

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

March 2021

Lake/Sumter Edition - Monthly

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**Include Good  
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With These Tasty Tips

**Kidney**

Awareness Month

**Estate  
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What You Should Know

**What You Need to  
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## TREATMENT OF VENOUS DISEASE/ VARICOSE VEINS

### TIRED & ACHING LEGS?

If you suffer from varicose and spider veins, you are not alone.

### WHAT ARE VARICOSE VEINS?

Although veins and arteries are both part of the circulatory system, they work in very different ways from each other.

### WHAT CAUSES VARICOSE VEINS?

Some predisposing factors include aging, standing occupations, and leg injury or trauma.

### WHEN AND HOW ARE VEINS TREATED?

The most commonly asked questions are:

"Do veins require treatment?" and "What treatment is best?"

## TREATMENT METHODS

- ENDOVENOUS THERMAL ABLATION
- ENDOVENOUS CHEMICAL ABLATION
- SCLEROTHERAPY

### WHAT RESULTS CAN YOU EXPECT?

Technological advances in evaluation and treatment methods allow spider and varicose veins to be treated more effectively and safely than ever before.



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## CONTACT US

Owner  
**Cristan Gensing**  
cristan@gwhizmarketing.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
**Sonny Gensing**  
sonny@gwhizmarketing.com



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# Diabetes and Eye Disease

## Monitoring is Key to Vision Preservation

Diabetes can lay the groundwork for a group of eye diseases, and awareness is instrumental in protecting vision from these stealthy conditions. While none are curable, they can be managed successfully, preventing, delaying and reducing the vision loss and impairment these untreated conditions can cause.

### Diabetic Retinopathy

The high sugar levels associated with diabetes can damage blood vessels in the retina, which most often leads to severe vision loss. Most people with diabetes have at least the early stage of this disease, called non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy, or NPDR. NPDR sees leaking of retinal blood vessels, which in turn engorge the tiny macula, the part of the retina that enables central vision, fine detail, and light and color reception. When the macula is damaged, it affects everything in the central view, robbing people of the ability to drive, read, watch movies, cook, even recognize faces. NPDR can also cause blood vessels in the retina to collapse or close, preventing healthy blood flow to the macula and often leading to the formation of particles that distort normal vision. NPDR causes blurred vision and is the most common cause of blindness in diabetics.

In its early stages, diabetic retinopathy often produces no symptoms. Left unmanaged, it can develop into the more advanced stage of the disease, proliferative diabetic retinopathy, or PDR. With PDR, the retina, in a failed effort to replace damaged blood vessels, begins to grow new ones, but they are malformed and weak. This process, called neovascularization, typically leads to vessels that bleed easily, damaging the vitreous, the gel-like fluid that fills the eye. Bleeding can cause blurred vision and new dark floaters to appear in one's field of vision. Serious bleeding creates poor vision, especially at night, muted colors, and blank areas, not only in central vision but in peripheral vision as well, leading to total blindness in some cases.

### Diabetic Macular Edema

Diabetic Macular Edema, or DME, occurs when diabetic retinopathy causes the macula to swell or distort, impairing central vision. DME occurs in about half of all diabetic retinopathy cases.

### Treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy/DME

The good news is that early diagnosis and treatment of diabetic retinopathy/DME can reduce the risk of related blindness by as much as 95%.



Annual comprehensive eye exams can catch diabetic retinopathy before it has a chance to steal sight.

Treatment depends on what your eye doctor finds during your examination, but will definitely include steps to control your blood sugar and blood pressure to protect your vision and, in some cases, even improve your current vision quality. Keeping your numbers in check and on target can help ensure that your eye's blood vessels perform optimally.

Other treatments include medications and corticosteroids. Anti-VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor) injections block the VEGF protein that encourages abnormal blood vessels to form. Blocking VEGF is an effective way to reduce these vessels and excess retinal fluid. Injectable steroids can also reduce macular swelling. These are usually the first line of defense against diabetic retinopathy/DME.

Less often, patients may require macular laser surgery to seal off leaking blood vessels. Most people respond favorably after just one treatment, though some require multiple sessions. It is often combined with drug therapy.

Very serious cases of PDR may require a procedure called a vitrectomy, in which the eye's damaged vitreous gel is removed and, when warranted, the retina surgically reattached. If needed, your eye doctor will refer you to a local recommended specialist.



### Glaucoma

Diabetes greatly increases one's risk of developing glaucoma, specifically a type called neovascular glaucoma. Glaucoma causes damage to the optic nerve, which transmits data collected by the retina to the brain, enabling vision. In its early stages, glaucoma produces no noticeable symptoms, so, as with nearly all eye diseases, its diagnosis and successful management begin with annual comprehensive eye exams, which can also catch ocular hypertension, a common precursor of glaucoma. Any damage from glaucoma is permanent, so discovering it before it produces vision loss is crucial.

### Glaucoma Treatment

Glaucoma is most often treated with prescription eye drops and/or oral medications designed to lower pressure within the eye. In many cases, laser surgery may be required to open drainage angles and decrease fluid and pressure.

For open-angle glaucoma, Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty, or SLT, opens up the drainage channel of the eye, relieving pressure. This quick, comfortable procedure lowers eye pressure in greater than 80% of patients over the 1-3 months following surgery.

For closed-angle glaucoma, there is laser iridotomy, a procedure in which a laser is used to create a tiny drainage channel in the iris to expel excess fluid. In some cases, surgeons take advantage of standard surgical instruments to create a new drainage passage. In all cases, Lake Eye patients return home the day of surgery, so no need to stay in a hospital overnight.

### Cataracts

People with diabetes face a significantly higher chance of developing cataracts. Changes in blood sugar can cause the lens of the eye to swell or distort, or create excess proteins that cause clouding. Diabetics are more likely to develop cataracts at a younger age as well, and because cataracts can develop without showing early symptoms (yes, this is a running theme in eye diseases), early diagnosis is paramount.

### Simple Solution: Annual Eye Exams

Adults with diabetes should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam every year or more often if your doctor recommends it. Changes in eye health can happen quickly and without warning, so schedule your exams on time so your doctor can spot changes early, while vision is intact and treatment is most effective. With early treatment, nearly all cases of vision loss can be prevented. If you have diabetes and haven't had a complete eye exam in a year or more, call Lake Eye today. Our team of doctors is here to protect and promote your healthy vision.





## A thorough look into your eye's health.

Regular eye exams are the gateway to crisp, clear vision for life. Your appointment clears the way for an exciting array of vision correction options, protective therapies and soothing, lasting comfort. A friendly visit to Lake Eye is all your eyes need to keep seeing and feeling their best, wherever life takes you.

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# LAKE EYE

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T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

# ARE YOUR SYMPTOMS RELATED TO ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFIB)?



**A** Fib is an irregular heart rate that is often rapid with palpitations and causes insufficient blood flow. More than 6 million individuals in the United States have AFib. Hereditary heart disease usually causes the disorder, but other factors contributing to heart arrhythmias are high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, heavy alcohol use, and more. A disruption to the top chamber of the heart, prompting the heart's rhythm and rate to fluctuate, causes an arrhythmia.

The two sides of the heart work in opposition to each other. The right side of the heart takes in deoxygenated blood from the body and feeds them to the veins and lungs; the left side carries the oxygen and nutrient-rich blood from the lungs and feeds it back to the body. Four chambers make up the heart. The top chambers are called the atria, and the lower are the ventricles. Without proper functioning, the heart will begin to cause damage to major organs, and without maintenance, your heart can cause adverse effects very quickly.

Most of us are very familiar with symptoms of coronary heart disease, but AFib symptoms often go overlooked and are not taken as seriously as they should be. Atrial Fibrillation takes over 130,000 lives each year.

## The symptoms of an atrial heart arrhythmia are:

- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Racing heart
- Fluttering heart
- Palpitation
- Uneven heartbeat
- Chest pain

If left untreated, AFib can cause blood clots to form in the heart. These clots are produced due to the restricted pumping of the chambers, which causes the blood to pool in the atria and form clots. If the blood clots break off, they can reach the brain and cause a stroke. Patients with AFIB are seven times more likely to have a stroke than those with normal heart rhythm.

## Treatment for AFib

- Medications to regulate the heart's rhythm (antiarrhythmic drugs)
- Blood-thinners to reduce the risk of stroke
- Surgery (i.e. Catheter ablation, MAZE procedure)

It's critical to seek medical attention from a respected cardiologist if you are experiencing any of the symptoms related to atrial fibrillation. Do not wait, the heart muscle, rhythm, rate, and ability to pump correctly, is what is keeping you alive.

# Dr. V

**T.E. VALLABHAN, MD, FACC**  
BOARD CERTIFIED CARDIOLOGIST  
SPECIALIST IN DISEASES OF THE HEART, ARTERIES AND VEINS

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# Include Good Nutrition in Your Meal Planning

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, boosting your immunity is more important than ever. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), people who have a well-balanced, nutritious diet tend to be healthier and have a stronger immune system with a lower risk of chronic illnesses and infectious diseases. Studies have even shown that a healthy diet can reduce your risk for some types of cancer.

## WHAT FACTORS CAN AFFECT OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM?

There are a number of factors that can have a negative impact on our immune system, including aging, lifestyle choices, such as smoking and excessive alcohol, stress, chronic disease and poor diet. Some factors, such as aging, are beyond our control; however, when it comes to proper nutrition, we can make positive choices that will help boost immunity.

As we age, our immune system can become less effective; in many cases, this decline is worsened by poor nutrition. Research has also shown that a poor diet can result in obesity and actually increase one's risk for disease or chronic illness. Conversely, eating a variety of fresh, unprocessed, plant-based foods provides the vitamins, minerals, proteins and antioxidants your body needs to keep your immune system functioning at its highest level. Drinking enough water and cutting down on or avoiding sugar, fat and salt significantly lowers your risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain types of cancer.

