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July 2019

Marion Edition - Monthly

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"By getting treated locally at Florida Cancer Specialists, I was able to spend more time with the people who matter most — my family."

Marissa

-Marissa Lenney, Patient & Breast Cancer Fighter

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CVH GAINS DR. RAY SUTKOWSKI



RAO's Center of Vascular Health meets growing demand with the addition of Dr. Ray Sutkowski to its interventional radiology team. Dr. Sutkowski received his medical degree at American University of the Caribbean in Pembroke Pines, Florida and completed his internship in internal medicine at Ohio's Kettering Medical Center. Dr. Sutkowski served his residency in diagnostic radiology at University of Florida's Health Shands Hospital, where he went on to earn a Fellowship in vascular and interventional radiology in 2018.

Intersecting the time earning his Fellowship, Dr. Sutkowski worked as both a diagnostic and an ultrasound radiologist at South Georgia VA Hospital and then as an interventional and diagnostic radiologist at Radiology Associates of Dothan in Alabama. His medical articles have been published in various industry periodicals, including the Florida Radiology Society and the Journal for Vascular Access.

"I am excited and honored to join RAO's respected Center for Vascular Health," says Dr. Sutkowski. "It is my goal to improve the lives of patients and continue CVH's commitment to outstanding vascular and interventional care."

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CONTENTS

JULY 2019

6 With Many Neurological Issues,
the Answer is in Your Head

8 UV Safety

9 Life Beyond a Cancer Diagnosis

10 Urinary Incontinence

12 The Truth About Esketamine
(Nasal S-ketamine Spray)

13 Following a Car Accident,
Who is on Your Side and Who
is Definitely Not?

14 Exciting Options for Glaucoma
Patients with Cataracts

16 Quick Tips for a Healthy
Mouth this Summer

18 Heat Safety Precautions for
the Summer Months

19 Innovative Therapies Group:
Get Back to Playing Golf & Break
Free From Pain

20 Alzheimer's and Brain Health
Awareness Month

21 Medical Marijuana is a Viable
Treatment Option

22 What Your Untreated Hearing Loss
is Doing to Your Brain...

23 Longer Days & Hot Weather:
How to Stay Safe All Summer Long

24 5 Ways to Overcome Anxiety
in Assisted Living Facilities

25 Is it a Senior Moment ...
or Something More Serious?

26 Cool Off with a Grand Alaskan
Cruise & Tour with YMT Vacations

27 Spiritual Wellness:
Balancing Life

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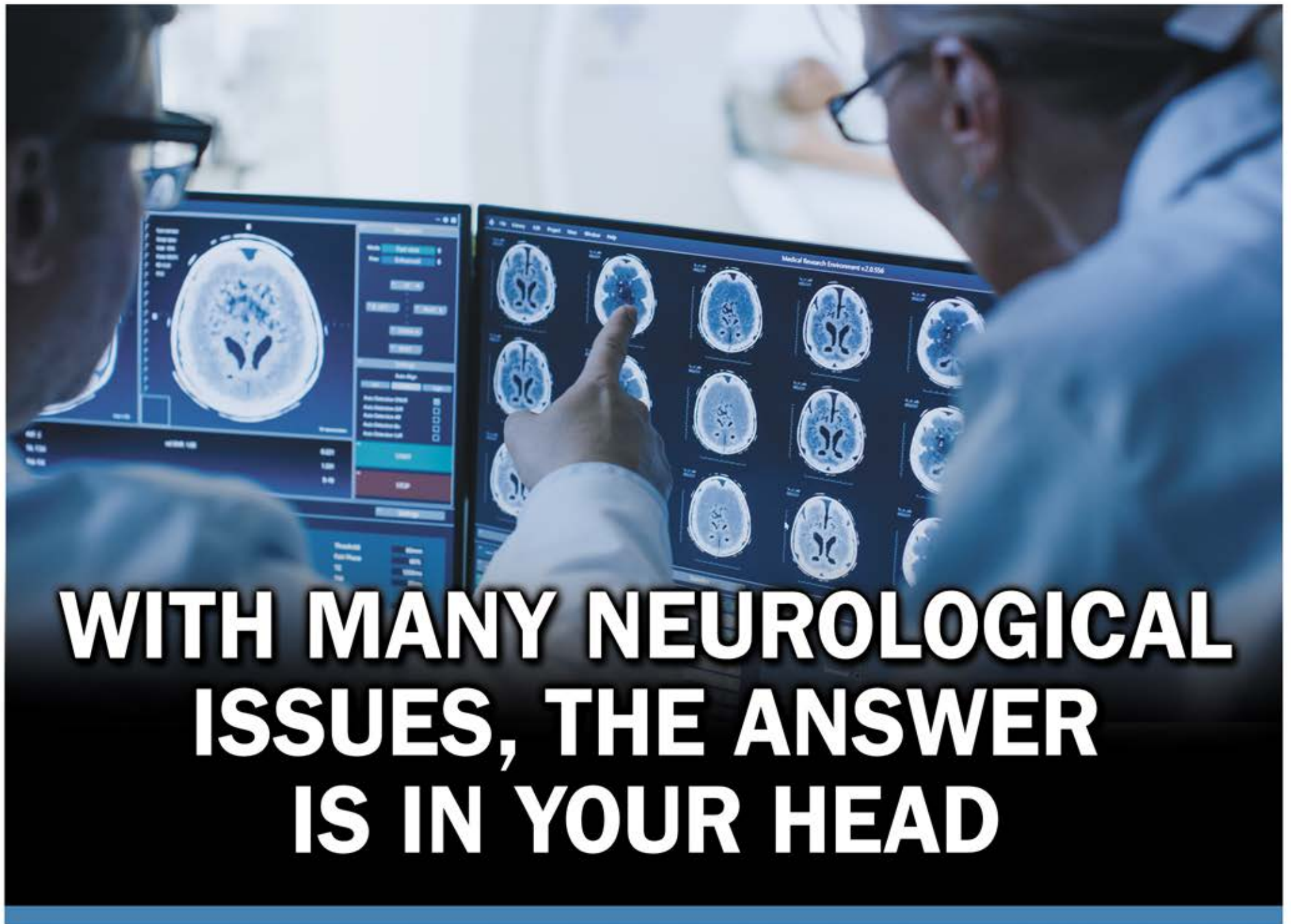


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WITH MANY NEUROLOGICAL ISSUES, THE ANSWER IS IN YOUR HEAD

The brain and brain stem/spinal cord comprise a complicated network, and injury, disease and anomalies in these tissues can create a variety of mysterious symptoms including changes in vision or memory, chronic headache and head pain, vertigo, loss of equilibrium, physical dysfunction, tremors, even paralysis.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a painless, radiation-free diagnostic scan that can look deeply into brain tissues to discover brain and neurological issues including injury, irregularities, stroke, dementia, multiple sclerosis and other degenerative diseases, tumors, inflammation, infection, abscesses, aneurysm, hemorrhage and other bleeding problems, the cause of chronic headache, herniated spinal discs and more, so that effective

treatment can begin. MRI produces images using a large magnet and radiofrequencies to capture images of the brain, brain stem and/or spine, which are sent to a specialized computer to produce detailed cross-sectional images, all without the use of ionizing radiation. In some cases, a contrast agent is first injected into a vein in the arm, where it travels into the area(s) being investigated to provide greater detail. A brain/spinal MRI can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the study.

RAO's team of Board Certified neuroradiologists subspecialize in diagnosing diseases and disorders of the brain, brain stem, spinal cord, neck and central nervous system, read all MRI imaging results personally, and consult directly with your referring clinician whenever needed. RAO maintains ongoing

accreditation from the American College of Radiology for high practice standards in accuracy, technology and safety, so you know you're in good hands. And when you're dealing with neurological mysteries, that can be especially important.

