less offensive. However, you can never restore a rancid fish oil back to freshness.

As for the nutritional profile, some of these fish oils have the highest omega-3 content – up to 30% combined EPA/DHA (3). On the other hand, half of the fats are saturated, or the double of what is found in salmon or cod liver oil. Depending on the fish oil product, it typically takes 8 to 10 large capsules to get a daily clinical dose of 3000 mg EPA/DHA.



Fish Oil Pros

- Contains the most EPA/DHA per oil dose.

Fish Oil Cons

- Byproduct from the animal feed industry.
- Typically rancid.
- Half of the fats are saturated.

Salmon Oil

Salmon oil sounds good. You visualize a beautiful salmon fillet, and imagine you get the same quality you would if you ate wild caught fish. The reality is not as pretty. Because salmon is an expensive fish, it's the leftovers – head, intestines and fins – that get turned into the oil, not the fillet. To be fair, those parts of the fish are fine to consume, so no negative comments there.

Most salmon oils, however, come from sea farmed salmon, which nutrition-wise is very different from its wild cousin. The fish delivers the same nutrition it gets, and sea farmed salmon typically gets its omega-3 from pellet feed. But how much omega-3? The problem is, it can be hard for consumers to determine what the farmed fish were fed, especially if the fish came from a foreign country.

What we do know is that sea farmed salmon usually contains much more omega-6 (4) and saturated fats than wild salmon (5). In addition, depending on the type of salmon, the EPA/DHA content is relatively low, typically ranging from 8 to 16% of the oil. That means, you would need twice as many salmon oil capsules to get the same EPA/DHA dose found in regular fish oil capsules.

As for getting a clinical dose of 3000 mg EPA/DHA, you would need around 20 capsules per day. That low dose also makes salmon oil more costly per omega-3 unit than typical fish oil capsules.

On the plus side, sea farmed salmon oil is often fresher than the wild version because the time from harvesting the fish to processing the oil is shorter.

If you happen to find a salmon oil that comes from wild salmon, the fatty acid balance resembles cod liver oil, but contains less omega-3. In addition, wild salmon oil is often rancid because of the long transportation time and because the fish is often stained with blood, which oxidizes the oil.

Salmon Oil Pros

- Often fresh because the time from harvest to processing is shorter.
- Lower in saturated fats than regular fish oils.

Salmon Oil Cons

- Typically made from sea-farmed salmon, which can be nutritionally and environmentally problematic.
- Low omega-3 levels compared to other types of fish oil products.
- Typically more expensive per EPA/DHA dose.

Cod Liver Oil

Cod liver oil is the original omega-3 source. Already in the 1700s, doctors were recommending cod liver oil for patients with joint pains, although its rich history dates back further (6). Considered a safe food product, cod liver oil is especially recommended for children and pregnant women in countries like Norway (it's worth noting, other omega-3 sources do not enjoy the same government-endorsed status) (7).

Part of the reason cod liver oil has been used for so many years is that the oil is easy to extract. The cod liver contains its omega-3 rich oil in small vacuoles. When the oil is extracted, there is limited amounts of rancidity-creating blood present. However, since the oil was historically left in open vats and exposed to heat and oxygen, the poor taste became notorious and limited its popularity. With modern technology and increased focus on freshness, cod liver oil has come a long way. For instance, Omega Cure® cod liver oil is tasteless and can even be used in chocolates or cookies.

Looking at the nutritional profile, cod liver oil is the only omega-3 source that also contains significant amounts of vitamin A and D*. As for the omega-3s, it typically contains around 20% EPA/DHA, and has only half the amount of saturated fats of regular fish oils. To get a clinical dose of 3000 mg EPA/DHA, you would need to consume one tablespoon (15 ml) of oil or 15 capsules.

Of course, not all cod liver oils are alike. While Omega Cure is a fresh, full-spectrum cod liver oil, store-bought cod liver oils are typically highly refined and rancid.

Cod Liver Oil Pros

- Long history of medicinal use and safety.
- Contains vitamin A and D.*
- Contains less saturated fats than regular fish oils.
- Often comes in liquid form, which makes it easier to get an effective dose.

Cod Liver Oil Cons

- If not manufactured correctly, vitamin A and D content may exceed dietary recommendations.