## CAN I STILL EAT THE FOODS I LOVE

Florida Cancer Specialists (FCS) has a team of 12 registered dietitians, all of whom have the CSO (Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition) certification, and who provide education, support and nutritional counseling for cancer patients, including how to adapt favorite family recipes to make them more healthy. They offer the following tips:

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water every day. Water is not only essential; it also helps you feel fuller. Often, if you are hankering for a snack, drinking a glass of water will quell or delay cravings.

- Eat fresh, unprocessed foods every day. These include fruits, vegetables, legumes (lentils, beans), nuts and whole grains.
- Raw vegetables are great for snacks and, if you just must have a dip, consider using hummus, guacamole or a dip made from low-fat yogurt, lentils, white beans or even nuts. You can find lots of great recipes on the Internet.
- Choose white meat and fish, which are generally lower in fat than red meat.
- Avoid trans fats, which are often found in processed food, fast food, fried food, frozen food, pies, cookies, etc.
- Eat less salt and sugar; choose healthy snacks such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

You can also adapt your favorite holiday recipes by substituting healthier choices for the recipe ingredients.

## HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- Cream of Wild Rice Soup - Substitute blended white beans, instead of heavy cream, to provide thickness.
- Sweet Potato Casserole - Instead of canned sweet potatoes and marshmallows, use fresh sweet potatoes and honey with a touch of brown sugar and cinnamon.
- Ambrosia - Use pineapple, oranges, apples and bananas to provide lots of vitamin C; top with toasted almonds and coconut to make this a delicious, healthy dessert.
- Green Bean Casserole Instead of canned cream of mushroom soup, sauté fresh mushrooms and make your own white sauce using skim milk.
- Lemon Cheesecake - Can be made with reduced-fat cream cheese; lemon zest adds lots of flavor and aroma.

- Pumpkin Mousse or Pudding - A delicious alternative to pie; sprinkle ginger snap crumbles on top for texture.

## WORLD-CLASS CANCER TREATMENT CLOSE TO HOME

Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) has a network of expert, Board-certified physicians who bring world-class cancer treatments to local communities, both large and small, across the state in nearly 100 locations. FCS is on the leading edge of clinical trial research, which provides patients access to the newest, most innovative treatments.

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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By Dr. J. Mandume Kerina

# OPIOID FREE ANESTHESIA for OUTPATIENT TOTAL HIP AND TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENT

**D**r. Kerina and his colleagues have spent their professional life studying how to combat the effects of arthritis. They have helped develop advanced surgical techniques to reliably help to revitalize your life. This has culminated in our current opioid free joint replacement program.

The overuse and abuse of opioid pain medication has become a national crisis. Studies have shown that a significant number of addiction cases begin with the use of opioids for pain relief after surgery. Utilizing a team approach involving primary care, anesthesia, our surgeons, and the home health team, we have developed a multi-faceted pain management program for perioperative pain control that is opioid free.

Phase one of our program started with the development and adoption of ligament and muscle sparing approaches to the hip and knee. These do not violate nerve, artery, or muscle planes. These approaches have changed our postoperative pain profile and significantly lessened our patient's dependence on opioids.

Phase 2 followed with the development of a series of long-acting nerve blocks that are effective in alleviating pain for 48 to 72 hours covering the post-op pain profile.

Phase 3 followed with the development of our opioid free anesthesia protocol which allows our patients to wake up more alert and oriented in recovery to begin immediate mobilization postoperatively.

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This is now approved beginning January 2021 and we have perfected outpatient total joint replacement over the last few years to be ready to deliver this to our patients safely.



# KIDNEY AWARENESS MONTH

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

## The National Kidney Foundation Explains How The Kidneys Work Below:

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

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

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

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

**1. Fatigue**—You're more tired, have less energy or are having trouble concentrating. A severe decrease in kidney function can lead to a buildup of toxins and impurities in the blood. This can cause people to feel tired, weak and can make it hard to concentrate. Another complication of kidney disease is anemia, which can cause weakness and fatigue.

**2. Trouble Sleeping**—When the kidneys aren't filtering properly, toxins stay in the blood rather than leaving the body through the urine. This can make it difficult to sleep. There is also a link between obesity and chronic kidney disease, and sleep apnea is more common in those with chronic kidney disease, compared with the general population.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Advanced Urology Institute

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

## Services Offered & Conditions We Treat

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



# Stasis Dermatitis Often Affects Those with Venous Insufficiency

By Bryan Carter, MPA-C, Phlebology-Surgery

**P**ainful, swollen legs, ankles and feet can be cause for alarm. Standing on your feet all day can cause a lot more than aches and pain. If your job or lifestyle requires you to stand for a majority of the day, your circulation will be affected; when this happens, you have a higher risk of venous insufficiency. Venous insufficiency is inadequate functioning of the vein valves in the leg, causing swelling, pain, varicose veins and skin issues.

Various forms of venous issues affect 25 million Americans. Their legs are swollen, achy and they have a heavy sensation. When our veins are working correctly, they pump blood back to the heart. Valves in the veins are made to open and close in one direction if these valves or the wall of the veins are damaged, the blood is unable to work against gravity, and the result is a pooling of the blood in our legs. This pooling is called stasis and can present significant risks to our health. Varicose veins are one of the indicators of major damage to your circulatory system; venous symptoms should not be taken lightly. A medical professional will be able to report whether or not your symptoms are superficial, moderate or severely dangerous and in need treatment.

## Stasis Dermatitis

A side effect of Venous Insufficiency is Stasis Dermatitis. This is a progressive sign of VI, where the skin of the lower legs, ankles and feet darkens from leaky veins. Skin inflammation in the lower legs caused by fluid buildup puts pressure on the veins and circulation issues, varicose veins, and ulcers cause the skin to darken. It also causes a thickening of the skin, dryness, flaking, sores and itching.

Stasis dermatitis causes the skin to be ultra-sensitive to even the smallest issues such as tiny abrasions and irritants like plants, cleaning products, soap, detergents and clothing. Very often dermatologists work directly with venous specialists to ensure their patients skin is cared for safely and treated to alleviate irritations.

## Other Symptoms of Venous Insufficiency:

- Leg pain while standing or sitting, which subsides after resting for an extended period of time
- Sensations of tightness & burning may occur in the leg or foot
- Swelling of the calves, which dissipates after elevation



- Dark veins
- Varicose veins
- Dry, itchy skin
- Ulcer near the ankle (often painless, but with a dark rim)

Although it can happen to anyone, the most common factors that puts you at risk for vein issues is being a female over the age of 50, pregnancy, sitting for extended periods of time, a family history of varicose veins, smoking, being overweight, and a sedentary lifestyle.

Some people develop ulcerations, or sores on the lower legs and ankles, due to the low level of oxygen in the veins and the uptake of white blood cells. These ulcers can be extremely painful and are often quite resistant to healing.

Because the veins and arteries balance each other out, when a person experiences chronic symptoms, it's critical to see a physician. If the veins are damaged, it's not unusual that the arteries are not pumping blood efficiently either. Chronic venous insufficiency must be treated to prevent further damage to your circulatory system and your overall health.

Both chronic and acute symptoms could be a sign or lead to a DVT (deep vein thrombosis). DVTs are life-threatening and should be treated immediately. Deep vein thrombosis is a blood clot in the veins that are formed deep in within the legs. Vascular malformations, pelvic tumors or sitting for long periods of time are some of the risk factors that go along with DVTs. Speaking to your physician is vital if you or a loved one have any of the venous symptoms or risk factors discussed above.



Sometimes venous insufficiency is more of a cosmetic issue and poses little health concerns. This is usually noted in spider veins, which is when the tiny capillaries are damaged, but when the veins are damaged, this can cause varicose veins, which can lead to more severe health issues such as DVTs and cardiovascular disorders. Varicose veins and symptoms of venous insufficiency should never be taken lightly. A medical professional will be able to report whether or not your symptoms are superficial, or dangerous and in need treatment.

## Treatment Options for Venous Insufficiency

- Compression Stockings
- Gradient Compression Devices
- Increased Exercise
- Medications
- Surgery (Usually through minimally invasive catheters, or ultrasound)

## Village Heart and Vein Center

At Village Heart & Vein Center, Bryan Carter specializes in venous issues and leg health, taking great pride in getting to know his patients on an individual level. He is supported by a full-service cardiology practice. Mr. Carter is a previous Army combat medic who obtained his Masters in Physician Assistant studies with a thesis in Venous Disease and Treatment. Mr. Carter has been treating vein problems since October 2002 and was one of the first Physician Assistants to perform thermal ablation—a treatment that soon made traditional vein stripping extinct. Bryan has personally trained physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners throughout Florida and Georgia and is an active member of the American College of Phlebology. He is also one of only a few to be inducted into the American Venous Forum.

To find out more, please visit their website at [villageheartandvein.com](http://villageheartandvein.com), or call their office to schedule your appointment at, (352) 674-2080.



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# Estate Planning: What You Should Know

**A**s we age, it's important to plan out where and who our assets will go to, but it's usually something that many people put off due to not wanting to think of end of life circumstances. Despite this train of thought, it's an essential part of planning and a responsibility that will make you feel prepared, and in most cases, satisfied by knowing everything is in order as it should be.

Legal teams and attorneys that specialize in estate planning are available to draft your will, trusts, power of attorney documents and living wills. Depending on your needs and desires, the documents can be customized and personalized. Leaving your estate to children, grandchildren, dependents, named beneficiaries or foundations will reduce estate taxes for your benefactors.

It's not uncommon that one needs a live-in nurse to help with daily tasks that are now impossible due to cognitive and degenerative conditions (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, etc.) or debilitating disorders (cancers, coma, on life-support, etc.). When there is no power of attorney (POA) in place to make decisions such as hiring a nurse or caregiver, transitioning into a memory care facility, or implementing a hospice plan, these important decisions can turn into a lengthy, legal process with negative outcomes.

Florida requires a permanent POA that goes into effect at the moment of signing. If you or a loved one are being proactive about your estate planning or medical interests, it's critical to speak to an attorney to help guide you through the process and make the appropriate decisions that are specific to your situation.