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From left: Amanda Aulls, MD; Kerry Raduns, MD; Ralf Barckhausen, MD; Malcolm Williamson, II, MD

MRI is a painless, radiation-free scan that can look deeply into brain and spinal tissues to discover neurological issues including head pain, headache, injury, stroke, dementia, multiple sclerosis, tumors, infection, bleeding, spinal disc problems and more, so that effective treatment can begin.

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UV SAFETY

By Gil Cortes, MD, FAAD

Ultraviolet, or UV rays, are part of the invisible energy that comes from the sun. UVA (aging) rays account for 95% of our sun exposure. They cause skin aging and contribute to skin cancer. UVA rays penetrate deeply into the skin layers, damaging collagen and cells which leads to wrinkling, hyperpigmentation and loss of elasticity. UVB (burning) rays mostly affect the outer layer of the skin. They cause sunburns and tanning that increase the risk of skin cancer and other disorders. The risk for skin cancer doubles in people who have had five or more sunburns. *Skin Cancer Foundation* (Nov. 2010)

To minimize UV damage to skin, sunscreen protection is available, but knowing what brand or type to use can be difficult for patients. Dr. Gil Cortes MD, FAAD, a board-certified Dermatologist at NOVU Dermatology in Lady Lake – The Villages, has some advice to offer patients. “I see patients who are using chemical only sunscreens, who should be using sun protectants with physical blockers. Chemical only sunscreens protect against UVB rays, and will prevent sunburns, but have minimal effect on UVA rays, which cause skin aging, hyperpigmentation and increase risk for skin cancer.

Zinc oxide, is a natural, mineral compound. Because zinc maintains its protective ability in the sun, it is more photostable than some chemical ingredients that may degrade.



Zinc sunscreen blocks the widest spectrum of UVA and UVB rays, protecting skin against burning and the premature appearance of aging and risk of skin cancer. Zinc is safe for even the most sensitive skin types.

How important is SPF? Is 100+SPF the way to go or are ingredients like Zinc and Titanium more important? According to Dr. Cortes, “The most important thing is ingredients. Once you have established that your sunscreen has either Zinc or Titanium, then you should look at the percentage of it in the product. A minimum of 10% or ideally 20% of combined Zinc and Titanium or just one of the two is acceptable.”

What sunscreen brand do Dermatologists recommend and why? “As far as brand, there are many good sunscreens available, I personally recommend three brands, First on my list is ELTA MD, because all their products contain Zinc and they also sell a completely chemical free sunscreen with combined zinc and titanium to an approximate 20%. Elta is excellent for sensitive skin. The lightly tinted sunscreens are easy to use daily, without risk of rubbing in the product too

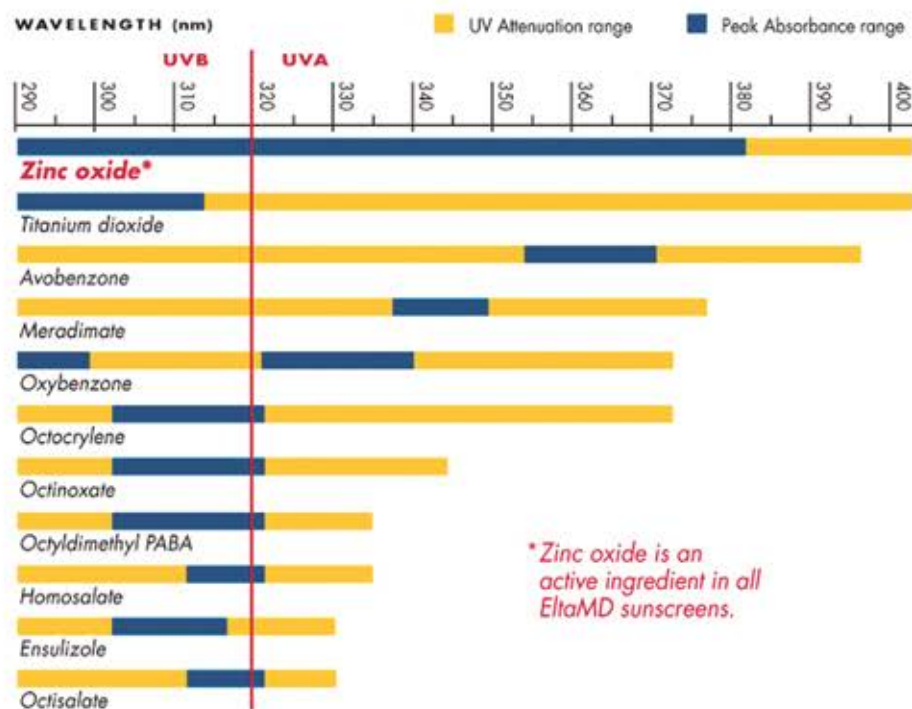
thin. As a close runner up, Shiseido, makes an excellent sun protectant, which also offers the option of tint, with or without combined chemical sun protectants. Shiseido’s formulation is quite unique so that it stays on the skin better than most brands. For sun protection during sports or water activities, it is a great option for lasting protection. For my number three choice, Nutrogena has a SheerZinc sunscreen which contains zinc at a near 20% and no chemicals. It looks very much like the chemical sunscreens they sell and can be easily confused, so you do need to read the ingredients on the label. Always remember the best protection for sun damage is protective clothing, hats and sunglasses, especially when outdoors at peak hours from 10AM to 4PM.



Chemical sunscreens are unstable and degrade with sunlight, limiting their effectiveness. They are a major cause of allergic contact dermatitis and are not ideal for sensitive skin. Recent studies have shown that chemical sunscreens build up in the bloodstream and may be unsafe. In addition, they are damaging to coral reefs. Chemical free sunscreens are therefore not only better for you, they are better for the environment.



Comparison of how the most widely used U.S. sunscreen ingredients attenuate (reduce the intensity) of UV light



* Zinc oxide is an active ingredient in all EltaMD sunscreens.

Data provided by P&G Beauty & Grooming

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LIFE BEYOND A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

According to the American Cancer Society, there are an estimated 16 million cancer survivors in the U.S. today. If you are a survivor, you have come a long way since you were first diagnosed. With the help of your oncology team, your family and even your employer, there is a lot of promise in the coming years. Your life after cancer offers the prospect of years of good health, rewarding work and a happy and fulfilling future.

While the end of successful cancer treatment is a time for celebration, it can also mean new challenges for survivors. Milestones such as returning to work, managing emotional issues and the ongoing physical effects of cancer and treatment can also present unanticipated changes for both patients, as well as their families. The key to returning to a normal life after cancer treatment may be found in establishing new habits of diet and exercise or learning to cope with a range of emotional and physical challenges.

Nutrition and Exercise

Cancer survivors typically should turn first to their care team for information and advice about nutrition, physical activity and dietary supplements to improve quality of life and long-term survival. In times past, doctors often advised patients to rest and reduce physical activity to avoid fatigue associated with cancer and treatment. If patients experience pain, shortness of breath or rapid heart rate, this is good advice. However, recent research indicates that exercise during and after treatment can be safe and beneficial. Your cancer team is the best resource for beginning or resuming a more active post-cancer lifestyle and they can refer patients and family caregivers to other professionals for a personalized post-treatment plan.

Physical and Emotional Challenges

The aftereffects of chemotherapy, surgery or radiation therapy should not be underestimated. Pain, fatigue and nausea are not unusual. More serious conditions include anemia, lymphedema (a buildup of fluid in fatty tissues just beneath the skin) and even severe infections. For both men and women, cancer and cancer treatment can cause changes in fertility and side effects in sexuality. Your oncology team is trained to monitor and manage the short- and long-term effects of treatment, so it is important to discuss your concerns with your team and follow their instructions.



Thanks to improved screenings and treatment options, today, many patients can look forward to many healthy and productive years after being diagnosed with cancer.

