

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

April 2021

Lake/Sumter Edition - Monthly

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## Surgical Trends

Everything You Need  
Nothing You Don't

## 3 Tips

For Relieving Dry  
Eye Symptoms

## Should I Stop Driving?

Are You Still Contemplating  
Moving to The Villages, Florida?

## What Are You Waiting For?

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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:

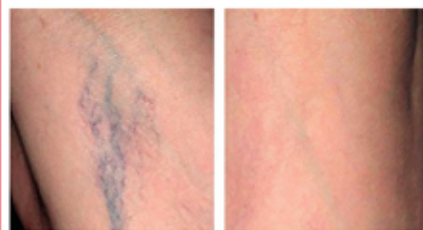
"Do veins require treatment?" and "What treatment is best?"

## TREATMENT METHODS

- ENDOVENOUS THERMAL ABLATION
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## WHAT RESULTS CAN YOU EXPECT?

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# It's your heart. It should be personal.

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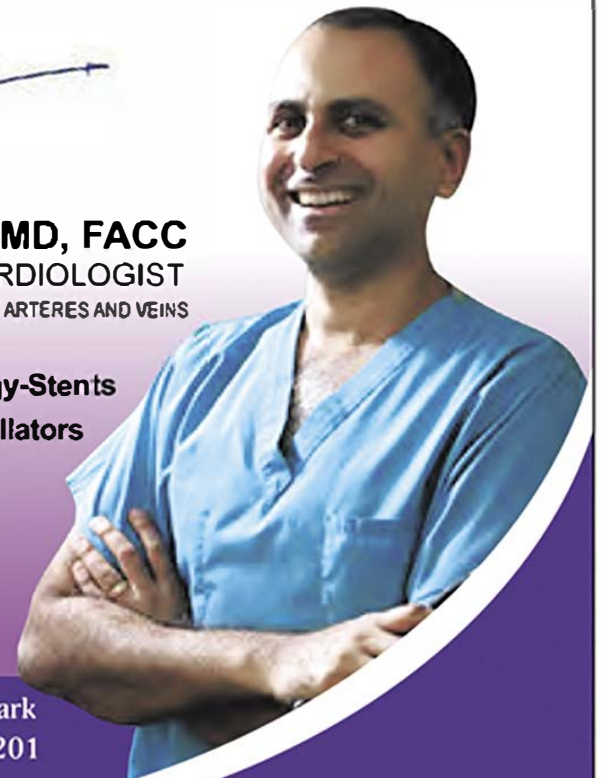
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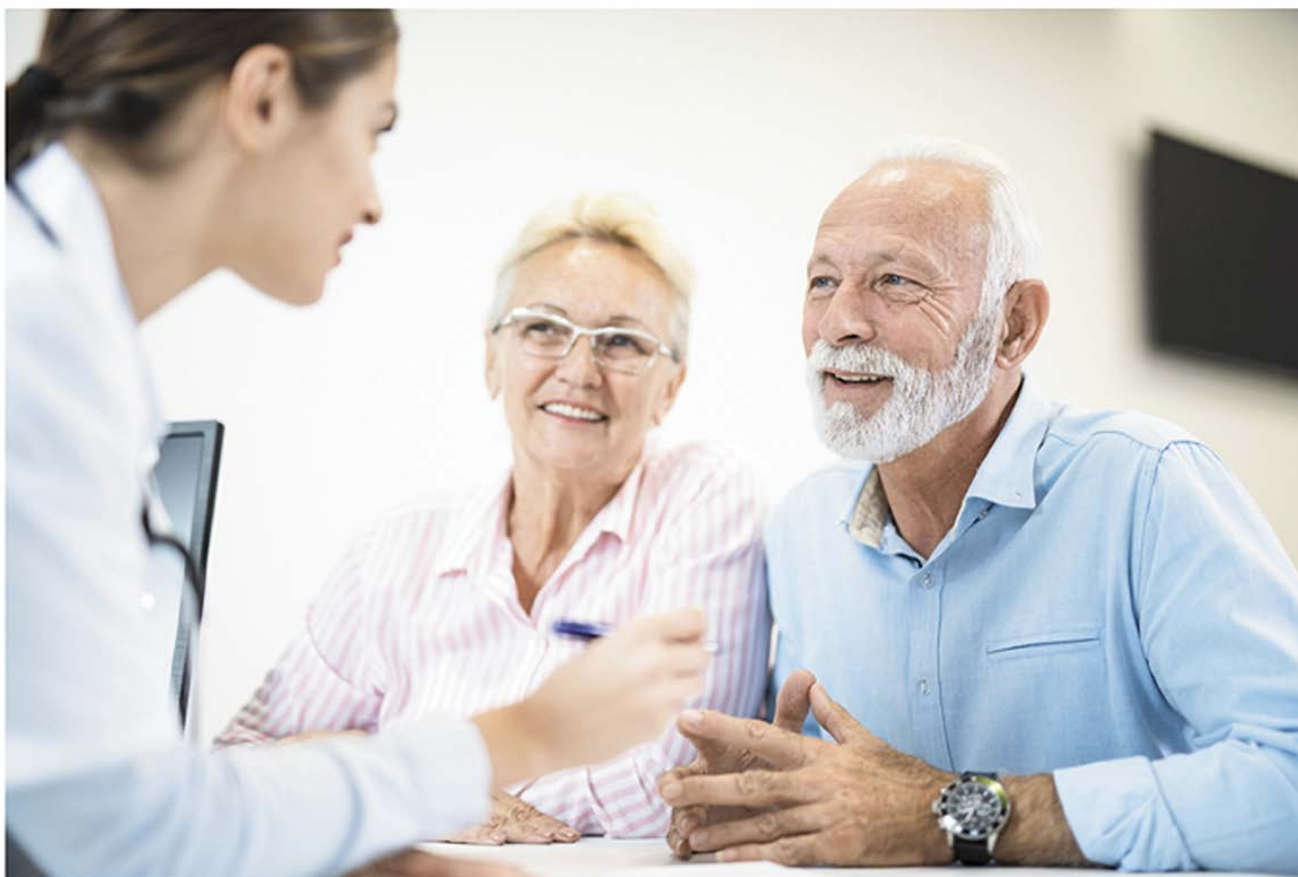
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# SURGICAL TRENDS