Talking to an attorney about making these important decisions now is a responsible decision.

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Senior living encompasses many lifestyles and living options. From Independent Living to Memory Care, Sumter Senior Living is designed to enhance the lives and well-being of all. And our knowledgeable and experienced associates are here to assist and provide the resources for ensuring you or your loved ones find what best works for your family.

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# ED: Getting Treatment Early is Best, but it's NEVER too Late

## *Don't Just Mask your Symptoms*

**E**rectile Dysfunction (ED) is deeply related to vascular health. Many men that begin to experience ED have little idea that they need to treat the arteriosclerosis in the penis as well as in their body. Most standard medical practitioners will start a man on the "little blue pill," but this only masks the symptoms of ED and it definitely doesn't treat the cause.

Any man that is showing signs of erectile dysfunction should seek alternative and thorough medical assistance from a physician that not only understands the disorder but one that also offers the most advanced treatment to address your overall health.

TNT (Total Nutrition & Therapeutics) uses the most advanced groundbreaking technology, which utilizes high-frequency shockwaves to break up the plaque in the penis. This technology is called GAINSWave.

### Treat ED's Cause with GAINSWave

The standard treatments for erectile dysfunction are prescription medications or injections that cause an erection for a limited amount of time. However, there is a better way than the standard of care by actually treating erectile dysfunction at its core. The GAINSWave is a revolutionary, non-invasive treatment that addresses the underlying causes of ED. GAINSWave uses scientifically proven technology through sound waves to stimulate blood circulation, tissue regeneration, and removes plaque build-up. Traditional treatments for ED, such as pills or injections, lose effectiveness over time and have to be used every time a man wants to engage in sexual activity. GAINSWave helps men to feel like themselves again and to enjoy their lives.

GAINSWave utilizes high frequency, low-intensity soundwaves to improve blood flow to the penis, remove micro-plaque, and stimulates the growth of new blood vessels. GAINSWave uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety, and results. Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by reduced blood flow. GAINSWave has developed a protocol to treat ED and Peyronie's disease (scar tissue) as well as enhance sexual performance.



### Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

Men who are just beginning to see ED warning indicators should seek the earliest treatment possible. The reason is that it has been well documented that if early diagnosis and treatment are started when a man is younger (the 30s, 40s, 50s) there is an increased chance that the ED will very likely no longer need medical treatment and their arteriosclerosis can dissipate. There have been multiple peer-reviewed studies that indicate that GAINSWave treatment can potentially cure ED in some patients. The sooner you intervene with treatment, the better your outcome will be.

Almost everyone will experience a decline in sexual functioning. But with the advent of Regenerative medicine, Erectile Dysfunction is no longer an inevitable part of aging. GAINSWave is based on a series of over 30 clinical studies showing a greater than 75% success rate in treating Erectile Dysfunction (ED).

### How to Get Started?

TNT has been helping men regain control of their ED and identifies the exact cause of your sexual health to create a customized treatment plan. Almost everyone will experience a decline in sexual functioning. But with the advent of Regenerative medicine, Erectile Dysfunction is no longer an inevitable part of aging. GAINSWave is based on a series of over 30 clinical studies showing a greater than 75% success rate in treating Erectile Dysfunction (ED).

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If you want drug-free alternative options for your health needs, TNT treats both male and female patients who desire alternative therapies to get to the root cause of their conditions.

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# What You Need to Know About Your IMMUNE SYSTEM

By Sheryl Hensel

**A**s long as your immune system is running smoothly, you don't even notice it's there or think about what it's doing.

What happens when it doesn't work properly? Diseases like Colorectal Cancer, Endometriosis, Kidney Disease, Vision Impairments, and Brain Disorders to name a few start to set in.

The role of an immune system is to protect your body against harmful substances, germs, bacteria, viruses, parasites, and cell changes that could make your body sick. It also recognizes and neutralizes harmful substances from the environment, like radioactive frequencies from your smart devices.

What are you doing to equip your system with the tools to fight it? We aren't living in the same world our grandparents and great grandparents lived in. They didn't have the assaults against their body that we have today. The ground was left to build minerals back before crops were planted again. The air and water wasn't riddled with toxins and pesticides. The list is long comparing the differences in just our environment alone, not to mention stress levels. They weren't surrounded by cement or driving for hours every day in a car. Being sedentary just wasn't part of their lifestyle. Times are very different and we need to be proactive in preventing our immune system from breaking down.

Imagine sitting at a table with 6 people and you're the only one whose body doesn't subside to the nasty germ roaming around. Why is it that some people exposed to the same germ get sick and some don't? They have a strong immune system and that doesn't happen by chance.

The innate immune system, which you are born with, recognizes an invader and immediately goes into action. The cells of this immune system surround and engulf the invader. The invader is killed inside the immune system cells.

The adaptive immune system, which your body develops as it is exposed to things, produces cells (antibodies) to protect your body from a specific invader. Once the body has come into contact with a disease-causing germ for the first time, it usually



stores information about the germ and how to fight it. Then, if it comes into contact with the germ again, it recognizes the germ straight away and can start fighting it faster.

## How do you help your immune system be as optimal as it can be?

Are you getting 8 hours of sleep? Are you drinking water, many recommend half your weight in ounces? Is your food organic, nutritionally dense, vegetables full of color? Do you get 30 minutes of exercise a day? These are a few things that you can do to support your immune system and help build healthy cells. There are also things that decline cellular health and provide a greater opportunity for disease to develop. Are you eating processed and high sugar foods? Do you cook with a microwave? Are you in constant stress? Are you taking medication? Are you sitting for long periods of time? Are you constantly around smart devices or wifi? There are so many things in our lives today that harm our immune systems that our ancestors never had to worry about.

Are you going to do the things your body really needs to be optimally healthy? For many of us, the answer is no. As much as we know eating sugar is bad for us, we often partake in too much at times. We know smoking has been linked to cancer yet it isn't just that easy to quit. Most of us know what needs to be done to take weight off and keep it off, yet our nation's obesity rates are sky rocketing. What we know and what we do are often two different things.

That is why it's so important to support your cell health. Without cell health disease is likely to invade your body. Remember from last month's article, once a cell has lost 60% of its energy, it stops working and uses the remaining energy to survive.

Magnetic resonance stimulation (MRS) may indeed come to the rescue therapeutically and/or preventatively, acting as a "whole body battery recharger". We know that cells that are oxygenated can do battle easier in your body than a depleted cell. Prevention is much less expensive and less painful than disease. Give yourself the gift of cell health this year and start 2021 off with a step in the right direction. Living a quality life with your well-earned time left is the name of the game, not sitting in doctor's offices.

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# Lower Your Cholesterol with these Tasty Tips

**H**igh cholesterol can become a problem at almost any age, but our risk for developing it increases as we get older. For women, women, high cholesterol can especially become a problem after menopause. Luckily, there are some easy ways to prevent high cholesterol or help lower it right in your kitchen. Celebrate National Nutrition Month in March by working to lower your cholesterol with these quick tips.

## First, what is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is found in all your body's cells. Your body needs cholesterol to function, but having too much of it in your blood can cause buildup in your arteries or even block them completely. This can lead to heart disease, heart attack and stroke, which older adults are also more at risk of developing. More than 42 million Americans over age 60 have at least one form of cardiovascular disease.

There are two types of cholesterol, LDL ("bad" cholesterol) and HDL ("good" cholesterol). LDL cholesterol comes from eating saturated fat and can clog your arteries. On the other hand, having higher levels of HDL cholesterol can lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. So, what can you eat to lower your bad cholesterol and increase the good stuff?

## The good guys: Foods that help your cholesterol levels

• **Fiber:** Foods high in fiber prevent your digestive tract from absorbing cholesterol. Try whole-grain oatmeal and oat bran. Fruits like apples, bananas, oranges and prunes are good sources of fiber. Add fiber-rich foods like kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas and lima beans to your diet. Fiber supplements can be a good option, too.

• **Fruits and Vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables have compounds that help lower your cholesterol levels and keep daily saturated fat intake low. Many of them also contain fiber for added benefits. Bonus: Avocado is a "heart-healthy" fat that is good to eat in moderation.

• **Fish:** Fish doesn't lower your cholesterol levels, but it is a good source of healthy cholesterol. Fish are rich in nutrients and protect your heart from blood clots and inflammation — which can reduce your risk for heart attack. These fish are also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids: salmon, tuna and mackerel.



## The bad guys: Foods to stay away from

• **Salt:** Limiting your sodium (salt) intake will help lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk for heart disease. Adults over 50 should stick to 2,300 milligrams (1 teaspoon) or less of salt per day. This includes salt that you add to your food and salt already included in your food. Try choosing low sodium or "no added salt" foods and seasonings.

• **Fried and Processed Foods:** Processed foods are high in saturated fats, sugars and salt. Try eating fresh foods like fruits and vegetables.

• **Butter:** Instead of butter, try using vegetable oils. Canola, sunflower and safflower are good replacements.

• **Whole-Fat Dairy:** Whole-fat dairy is high in cholesterol and saturated fats. Look for low-fat yogurt and cheese, 1-percent or skim milk and low-fat or fat-free frozen yogurt and ice cream.

• **High Fat Meats:** Look for lean meats such as beef sirloin or pork tenderloin. Eat portions less than 3 ounces.

• **Eggs:** According to research from the Harvard Medical School, one egg a day should be OK for most people. Eggs have dietary cholesterol, but are low in saturated fat. The problem with eggs occurs when you add oils, butter or cheese into them when you're cooking. However, if you are at a high risk for diabetes or have heart disease, then you should limit yourself to three eggs per week. If you like eggs but don't want the added cholesterol, try egg whites. Egg whites are cholesterol free.

## Tips when shopping for food

• This seems like a given, but make sure to look at nutrition labels when shopping for food. The nutrition label will have all the information about how much fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, fiber, sugar and sodium is in the product.

• Shop around the perimeter of the store. This is where you usually find produce, lean meats, nuts and low-fat dairy.