The emotional side of cancer survivorship touches both patients and their families. The stress associated with a cancer diagnosis and the physical effects of treatment are often still fresh in memory. Survivors and their families can feel a complicated mixture of relief and worry about the future. Some people suffer episodes of anxiety and even depression. All these are matters to discuss with your oncology team, who can help you achieve balance or refer you to another appropriate professional, if needed.

Healthcare After Cancer

In the rush to put cancer in the past, it is important to remember that the end of treatment doesn't mean the end of seeing your cancer team. Most often, long-term follow-up appointments and tests, followed by routine checkups and health screenings, will continue for many years. It is important to keep your follow-up appointments and undergo tests and screenings as recommended by your oncologist. While there is no absolute certainty that seeing your oncologist will prevent cancer from returning, it will help make sure that any recurrence is detected and treated early.

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Florida Cancer Specialists treats patients with all types of cancer, and offers a number of services, such as an in-house specialty pharmacy, an in-house pathology lab and financial counselors at every location, that deliver the most advanced and personalized care in your local community.



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Urinary Incontinence

Having an overactive bladder is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, nearly 15 percent of women are dealing with it on a chronic basis. As you may suspect, it is more prominent in women due to pregnancies, menopause, and the unique structure of the female urinary tract.

Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI) is a specific type of problem that is caused by movement or exertion. Certain movements can result in excess pressure on the bladder; which results in unintentional urine loss. In a healthy individual, the muscle surrounding the urethra, called a sphincter, is responsible for containing urine within the bladder. Our bladder walls are made up of muscles that must be relaxed for the bladder to expand. When incontinence occurs, it is because the muscles have been weakened and cannot maintain their normal function. Various events can lead to this condition; childbirth, trauma to the pelvic region, and even chronic coughing from smoking. Knowing the mechanics of urinary incontinence helps us to find a proper treatment.

The most troubling part of having an uncontrollable bladder is that it can happen at virtually any time, day or night. It can occur during laughing, sneezing, or working out. Anytime we experience strenuous physical activity could be the next embarrassing accident. As with most medical problems, being healthy can drastically reduce our risks. Being overweight can increase abdominal pressure making matters worse. A bad habit like smoking can induce coughing; which can weaken the abdominal muscles. There are different treatments available for this condition; ranging from Kegel exercises to surgery.

Kegel exercises are the clenching and unclenching of the pelvic muscles. It is accomplished by "bearing down" and releasing. Also, the use of Botox is an option. When we hear the word "Botox", it is generally attributed to the removal of wrinkles. However, in this case Botox is used to treat and reduce daily bladder leakage.



Botox has been FDA approved for incontinence sufferers and has shown great success. It works by injecting the Botox into the bladder muscles; this allows them to relax and store more urine with less stress. Botox is not a permanent solution and needs to be re-injected every 9 to 12 months.

Durasphere injections are another option; they are bulking agents that consist of non-migratory and non-absorbable prolytic-coated graphite beads in a gel. A mouthful to say, but it's actually a quite simple procedure to help control uncontrollable bladder leakage. The bulking agents are injected straight into the urethra to fill up the space that permits urine leakage. The injection actually thickens the bladder

making it more easily retain a healthy amount of urine. The pyrolytic carbon has been used in the medical field for over 30 years in implantable medical devices and it is non-reactive to tissue. This treatment is a safe and effective, minimally invasive, outpatient procedure option for urinary incontinence.

When it comes to treating urinary incontinence, the InterStim device is the most technologically advanced. This product has been used for over 15 years with over 100,000 individuals undergoing the procedure. The small device is surgically placed underneath the skin to stimulate the sacral nerves, the nerves that control the bladder. It blocks communication between the brain and the bladder. About the size of a pacemaker, this device sends electrical pulses down to the nerves of the pelvic floor. This is a method to reduce the contractions of an overactive bladder.

Urinary incontinence is not something that will go away on its own. Proper treatment is the only way to alleviate the symptoms. If you have any questions regarding incontinence, you can contact Advanced Urology Institute at (855) 298-2273.



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The Truth About Esketamine (nasal S-ketamine spray)

By Eric Milbrandt, MD, MPH

Much has been made in the news lately about the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of esketamine (Spravato), the nasal S-ketamine spray by Janssen Pharmaceutical, a company owned by Johnson & Johnson.

Ketamine is a medicine developed more than 50 years ago for anesthesia during surgery and other painful procedures. High-dose ketamine has been used safely for that purpose in children, adults, and animals for decades. About 16 years ago, medical researchers began studying low-dose intravenous ketamine infusions for treatment-resistant mood disorders, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since then, studies have proven conclusively that the drug not only works but works quickly, with significant and lasting relief within hours of the first infusion.

Because ketamine has been around for so long, it is not patentable. This means that big pharma cannot make big money selling it because it is generic and inexpensive. Like many drugs, ketamine is a mixture of two molecular forms, the R-isomer and S-isomer, which are mirror images of each other. What Janssen has done is to isolate the S-isomer, S-ketamine ("es-ketamine"), and patent the isolate and its delivery by nasal spray. They haven't invented anything new or even tweaked the molecule a bit.

Researchers have examined the effectiveness of both the R- and S-isomers of ketamine and found that neither is as effective alone as the mixture is together. To support their application, Janssen submitted results from five randomized controlled trials of esketamine to the FDA. Only 2 of 5 studies showed a significant benefit for esketamine. Two out of five! That's 40%, which would be a failing grade in any classroom. Furthermore, Janssen used non-standard measures to define "remission" of depression in their studies, which made it easier to show a difference with esketamine. Had they used standard accepted definitions, it is doubtful that even their two "positive" studies would have shown the drug to be effective.



Not only is the S-isomer less effective, but the *delivery* by nasal spray is unpredictable. What if your allergies are acting up and you have a nose full of mucus? How much drug do you think your nose will absorb? This is exactly what Janssen's studies found. Unpredictable absorption! One day you get a good dose, then next not so much. The next, too much!

Finally, the likelihood that the nasal spray will get into the hands of those who would abuse it is incredibly high. Imagine people going through your medicine cabinet and swiping your spray. The same happens with pain pills all the time. Why would esketamine be any different?

Given these criticisms, why would the FDA approve Spravato? I'd like to think it is because it does work for some patients. Far more likely, however, is the fact that Janssen stands to make a killing selling this "new" drug. Anytime large sums of money are involved, the potential for greed to shape decision-making is significant. I believe that this is exactly what we are seeing here, a greedy grab selling an inferior form of a medication that is anything but new or novel.

Supporting this claim, in early March Johnson & Johnson announced that Spravato will be priced at \$590 for a 56 mg dose and \$885 for 84 mg. That is PER DOSE. During the induction phase of the therapy, which lasts for a month, patients will be treated twice a week with either dose, resulting in a wholesale acquisition cost or list price in the range of \$4,720 to \$6,785. Subsequent maintenance doses will be provided either

once a week or every two weeks, adding up to monthly costs ranging from \$2,360 to \$3,540, or \$28,000 to \$42,000 per year.

In comparison, intravenous ketamine therapy at The Infusion Clinic of Ocala costs \$250 per dose, for an initial induction phase cost of \$1500. Subsequent maintenance doses are given approximately every 1 to 6 months, for a maximum yearly cost of \$3000. Yes, it requires an IV and 40-minutes of your time, but there are a lot of things you could do with that \$25,000 price difference, even if your insurance company covers some of it.

In summary, if you are depressed, anxious, or have PTSD and haven't gotten relief from counseling or traditional antidepressants, give generic IV ketamine infusion therapy a try. It is proven to work in 3 out of every 4 treatment-resistant patients. It is safe and predictable. If you would like to give it a try, our clinic has lots of openings and the cost of an infusion is only \$250. There is no better time to try!