Krill Oil

Although not derived from fish, krill oil is also a popular omega-3 source. How does krill oil compare?

Like regular fish oils, krill oil is a byproduct from the animal feed industry where the main goal is to make feed for chicken or sea farmed fish. Compared to the above fish oil products, however, krill oil is much harder to extract. The manufacturers typically use solvents to extract the oil. In some cases, the use of these chemicals can have serious consequences. In 2012, for instance, chemicals caused a deadly explosion at one krill oil facility (8).

Depending on the product, krill oil typically contains somewhere between 15 to 25% EPA/DHA. Krill oil has become popular because the labels claim you only need one small capsule a day. Looking at the research, however, you have to wonder what that one capsule is supposed to be achieving. Even the krill oil manufacturers' own studies show that you need more

than 4 capsules per day to get any meaningful increase of omega-3 in the body (9). And if you look at the amount of EPA/DHA per capsule, it would take more than 20 capsules to reach a clinical dose of 3000 mg EPA/DHA.

So far, krill oil lacks the scientific support that cod liver oil and fish oil have in spades. The manufacturer's claim that the astaxanthin antioxidant renders additional benefits has not been proven, nor that the special phospholipid form makes any difference in terms of bioavailability relative to other fish oils (10, 11).

The krill oil manufacturers also struggle with rancidity issues. At the cost of 5 times as much per omega-3 unit than regular fish oil, you've got to wonder if krill oil is worth it. Particularly until researchers learn more about its efficacy and safety.

Krill Oil Pros

- The jury is still out on this one.

Krill Oil Cons

- Byproduct of the animal feed industry.
- Solvents are used to extract the omega-3, raising safety questions.
- Relatively expensive compared to other omega-3 products.
- Not enough studies to support manufacturers' claims of efficacy at recommended doses.



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What's the Main Message?

Taking a clinical EPA/DHA dose of any of these omega-3 oils should lower triglyceride levels in the blood. However, the manufacturing methods, the freshness factor, and the nutritional profiles of the oil will also impact clinical effects.

In many ways, we should stop talking about omega-3 in general and start clearly attributing the source of the omega-3 oil and the dose in reporting the results from new studies. Right now, it's as if we are making a judgement about the health benefits of grains, without mentioning whether we're discussing barley or wheat or quinoa, refined grains or whole grains.

As you go forth looking at different omega-3 supplements, consider the source and what that means for the daily dose you need to consume.

* The vitamin A and D in modern cod liver oils is unfortunately reduced due to necessary refining. One tablespoon of Omega Cure, for instance, contains only 30% of the daily vitamin A recommended and only 10% of the daily vitamin D recommended.

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Progesterone VS. Progestin (Bio-identical or Synthetic)

Hormonal Imbalance

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

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

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

What Are Bio-Identical Hormones?

In the U.S., bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) has been used since the 1930s. Results from hundreds of current medical studies looking at the use of BHRT show astounding improvements in patients' overall quality of life and their hormonal symptoms.

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

Bio-identical hormones are made from natural plant sources and are readily received by the body since they are identical to those hormones that the body produces for itself. Dosing or the amount of hormones being taken by a patient is just as important. When we are replacing the body's hormones, it would make sense to use physiologic doses or doses that are similar to the amounts of hormones naturally made in the body prior to menopause and not imbalanced or overly potent synthetic versions.



Progesterone vs Progestin

Oftentimes, the terms progesterone and progestin are used interchangeably; however, there is a huge difference between the two. Progesterone, and not progestin, is the natural bio-identical form of the hormone as opposed to progestin, which is the synthetic version found in manufactured products like Prempro.

Progesterone can be best thought of as a hormone balancer, especially for estrogens. It enhances the positive effects of estrogen while preventing any negative effects of estrogen dominance. Progesterone is the precursor, or hormone from which most of the other hormones are derived, including the estrogens and testosterone. Progesterone has a number of very important jobs in the body, including normalizing blood sugar levels and maintaining pregnancies. It also has a natural calming effect and diuretic properties.

On the contrary, synthetic progestin does not have as many benefits. In fact, it has more negative effects, such as miscarriages, weight gain, decreased sex drive, increased risk of breast cancer, high risk of fractures and osteoporosis, increased blood clotting risks, anxiety, depression, migraine headaches and other health related disorders.