## Everything You Need - Nothing You Don't

**T**here are so many trends in eye and vision care that people can sometimes be talked into getting - or even requesting - procedures they don't need. One example is cataract surgery, which has advanced so much in recent years that it takes little time to perform and is done on an outpatient basis. Many of us know someone who has had cataract surgery and were impressed with the clarity of their new and improved vision. Seeing a neighbor become less dependent on glasses can inspire some people to request cataract surgery they don't need in order to get vision-correcting intraocular lenses (IOLs) and have the procedure covered by Medicare. In other cases, a less-than-scrupulous eye doctor may suggest that cataract surgery is warranted when it is not. "When a cataract is impairing your vision, cataract surgery provides both clearer vision and protection from cataract-related blindness," says ophthalmologist Dr. Scott Wehrly. "But when no cataract is present, or it is so early in its progression that it isn't really interfering with vision, cataract surgery isn't necessary. Any doctor looking to perform unnecessary surgery is not one I would trust, especially not with something as valuable as one's eyesight."

Another surgery that may or may not be medically necessary is blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery. Drooping, excess eyelid skin or sagging lower eyelids can cause vision problems and invite chronic infections, interrupting daily activities like driving, reading or seeing the floor in front of you, which can be potentially hazardous. These conditions may make blepharoplasty medically necessary. People whose eyelids make them appear tired or haggard but don't seriously impact vision may choose to have cosmetic eyelid surgery, which is an elective procedure. "I perform eyelid surgery for patients for both medical and cosmetic reasons," says comprehensive ophthalmologist Shelby Terpstra, DO. "But it is important to outline the difference for people, as medical blepharoplasty is defined by specific guidelines and functional problems, and elective blepharoplasty is something a person might choose to have to look and



feel more refreshed. I perform a lot of medically necessary and cosmetic eyelid surgeries, but there are certain circumstances under which I would advise against it." Certain health conditions and other factors can render some people poor candidates for eyelid surgery. "There may be surgeons willing to do this for you if you ask, but if they don't bother to learn about your health background first, be wary."

"Always impressed by the conversations I have with the doctors here," says Lake Eye patient Gil Worden, who was considering eyelid surgery.

After a thorough exam, Dr. Wehrly advised against it due to risk factors in Gil's health profile. "I was impressed with their honesty in giving me reasons why [eyelid] surgery was not the best option for me," says Gil. "They think things through and I never feel like they're wasting my time."

"Just because a patient is willing or even wanting to have a procedure done, it doesn't mean it's always in their best interests," says Dr. Wehrly. "Quality treatment needs to be customized to each patient based on their health data and personal goals. We want people to know they can trust our diagnoses and recommendations, and that we always place their safety above all else."

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# ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH: How it Affects Your Health and Your Heart

T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

In our social culture, drinking with family and friends is common for celebrating special occasions and in some instances coping with life. Drinking alcohol has become extremely accepted in our society, and with that acceptance and desensitization of the harmful effects, comes a lot more alcohol abuse than most people are aware of, or willing to acknowledge.

We all know the guidelines of the healthy version of drinking. A glass of wine or liquor for women and two for men is usually the allotted daily amount recommended for the health benefits to transpire. Despite the health claims in moderate drinking, not everyone should drink.

Alcohol damages the liver, kidneys, brain, and heavy drinking also damages the heart, which can lead to heart palpitations and irregular beating, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, and cardiomyopathy.

According to a study titled *Effects of Alcohol on the Heart* reported the following, Some evidence suggests that light to moderate alcohol consumption protects against cardiovascular diseases. However, this cardioprotective effect of alcohol consumption in adults is absent at the population level. Approximately 20 to 30% of patients admitted to a hospital are alcohol abusers. In medical practice, it is essential that patients' levels of consumption are known because of the many adverse effects that might result in the course of routine care. Ethanol damage to the heart is evident if alcohol consumption exceeds 90 to 100 g/d. Heavy ethanol consumption leads to increased risk for sudden cardiac death and cardiac arrhythmias.<sup>1</sup>