You can find out more about IV ketamine therapy in the January issue of Health & Wellness Magazine (<https://tinyurl.com/y7sursfq>), online at <https://www.infusionclinicocala.com>, or by calling The Infusion Clinic of Ocala at (352) 325-5755.



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Dr. Eric Milbrandt is owner of The Infusion Clinic of Ocala, located at 40 SW 1st Ave, Ocala, FL 34471. Dr. Milbrandt is a critical care medicine specialist with over 16 years of experience providing care to the sickest of hospitalized patients, including those with severe depression, anxiety, and PTSD. He is board certified in Critical Care Medicine, completed a fellowship in Quality Improvement and a Master of Public Health at Vanderbilt University. He is a graduate of The Ketamine Academy, a leading provider of comprehensive online training for all major aspects of ketamine therapy. The Infusion Clinic of Ocala provides low-cost ketamine infusions for the rapid treatment of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and chronic pain.



FOLLOWING A CAR ACCIDENT, WHO IS ON YOUR SIDE AND WHO IS DEFINITELY NOT?

By John H. Piccin

1. Following a motor vehicle accident of any sort, the first thing to do, of course, is to determine whether anyone needs immediate medical attention. If so, call 911 and get medical professional help to the scene.

2. Next, be sure the police or Highway Patrol has been called to come to the scene. Especially when the other driver is at fault, it is most helpful and sometimes necessary that the facts be documented and preserved in the form of an official crash report. Be completely honest in dealing with the police official. (Only if you have been drinking should you try to contact a lawyer before speaking with the police.)

3. Get the names, addresses and phone numbers of any witnesses! When responsibility is not clear, eye witnesses can make all the difference to the success of any claim. The police do their best, but they are usually not concerned with proof you may need to support your personal injury claim later on.

4. Now to the point of the headline above: who is on your side and who is definitely not? The insurance claims adjuster for the other driver definitely is not. He is looking to pay no money or as little money as possible in order to dispose of any claim. The claims adjuster for your insurance company is somewhat different. You have an obligation under your policy to cooperate with your company (at least until you file suit against it), but you and your insurance company are adverse to each other with respect to several insurance coverages contained in your policy.

5. With regard to personal injury protection coverage (which is mandatory and which covers 80% of your related medical bills and 60% of related lost income, usually to a combined total of \$10,000), your company may take the position that you do not need more than an initial medical evaluation. If you have purchased optional medical payments coverage, your company may say that you do not need medical treatment under it. If you have purchased optional uninsured motorist coverage, you will most likely need the services of an experienced personal injury lawyer because uninsured motorist coverage is complicated. It is meant to cover your injuries due to the negligence



of an uninsured or underinsured driver/owner of the other vehicle. The uninsured motorist coverage of any resident/relative in your household will also be available to compensate you for your injuries but the adjuster for that company or those companies will not voluntarily tell you so and will resist paying you at every turn.

6. Keep in mind that any insurance adjuster, no matter for what insurance company, is paid to pay no more than the least amount of money his or her employer can get away with paying. Sometimes that goal is accomplished dishonestly. Here is an example:

Several years ago, we obtained a Marion County jury verdict which found that one of the major auto insurers had defrauded its insureds by telling them that their uninsured motorist coverage did not apply to the death of their 16 year-old son, when, in fact, their uninsured motorist coverage did cover that horrible loss. (The parents had settled without the help of a lawyer, and then came to us wondering what they had done.) The fraudulent conduct of the adjusters meant that our clients were entitled to compensatory damages and punitive damages.

(Punitive damages in Florida are rare, but, when applicable, are intended to punish the wrongdoer and to deter others from like conduct.) That case was a prime example of how people who try to settle their claims without the help of an experienced lawyer can be taken advantage of.

I hope these basic ideas will assist you if you ever need them. John Piccin and his law partner, Katie Glynn, devote their practice to representing injured people and the survivors of wrongful death victims. They will be glad to consult with you, at no cost, regarding any motor vehicle injuries or related legal or insurance questions. They can be reached at (800) 969-5446 or (352) 351-5446 in their offices at 320 N.W. 3rd Avenue, Ocala, FL 34475, since 1981.



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EXCITING OPTIONS FOR GLAUCOMA PATIENTS WITH CATARACTS

Glaucoma is a set of diseases in which fluid and pressure damage the eye's optic nerve, the part of the eye responsible for sending information collected by the retina to the brain. When fluid produced by the eye fails to drain normally, it creates pressure inside the optic nerve, resulting in vision loss. The most common form of glaucoma is primary open-angle glaucoma, or POAG, accounting for roughly 95% of glaucoma cases and affecting 2.7 million Americans ages 40 and older.

A cataract is a clouding of crystalline proteins within the lens of the eye, distorting and clouding vision. Also common as people age, cataracts can increase intraocular pressure, exacerbating POAG.

"Left untreated, both glaucoma and cataracts can lead to blindness," says ophthalmologist Scot Holman, MD. "Having both conditions together places vision at serious risk."

Luckily, years of research and technology have produced new approaches to treating both glaucoma and cataracts during the same surgical appointment. The latest is the Hydrus® Microstent, an advanced therapy created specifically for patients with POAG. Inserted into a key drainage vessel called Schlemm's canal immediately following cataract surgery, the Hydrus Microstent has been shown to promote normal fluid outflow, reducing eye pressure. After receiving the Hydrus Microstent, most patients are able to reduce or eliminate their dependence on glaucoma medication. "The Hydrus Microstent is extremely tiny, about the size of an eyelash," says Dr. Holman. "It is implanted via microscopic incisions, which heal quickly and pose less chance of complication than conventional glaucoma surgical methods."

"The Hydrus Microstent opens and expands the eye's natural drainage channel, so the eye expresses fluid more like a normal healthy eye," says Dr. Holman. The Hydrus Microstent is so effective that more than 3 out of 4 glaucoma patients experience a significant reduction in eye pressure compared to cataract surgery alone, and are able to remain drop-free two years following surgery.



Adult cataract patients with mild to moderate POAG and otherwise normal eye anatomy may qualify for the Hydrus Microstent. Eligible patients can have the microstent inserted immediately after cataract removal using the same corneal incision, making this outpatient procedure remarkably quick and safe, with minimal healing time.

Other options for adults with mild to moderate POAG planning to have cataract surgery include iStent® and iStent inject® Trabecular Micro-Bypass implants, the world's smallest FDA-approved medical implants. 20,000 times smaller than an intraocular lens, the iStent and iStent inject reduce excess fluid and lower eye pressure so successfully that many patients find they can limit or stop using glaucoma medication for a year after receiving the implant. "After getting the iStent inject, most patients are able to maintain healthy eye pressure and reduce or eliminate their need of eye drops," says ophthalmologist Scott Wehrly, MD. "The procedure comes with about the same minimal risk and recovery times as cataract surgery alone, making it a revolutionary way to help stop glaucoma's damage in its tracks."

"The iStent opens up the eye's drainage system so that fluid can flow more freely," says ophthalmologist Vinay Gutti, MD. "The iStent inject is even more powerful, with two tiny stents for greater control of excess fluid and pressure. Both systems work to help prevent further POAG-related vision loss."

The Hydrus Microstent, iStent and iStent inject are not suitable for patients with primary- or secondary-angle-closure glaucoma and certain other diseases.

If you have POAG and are considering cataract surgery, talk to your Lake Eye doctor about whether these revolutionary glaucoma treatments may be used to help manage or even stop the progression of glaucoma and reduce your need of glaucoma medications. You could see better vision, comfort and protection in your future.

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Quick Tips for a Healthy Mouth this Summer

Doing some summer cleaning? While you're busy beating rugs, cleaning curtains and organizing cabinets, don't forget to check your bathroom counter! Add these four items to your checklist to include dental hygiene in your battle plan. While you're at it achieving healthy teeth takes a lifetime of care. Even if you've been told that you have nice teeth, it's crucial to take the right steps every day to take care of them and prevent problems. This involves getting the right oral care products, as well as being mindful of your daily habits.