Progesterone After a Hysterectomy

Opposite of what some uninformed physicians believe, women that have had a hysterectomy see just as many benefits with progesterone therapy. It has been widely studied and proven that bio-identical hormone replacement therapy with progesterone is just as important and beneficial for their health even after a hysterectomy. For women, progesterone is essential for all of life's stages, and it provides beneficial results outside of the uterus since progesterone receptors are imbedded in almost every cell in the body. Ultimately, women without a uterus still need progesterone therapy.

Progesterone After a Hysterectomy

Obviously, hormone replacement with bio-identical progesterone versus synthetic progestin is the best option considering it looks and acts just like the progesterone we make in our bodies. When hormone balance is achieved with bio-identical hormones, fewer side effects if any are observed. Just think, natural hormones have undergone safety and efficacy trials for as long as humans have walked the earth!

Custom Meds is an independently owned compounding pharmacy that has been in business since 1985. Compounding is the art and science of preparing personalized medications for patients. Compounded medications are "made from scratch" – individual ingredients are mixed together in the exact strength and dosage form required by the patient. Custom Meds is dedicated to working with the patient and the prescriber to customize a medication to meet the patient's specific needs. To find out more about bio-identical hormone replacement therapy or their many services, please call or stop by and see them today.

Jessica DiLeo, PharmD is a compounding pharmacist at Custom Meds, Inc. in Inverness, Florida. Dr. DiLeo received her doctorate of pharmacy in 2009 from the University of Florida and eventually became the owner of Custom Meds Compounding Pharmacy in 2011. She can be contacted at jessica@custommeds.com.



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SELLING YOUR HOME DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

It's the time of year that calendars are packed with holiday parties, budgets are strained by gift-giving and the roads are covered in freshly fallen snow. Alas, 'tis not the season for real estate. But the good news is that the few brave house-hunters who do venture out are serious about buying a house and stylish trimmings will make them want to ring in the new year in your home.

Holidays can be personal on a lot of levels, but you want to make sure your decor is neutral. You want to romance your buyer, not invite them to your Christmas party.

TRY THESE TIPS TO GET BUYERS IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT:

- **Clean and stage.** "Before you decorate, your house needs to be staged," Powers says. If your living room is already piled high with clutter and tchotchkes, your ceramic reindeer collection is only going to add to the sense of overcrowding.
- **Create a cozy vibe.** The less-is-more mantra of home staging may tempt you to forgo holiday cheer this year. But a few subtle touches like a bowl of pinecones, an evergreen wreath, or a pot of cider simmering on the stove can create a warm and festive feeling in your home.
- **Complement your palette.** Before you start untangling your tinsel, make sure your holiday collection matches your current decor. If your living room is painted a soothing ocean-blue hue, skip the clashing red garland and opt for white snowflakes or a silver glass-ball wreath. If you've got an earthy color scheme, accent with rich tones like cranberries, forest greens and gold.
- **Accentuate the positive.** Too many trimmings may distract buyers, but the right accessories can draw attention to your home's best features. Dangle mistletoe in an arched doorway, or display your menorah on the ledge of a bay window; just don't block a beautiful view with stick-on snowflake decals or clutter an elegant fireplace with personalized stockings.
- **Go light on lights.** Step away from the inflatable snowman, Clark Griswold. One man's "merry" is another man's "tacky," so tone down any garish light displays while your home is on the market. (No, your neighbors didn't pay us to say that.) Instead, use simple string lighting to play up your home's architecture or draw attention to the gorgeous fir tree in your front yard.
- **Be an equal-opportunity decorator.** Leave the life-sized Nativity scene in storage this year, because overtly religious flourishes may be off-putting to some buyers. "You want to keep neutrality throughout, so you can attract any type of buyer," Powers says. Not sure what qualifies? Powers adds, "No matter what your religion is, you're not going to feel offended by a nutcracker."
- **Mind the tree.** A tall Christmas tree can help you show off your two-story great room, but make sure the wide base won't overwhelm the floor space. If your living



area is on the small side, save space with a skinny tree. Swap the gaudy heirloom ornaments and trim your tree in a cohesive theme such as icicle lights and silver tinsel, for example, or blue and gold glass balls.