In patients with coronary heart disease, alcohol use was associated with increased mortality. An early response to drinking was an increased ventricular wall thickness to diameter ratio, possibly proceeding with continuous drinking to alcoholic cardiomyopathy, which had a worse outcome compared with idiopathic dilative cardiomyopathy if drinking was not stopped or at least reduced (< 60 g/d). In the ICU, patients with chronic alcoholism have more cardiac complications postoperatively. These complications probably are caused by biventricular dysfunction, particularly with the occurrence of severe infections or septic shock, events that are three to four times more frequent among chronic alcoholics



than occasional drinkers or nondrinkers. To prevent further complications from drinking and for long-term management of drinking, patients with alcohol abuse and heart failure should be treated in brief intervention and follow-up programs. Prognosis is good even in patients with New York Heart Association class IV heart failure caused by cardiomyopathy if complete abstinence is accomplished. Noncompliance to smoking and alcohol restrictions, which are amenable to change, dramatically increases the risk for hospital readmissions among patients with heart failure.<sup>1</sup>

Alcohol plays a significant role in your bodies overall health. A full 24 hours after an episode of drinking, your immune system is more susceptible to disease and infection and the entire body and it's organs experience an inflammatory response.

The functions that are damaged by alcohol abuse are often longstanding. If you stop drinking, some of the damage will lessen, or improve like problem-solving, memory recall, attention span, and motor functions, but this will take time. Researchers usually see improvements to the brain after several months or years after abstinence takes place.

There are benefits to moderate drinking, but the problem is that with the acceptance and social aspect of alcohol, many people are at risk of becoming dependent on it for one reason or another. It's quite common to start out drinking socially and to then need it more often as your tolerance level increases.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, and the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence shines a light on the first weekend in April every year as the weekend of abstinence. If you have trouble avoiding alcohol for those three days, they encourage you to speak to your physician or therapist about getting help.

Source: 1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11505330>

# Dr. V

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# Screenings Help Detect Head, Neck and Oral Cancers at Early Stages

While not as common as some other types of malignancies, oral cavity and oropharyngeal (head and neck) cancers can often be discovered during routine screening exams by a dentist, medical doctor, dental hygienist, or even by self-exam. During the pandemic, many people have chosen to delay or even skip routine screening exams that can detect these cancers at an early stage, when they are more easily treatable. This has resulted in some people being diagnosed with cancers that are more advanced and more difficult to treat. It is extremely important not to skip regular screening exams with your dentist or primary care physician.

Oral, head, neck and throat cancers account for about 4% of cancers in the U.S. and are more than twice as common among men than women, according to the National Cancer Institute. Most of these cancers begin in squamous cells, which are cells that line moist surfaces, such as those inside the mouth, nose, sinuses and throat. Salivary gland cancer, another category of head and neck cancer, has many different forms because these glands are made up of many different types of cells that can become malignant. As you might suspect, tobacco use, heavy alcohol use, and infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) increase the risk of many types of head and neck cancer.

One of the factors that can increase your risk of oral cancer is tobacco usage of any kind; this includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and snuff, among others. Heavy alcohol use and excessive sun exposure to your lips can also increase your risk. In recent years, there has also been a rise in cases of oropharyngeal cancer linked to infection with human papilloma virus (HPV) in Caucasian men and women.

According to the American Cancer Society, some of the early warning signs and symptoms can include:

- A sore in the mouth that does not heal (most common symptom)
- Pain in the mouth that doesn't go away (also very common)



- A lump or thickening in the cheek
- A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, tonsil, or lining of the mouth
- A sore throat or a feeling that something is caught in the throat that doesn't go away
- Trouble chewing or swallowing
- Trouble moving the jaw or tongue
- Numbness of the tongue or other area of the mouth
- Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
- Loosening of the teeth or pain around the teeth or jaw
- Voice changes
- A lump or mass in the neck
- Weight loss
- Constant bad breath

Of course, many of these symptoms can also indicate conditions other than cancer; that is why it is so important to get regular dental and physical checkups. See your dentist or medical doctor right away if any of these symptoms lasts for more than two weeks.

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By Dr. J. Mandume Kerina

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# The Herbal Treatment Of Sleep Apnea

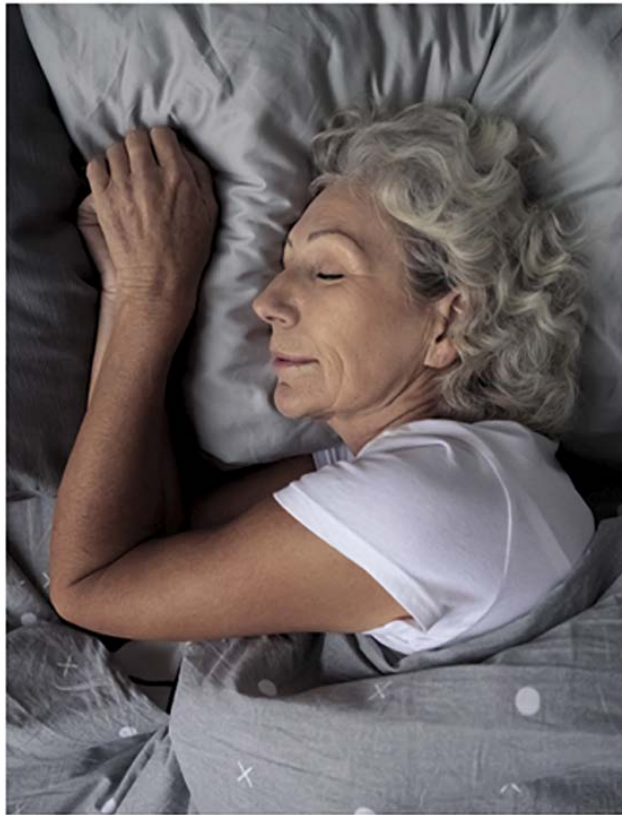
**S**leep apnea is one of the most common sleep disturbance problems in America. It ruins the sleep of 25 million Americans with likely millions more un-diagnosed sufferers. The condition prevents the sleeper from entering REM and Delta sleep causing them to become anxious, cantankerous and tired during the day. There are very serious health consequences of prolonged sleep disturbance and deprivation.