• Always shop when you are full. You will be less likely to buy foods that are high in sugar and salt when you're not hungry.

• When shopping for meat, meats labeled "prime" are higher in fat. Look for meats labeled "choice" or "select."

## What else can you do to help manage your cholesterol?

• **Stay active:** Get at least 30 minutes of exercise each day. Exercise will help circulate your bloodstream and improve your overall health. You can walk, garden or hit the gym, anything that gets you moving!

• **Stop smoking:** Just like high cholesterol levels, smoking can clog and block your arteries. Smoking can increase your risk for heart disease or even a heart attack, too.

• **Cholesterol-lowering drugs:** If diet and exercise don't help lower your cholesterol, there are medications that can help. Talk to your doctor to find out if these medications could be right for you.

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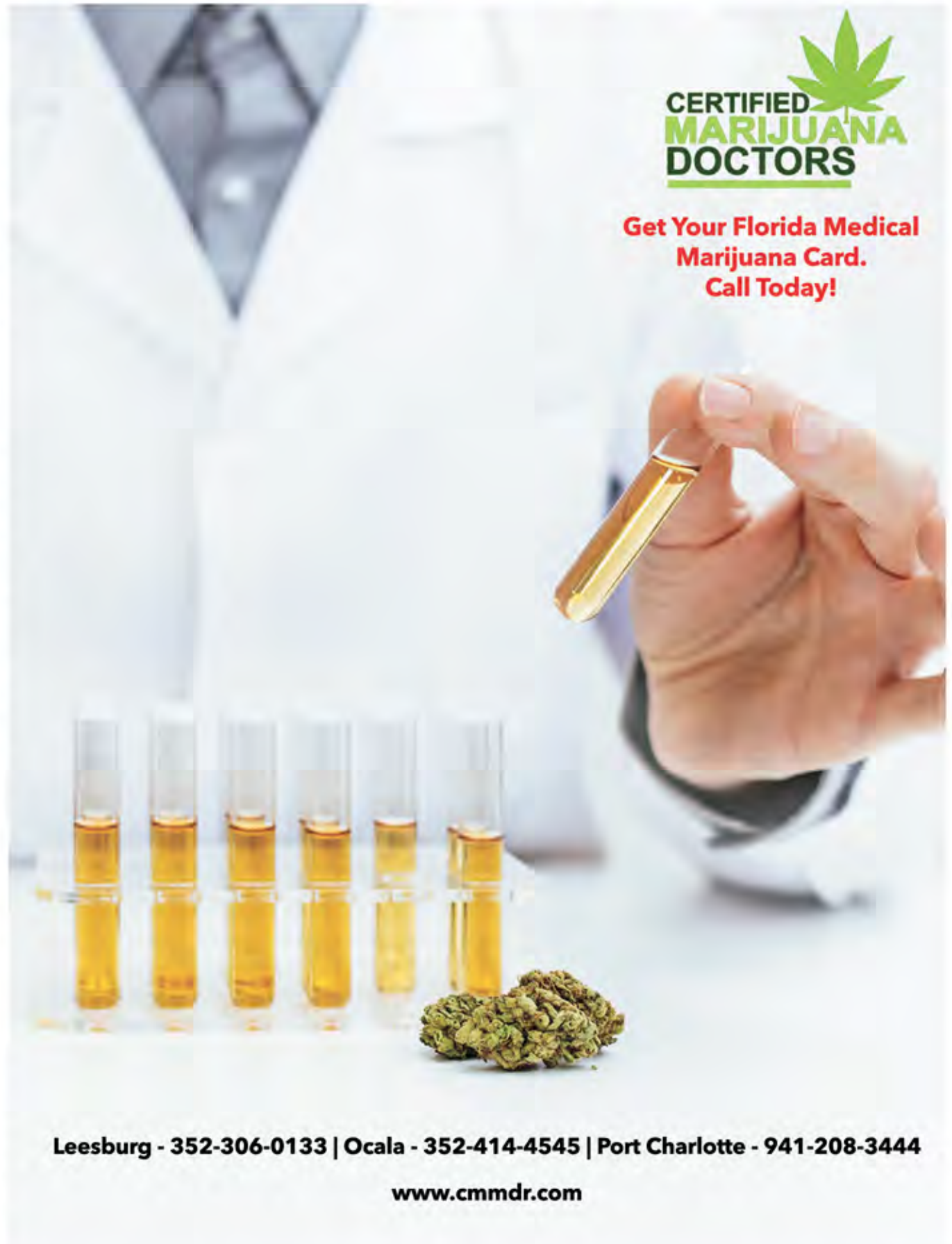


# 10% THC CAP PROPOSAL

**E**vidently, the last few years within the Florida cannabis industry have progressed rapidly with proposed changes such as the Smoking amendment that currently allows patients to purchase cannabis for smoking use. Other small victories such as defeating a proposal for recreational cannabis that would have further exacerbated the issue of vertical integration have created quite the storm of optimism among those in the community. But despite these wins, there are other problems surfacing this coming year that could negatively affect both dispensaries and patients.

Rep. Jose Oliva is proposing a hard limit on the percentage of THC allowed in all medical marijuana products; a leap back from the current progression in the program. Cited from a UK study done in the 1950's, Oliva is quoted saying "We're seeing different strains now in Europe that are 100 times stronger, and we're starting to learn that this has some schizophrenic results, especially in young, developing brains." Every year we see similar policies trying to trek its way into senate and undermine Florida's already strict medical program and Florida marijuana cardholders see this as an uphill battle they're willing to fight for. Patients across social media outlets cannot stress enough how much this could negatively affect them as well as the dispensaries revenue. The bottom line is that this proposal will not benefit anybody in the marijuana industry from the patients all the way to the top executives at places like Trulieve.

While these initiatives have not slowed down yet, it is very important to note that most of these laws have not made it past the House and should not be a major concern to current card holders. Despite this, it is important to stay up to date with the current direction of Florida's ballooning marijuana industry although this particular proposal shouldn't worry any medical card holders anytime soon.



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# Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances: A Solution for a Good Night's Sleep

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

**S**leep apnea affects more than 25 million people in the United States. It is a progressive condition that interrupts breathing patterns throughout a person's sleep. People that suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) may have episodes of stopping breathing up to hundreds of times per night for 10 seconds or longer, and along with this disruption comes many adverse side effects and morbidities.

## What Causes Sleep Apnea?

The Short answer to sleep apnea's cause is that the airway collapses during sleep due to one or more of the following conditions, obesity, drinking alcohol, smoking, stress, lung disease like COPD, emphysema or asthma, drugs, and various ailments. Once the sleep pattern is disrupted, the lack of oxygen to the brain and heart can cause serious health concerns and implications.

## What are the Side Effects and Complications Associated with Sleep Apnea?

- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disorders
- Chronic disease
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Behavioral issues
- Stroke
- Brain health impairment

If not treated, over time, OSA can lead to heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and other serious complications.

## What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

- Snoring
- Gasping
- Dry mouth
- Choking
- Cognitive decline or brain fog
- Restless sleeping
- Depression and irritability

## Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances:

### Have you tried CPAP therapy and failed?

The customary first line of treatment for sleep apnea is a PAP device. However, many patients are unable to tolerate the use of a PAP, and therefore are not achieving optimum treatment results. Those patients are candidates for Oral Appliance Therapy, or OAT. Research shows that a custom-fit oral appliance is an effective therapeutic treatment option for Obstructive Sleep Apnea and can also help to eliminate snoring. A custom oral appliance is similar to a nightguard or retainer and is designed to assist in opening the airway. By opening the airway, you increase your oxygen intake, as well as improve your sleep, and your over-all health. The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine; all recommend OAT to be prescribed by a Sleep Physician and fabricated by an ABDSM qualified dentist.

The negative effects of poor sleep are numerous. We all know the short term results of not sleeping well and feeling terrible but what about the more serious health concerns? If left untreated, people may experience poor memory, decreased cognitive function leading to dementia and Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease including high blood pressure, insulin resistance, obesity and worsening symptoms of asthma and COPD due to lack of oxygen to the brain during sleeping hours. The good news is that if properly diagnosed and treated early, the effects of Sleep Apnea can be reversed over time.

### COVID-19 and Sleep Apnea

It is the position of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSMD) that oral appliance therapy (OAT) should be prescribed as a first-line therapy for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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*This recommendation is being made based on the following information:*

- The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) has indicated that PAP therapy potentially exposes individuals, especially those in proximity to the patient, to increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- A number of studies have found evidence that COVID-19 can remain suspended in the air in aerosol particles
- It is unknown whether it is possible for patients to be re-infected from re-using PAP tubing, filters, and/or masks.
- There have been reported shortages of distilled water and other supplies necessary for optimal use of PAP machines.
- Oral appliances do not generate aerosols and can be easily disinfected by patients to kill the COVID-19 virus

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At Village Sleep Dentistry, we not only have the qualifications, but we are also a Medicare approved provider as well. If you have Sleep Apnea, consider improving your health and your quality of life. Your body and mind will thank you.

### Meet Dr. Rozensky

As a Diplomate of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and recognized as a qualified dentist by the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine. Dr. Rozensky earned his Doctorate of Dental Surgery degree from University of New York at Buffalo and then went on to serve our country in the United States Air Force, after which he enjoyed private practice in General Dentistry for over 20 years. Dr. Rozensky now includes his passion for Sleep Dentistry in his practice and finds true joy in the life changing care he is providing.

### Village Sleep Dentistry

At Village Sleep Dentistry, our dentist Dr. Richard Rozensky and the entire dental team will work closely with you so that you can make informed decisions about your health. In addition to sleep dentistry, we offer all aspects of dental care and treatment including restorative, general, cosmetic dentistry and more.

From the moment you step in the door you will feel at ease. You will be welcomed by a warm and inviting atmosphere, combined with a professional and caring team. You will immediately recognize the emphasis on professionalism and quality, from the people who care for you to the technology used-this is the way dental care should be!