- **Clear the clutter.** A few decorations can stir the holiday spirit, but don't feel obliged to hang every last ornament. "A lot of people, when they decorate, tend to use all the extra space in their house," Powers says. "You still want each space to look as spacious as possible." Limit yourself to a few hints of holiday flair, but stash the rest in the basement for now. If you start to miss your Santa figurines, just remember that with a little luck, you'll be celebrating next year's holidays in a new home. And you can decorate that place any way you please.

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Underlying Reasons for Limb Swelling

By Alyssa Parker

Many people may experience complications after an operation due to the significant amount of trauma your body endures. Whether it's cancer related, non-cancer related, or a minor surgery, patients may develop post-operative symptoms such as swelling in a limb or a particular area of the body. Swelling in the limb which may appear to be temporary can later lead to chronic swelling known as lymphedema.

How the Lymphatic System Works

What does edema have to do with your lymphatic system? The lymphatic system serves as one of the body's main highways. Through its network of vessels and ducts, it works as a filtration system for body fluid entering into the blood stream. This fluid is referred to as "lymph" fluid, which is the interstitial fluid consisting of proteins, wastes, and a collection of white blood cells. The kidneys, skin, lungs, or intestines then eliminate the wastes that have been filtered out of the lymphatic vessels.

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is a degenerative condition which means it will only get worse over time without treatment. There is no cure for Lymphedema. Once a lymph node has been damaged, your lymphatic can become compromised. Over the years, as you get older, you may incur irreversible damage to the lymphatic system through medical procedures, injuries, or infection. Examples include cancer radiation, surgical lymph node removal, joint replacements, scarring of the lymphatic vessels through reoccurring infections i.e. cellulitis, or other health problems relating to gall bladder, kidneys, intestines, or reproductive organs. When an obstruction has occurred, a blockage in the lymph nodes can occur. The limb begins to swell with fluid because the lymphatic system is blocked/impaired, unable to move the fluid back into the circulatory system.

Compression Pump Treatment

One recognized treatment is using a compression pump. This is a safe and effective way to assist your body's lymphatic system in moving the lymph fluid which has accumulated in the limb and can cause painful swelling, non-healing wounds,



heaviness, and discomfort decreasing your mobility. The compression pump is a gentle massaging technique that compresses in a rhythmic cycle, similar to that of a normally functioning lymphatic system that has not been damaged.

Possible Symptoms of Lymphedema

- Swelling in your legs or arms
- A feeling of heaviness or tightness
- A restricted range of motion
- Aching or discomfort
- Recurring infection/cellulitis
- Hardening or thickening of the skin on your arms or legs

It is important to rule out other causes of edema including nutritional issues, allergies and reactions to medication you may be on. True Lymphedema should not be treated with Diuretics as they draw from the Venus system not the Lymphatic system. Removing fluid from the body in this fashion takes away the wastes' only means of transport and can lead to serious recurrent infections or cellulitis since the lymph waste is now trapped in the limb and has no place to go. If symptoms return when you cease Diuretics, you should be asking questions and seeing a specialist immediately. This is where choosing a physician experienced in recognizing and treating Lymphedema is critical.

Some Good Questions to Ask Your Physician Include:

- Does my family have a history of swelling (Hereditary Lymphedema)?
- Stemmer's sign present?
- Pitting (push your finger into your skin and count how long it takes to return) or skin hardening?
- Hemosiderin staining (port wine skin stains or "red socks") appear from the ankles down?
- Traumatic injury or surgery potentially damaging Lymph nodes (Hip replacements, etc)?
- Radiation to Lymph areas?



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Healthy Holidays To You!

By Karina Hammer, Certified Health & Wellness Coach

It's that time of the year again! It's time to celebrate the holidays with parties, get-togethers, corporate dinners, and of course the endless family celebrations. While the holidays can sneak up on us, every year doesn't mean the pounds have to follow. The average American will gain 7-10 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Now, don't let that happen to you this holiday season. Temptations will be knocking at every door. Friends giving you boxes of chocolate or bottles of wine, Grandma's homemade warm apple pie (and don't forget the ice cream), Aunt Martha's cheesy potato casserole, and even grocers putting out their array of colorful and mouth-watering cookies, pies, and exquisite holiday pastries are just the beginning. However, there is no need to deprive your taste buds this holiday season. Instead, try something new this year. Make your New Year's resolution before the holidays even begin.