When diagnosed, the patient is told to lose weight, drink less alcohol and quit smoking. Beyond that, surgery is offered, though it is painful and has provided only limited success. Dental mouth-pieces can be difficult to sleep with and long-term effects on tooth alignment are questionable. Another common option is CPAP. This is a forced air mask, worn during sleep, that insures proper inhalation. Experience has shown that 60% of patients are not able to tolerate the mask and ultimately discontinue using the equipment. Some users develop respiratory infections from the mask. Finally, there is an herbal and natural approach that we can explore.

## Cause of the condition:

Before we evaluate the "solutions", let's consider what is causing the condition. When we begin to fall asleep, we move from stage one (drowsiness) into stage two sleep. Stage two sleep, is the transition stage before entering REM (rapid eye movement). REM sleep is where we dream. Dreaming is critical to a good nights sleep. When we enter stage two sleep in preparation for dreaming, muscular activity is inhibited (blocked). It is called "reduction of muscle tonus". This is a function that occurs primarily to keep the dreamer from physically acting out the movements of their dreams.

The first problem is that the inhibition of signals from the brain tends (inadvertently) to reduce the signal that tells the diaphragm to breathe. In some individuals, upon entering stage 2 sleep, the breathing will actually come to a stop (Sleep Apnea means *cessation of breathing*).



As our breathing becomes shallower, the blood oxygen level drops and the carbon dioxide levels rise. In a young and healthy individual, this would elicit stronger and deeper breathing from the physiological control system that regulates these activities. In an older individual the respiration reduces in intensity and the blood oxygenation drops. This is where the safety back-up system comes in. When the blood gas levels get too far imbalanced, the brain intervenes and causes the body to make a large and immediate inhalation. This causes a large pressure differential in the pharynx and literally sucks the sagging-soft palate into the airway. This obstructs the air flow and causes a loud "SNORT" partially or fully awakening the subject. Most times, the subject is not fully awakened and thus isn't aware that this is even happening. It still disturbs their sleep enough so that they return to stage 1 sleep.

Upon awakening or returning to stage 1 sleep, the inhibition causing the reduction of muscle tonus for entry into stage two sleep is released and respiration begins again in a somewhat normal manner. As the subject starts to drift off to sleep again, they move into stage two, the muscle tonus drops, the soft palate sags, the signal to the diaphragm diminish and the cycle repeats. The resulting snorting awakenings typically occur every 1 to 5 minutes or so.

## The Solution:

If your breathing was sufficiently deep enough, then you would not make a rapid inhalation, suck your soft palate into the airway and snort; disturbing your sleep.

The appropriate solution is to accentuate (increase) the ability of the brain to communicate with the diaphragm so that you breathe deeply and steadily throughout the night.

Sure it is beneficial to strengthen the muscles of the soft palate. Yes it is advantageous to reduce muscular tension in the neck. Both of these things will make a noticeable improvement in the condition. In fact some foods like wheat products and cheese should not be eaten near to bed time as they can cause congestion which aggravates the condition. However; the most dramatic impact can be made by the administration of just a few common herbs.

Lobellia, when used in small doses, acts as a respiratory stimulant. It has been used for thousands of years to treat respiratory conditions. This herb, when taken before bed, can *actually increase* the quiescent level of respiration sufficiently so as to avert the dangerous drop in blood oxygen level that occurs upon muscular inhibition. It can maintain deep steady breathing throughout the stage 2 sleep period.

Thyme has traditionally been used to enhance pleural activity. It actually improves the ability of the lungs to exchange CO<sub>2</sub> for oxygen and makes an excellent contribution to maintaining sufficient respiratory amplitude. To round out the combination, Chamomile aids the subject in relaxing and Cramp Bark helps the upper trapezius muscles to relax.

This combination of herbs taken before bed has been demonstrated to relieve sleep apnea in most cases.



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# 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.



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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.

# Advanced Treatment for **OVERACTIVE BLADDER**

**H**ave you tried treatment for overactive bladder and still suffer from any of the symptoms below?

- ✓ Urgency to get to the restroom in time
- ✓ Increased frequency of urination
- ✓ Getting up at night 2 or more times to urinate
- ✓ Wearing adult protective undergarments or pads
- ✓ Inability to empty your bladder completely
- ✓ Curbing your usual activities because you must be near a restroom at all times

If you are a man or woman who said yes to any of these, then you should know about some of the advanced therapies that are available and can drastically improve your quality of life.

Commonly used therapies such as behavioral modification, bladder training and medications are a first line of therapy for overactive bladder (OAB). Unfortunately, in many patients, these do not work or don't work well enough. Some patients may even be unable to tolerate the common side effects of medications such as dry mouth, dry eyes or constipation. If you or someone you know has OAB, the use of sacral neuromodulation or Botox may be the answer. In a specialty trained urologists' hands these treatments can succeed where others have failed.