Replace old or worn toothbrushes

Get in the habit of changing your toothbrush every three months. The ability of a toothbrush to reach small crevices decreases as its bristles wear down. Bacterial and viral infections are another reason to switch out an old toothbrush for a new one. Infectious agents can thrive among the bristles, with the potential to reinfect you, so make sure to toss your toothbrush after every cold.

Don't go to bed without brushing your teeth

It's no secret that the general recommendation is to brush at least twice a day. Still, many of us continue to neglect brushing our teeth at night. But brushing before bed gets rid of the germs and plaque that accumulate throughout the day.

Brush properly

The way you brush is equally important — in fact, doing a poor job of brushing your teeth is almost as bad as not brushing at all. Take your time, moving the toothbrush in gentle, circular motions to remove plaque. Unremoved plaque can harden, leading to calculus buildup and gingivitis (early gum disease). Plaque can also build up on your tongue. Not only can this lead to bad mouth odor, but it can lead to other oral health problems. Gently brush your tongue every time you brush your teeth.

Check the expiration date on your mouthwash

Most mouthwash has a shelf life that should be indicated on the bottle. Using mouthwash past the expiration date can affect not only its taste but also its effectiveness, so double check that yours is still good to go.





Advertisements make mouthwash seem necessary for good oral health, but many people skip them because they don't know how they work. Mouthwash helps in three ways: It reduces the amount of acid in the mouth, cleans hard-to-brush areas in and around the gums, and re-mineralizes the teeth.

Use a fluoride toothpaste

When it comes to toothpaste, there are more important elements to look for than whitening power and flavors. No matter which version you choose, make sure it contains fluoride. While fluoride has come under scrutiny by those worried about how it impacts other areas of health, this substance remains a mainstay in oral health. This is because fluoride is a leading defense against tooth decay. It works by fighting germs that can lead to decay, as well as providing a protective barrier for your teeth.

Replenish your floss supply

The recommended length of floss is 18 inches per flossing session. With a daily flossing schedule, that adds up to roughly 45 feet of floss a month! Stock up to avoid running out.

Treat flossing as important as brushing

Many who brush regularly neglect to floss. Flossing is a way to stimulate the gums, reduce plaque, and help lower inflammation in the area. Flossing once a day is usually enough to reap these benefits.

Don't let flossing difficulties stop you

Flossing can be difficult, especially for young children and older adults with arthritis. Rather than give up, look for tools that can help you floss your teeth. Ready-to-use dental flossers from the drug-store can make a difference.

Drink more water

Water continues to be the best beverage for your overall health — including oral health. Also, as a rule of thumb, drink a glass of water after every meal. This can help wash out some of the negative effects of sticky and acidic foods and beverages in between brushes.

Eat crunchy fruits and vegetables

Ready-to-eat foods are convenient, but perhaps not so much when it comes to your teeth. Eating fresh, crunchy produce not only contains more healthy fiber, but it's also the best choice for your teeth.

Limit sugary and acidic foods

Ultimately, sugar converts into acid in the mouth, which can then erode the enamel of your teeth. These acids are what lead to cavities. Acidic fruits, teas, and coffee can also wear down tooth enamel. While you don't necessarily have to avoid such foods altogether, it doesn't hurt to be mindful.

Schedule a dentist appointment

With cleanings recommended for every six months, regular visits to the dentist should already be a part of your schedule. If you've been skimping on these visits, or a new problem has popped up, call your dental office to set up an appointment. Seeing your dentist regularly is a good way to spot – and stop – problems before they become bigger, pricier and painful. Spring and fall are excellent times to book cleanings, as these seasons may be the least likely to conflict with potential vacation plans. Your own everyday habits are crucial to your overall oral health. Still, even the most dutiful brushers and flossers need to see a dentist regularly. At minimum, you should see your dentist for cleanings and checkups twice a year. Not only can a dentist remove calculus and look for cavities, but they will also be able to spot potential issues and offer treatment solutions.

Ocala Dental Care

Ocala Dental Care is a restorative dentist office dedicated to offering exceptional care from dental basics to extensive procedures, all within a warm, inviting setting. They provide comprehensive restorative and general dentistry services to patients, including dental hygiene cleanings, root canals, endodontics, dental implants, dentures, crowns, and full mouth reconstruction.

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If you or someone you know is concerned about their oral health, or if you need a check-up, please contact Ocala Dental Care today.


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HEAT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS

With weather approaching the upper 90's and, on some days, triple digits, the heat can be unbearable at times and downright dangerous, this is especially true when we factor in the high level of humidity. Our bodies self-regulate heat by sweating and also through radiating heat back into the atmosphere. When we sweat, we also perspire potassium and sodium. Both of these minerals help to control nerve function, water balance, and heart rhythm. If you suffer from any heart conditions, the loss of these minerals can be detrimental to your cardiac health.

Sweating can quickly escalate into dehydration; therefore, it's critical to stay hydrated with cool water, not sugary drinks. If we become dehydrated, we increase our risk of raising blood pressure and having heart palpitations. When our bodies are hot, the skin radiates heat into the air to normalize our body temperature. When the air is sweltering, our bodies can no longer reduce its high temperature this way, as it has nowhere to radiate the heat into or to take in cooler air from, as the temperature is higher than your bodies.

Warm weather makes the heart pump faster, which requires more oxygen. When it's hot, and we can't cool down, or breathe efficiently, we complicate the heart's normal functioning, by putting undue stress on its muscle contractions.

Syncope is a fancy medical term for fainting. Syncope can occur due to many different complications but is commonly seen due to heat exhaustion. What happens is, the body's oxygen and blood are not able to adequately reach the brain, usually due to a drastic change in blood pressure, which creates a pooling of blood into the lower extremities, and this will cause collapsing and fainting. If the person is not put in a reclined position with the feet elevated, they could potentially suffer additional complications, including a seizure. Syncope can quickly escalate into a dangerous outcome for many individuals. If you have any heart irregularities, you may be more susceptible to these types of fainting spells.



Heat Disorder Symptoms can include muscle cramping, heart palpitations, dizziness, fainting, headache, nausea, and fatigue. If you experience any of these symptoms, it's imperative to get to a cool place, drink cool water and call 911 if symptoms persist.

Tips to stay cool and avoid heat-related heart issues

- Drink extra water
- Talk to your physician about reducing your diuretic pills
- DO NOT exercise in the heat
- Avoid the hottest times of the day (10:00 am to 4:00 pm)
- Eat plenty of cooling foods like vegetables and fruit
- Stay in an air-conditioned room
- Avoid caffeinated and sugary drinks

If you have congestive heart failure, you should talk to your cardiologist about specific ways to stay cool that will not interfere with your fluid and sodium intake issues.

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If you believe you are having a heart attack or stroke, call 911! If you're having initial symptoms that come and go, contact your cardiologist immediately.



Innovative Therapies Group: Get Back to Playing Golf & Break Free From Pain

When your golf swing is lacking, it may be because of underlying mobility issues that are actually affecting your entire body. Whether impinged muscles, injury, stiffness or pain are limiting your range-of-motion, physical therapy will not only get you out of pain but can improve your golf game by increasing you mobility and strength.

Instability, especially in the core and spine, along with hip and ankle limitations can also be impeding upon your ability to drive the ball like you used to. With the right method of physical therapy exercises and stretching, you can regain control of your active lifestyle within a short period of time.

Innovative Therapies Group works with you to customize your specific plan depending on your injuries, health, goals and needs. These plans include increasing mobility, stability, strength, and endurance. The area's most commonly needing physical therapy are hips, spine, posture, and lower extremities.