# Can Omega-3 Fish Oil Help Prevent Muscle Wasting?

By Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

**M**uscle wasting. It's a nasty phenomenon that scares many of us over the age of 40 – especially when we stand naked in front of the mirror!

Known more formally as sarcopenia, muscle wasting is a major issue. As many as 25-45% of older adults in the United States suffer from problematic loss of muscle mass and strength. Besides making it harder to carry out everyday physical tasks, sarcopenia is associated with a long list of negative health outcomes, like fractures, hospitalization and early death.

The good news is that there are ways to fight muscle loss. In addition to traditional measures – like regular exercise, getting enough protein, and maintaining healthy vitamin D levels – research indicates that omega-3 fatty acids may also be important for preserving our muscle strength.

## Does Omega 3 Help with Muscle Growth?

A number of studies have indicated that omega-3s play a role in muscle growth.

Just in the last year, a study from South Korea found that older women with higher omega-3 levels had a lower risk of sarcopenic obesity. In addition, a 2020 meta-analysis of 10 randomized controlled trials found that taking more than 2000 mg of omega-3s daily was associated with a 0.73 pound increase in muscle mass in elderly individuals.

While such improvements may seem minor, keep in mind that most people after age 50 lose 2% of their muscle mass on a yearly basis. Thus, even small improvements in muscle mass and mobility can be meaningful.

These 2020 findings importantly reiterate the results from previous trials. Consider one 2015 study, which found that giving healthy older individuals 3360 mg of EPA/DHA omega-3s daily for 6 months increased thigh muscle volume, handgrip strength, and one-repetition muscle strength (compared to the control group). The researchers of this study noted that, in functional terms, taking the omega-3 supplements had prevented 2 – 3 years worth of normal age-associated losses in muscle mass and function.



## Why Does Fish Oil Help Build Muscle?

While researchers are still working to understand exactly how omega-3s influence muscle mass, they have some educated ideas:

One of the central theories is that omega-3s help fight a phenomenon known as “inflammaging,” which is age-related chronic low-grade inflammation. With inflammaging, the body produces higher levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines that affect signaling pathways for muscle anabolism (ie. muscle building) and catabolism (ie. muscle breakdown).

Since omega-3s have been shown to reduce high levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines, they may help resolve destructive ongoing inflammation and make the body more effective at building muscle.

Another mechanism could be that omega-3s support muscle mass by counteracting the damage of oxidative stress. Oxidative stress – which is generally caused by poor eating habits, inactivity, smoking, pollution, etc. – contributes to sarcopenia by decreasing muscle protein synthesis. Over time, prolonged oxidative stress can reduce muscle mass quantity. Promisingly, omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce certain oxidative stress markers.

## Omega-3s May Fight Anabolic Resistance

Part of what makes these theories especially exciting is that they could help address one of the biggest challenges with sarcopenia: Anabolic resistance.

Anabolic resistance refers to the body's reduced ability to build muscle, even when getting enough exercise, amino acids, protein, etc. Since anabolic

resistance increases with age, some researchers believe that adding omega-3s to the mix could be key to achieving better exercise results in older individuals.

## How Much Omega-3 Do You Need Every Day?

One of the tricky things about the current omega-3 literature on muscle building is that the trials use a variety of supplement sources, exercise protocols, and other variables. Therefore, the findings are not always conclusive.

With that said, several reviews have identified that getting at least 3000 mg of EPA/DHA omega-3s daily may be necessary in order to achieve positive results for muscle mass in older adults. Since most fish oil capsules contain just 10% of that amount (approximately 300 mg of EPA/DHA per gel cap), this dosage can be hard to replicate through regular omega-3 supplements.

For easier-to-swallow alternatives, liquid products like Omega Cure® Extra Strength and Omega Restore provide 3000 mg of EPA/DHA in pre-measured vials. That's roughly the same amount of omega-3s found in a 6oz. fillet of wild-caught salmon.

*This article was abbreviated from a longer version published on omega3innovations.com. For the full text and references, visit:*

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/con-omega-3-fish-oil-help-prevent-muscle-wasting/>

## About Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

Born and raised in the United States, Dr. Chalmers graduated from Brown University and completed her medical training at the University of Oslo in Norway. Dr. Chalmers practiced medicine in Norway for many years. Today, she serves as president of Omega3 Innovations.



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**Dr. Brent Carter**

# Neuropathy? Or is it?

**T**hese days we hear more and more about neuropathy. People often attribute all their foot ailments to neuropathy: Burning, Tingling, Numbness, and Pain to name the most common but also loss of balance, swelling, and weakness. The truth is that many of these symptoms can indeed be caused by neuropathy. But frequently the problems are not caused by neuropathy but by inflamed nerves called neuritis.

First, let's discuss what neuropathy actually is. Neuropathy is nerve damage, typically in the hands and feet that can be caused by many factors. Diabetes can be a major cause. For whatever reason, if the nerves in the feet and legs are deteriorating or damaged, they will not work the way that they are supposed to. The pain, burning, etc. can be extremely crippling and negatively affect a person's life. Sadly, there are not really any effective cures for this although there are treatments available to reduce the symptoms. People are commonly of the belief that their problems are caused by neuropathy and nothing can be done.

The good news is that many patients' pain, burning, etc. are only partially or not at all caused by neuropathy but are caused by neuritis or neuromas instead. These are irritated nerves that have become inflamed and enlarged. They are very treatable and can actually be cured. Usually it is not necessary to have them surgically removed.



Some testing is frequently recommended to confirm the diagnoses and rule out other problems. Once a doctor is able to determine that you have this condition, there are a number of treatments available which have high rates of success.

Our goal is to relieve the pain as quickly as possible, help the patient to completely heal, and change the forces that caused it in the first place.

In conclusion, I'd like to give hope to anyone who has painful, burning, tingling, and/or numb feet. Don't give up!

**Schedule an Appointment Today**



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# Migraines Are the Sixth Most Disabling Disorder Globally

By Alexander C. Frank, DC, DACNB, FABES

## Briana, Mom of 3

"When I get a migraine I am done for a couple of days, and with 3 young children it is devastating. I was fortunate to have been given Dr. Frank's card by a friend when my most recent attack occurred. After a thorough examination, he gently adjusted my neck and applied other therapies including vibration and aroma therapy. Normally the only thing that stops my migraine is going to sleep (or vomiting). However, I left that first treatment with a pain level of 2 out of 10, having started out at level 10 pain; I was thrilled! In addition, Dr. Frank gave me exercises and recommended neurological tools that I could use to help prevent and/or treat my migraines".

Migraine are the sixth most disabling disorder globally, and the most disabling of all neurological disorders. Migraine affect females greater than males at a rate of 3:1. It is described as a disorder of brain sensory processing that can have many influences such as genetics, environment, stress, etc. It's a complex and multifaceted disorder which can last for moments, or may last over several days. It is widely accepted that Migraine involves activation and sensitization of an orchestras of tissues along with the Trigeminovascular Pathway (TVP). The TVP starts in the deepest regions of the brain that are tasked with maintaining homeostasis, or balance within the body & its systems. The TVP continues through the Brainstem which houses the centers that control light & sound sensitivity, pain inhibition, posture, sleep, arousal, nausea/vomiting centers, and more. It ends in the upper cervical spinal cord around C2/C3. It has been suggested that migraine may be considered a brain state of altered excitability which leads to the failure of the "volume knob" which gaits sensory information.

In simple of terms, a migraine is occurs when the cells/tissues (think engines) that make up your TVP and associated tissues do not have the capacity/integrity to do work and fail, just like an injured muscle. An example of this type of pain is when you eat or drink something cold and you feel a sudden onset of severe head and/or facial pain. This leads to an over-activation of the system that relays facial pain and we experience 30 seconds of what we feel as excruciating pain. However, this is an misinterpretation of the actual level of tissue damage, as there is none. What occurred was an immediate constriction of blood vessels in the upper palate followed by a rapid dilatation (stretch) of those blood vessel. The failure to throttle the information caused the brain to perceive things being worse than they actually were.



DO NOT ACCEPT "LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT".  
THE BRAIN CAN CHANGE!

Many medication aim to block this pain pathway from sending painful information. At Florida Functional Neurology Group, Dr. Frank utilizes his extensive knowledge of clinical neuroscience to apply drug-free treatments to improve the capacity/integrity of the TVP and other tissues involved in head/facial pain. utilizing a combination of neuroplasticity retraining, vestibular rehabilitation, visuomotor rehab, chiropractic, photobiomodulation, & physio therapies. Diet can play a major role in migraines as keeping TVP tissues appropriately "fueled" in order to prevent fatigue failure of tissue pain. There other variables that also must be considered when developing a tailored treatment plan for each individual. Many times it is a combination of treatments that provide the longest lasting results. This approach has allowed Dr. Frank to help many individuals suffering from various forms of head and facial pain who have not be able to find relief through traditional methods and have been told to "learn to live with it".



Dr. Frank understands that no two people are quite alike, and as such, no two injuries or pains manifest themselves identically. He offers a diverse range of cutting-edge neurological, chiropractic, orthopedic, treatments & physiotherapies, along with nutritional support, to better assist his clients on the road to optimal health & maximum potential.



## About Dr. Frank

Dr. Alexander Charles Frank is the only Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist in the North Central Florida area. He also holds a fellowship in Electrodiagnostic Specialties.

Dr. Frank graduated Cum Laude from Life Chiropractic College West. He has interned and trained with the top chiropractic neurologists and functional medicine specialists in the world in order to manage the most complicated of health issues.

Dr. Frank's comprehensive evaluations assess for the root cause(s) of his client's health issues. Treatment plans are then tailored to an individual's specific needs. Dr. Frank's comprehensive evaluations are based on the most advanced clinical neuroscientific research of today. In addition, he utilizes the most state-of-the-art diagnostics available that help to find the "weak links in the chain". Cutting-edge rehabilitative programs are then tailored to each individual's specific needs.