Resolution: Making this holiday season a season full of making better choices for a healthier you.

Follow these healthy eating tips so you can look and feel your best during the holidays.

Top 10 Healthy Holiday Tips:

1. Don't make a meal with the appetizers. Remember that appetizer is "any small portion that stimulates a desire for more." Take one or two and wait for the second course, which will help you avoid overeating.
2. Plan ahead. Eat lighter meals on the days you have a holiday party to attend. Snack on nuts, fruits and vegetables before heading out the door.
3. If you're the host, send your guests away with some leftovers. This lets them enjoy something at home and saves you from eating all of the leftovers yourself.
4. On average, it takes your stomach 20 minutes to produce hormones that tell your brain you're full. So, eat slowly and you'll feel full faster with less food. This is a good tip for any meal, not just during the holidays.



5. Socialize away from the buffet, dessert table, or even the candy dish. We tend to eat more if the temptation is right in front of us.

6. Keep moving. Take your family or dog for a nice brisk walk before or after dinner.

7. Stay hydrated with the legendary H2O. Limit your soda, alcohol and caffeine consumption. Alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating; non-alcoholic beverages can be full of calories and sugar.

8. Take the focus off food. Turn candy and cookie making time into non-edible projects like making wreaths, dough art decorations or a gingerbread house. Plan group activities with family and friends that aren't all about food. Try serving a holiday meal to the community, playing games or going on a walking tour of decorated homes.

9. Bring your own healthy dish to a holiday gathering.

10. Practice healthy holiday cooking. Preparing favorite dishes with more fresh fruits and vegetables, and making it from scratch will help promote healthy holiday eating.

Incorporate Healthy Recipes and Activities

Enjoy the holidays, plan a time for activity, incorporate healthy recipes into your holiday meals, and don't restrict yourself from enjoying your favorite holiday foods. In the long run, your mind and body will thank you.

About Karina Hammer



Karina Hammer is dedicated to educating and empowering busy women to honor and nourish themselves so they can have more energy, lose weight and live a happier, healthier and more fulfilling life.

To learn more about staying healthy during the holidays or to decide if health coaching is right for you, I invite you to schedule a complimentary 30 minute consultation with me. During this session, we will discuss how I can best support you in achieving your goals. Available for in-person or phone consultations to carefully design and develop an individualized wellness program that will change your life. Please contact me at health@karinahammer.com if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment.

VISITING LOVED ONES AT CARE FACILITIES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Freedom Pointe at The Villages – a Brookdale Life Care Community

During the holiday season our thoughts often turn to visiting friends or loved ones in nursing homes. The visits, while strongly recommended by those involved in healthcare and aging, are sometimes very emotional. It is recommended to first plan ahead to ensure your visit is rewarding for both the resident and yourself.

The following tips should be considered when visiting a long-term care facility to get the most from the visit:

- Check the visiting hours beforehand. If your schedule does not allow you to visit during regular hours, contact the nursing facility social worker or administrator. Do not show up unannounced or just “drop by.”
- Call ahead to the facility to inquire if the resident needs any personal items, clothing or other necessities.
- Arrange a time when the visit will not interfere with meals or medications.
- Let the facility know if you want to share a meal with the resident.
- Inquire about pet visits and limitations. Many residents have “roommates” who may be allergic to animals.
- Children of all ages are generally welcome. Young children rarely react negatively to nursing home residents, but teenagers and older children may need time to adjust.
- Specialized care units may have different visiting hours and regulations. Always call first.
- Always consider including the resident in holiday meals at home and other outings.

If you are visiting for the first time, give yourself a chance to adjust. The surroundings are perceived differently by you more than they are to your friend or relative. Ask the Manager or administrator what to expect.

Most of all, be supportive of the resident and his/her decisions. Consider engaging in activities that are both stimulating and productive.