## **SACRAL NEUROMODULATION**

Sacral neuromodulation (SNM) allows regulation of the nerves that go to the bladder. This works by sending messages back to the brain to regulate the "on-off" switch for bladder function. A simple way to think of SNM is as a pacemaker for the bladder. It can help to bring your bladder function back to normal function if it is too active or even underactive.

SNM is approved by the FDA for the treatment of refractory OAB, urge incontinence and urinary re-tention. Currently one company (Medtronic Inc., Minneapolis) produces this SNM device for international use under the name InterStim®. In Europe, it is also



used successfully to treat bowel dysfunction including severe constipation, fecal urgency, frequency and fecal soiling. This is possible because there are nerves in the pelvis that work on both the bladder and bowel.

SNM is a very appealing option to patients due to its high success rate (up to 80%) and a unique trial phase. This trial phase of 3 to 7 days is called a percutaneous nerve evaluation (PNE) and is a simple procedure that places a thin temporary lead next to the nerve that controls bladder function. This can be placed using local anesthesia or light sedation and takes minutes to perform. This gives the patient the ability to "test drive" the device without going through the full implant. It also helps patients to gain insight on just how much the InterStim could help them. At the end of the trial, the leads are removed in the office without damaging the nerve.



**855-298-CARE**  
[Advancedurologyinstitute.com](http://Advancedurologyinstitute.com)

If the PNE is successful in reducing symptoms, it is likely that the full implant will work in these patients. The InterStim uses an implantable lead and small battery that are placed for long-term treatment of OAB or urinary retention. Once placed, the InterStim can last up to ten years depending on its use. The battery can be easily changed under local anesthesia. After implan-

ation, the InterStim is virtually undetectable even in a bathing suit. This device can drastically improve a patient's quality of life.

## **BOTULINUM TOXIN (Botox)**

Botox injections are another option in the treatment of OAB. The Botox is placed directly in the bladder muscle for treatment of OAB and urge incontinence.

This is done with a simple cystoscopy (small telescope) and can be done under local anesthesia or sedation. It works by binding to nerve endings allowing for relaxation of the bladder muscle. This has been shown to improve symptoms in up to 70% of patients and up to 60% of patients will have complete resolution of their OAB or urge incontinence. Botox, however, only lasts 6 to 9 months and needs to be repeated. The FDA considers this an off-label use even though it has been used successfully for years. Use of Botox in the bladder carries no greater risk to the patient than cosmetic procedures.

These are only a few of the many options that can significantly improve quality of life. A full range of treatments for OAB and any other urologic concerns are offered at Advanced Urology Institute.

# Learn How P+G EQUALS an R Rating in The Bedroom

**T**here are two secrets that are starting to gain more attention due to their ability to treat the root cause of erectile dysfunction. And when they are coupled together, the results are remarkable, and numerous men and their partners are clamoring to find out more.

With these two alternative treatment options, you can kiss the little blue pill goodbye—forever.

For men between the ages of 40 to 70, erectile dysfunction is extremely common. It's critical to see a medical professional if you are experiencing difficulty in getting and maintaining an erection, but most physicians will not try to get to the root cause of your condition.

The standard treatments for erectile dysfunction are prescription medications that cause an erection for a limited amount of time. However, there is a better way than the standard of care that actually TREATS erectile dysfunction at its core. These are GAINESWave and the P-Shot.

#### WHAT IS GAINESWave?

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.



#### WHAT IS THE P-Shot?

The P-Shot is a spun down platelet rich plasma that is taken from the patient's own blood and injected into the penis. The P-Shot is comprised of the patient's stem cells that stimulate new tissue growth, collagen formation. Because it's not a foreign substance, the body accepts it naturally, and the results are amazing. Stem cells have the potential to differentiate into many different types of cells and can serve as an internal repair system, which can replace damaged tissue and help to regenerate new healthy tissue and cells.

The P-Shot also helps men with Peyronie's disease by stimulating circulation and lessening the scar tissue associated with the disorder. No longer do men have to rely on the tiny blue pill that causes so many adverse side effects. Now, there is a safe, natural alternative to help so many men with ED and Peyronie's disease.

#### Added Benefits

GAINSWave and the P-Shot also helps men with Peyronie's disease by stimulating circulation and removing the plaque and scar tissue associated with the disorder.

**CONTACT US FOR A FREE CONSULT WITH OUR GAINSWAVE PROVIDER!**

Call them to day to schedule your appointment at (352) 259-5190.

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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At TNT, their goal is to empower you to achieve your optimal state of health. Their vision is to create a wellness mindset momentum that is infectious—leaving obesity, illness, and disease behind—for lives that are truly healthy. Looking better, feeling better and functioning optimally is the key to a life of vitality! Let them help you achieve wellness for life!

TNT offers free monthly seminars to find out more about GAINSWave and the P-Shot.

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Central Florida's Health & Wellness Magazine is the most effective and affordable way to reach customers. More than 30,000 copies are distributed every month at hospitals, health and wellness centers, shopping plazas, grocery stores and many other locations.

The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo and search bar. Below the header are navigation links for different editions (Charlotte, Collier, Lee) and a contact link. The main content area features a large article on Skincancer with a photo of a woman wearing a sun hat. To the right is a sidebar with 'In This Issue' and a newsletter sign-up form. Below the main article are links to 'Read Our Flip Book Version' for different counties and a 'Featured Article' section titled 'The Other Side of Parkinson's Disease'.