Masking your pain with pain medications is not the answer. Getting to the root cause of your condition is the key to healing your body and living the life you deserve.



Physical therapy is the leading way to relieve pain and discomfort at its core for many individuals. Therapeutic manual stretching and exercising provide real results in controlling pain for countless patients. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) also launched new guidelines recently, recommending the use of physical therapy for chronic pain.

Common Conditions that Improve significantly with Physical Therapy

- Assessment and Evaluation Programs
- Difficulty Walking
- Fall Prevention and Balance Retraining
- Fitness and Wellness Programs
- Functional Training
- Gait Training and Balance Programs
- Manual and Massage Therapy
- Neurological and Neurodegenerative Retraining
- Vestibular Rehabilitation

Patient & Occupational Education is critical to alleviate further injury and to promote the most efficacious healing. Coupled with at-home exercise guidelines and self-help management to promote and maintain independent function and increase mobility, Innovative Therapies Group has got you covered.

Physical therapy is used to help with numerous indications and conditions like retraining the body to improve gait and balance and also after hip, knee or shoulder replacement and so much more. There is no better way to alleviate pain, increase range-of-motion and live a more mobile higher quality of life than through physical and occupational therapy.

To find out more or to schedule your appointment, please contact Innovative Therapies Group today.



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Alzheimer's and Brain Health Awareness Month

Provided by United Healthcare

Numerous studies and statistics show Alzheimer's and other related dementias are on the rise. According to the Alzheimer's Association's latest figures, nearly 5.2 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and that number is expected to triple by 2050. Experts estimate that an Alzheimer's diagnosis will affect close to 15 million people by mid-century. Currently, every 66 seconds, someone develops dementia in the United States.

What is Alzheimer's/Dementia?

Forgetfulness, agitation and frustration, social withdrawal, and difficulty with daily tasks, are all symptoms of dementia. Alzheimer's is the most progressive form of dementia and accounts for 60 to 80 percent of all dementia diagnoses. The "tangles" in the Alzheimer's brain become unattached and disrupt the communication process, and excessive plaque buildup causes oxidative disruptions to the brain. These disturbances coincide with the tangles that are present. This plaque is known as atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis can occur anywhere in the body, but once it ravages the brain, those affected will experience symptoms of forgetfulness and changes in personality, especially in the short-term memory region of the brain.

There are several types of dementia, but one common and often overlooked type is vascular dementia, which usually affects individuals that have suffered a stroke. Vascular dementia injures the brain in the area that controls memory, problem solving and speech. This type of dementia progresses at a slower pace, nonetheless it can be extremely frustrating and devastating for both those living with the disease and their loved ones.

Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of dementia are different for every patient, but common indicators include:

- Forgetfulness, especially short-term memory
- Change in personality
- Agitation/Frustration
- Difficulty with daily tasks
- Social withdrawal
- Aphasia (a speech disorder)
- Sundowning (confusion and sleeplessness in the evening)



Treatment

Some medications may slow the progression of the disease, but these are, unfortunately, not a curative treatment method. However, some patients find the following helpful:

- Dietary guidance
- Some medications slow the progression of the disease
- Physical activity
- Cognitive training and socialization
- Intensive monitoring and management of metabolic and vascular risk factors

Maintaining a Healthy Brain

Eating a nutritious diet, such as the Mediterranean or Dash diet, provides essential nutrients for the brain's health. All three of these diets emphasize on eating plenty of veggies, fruit, healthy fats, whole grains and lean protein, while avoiding sugar, simple carbs and saturated fats. Other studies show high doses of Vitamin C and antioxidant therapy may also help protect cognition.

Staying active and social is also a useful method for maintaining optimal brain health. Along with socialization, staying physically active is imperative in the production of oxygen-rich blood flow and can decrease your risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

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Medical Marijuana is a Viable Treatment Option: What You Should Know About it's History & Progress

Marijuana has been used as an effective and safe medicine for thousands of years in almost all civilizations including the USA. At that time, aspirin, opium, and cocaine were being discovered and touted as better drugs. There was also a financial incentive to outlaw the plant by factory owners who saw the cannabis plant (hemp) as a huge threat to the value of tracts of land with trees they owned for making paper. Hemp was a lot cheaper to make into paper than trees.

So, marijuana became illegal and kept a pretty low profile for about 35 years, and its reputation tarnished by the DEA classifying it as a dangerous narcotic (it is not a narcotic and there has never been an overdose fatality). Severe legal penalties were passed for its possession or use.

In the 1960's and 70's marijuana had a resurgence in popularity as the drug of choice amongst the younger "hippie" generation. It became the symbol of the anti-war and anti-establishment movement. The government powers at the time went a step further in squelching the drug by getting the DEA in 1972 to categorize it as a Schedule 1 narcotic. This put it in the same category as LSD, ecstasy, and cocaine. But unlike the other drugs classified as Schedule 1, marijuana was not physically addictive or capable of killing you and it was useful as a medicine.



In the ensuing years between 1972 and now, marijuana did not go away. Several other countries continued to recognize its value as a medicine. In the 1990's, scientists in Israel found cannabis to have more useful components than just the THC that people liked to get high. There were several other compounds called cannabinoids that had various effects but did not cause euphoria. These components have various receptors in your body that control pain, mood, the immune system, suppress certain types of cancer, relieve nausea, cure insomnia, control seizures etc. And even in this country, even though illegal, people began to rediscover these medicinal benefits and started to demand its legal availability. California was the first state to allow legal marijuana in 1996 and it took off without any major problems. It wasn't long before other states started following California's lead, and we now have 29 states with medical marijuana and many predict that soon all states will.

In November 2016 Florida passed Amendment 2 by a vote of 71.3% in favor which allowed medical marijuana to be recommended by certain physicians and used by certain patients. Florida limits its use to cancer, epilepsy, glaucoma, AIDs, HIV positive, PTSD, ALS, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, and chronic nonmalignant pain. To set up the program, the Florida legislature gave the job to the Florida Medical Association, an entity (like much of the legislature) did not understand medical marijuana and were opposed to its existence. Thus, getting to the point we are at now has been a struggle, but it's here now.

Several factors have worked against the legalization of medical marijuana in Florida. Pharmaceutical companies, some portions of law enforcement, and a few politicians are fighting hard against this. But it's been discovered now and many Floridians are reaping the benefits. About 90,000 now have their cards. Keep an open mind and if you suffer from any of the conditions in Florida that can be treated, take some control of your health care and learn more about it as a viable option.

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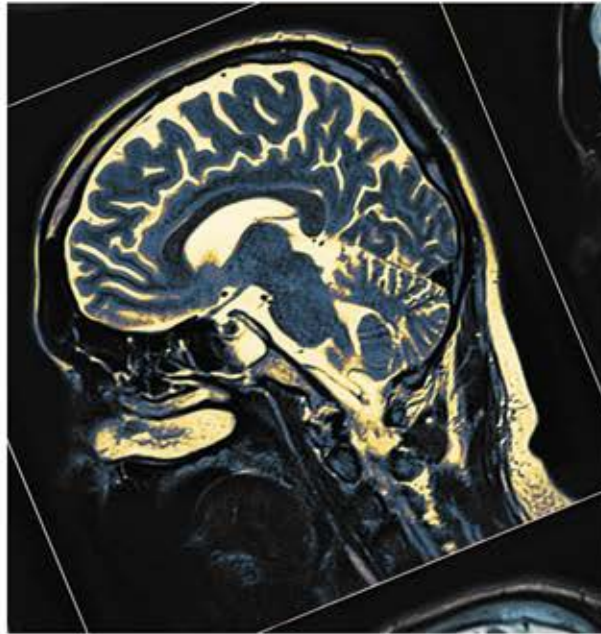
What Your Untreated Hearing Loss is doing to YOUR Brain...