**To Schedule your appointment  
with Dr. Frank, please call the  
Florida Functional Neurology Group  
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# The Role of Physical and Occupational Therapy for MS

**M**ultiple Sclerosis affects approximately 2.3 million Americans, but that number is thought to be much higher since the symptoms are often unspecified and confused with other disorders. With autoimmune disorders, the body's natural defense system (immune system) attacks itself and causes inflammation and damage to healthy tissue and organs.

Multiple Sclerosis is one of the fastest growing autoimmune disorders, affecting the CNS (Central Nervous System), which is made up of the spine, brain and optic nerves. When the immune system attacks the CNS, the myelin sheath, which is the outer protective layer of the nerves, becomes inflamed and can begin to deteriorate. The initial symptoms of MS often come and go, until the disease is much more advanced.

## MS Symptoms

- Numbness & Tingling
- Balance Issues
- Vision Disorders
- Slurred Speech
- Cognitive Decline
- Lack of Concentration
- Burning Sensations
- Tremors
- Twitching Nerves & Muscles
- Paralysis
- Blindness

Autoimmune flares are when the body attacks itself. With MS, these flares are called exacerbations or relapses. An exacerbation can be mild

to severe, but they will show signs of myelin inflammation and varying symptoms. An exacerbation can last from one day to a few weeks, depending on your progression and treatment.



Wellness plans play a role in keeping symptoms at bay. Eating a healthy diet, exercising, and healthy behaviors are key components to keeping you healthier in general. Avoiding certain foods that cause inflammation in the body, like gluten, saturated fats, and processed foods, has helped many individuals. Along with eliminating certain foods, adding anti-inflammatory nutrients is also very beneficial to staving off exacerbations. These foods include things like ginger, turmeric, omega-fatty acids, fruits and vegetables, and flaxseeds, to name a few. Physical Therapy plays a crucial role in treating MS and helping patients move well and function at optimal levels depending on their MS severity.

## Managing MS With Physical and Occupational Therapy

Throughout the different stages of MS, physical therapy is a primary wellness and therapeutic addition to treatment. From the initial diagnosis to relapse and flares, physical therapy and occupational therapy are critical components of maintaining daily living routines, improving balance and range of motion, to name a few.

Therapists help patients stay active and mobile while teaching them ways to stay safe in their daily lives.

When patients suffer from flares or relapse, the therapist's main goal is to get them back to where they were and retrieve the progress that was made prior to the regression. As the disease continues to progress, therapists will incorporate additional adaptive equipment such as grab bars, shower chairs, reaching/grabbing poles, walkers, scooters, wheelchairs, etc. These are essential components to keeping patients safe and providing daily living assistance. Speech therapy can also be a beneficial means to help with any slurring or cognitive issues that may arise.

Innovative Therapies Group offers massage, physical, occupational and speech therapy. They embrace alternative and eastern medicine philosophies and will help you explore new inventive ways to combat your pain or disorders.

## Types of Treatment Available 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

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

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By Daniel Taylor DC

**I**t's a beautiful Sunday afternoon on the golf course; the greens are freshly cut and the sun shining. You drive up to the tee box for the first shot of the day. You bend over to put the tee in the ground and out of nowhere the stabbing, knife-like low back pain hits you hard.

If the above scenario sounds familiar, know that you are not alone; studies reported that 50 percent of those who golf regularly suffer from chronic low back problems. Whether this pain is caused from placing the tee into the ground, riding in the golf cart or hitting the golf ball, know that there are options to eliminate this pain.

There are three fundamental causes of golf injuries: poor posture, lack of flexibility and lack of balanced functioning muscles. Golf is a game of repetitive

motion that places torque on one side of the body. This is hard on the body and worse for amateurs because of improper swing mechanics that cause a greater load of stress on the low back. Imagine going to the gym and only working out one side of your body for years while neglecting the opposite side. Now picture yourself bent over in your golfing stance while hitting the ball a hundred times during a period of three to four hours. It's easy to see how golfers set themselves up for injuries.

Another aspect of your golf game that chiropractic can improve is your swing. Every golfer can agree that it is essential that the body is balanced from head to toe in order to have the perfect golf swing. In order to perform your best, you need to have unrestricted,

fluid motion throughout the spine and pelvis. An improper stance will have a profound effect on your golf swing. Think of the body as a machine that stores and uses energy. Angular momentum only exists through fixed axis rotation (your spine). Your arms, hands and golf club all rotate around the spine. When the spine turns, the body creates a centrifugal motion for the club to follow. In order for there to be a fluid motion there must be a healthy, freely moveable spine and proper balanced muscles. Still unsure if chiropractic could help your game? Ask one of golf's greatest about chiropractic. *"I've been going to chiropractors for as long as I can remember. It's as important to my training as practicing my swing"*

- Tiger Woods.



**Common golf related diagnosis include:**

• **Sacro-iliac (SI) joint dysfunction:** This basically means that the SI joint has lost its normal fluid motion due to a fixation. Typically 2-4 visits can solve this complaint.

• **Facet Syndrome:** Facets are the name for the joints in the spine. At times these joints can experience abnormal motion (commonly from a golf swing) and become fixated. Very similar to SI joint dysfunction and often the two conditions exist concurrently. Again 2-4 visits usually.

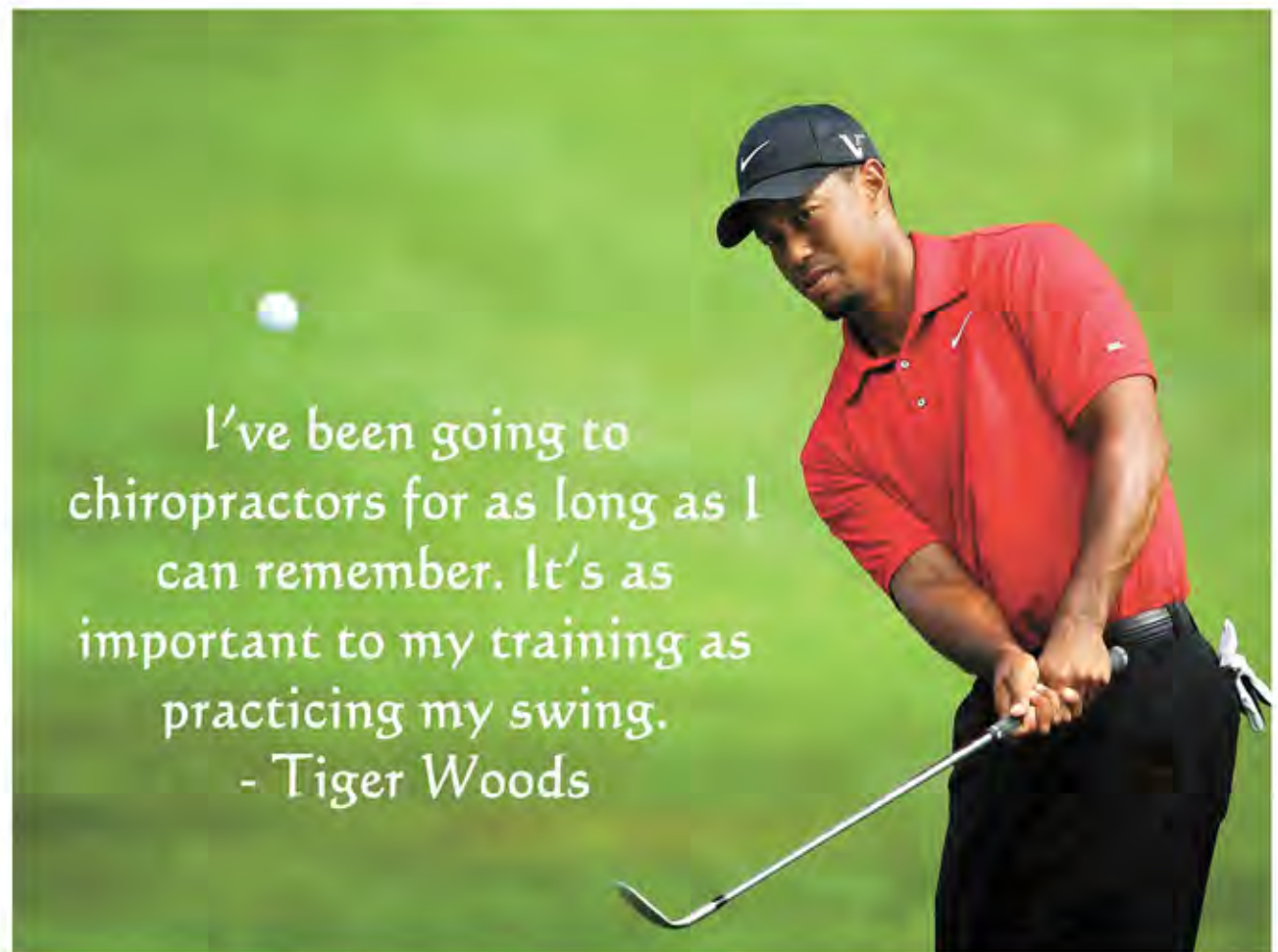
• **Sprain/Strain injuries:** Very common with any athletic event. Typically minor conditions can self-resolve. However proper stretching, support and in office rehabilitation are always recommended.

• **Sciatica:** Often the most misdiagnosed disorder on the golf course. Everyone thinks pain down the leg is sciatica. However, there are actually many causes for pain down the leg and a proper diagnosis is essential in order to properly treat the symptoms. This complaint is a large part of our practice. Call today to learn more.

**The next time you are on the golf course focus on these things:**

1. Are your feet balanced and comfortable at address?
2. Do your feet have to flare out in order to turn on the backswing?
3. Do you find yourself walking slightly crooked the day after a round of golf?
4. Do you find it difficult to get out of bed for a few days?
5. Is it painful to play the game?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then contact us so we can address these issues. As avid golfers ourselves, we understand how easy it is to hurt yourself trying to hit that 300-yard drive.