# Should I Stop Driving?

**H**ave you ever squinted at the road in front of you and wondered, “Maybe I should stop driving?”

Getting older doesn't necessarily mean you'll have to stop driving one day. You could still be cruising down the road, windows rolled down and blasting Led Zeppelin, well into your 80s and 90s. But for many of us, the time may come when you have to decide whether it's safe for you to be in the driver's seat. According to AAA, adults over 65 are more likely to have health conditions that make it harder to drive and take medications that could affect their driving. Older drivers also have the second highest rate of car crashes, just under teens.

It's not an easy decision to make. No one wants to give up their independence. So how do you know when it's time to hang up your car keys? April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, so we've put together a list to help you think about whether it's time to stop driving.

## Your vision

As we age, our vision slowly declines over time. We're also more likely to develop cataracts or have glaucoma, too. Being able to see is the most important skill you need to drive, so if your vision is failing, it may be time to take a step back and figure out if it's causing you problems on the road.

## Here's what you should watch out for

- How well can you read road signs, during the day and at night?
- How well can you see traffic signals?
- Can you tell how far away or how close other cars are to you on the road?
- Can you read your speedometer and other signals inside your car?
- Do the lights bother your eyes when you drive at night?

If you find you aren't able to read road signs anymore or you can't see the lines on the road very well, even with your glasses on, it may be time to stop driving. Talk to your doctor and have your vision checked. You get a routine annual eye exam as part of your Medicare Advantage health plan. You may find out that your medications are causing blurry vision or you may need a stronger prescription for glasses and contacts.



**Important note:** In Florida, once you reach age 80, you will have to pass a vision test when you renew your driver's license. Check out Florida's information and resources for older drivers on the Grand-Driver website.

## Your medications

Some medications you take may make you drowsy, which can make driving dangerous for you and other people on the road. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the medications you take and find out if any of them make it risky for you to be on the road. Make sure you tell them about any over-the-counter medications you take. Your medications may interact in a way that makes it unsafe for you to drive, too.

## Your hearing

Just like with your vision, you need to be able to hear what's happening when you're on the road, too. If you use a hearing aid, make sure to wear it when you're driving. If you don't have a hearing aid, but you can't hear sirens and honking cars on the road, talk to your doctor about getting a hearing aid. Florida Blue Medicare plans cover hearing exams and hearing aids. Depending on your plan, you may get an allowance for hearing aids, or you may have a copay. Remember, you may not notice that your hearing is worse than it used to be. Hearing loss usually happens gradually. That's why it's always good to have your doctor check your hearing.

## Your health and physical strength

There are several health conditions that can make it difficult for you to drive. Painful conditions like rheumatoid arthritis can make it difficult for you to steer. Uncontrolled diabetes can affect your feet and vision and could even lead to heart attack and stroke, all of which affect your ability to drive.

## Resources to find rides

If you don't feel safe driving any more, there are resources available to help you get where you need to go. This website can link you to community resources available to help. <https://www.findaride-florida.org/>. Also, your Medicare Advantage plan may include transportation benefits to help you get the health care you need.

## Info for caregivers

If you're a caregiver worried about a loved one's driving, remember, age isn't the issue. Age doesn't make someone dangerous on the road. If you are worried you aren't getting the full scoop from your loved one on their driving, here are some red flags to watch for:

- 1. Traffic violations:** Have they gotten a few tickets lately? Ask why and try to determine if there is a problem or if it was just a simple mistake.
- 2. Look for damage to the car:** See a recent dent? Find out what happened.
- 3. Ask friends and neighbors.** They see your loved one when you aren't around. Find out if they have had any concerns, too.
- 4. Check the insurance:** Has their insurance rate gone up? That could be a clue they may have gotten more tickets or had more accidents than they have told you about.
- 5. Take a drive with them:** You won't know how you feel until you observe them in the car. Make sure to pay attention to their reaction time and whether they seem to be struggling to see.

## Sources:

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/transportation.php>

<https://www.caring.com/articles/assessing-aging-parent-driving>

<https://www.caring.com/articles/when-to-stop-driving>

<https://seniordriving.aaa.com/resources-family-friends/conversations-about-driving/facts-research/>

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# ARTHRITIC KNEE PAIN: DO YOU REALLY NEED SURGERY?

By Physicians Rehabilitation

**W**alking, standing and exercising put a lot of strain on our knees. For example, a person that weighs 150 lbs. walking up a flight of stairs will put approximately 500 lbs. of pressure on their knees with each step. Not only is the knee one of the most intricate of all the joints in the body, but they are also the most susceptible to arthritis. Multiple types of arthritis affect the knees, but osteoarthritis is by far the number one type that surpasses all others.

## What is Osteoarthritis (OA) of the Knee?

Positioned between the three bones of the knee (the femur, tibia, and patella) the articular cartilage provides a smooth gliding surface and acts as a shock absorber. This cartilage is smooth and resilient but susceptible to wear and tear. Once the cartilage begins to break down it is difficult to stop and often the cartilage breaks down completely and wears away. This can cause soreness, swelling, and stiffness, and it is the beginning stages of osteoarthritis, or bone rubbing against bone, which in turn causes bone spurs and a great deal of discomfort.