Hearing loss is a fact of life for more than 48 million Americans. According to the Hearing Loss Association of America, this fact may increase the risk of cognitive problems and even dementia. “The general perception is that hearing loss is a relatively inconsequential part of aging,” says Frank Lin, an otologist and epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He also says that “recent findings suggest that it may play a much more important role in brain health than we’ve previously thought.”

As part of the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging, 126 participants underwent yearly magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to track brain changes for up to 10 years. Each also had complete physicals at the time of their first MRI in 1994, including hearing tests. At the beginning, 75 had normal hearing, and 51 had impaired hearing, with at least a 25-decibel loss. After analyzing their MRIs over the following years, Lin and his colleagues, say those participants whose hearing was already impaired at the start of the sub-study had accelerated rates of brain atrophy compared to those with normal hearing. Overall, the scientists report that those with impaired hearing, lost more than an additional cubic centimeter of brain tissue each year compared with those with normal hearing. Those with impaired hearing also had significantly more shrinkage in particular regions, including the superior, middle and inferior temporal gyri; the brain structures that are responsible for processing sound and speech. If you want to address hearing loss well,” Lin says, “you want to do it sooner rather than later. If hearing loss is potentially contributing to these differences we’re seeing on an MRI, you want to treat it before any brain structural changes take place.”

The brain becomes smaller with age; however, the shrinkage seems to be more rapid in older adults with hearing loss, according to the results of a study by researchers from Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging. Their findings add to a growing list of health consequences associated with hearing loss, including increased risk of dementia, falls, hospitalizations, and diminished physical and mental health overall.

P. Murali Doraiswamy, M.D., a professor of psychiatry and medicine at Duke University School of Medicine and coauthor of *The Alzheimer’s Action*



Plan, says that while the link between hearing loss and milder cognitive problems has been questioned by some, it is becoming increasingly accepted. “Every doctor knows that hearing loss can result in cognitive problems, but they still don’t focus on it as a priority when they evaluate someone with suspected dementia — which is a big missed opportunity. The benefits of correcting hearing loss on cognition are twice as large as the benefits from any cognitive-enhancing drugs now on the market. It should be the first thing we focus on.”

There also was a study done at the University of Colorado’s Department of Speech Language and Hearing Science that looked at how neuroplasticity affects how the brain adapts to hearing loss. Neuroplasticity is the brain’s ability to change at any age. Conventional thinking used to view the brain as static and unable to change; we now know that this is not the case. In the case of hearing loss, the part of the brain devoted to hearing can actually become reorganized, i.e. reassigned to other functions. The study was designed to answer two questions: How does the brain adapt to hearing loss and what are the resulting implications? The researchers found that when hearing loss occurs, areas of the brain devoted to other senses such as vision or touch will actually take over the areas of the brain which normally process hearing. This is a phenomenon called cross-modal cortical reorganization; essentially, the brain adapts to a hearing loss by rewiring itself. This can have a very serious detrimental effect on cognition.

Hearing loss system significantly reduces the brain’s ability to process sound, this can then affect a person’s ability to understand speech. Even a mild hearing loss can cause the hearing areas of the brain to become weaker. What can happen next is that the areas of the brain that are necessary for higher level thinking compensate for the weaker areas. They essentially take over for hearing, which leaves them unavailable to do their primary job.

This compensatory brain reorganization could explain why age related hearing loss is strongly correlated with dementia. This should be taken seriously, even in the early stages of hearing loss, the brain begins to reorganize.

Finally, it also seems very likely that hearing loss, which tends to isolate people from others has long been recognized as a risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia.

If you have hearing loss, it makes sense to get it treated as early as possible. It is widely believed that less than 15 to 20 percent of those with a clinically significant hearing loss use hearing aids. Early treatment for hearing loss could prevent long term cognitive issues down the road. The solution could be as simple as an early hearing loss screening program for adults.

With that being said, **Premear Hearing** would like to help you with your hearing health by offering a Complimentary *Hearing Screening and mini-consultation. Call today to set up your appointment.

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Longer Days & Hot Weather: How to Stay Safe All Summer Long

During the next few months, our families will be a little more active than normal with school being out and vacations planned for the near future. We will soon be enjoying, excursions, playing on the beach, visiting the parks, and barbecuing a lot more often. With all of this extra activity, comes the unfortunately increased chance of injury. Summer Safety is about being aware of your surroundings, preparation, and having a detailed plan of action if someone needs help.

When your child, you, or a loved one gets a bad sunburn, dehydration, falls, breaks a bone, or gets overheated, it can be quite scary, and the emergency room is not a place that most of us want to sit around waiting for hours on end. Fortunately, there is another option! Urgent care clinics are an excellent alternative to the ER unless of course, it's a life-threatening situation. However, urgent care facilities can treat many injuries or illness from, broken bones, sore throats, poison ivy rashes, and stomach viruses to giving tetanus shots and taking x-rays.

Quick Care Med Urgent Care Vs. Emergency Room

If your health needs are not emergent like a heart condition or other impending lifesaving issues, the benefit of urgent care in comparison are numerous. To name a few, the wait time will be much shorter. For the most part,



urgent care can see their patients within an hour. The cost is also much less with urgent care than it is with emergency room treatment. Quick Care Med urgent care provides you with the proper paperwork to follow up with your primary care physician or specialist, as urgent care takes initiatives to keep the line of communication open to make certain that your treatment is a top priority.

Before you go to the ER, consider if you could instead be treated at urgent care because of the numerous benefits to you and your loved ones.

Quick Care Med Walk-In Clinic & Urgent Care is a comprehensive urgent care clinic with multiple specialties to serve you. Quick Care Med has locations in Marion (Dunnellon and Ocala), Citrus (Crystal River, Inverness, Beverly Hills, and Homosassa), Levy (Williston), & Alachua (Newberry) counties that provides immediate walk-in treatment to pediatric and adult patients for illnesses and injuries, wellness exams, and employer health services.

At Quick Care Med, they understand that illness and injuries can happen outside of the normal 9 to 5. That's why they provide Fast, Easy, and Affordable® urgent care with the convenience of extended hours, including weekends and holidays!

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5 Ways to Overcome Anxiety in Assisted Living Facilities

Moving to an assisted living facility can be a time of emotional upheaval for seniors. Not only are they leaving behind a home of their own, they need to learn how to live in harmony with strangers. Settling into a seniors home can increase anxiety and leave many new residents feeling out of place and worried. If you're moving a loved one into an assisted living facility, below are five tips you can share to help them overcome their anxiety in their new surroundings.

1) Learning to sing on a daily basis can significantly reduce tension and anxiety. Seniors who make a habit of singing songs from their childhood or teenage years can reduce their feelings of discomfort and feel more at home. Encourage your loved one to sing in their room even if they don't have a great voice or can't carry a tune. We have introduced this in our home with our child on the autism spectrum and he LOVES it. It's not unusual for him to belt out anything from Amazing Grace to Scooby Doo! Singing is a fun coping method to help remedy anxiety for any age. It really works!

2) It might sound simple, but helping your family member to laugh and smile more can ease their transition into senior living. Share jokes, help them practice silly smiles, and make a point of reducing tension with gadgets that prompt laughter. Search an e-commerce site like Amazon.com for 'noise machine' and you'll be amazed at the goofy sound machines you can purchase for your family member. Better yet, hang pictures up in their room of family and past events that make them smile..

3) Seniors who take part in their new community tend to feel less stressed than those who hole up in their room. Just because your loved one is living in an assisted living facility doesn't mean they can't make new friends. Encourage them to take field trips with other residents or participate in community games and devotion. Participation in our scheduled events will help to reduce their level of anxiety at their new surroundings.