At Compton Chiropractic, we offer spinal adjustments, decompression, preventive swing advice, rehabilitation exercises, physical therapy and nutrition in order to reduce pain and improve spinal posture and mobility. We treat a wide variety of village athletes including those who participate in pickle ball, tennis, softball and swimming.

So the next time you are on the greens ask yourself, 'is your swing hurting your back or is your back hurting your swing'?

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# MOST BACK AND NECK PAIN CAN BE TREATED WITH A NON-SURGICAL PROCEDURE

By Physicians Rehabilitation

Unfortunately, as we age, back and neck pain due to injury and degeneration tends to become progressively worse and can become chronic if left untreated. Some of the most common reasons for backaches are trauma or sports-related injury, lifting heavy objects, improper spinal posture, poor sleeping posture, ballistic movements, and degenerative disease.

## Back Pain and Spinal Injury

The spine is made up of wedges of vertebral bone consisting of sacral, lumbar, thoracic, and cervical vertebrae, as well as vertebral discs, ligaments, tendons, and muscles that attach to the spine. Over 30 nerves run down the entire spinal column. When our backs are injured, the surrounding muscles often contract as they try to protect the spine, but this causes even more discomfort to our bodies. Not only is the back affected with pain, but the arms, legs, and neck may experience permeated pain from the tension, too. Compressed nerves are being impinged by the narrowing of the vertebrae.

## Neck/Cervical

The vertebrae of the neck have a natural c-shaped curvature (lordotic), which acts as a shock absorber for the upper extremities. If the curvatures are damaged or deformed from injury or other health conditions, the discs and joints in the neck and cervical spine will be under an excessive amount of force. Any irregularities in the neck can lead to degenerative disc disease, spurs, fusion, and neurological disorders.

The typically recommended treatments for spinal compression are pain medication and surgery, but most patients are reluctant with good reason. Long-term spinal complications and failed back surgeries often lead to unresolved chronic pain, and pain medications are very often addictive; therefore, most individuals are unenthusiastic about taking pain medication prescriptions. Surgery often fails patients and leaves them in chronic pain.

There is a better way; a results-driven solution that doesn't include any drugs or surgery shows favorable results in relieving back pain. For many years the experts at Physicians Rehabilitation have been utilizing a natural therapy for back discomfort called spinal decompression.

The practitioners at Physicians Rehabilitation are Medical Doctors (not chiropractic care providers), which is critical for optimal outcomes.

## Spinal Decompression

Spine decompression therapy is a medical technology that gently stretches the spine and decompresses discs. The injured disc is located and gently pulled, creating a vacuum, which allows the disc to be "pulled back in," taking the pressure off the nerve. Spinal decompression therapy treatment is able to reduce the pressure in the disc, allowing fluids and nutrients to re-enter the disc, thus reducing swelling and relieving the pressure on irritated or pinched nerves.

## Physicians Rehabilitation doctors are experts in an advanced non-surgical procedure known as VAX-D.

VAX-D is a non-invasive medical technology that stretches the spine and decompresses the spinal discs. VAX-D treatment is able to reduce the pressure within the spinal disc, thereby relieving the stress on inflamed and pinched nerves. In short, VAX-D breaks the cycle of pain caused by bulging and degenerated discs, and other spine-related disorders, by eliminating nerve compression. By removing the cause of back pain, the body is allowed to heal naturally.

VAX-D is a decompression device and achieves the same goal as surgical treatment of the spine, which is to relieve pressure by decompression. VAX-D, therefore, unlike the popular but relatively ineffectual traction device, more precisely addresses the physiology or reason for spinal pain. Although traction devices can stretch the lower back, they have not demonstrated the ability to decompress the lumbar and cervical discs or reduce spinal nerve compression. VAX-D works by reducing the pressure within the discs, not to zero, but to negative levels! No other device has been shown to reduce the disc pressure to these desired negative levels. It is this negative pressure that causes the disc bulging or herniation to decrease in severity. This, in turn, reduces pressure on the spinal nerves, which ultimately leads to less or no pain.

The VAX-D treats the entire spine; however, VAX-D cervical (neck) treatment is designed specifically for neck pain and works in the same way.



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## Why VAX-D is the Superior Procedure

VAX-D therapy has been proven safe and effective in numerous clinical studies. Over 3000 patients per day are treated with VAX-D. The other so-called "decompression treatments" simply do not have published clinical trials proving that they can lower intradiscal pressure and result in positive clinical outcomes. VAX-D studies have been published in prominent, respected, reliable, and peer-reviewed medical journals, with all of them showing a marked reduction in pain and a significant increase in activity and mobility.

VAX-D is easy, convenient, and painless. It is non-invasive, so it does not have the pain, risks, and complications that are associated with surgery, injections, and anesthesia. Patients will require an MRI prior to treatment to make sure no other serious conditions are causing their pain. Once treatment commences, many patients experience relief of their pain during the first several treatment sessions, and then a gradual reduction in symptoms as treatment progresses. The treatment duration plan is 15-25 days, while each session takes about 30-40 minutes. It's that easy.

## Physicians Rehabilitation

Physicians Rehabilitation is a patient-focused practice that provides comprehensive care to eliminate your pain non-surgically. We evaluate each patient and implement an individual care plan specifically designed to alleviate your pain and dysfunction. Trained and licensed providers, with years of clinical experience, work together to provide this plan of care that addresses the specific concerns and problems of each patient. Our clinical care providers are able to employ a wide variety of physical modalities by utilizing state-of-the-art tools.

Our goal is to identify the source of your pain, promote healing and eliminate your pain. We begin by giving you a thorough examination and quickly address outward symptoms of pain, such as inflammation, while gathering medical history and evaluating your symptoms to get to the root of your pain and dysfunction. Our therapists have found that these advanced technologies, along with a specialized physical therapy program specific to the individual condition, makes for extremely successful pain relief treatments.

**CALL PHYSICIANS REHABILITATION TODAY!**



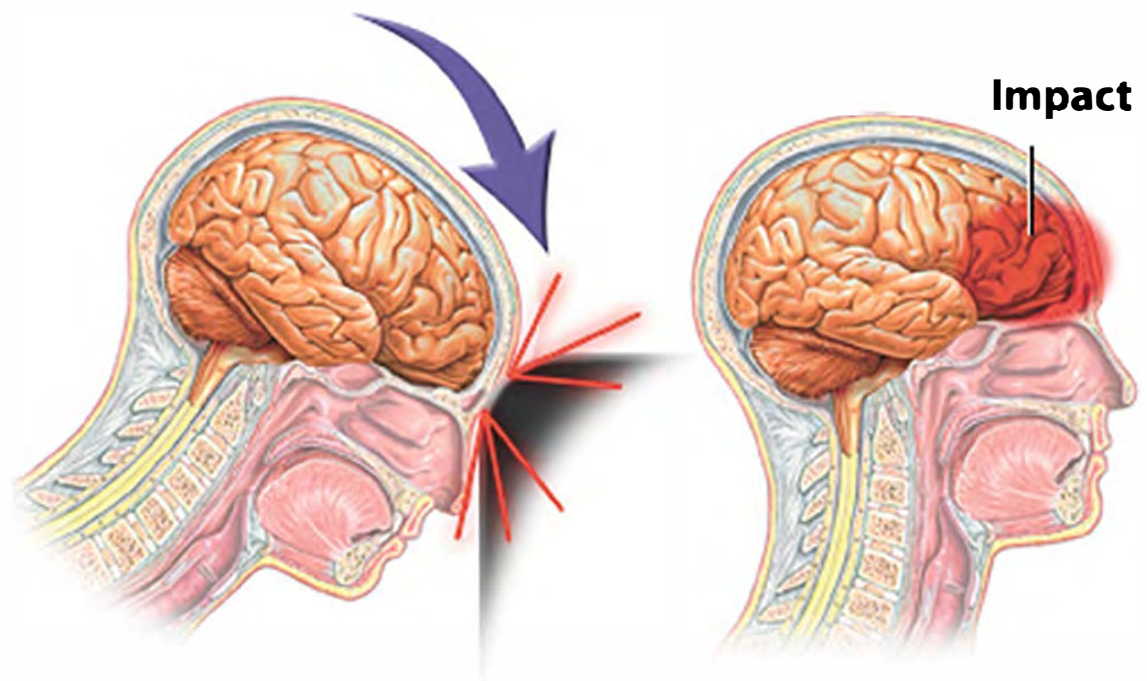
# Traumatic Brain Injury

**T**raumatic brain injury (TBI), also known as concussion, is a serious disorder that can have long term repercussions. This injury can be caused by “whiplash”, or a bump or blow to the head, that disrupts the normal functioning of the brain. Car accidents are the leading cause of TBI. Symptoms can include significant changes in memory and attention, dizziness, headaches, nausea with or without vomiting, sensitivity to light and/or sound, changes in emotional status (example: increased irritability, sadness, or anxiety) and altered sleep habits.

It is very important to be evaluated by a qualified medical provider as soon as possible, in order to begin appropriate evaluation and treatment. At Medig, they have treated over 13,000 patients with car accident injuries in north central Florida in the last almost 18 years.

**We recently caught up with Sarah Janning, one of the Physical Therapists at Medig.**

“I joined the Medig team after graduating with a doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Saint Augustine for Health Sciences. Although she treats all car accident related injuries, she has developed a special interest in TBI injuries. This led her to receive her certification for Vestibular Rehabilitation from the American Institute of Balance in 2018. In 2020, she received a certification from Complete Concussion Management. Sarah and the PT team use a patient-centered approach to TBI management and are passionate about guiding their patients through the stages of healing. This includes helping patients work through their initial frustration and fear of their brain not functioning the way they are used it doing so.”



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“We continually adapt our protocols and treatment methods to accommodate the specific needs of each patient.”

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# Cornerstone Hospice Programs Help Children Deal with Mental Health Issues

Submitted by Cornerstone Hospice and Palliative Care

**K**risten Nardolillo has seen a huge increase in children who are grieving. As Cornerstone Hospice's Children's Bereavement Counselor, Nardolillo is on the front line dealing with students trying to cope with loss.