Articular cartilage has no blood supply. The cells that make the cartilage are nourished by the synovial fluid, and hydrostatic pressure of the joint influences the health and pathological condition of arthritis. The wear and tear process can be slowed often by weight reduction, strengthening the muscles surrounding the joints, and by minimizing or reducing activities that put excessive weight on the knee joints. However, there are well-known non-invasive treatments that have helped numerous people regenerate knee joint function and tissue.

Osteoarthritis develops slowly, and often the pain becomes worse with time. This type of arthritis is also known as degenerative joint disease, because it is often associated with the aging process. But occasionally, this process can also affect younger people too. The pain can be debilitating and interfere with daily activities, affect your ability to work and create limited range of motion in your life.

## MANY PHYSICIANS WILL RECOMMEND SURGERY, BUT DO YOU REALLY NEED IT?

### Knee Replacement Surgery is Permanent

Starting with a more conservative approach is a better choice. Knee replacement is a very extreme measure to take without considering all of your options for a condition as common as knee arthritis. Physicians Rehabilitation has an effective knee program that entails several non-invasive treatments that can alleviate pain, increase weight bearing and strength, and regenerate tissue.

## Physicians Rehabilitation's Knee Therapy Program Includes:

- Stem cell therapy
- PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma)
- Physical therapy
- Bracing
- Rehabilitation
- Supplementation and more

### Viscosupplementation

Viscosupplementation is an FDA approved, guided, hyaluronic acid injection. It is a gel like substance that is very similar to the synovial fluid in our joints, which reduces inflammation and increases cushioning and lubrication of your knees immediately. This treatment protocol is used to treat the symptoms associated with arthritis.

Viscosupplementation (also known as hyaluronic acid injection) involves injecting a lubricating fluid into the knee joint to promote more comfortable knee movement, reduce friction in the joint, and slow the progression of arthritis. This treatment is also commonly paired with physical therapy to help strengthen the joint and improve range of motion. At Physicians Rehabilitation, we perform viscosupplementation with the guidance of advanced fluoroscopic technology to achieve enhanced precision and provide our patients with optimal results. Viscosupplementation is considered to be a safe procedure, with only a small percentage of patients reporting mild side effects.

### Stem Cells (Not all Are Equal)

The stem cells are precisely injected into the injured region under ultrasound-guided imaging. These stem cells immediately begin to assist in the normal healing process to regenerate tissue growth, and signal repair to the damaged area.

Our own stem cells are not enough due to limitations, which are usually due to aging, or severe injuries; stem cells from other sources increase platelets in the blood,

which travels to the injured area to increase healing more effectively. Many healthcare providers are supplying patients with inferior stem cells that do not work as well as pluripotent stem cells. The pluripotent cells come from umbilical cord donors and produce active cells that are full of nutrients, minerals, amino acids, and proteins and have the ability to reproduce and regenerate new cells throughout the body. Umbilical cord stem cells are one of the most powerful stem cells available because they have the potential to develop into any cell found in the human body.

Pluripotent stem cells can be used to treat and replenish areas of the entire body from head to toe. Stem cells work wonders in repairing and regenerating damaged tissue, and the human body completely accepts them. They offer anti-inflammatory, as well as immunomodulatory effects, which helps modulate the body's immune responses. No embryonic tissues or tissue from aborted fetuses are ever used. The umbilical cord stem cells are obtained through aseptic recovery technique from full-term delivered babies from a healthy mother.

### PRP (Platelet-Rich Plasma)

Fortunately for our patients today, advances in science have allowed us to find new and targeted approaches to treating degeneration and injuries. Platelet-rich plasma or PRP is an "autologous blood therapy" that uses a patient's own blood components to stimulate a healing response in damaged tissues. PRP provides an alternative to surgery by promoting safe and natural healing.

Research studies and clinical practice have shown PRP therapy to be very effective at relieving pain and returning patients to their normal lives. Both ultrasound and MRI images have shown definitive tissue repair after PRP therapy, confirming the healing process. The need for surgery can also be greatly reduced by treating injured tissues before the damage progresses and the condition is irreversible.

### Physicians Rehabilitation

We are a leading provider of nonsurgical orthopedic solutions in the Florida. We cater to patients of all ages and lifestyles who are at their wit's end with symptoms of osteoarthritis and other debilitating joint conditions. If you're ready to find meaningful relief from your knee pain, we encourage you to consult with our board-certified physicians about your nonsurgical treatment options – even if other doctors have told you that surgery is the only answer.

### No-Cost, No-Obligation Consultations

Physicians rehabilitation will answer all of your questions in a warm, friendly environment. Once complete, you will know exactly what your treatment options are and if Viscosupplementation therapy and our specialized rehab program is right for you.

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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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**352.430.1710**  
**villagesleepdentistry.com**

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The Villages, Florida 32162

*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

Best of all, Village Sleep Dentistry provides CDC recommended, single use WatchPAT™ ONE contactless, first and only disposable Home Sleep Apnea Test.

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!

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**A** trusted name in senior living, Grace Management, Inc. is dedicated to the long-term satisfaction and quality of life of our residents. By continually reinvesting in our team and our communities and evolving our service model to meet the needs of residents today and tomorrow, we bring strength and stability to everything we do.