4) Old hobbies can be especially comforting to those who have recently moved into a seniors home. Remind your loved one of hobbies they used to like and encourage them to start enjoying those hobbies again. Anything from knitting and crocheting to model building and puzzles can be enjoyed while living in their new home. They might even discover other residents who have an affinity for the same relaxing hobbies.

5) If your loved one is experiencing mild depression and anxiety, encourage them to speak with their family physician. Changes in behavior could mean their medication needs checking or they need to start taking an herbal supplement like 5HTP to prevent mood swings. Speaking with a medical professional can put your mind at ease and help your loved one adjust to their new home.

Share these five ways to overcome anxiety with your family member and there's a good chance you'll both feel better. Living with anxiety doesn't have to be a permanent state of mind if your loved one is willing to make small adjustments in their daily routine.



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Is it a senior moment... or something more serious?

Mery J. Lossada, MD - Chief Medical Officer, Hospice of Marion County

We've all had a 'senior moment.' We forget something and then laugh about it with friends and family, but the thought runs through the back of our mind: was it really temporary forgetfulness or could it be something more ominous? How can we be sure?

Below are questions that can help you determine if medical attention may be required -- Do you forget:

- where you left your keys?
- why you went into a room?
- a friend's name?
- your own phone number or address?

The above list may be an indication of a memory issue and could be from memory decline. Is it something you've noticed about yourself or does a spouse or family member worry about the frequency of these episodes? If the latter, you may want to seek preventive intervention and further evaluation.

When is it a serious memory problem?

- You lose your car in the parking lot because you forgot the color, make and model.
- You have always had a remarkable memory and now you can't remember anything.
- You get lost in places you should know well.
- You ask the same questions over and over.
- You are unable to follow directions.
- You are confused about time, people, or places.



Serious memory problems usually worsen over time with lapses becoming the norm. With mild cognitive impairment (MCI), patients are more likely to develop dementia. However, there are four different kinds of dementias: Alzheimer's, Vascular, Frontotemporal, and Lewy Body. Depending on which one is diagnosed, the progression varies.

How the brain stores memories

Our brains are wonderful and fascinating "computers" that store memories in different categories: recent—what you ate for breakfast; short-term—the name of a person you met moments ago, and long-term—memories of your childhood.

Aging affects our memory and begins in our 20s. A few cells at a time are lost, with fewer chemicals produced that help the brain function. The older you are, the more these changes affect the memory. There are also changes in the way memories are stored, making it harder to recall information. It's our short- and long-term memories that usually are not affected by aging. Other conditions that can affect memory include depression, side-effects of drugs, strokes, head injuries and alcoholism.

Memory tips:

- Make lists, use notes
- Stick to routines and use calendars
- Make associations—connect things in your mind
- Put frequently used items in the same place each time
- Learn new things, do brain games, learn a new language
- Avoid stress—exercise, meditation, and deep breathing
- Hydration—boosts speed of neuron firing; 8 glasses of water a day is ideal

Preventive measures include stopping smoking and drinking alcohol in moderation. Sleep is especially important, regenerative and restorative; get at least 7-8 hours of restful sleep, which also helps consolidate learning and new memories from the previous day's experiences. Please call 352-873-7400 for more information.



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Cool off with a Grand Alaskan Cruise & Tour with YMT Vacations

In Florida, our warm weather starts way before the rest of the country. We're experiencing hot summer temperatures in the beginning of spring in many cases, and the heat continues into the autumn months. With warm weather in full swing, many people are looking for ways to escape the sultry heat. What better time to visit Alaska than May and June, when prices are low and you'll get a much needed reprieve from the heat along with spectacular scenery.

With Alaska's average temperatures of 60 degrees and lots of sunshine, people are clamoring to this great state to take in glaciers, snowy mountain peaks, exotic animal life, fresh glistening water, and to enjoy the delicious local food, especially the coveted King Salmon.

On this Grand Alaskan Cruise and Tour, the itinerary is well-laid out; travelers can visit Denali National Park and Glacier Bay National Park on this one trip, which most agencies do not offer. Cruise both the Gulf of Alaska and the Inside Passage and discover the best of the Frontier State by land and by sea. This trip includes sightseeing in Seattle, Vancouver, Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, Glacier Bay, Anchorage, Denali National Park, Alaska Inside Passage and the Gulf of Alaska. Travelers will enjoy seven nights on aboard Holland America Cruise Line's ms *Westerdam*.

The ms *Westerdam* was recently updated with new bar, entertainment, and dining venues, plus completely reimagined suites. The ms *Westerdam* is a fascinating destination in her own right. On board, enjoy live entertainment with Music Walk™, including Lincoln Center Stage, B.B. King's Blues Club, and Billboard Onboard. Learn culinary skills at a cooking show or hands-on workshop with America's Test Kitchen. Enrich your travel experience at the new Exploration Central atop the ship.¹ The ship holds 1916 passengers and the crew is an 800 member team to meet all of the passenger's needs.

This Alaskan cruise package also includes a four-night land tour with a professionally trained local tour director who is knowledgeable of the area and will provide you with a wealth of information. Their friendly service will make your trip a memorable experience.



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YMT Vacations

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References:

1. Holland America Cruise Lines, *Westerdam*, hollandamerica.com, 2019



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BALANCING LIFE

By Rev. J. Keith Long

Do you live a balanced life? When your life seems to be running smoothly and everything is happening just like you suppose it should, you may not give much thought to what it means. When you seem to be at wits end, you may be thinking there must be a better way.

Luke 10:27 reads: He responded, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.**"

Look closely at what this says. It says with your heart. The heart, the amazing muscle made to provide life giving blood to all of the body. Without the heart, the body cannot do its amazing things. Without blood, the brain will not function, the arms and legs will not move, the body cannot live. One of the best ways to honor God is with your heart, by using the gift of life, of the blood flowing through you to do good things, to say good things, and to be good, or sometimes people say righteous.

Your heart is maintained by exercise. As Americans we are prone to spend too much time in the car, in front of the Television, or at the computer. The heart as a muscle needs work to keep doing what it does at the optimum. The healthy heart provides for you the opportunity to love God with all of your strength. The muscles provide strength to move your legs, your arms, all the parts of you that hugs, carries, moves, speaks, and shares. Health professionals will say this: get moving. Movement maintains, lots of movement builds, but most important is the first step movement.

Love God with your mind. In other words, think. Wisdom and knowledge are two very different things. Wisdom for me is a daily process. Living each day learning something, gaining knowledge is mostly helpful, but I can honestly say some things I hold as knowledge are not always helpful. So, therefore, wisdom is about knowing the difference and what makes your life better becomes the very best wisdom. I skipped over "being" because for me it is the entire package. Your heart, your muscles, your mind, every part of you is combined as the temple for your soul. All of your being means everything about you. Jesus said in answer to the



question, "What must I do to have eternal life?" He said, "Do these things." Not some of them, all of them. Not part of the time or most of the time, but all of the time.

Finding Balance is Key

Balance, the act of having enough, not too much, not too little, this is the key to most things, if not all things. I am really strong on spiritual practices, but I need to work on my physical practices. My emotions seem to be doing OK, my relationships are trending up. My visits to my healthcare providers including the dentist are in check. I am making better decisions about what I eat, when and how much. Thinking about these areas of my life and finding balance is an opportunity. Thinking about these things has shown me there is a better way. I thought I was happy and doing

OK, but consideration of these aspects has given me a way to be happier, to have more joy, even in the midst of crisis and stress, and everything else going on.

Practice is Necessary

Like an athlete, for any sport they will practice and work at keeping their skills up to be their personal best. Like a piano player or any musician, even for a drummer, practice is necessary to maintain the talent. It seems that for all of us the same is true; we must have a routine of practice that keeps our mind, body and soul in its best condition. As you live, be encouraged that your God has given you abundance. How you use it, what you do with it, that is something not to be squandered, it is more precious than gold.

**Bible Reference - Common English Bible

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