Things to do during the visit:

- Attend an activity at the facility together
- Take a walk, either inside or outside
- Watch a favorite TV show together
- Read to the resident from a favorite book or magazine
- Reminisce or work on a photo album together
- Write letters or cards together. As people age, handwriting becomes more difficult and less legible. Help with clear addresses on postcards or envelopes.
- Record, either on videotape or audio, the resident's remembrances. You will look back on these moments and cherish them.

Most of all enjoy your time with the resident. Remember – this can be beneficial for both of you, and most importantly, the short time you spend will be cherished for a long time afterward by the resident.

If you have a cold or have flu symptoms, please refrain from visiting at this time, due to the vulnerability of your loved ones and other residents.

Call us today at (352) 674-3100 to schedule your personal visit.



1550 El Camino Real, The Villages, FL 32159
352.674.3100 | brookdale.com

The Greatest Love Story

By Jodi Thomas

We all love a great Love Story. You've Got Mail. Pretty Woman. Cinderella. Pride and Prejudice. There's just something about these stories when the rich guy falls head over heels for the not-so-rich girl. And yet, there's an even greater love story where the hero left it all—for you and for me.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:6

I'm sure you already know this, but Jesus showing up as the babe in the manger was not the first time he appeared on the scene. Jesus, the King of Kings, was in heaven with the Father—in absolute position, power, rule, reign, wealth, luxury, majesty, and on and on. And yet, because the Father loved us, he sent His Son, "that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16) The Prince became the pauper. Jesus left it all—for us. God humbled Himself to become a helpless baby, born not into royalty and luxury, but to ordinary, blue collar parents, Joseph and Mary (Philippians 2:6-8). Creator of the Universe—knit together in Mary's womb—born not in a palace, but a borrowed stable. He grew up a blue collar life, in a dinky little town. Eventually he left that dinky little town, and became homeless by choice, teaching about the Kingdom of God, healing, loving, and serving wherever he went. . . only to be misunderstood, rejected, mocked, betrayed, and ultimately executed. The hands that healed and blessed were nailed to a cross, by the very people He came for. Why? Why would he be willing to do this? Because he loves us—and he wants us to have it all, to be rich. No, I'm not talking Powerball rich. I'm talking true riches. If we choose Christ, Ephesians 1:3 says we have "every spiritual blessing in Christ." This means joy, grace, hope, faith, peace, healing, favor, righteousness in God's eyes, an eternal inheritance—and most of all—the gift of eternal life is ours in Christ. Sinners, stuck in sin, stuck in lying, hatred, jealousy, unforgiveness, gossip, slander, abuse, addiction, selfishness, pride,



arrogance, immorality, idolatry—you name it. . . loved and forgiven by God and granted eternal life. The Prince of heaven set his sights on us—little street urchins of sin—and came after us. He left it all, to give all to us.

And yet, even with these riches, life is hard. I'm sure you've noticed. My friend's husband just left her. Another friend fumbles through Christmas while grieving over her mother dying from ALS earlier this year. Another friend battles cancer—for the 9th year. Oh, and he just had a heart attack. And a stroke. All of these people know and love Jesus. Just because you're in the romance, doesn't mean life is a fairy tale. But it does mean, that no matter what you face and no matter your failures, you are always loved and He is always with you. He is Immanuel—God with us. So even through great suffering, He is with us, giving us His Riches—His peace, grace, mercy, and strength. . . and best of all—Himself.

We get inoculated from the Christmas story because we've heard it so many, many times. But we all need to take some time pondering—pondering the mystery and magnificence of God becoming a baby, to come after me and you—solely because He loves us. As much as some of us love all the Christmas hubbub, Christmas isn't about gifts, Christmas trees, or that dadgum Elf-on the Shelf (may "Elfie" rest in peace, since he has been banished from our house due to parental overload). . . it's about a passionate God pursuing you and me. And that no matter what we go through, He is with us. And unlike all those awesome chick flicks, our Prince of Love gave it all—even his very life—to be with us, forever.

For more on a relationship with Christ, go to peacewithgod.net.



The signs of a heart attack can be different in women.

In fact, some women can experience a heart attack with no chest pain at all. So know the signs. If you feel them, get to an emergency room – fast. Call 911 and know that you can count on the Accredited Chest Pain Center at Munroe Regional Medical Center.



Munroe Regional Medical Center

MunroeRegional.com