But Nardolillo does not attribute this abundance of grief only to the passing of loved ones.

"Just about everyone has experienced dramatic changes due to the pandemic. But for kids, the lockdowns, mask-wearing, attending school virtually and social distancing has been traumatic," said Nardolillo, a licensed clinical social worker, at the non-profit which serves Lake, Sumter, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties in Central Florida as well as several North Georgia counties. "Their worlds have been turned upside down and children often don't have the tools to cope."

Nardolillo cites a support group she has been facilitating at a local middle school as an example: "For the past few months, I've been meeting with the best friends of a young boy who tragically died from a gunshot wound. Although the group was formed to help the boys grieve the loss of their best friend, the weekly discussions have turned to a lot of anger towards the pandemic, because they could not spend time with their friend before his passing," said Nardolillo. "Grieving a death of any sort, let alone the unexpected loss of your best friend, is very hard. These boys are placing blame on the virus for memories they didn't get to make with their friend due to social distancing."

## A national emergency

According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), pediatric emergency department visits have increased 24% for children aged 5 – 11 and 31% for 12–17-year-olds.

The emergency room is often the first point of care for children's mental health emergencies, according to the CDC. The study attributed the increase in visits to mental health syndromes that often result after disaster events, such as stress, anxiety, acute posttraumatic stress disorder and panic.

"Children are experiencing financial insecurity due to parents losing their jobs, lost companionship with grandparents, extended family and friends due to social distancing, illness or even death. They have difficulty keeping up grades and concentrating on schoolwork in



remote classrooms. They feel isolated," said Nardolillo. "As an adult who is trained to help others with mental health issues, even I struggle to cope with changes caused by COVID-19."

Last May, Nardolillo and the other Cornerstone Hospice bereavement counselors began offering free, virtual support groups where participants could share their feelings and find mutual strength in a safe, secure environment. The support group offerings were also expanded to specific populations, such as healthcare workers, first responders, caregivers, and students.

## A safe space to deal with loss

For more than 20 years, Cornerstone Hospice has offered Camp Bridges to students in its children's bereavement program. The volunteer-run weekend event, which will be held this May at the Florida Elks Youth Camp in Umatilla, includes games, crafts, outdoor activities, and music. Campers share stories about lost loved ones and express their feelings with peers. Many of the volunteer counselors attended Camp Bridges when they were children.

Last April would have been Nardolillo's first year leading Camp Bridges, as her predecessor retired in late 2019. But like most other events, it was canceled because of COVID-19 concerns.

"It was heartbreaking. I knew there were so many kids who looked forward to the experience at camp," said Nardolillo. "We didn't want to wait a year to offer a fun

outlet for the kids in our bereavement program, plus we saw a need to address mental health concerns of students whose struggles with grief aren't necessarily tied to death. So, Cornerstone's Kids was born."

Cornerstone's Kids offers a variety of activities each month that children can participate in while getting the support they need to feel safe, secure, and happy. Nardolillo utilizes art therapy, creative writing storytelling, play therapy and visualization as well as socially entertaining events to help children explore their thoughts and feelings.

"Some activities are specifically geared toward bereavement but others, such as movie and game nights, are open to any child," said Nardolillo. "Cornerstone's Kids offers a community where they can be engaged with peers and enjoy healthy and positive interactions."

A weekly Kids Yoga class is a favorite of two young brothers who have been participating since May. "Almost every week, they tell me how happy they are to be doing yoga with the group, then tell me again at the end of class how excited they are for next week," said Nardolillo. "It tells me how significant the need is for kids to feel connected to each other during this time."

In February, Nardolillo has planned several Valentine's Day-related activities, including a Valentine making workshop, a Dance Party, and a Valentines to Heaven event for children in the bereavement program.

All Cornerstone's Kids activities are held weekdays, from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. to accommodate school schedules. Children and families register to join Cornerstone's Kids for free and receive access to members' only activities and resources to help the entire family. For now, all activities are held virtually.

"It's important to remember that grief is a natural reaction to loss, whether a loved one passed away or because some constant in your life is gone. If not addressed, grief can have a devastating impact on a child's ability to focus on day-to-day tasks, can lead to grades dropping and a loss of interest in activities. Parents and caregivers should pay attention to major behavioral shifts that could be a sign of depression," said Nardolillo. "I am proud that Cornerstone's Kids is now available as a free resource, providing the support families need to prevent these issues from exacerbating in the future."

**For more information about Cornerstone's Kids, visit [CornerstoneHospice.org/Cornerstones-Kids](https://www.cornerstonehospice.org/Cornerstones-Kids), or call 866.742.6655.**



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**E**state planning does not need to be an expensive or time-consuming process, according to Attorney Patrick L. Smith. Whereas many attorneys bill their clients by the hour to handle their planning, Attorney Smith offers a complimentary consultation and has instituted a flat-fee system for his services. For example, a basic Will is a flat charge of \$75.00 and a Non-Tax Trust Package is \$695.00. This allows clients to know their costs from the start of planning and to determine their estate planning needs without surprises. Although Attorney Smith primarily practices in estate planning and asset protection, he regularly works to connect his clients with a network of attorneys to provide them with complete, affordable legal advice.

Attorney Smith also works to make legal advice accessible to the central Florida community through his weekly radio show, "Ask An Attorney," answering legal questions on the air from live callers, sharing legal information critical to FL residents, and educating his listeners on various topics.

He also incorporates information from other attorneys, financial advisors, CPAs, and other professionals who join him to answer his listeners' questions. "Ask An Attorney" airs on Gospel 90.3 FM every Saturday at 8am.



In addition to giving legal advice live over the radio, Attorney Smith is known for donating his time and legal services to multiple churches and charitable organizations in the community. Attorney Smith offers free seminars on a wide variety of legal topics for civic groups, clubs and other organizations, to inform them about the law and their legal rights.

Furthermore, Attorney Smith recently announced the publication of the third edition of *The Florida Estate Planning Handbook* through Certa Publishing, giving Florida residents an accessible, easy-

to-understand introduction to key estate planning concepts. Adding to Attorney Smith's work is his law partner Attorney Joseph F. Phippen, Jr. who joined him on the third edition.

More information about Attorney Smith can be found at Joseph F. Phippen, Jr. & Associates' website: [www.attypip.com](http://www.attypip.com). For your free consultation or to have Attorney Smith speak at your event or group, you may reach him at his Fruitland Park office by calling (352) 241-8760.

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# NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

**M**arch is National Nutrition Month and what exactly does that mean? Well, for starters it provides an opportunity for you to assess your current nutritional intake and health. How do you care and feed/fuel your body, your amazing organic machine? Before you think about that let's start with a basic explanation of nutrition.

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines nutrition as "the assimilation by living organisms of food materials that enable them to grow, maintain themselves and reproduce."

Since attempts to find a definition on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the American Medical Association failed, I looked on MedicineNet. They define nutrition as the "process of taking in food and using it for growth, metabolism, and repair. Nutritional stages are ingestion, digestion, absorption, transport, assimilation and excretion."

Your body, your weight and your health depend on what you choose to eat and drink. Nutrition is key!

The study of nutrition has been around for centuries; however, only in the last 100 years has the role of nutrition in complex non-communicable chronic diseases (diabetes, heart, obesity, renal and cancer) been studied at length. The first vitamin was chemically defined and isolated only in 1926 (thiamine)! It was synthesized in 1931 and called vitamin B1. Vitamin C was identified in 1931, 200 hundred years after a ship's surgeon (James Lind) realized that lemons worked for the treatment of sailors with scurvy. Between 1910 and 1950 the focus centered on the identification and synthesis of essential vitamins and minerals. This knowledge led to the prevention and treatment of nutritional deficiency related diseases such as rickets, scurvy and nutritional anemias (to name a few).

The Great Depression and World War II created fears of food shortages. It was at this time that the US government along with the British Medical Association and the League of Nations generated minimum recommended daily allowances (RDA). These were announced in 1941.



From the 1950's through the 1970's the discussion of sugar versus fat was all the rage. Calories became important. The development of processing foods at a low cost fortified with minerals and vitamins led to the rise of diet related non-communicable diseases.

From 1970 through the 1990s the push for the modernization of food processing and agriculture continued. What followed was a rise in type 2 diabetes, obesity and several cancers.

It has been a scary time from the 1990s to the present. With the growth of agribusiness and the increase of manufactured foods we have no idea what the long-term health issues will be. The way crops are planted (GMO vs Non-GMO), livestock are fed and housed, grain milling, etc. we must be even more mindful of nutrition and what we should feed ourselves and our loved ones. Do we want to live to eat or eat to live.

Nutritional advances have shown that diet patterns and foods rather than nutrient (vitamins) have more of an effect on non-communicable diseases.

Whether you are a vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, flexitarian, paleo, keto, DDF\*, PNP\* – the message is this: less is more. Your mouth is NOT supposed to have a party at every meal. Eat to sustain life not reduce it.

What simple change can you make that will affect your health and your weight? Make Wednesdays and Fridays VEGAN days. Avoid all animal products from meat and cheese to eggs and yogurt. Focus on avocado toast or an apple with almond butter for breakfast, a salad with quinoa and chickpeas for lunch. How about brown rice pasta with marinara sauce, along with a salad for dinner? It is not that hard. Give your organic machine a break from heavy eating. Keep it simple.

Try it for the month of March. Who knows, it just might become a healthy habit and part of your 2021 lifestyle.

\*DDF – Data Driven Fueling™

\*PNP – Pancreatic Nutritional Program™

\*Remember to consult with your physician before beginning any new way of eating especially if you are on medication!

**Candice P. Rosen, R.N., B.S., M.S.W., C.H.C.** is a health counselor and creator of the PNP and DDF. She is the author of *The Pancreatic Oath and Forget Dieting!* (available on Barnes & Noble and Amazon). She lives and has a private practice in Los Angeles. [www.candicerosenrn.com](http://www.candicerosenrn.com)

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# Maintaining Healthy Friendships

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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