## A Place Where You Belong

At Sumter Senior Living, conveniently located in The Villages® community, we want you to live life to the fullest. Spend time with friends old and new in our community rooms. Take care of your health in our fitness center and indoor heated therapy pool. Explore enriching interests at the library, theater, and the arts and crafts studio. Beyond our convenient on-site offerings, you'll also gain access to The Villages® Amenities. With Florida sunshine, caring staff and friendly neighbors, you'll feel the warmth right away.

## Sumter Senior living is Owned and Operated by Grace Management, Inc.

For more than three decades, Grace Management, Inc. has developed, managed and marketed residential communities for seniors. The company has been able to elevate industry standards by delivering exceptional living experiences while providing the resources and information seniors and their loved ones need to make important life decisions.

## Thank You To Our Veterans

Sumter Senior Living is proud to be home to many brave men and women who have served our country. As a thank you for your service, we offer a 10% discount on monthly rent\* to qualified veterans and spouses.

## VA Aid & Attendance

In addition to the 10% discount Sumter Senior Living offers, we accept the VA Aid & Attendance Benefit. This benefit is available through the US Department of Veterans Affairs to help eligible Veterans and surviving spouses cover the cost of senior living expenses. To see if you're eligible, call our community at (352) 674-3600 or visit VA.gov to learn more.

\*Some restrictions may apply. 10% discount offered to qualifying veterans and/or spouse on monthly rental rate only. See Sales Director for additional details and to see if you or a loved one qualifies.



**Sumter Senior Living provides Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care services and amenities catered to the individual.**

## See Yourself Here

Sumter Senior Living provides Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care services and amenities catered to the individual.

Our Independent Living lifestyle provides the day-to-day freedom to come and go and the convenience of any number of activities to choose from. It is the perfect fit for an active, healthy lifestyle where residents enjoy all-inclusive, restaurant-quality dining and weekly social gatherings. Sumter Senior Living is dedicated to empowering residents to explore personal interests and connect you with the greater community through transportation and full access to The Villages® amenities. Our Grand Clubhouse includes a full bar, heated pool, and fitness center. There is also golf cart accessibility with convenient charging stations.

Our Assisted Living lifestyle is truly catered to the individual, providing support and care that stands out from any other. Enjoy the comforts of home to call your very own and personalized assistance with daily routines that promote a healthy, social, and active lifestyle. Research shows that seniors who stay active and social experience better health, a greater sense of well-being, and may recover from illness quicker. Our planned activities and events provide fulfilling experiences each day with 24-7 help at your fingertips.

Our Memory Care specializes in providing compassionate care to individuals with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and other neurodegenerative conditions. The challenges presented by memory loss can be difficult to navigate, but our specialized Village Program® is here to help every step of the way.

The Village Program® offers personalized programming that engages residents in activities to best reflect their former schedules, lifestyles, and interests while providing a safe place where their unique interests are nurtured. We also provide It's Never 2 Late (iN2L) technology to engage and stimulate the intellect and provide connection through innovative technology.

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.

Sumter Senior Living is managed by Grace Management, Inc. (GMI), an industry leader in providing the best senior living experience. The company has been able to elevate industry standards by delivering exceptional living experiences while providing the resources and information seniors and their loved ones need to make important life decisions. Grace Management, Inc. is a subsidiary of CPF Living Communities and is ranked in ASHA's 50 largest seniors housing owners.

**For more information, please visit [www.gracemanagement.com](http://www.gracemanagement.com).**

*For more information about Sumter Senior Living or to schedule a personalized visit please call us at: 352-707-9959 or visit our website: [www.SumterSeniorLiving.com](http://www.SumterSeniorLiving.com). We look forward to hearing from you!*



## SUMTER SENIOR LIVING

A GRACE MGMT COMMUNITY

1490 Killingsworth Way, The Villages, Florida 32162

**352.707-9959**

**[www.sumterseniorliving.com](http://www.sumterseniorliving.com)**

Assisted Living License Number: 12227

# Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy Helps Patients with Parkinson's Disease

**P**arkinson's disease is a progressive disorder and unfortunately, affects nearly 1 million Americans. The average onset of Parkinson's disease (PD) is around 60 years of age. Approximately 100,000 Americans are diagnosed with PD each year and 15% of those are under the age of 50, which is called "young-onset."

Although the cause is unknown, the main effect of Parkinson's disease is the cell death of neurons in the substantia nigra area of the brain. Neurons are nerve cells that produce the neurotransmitter, dopamine, which send signals to the brain that controls movement and motor skills. In the brain of a person suffering from PD, dopamine is significantly decreased as the disease progresses. Certain drugs may be prescribed to stop the progression of the symptoms below.

The cell death that occurs in Parkinson's patients leads to continual deficiencies in movement and mobility like the following:

- Hand tremors
- Muscle stiffness
- Limb rigidity
- Loss of memory
- Confusion
- Involuntary twitching
- Shaking
- Slowed movement
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Slouching and posture changes
- Diminished facial expressions
- Changes in handwriting (small/tight lettering)

**Physical Therapy: Innovative Therapies Group Offers Advanced Methods**

## Parkinson's - LSVT Big and Loud

As of yet, there is still no cure for Parkinson's disease. The treatments available are medications, which help to alleviate symptoms, and a high emphasis is placed on a healthy diet along with exercise and mobility training. Because Parkinson's patients are often struggling with small shuffling movements, rigid muscles and tremors, specifically tailored physical therapy classes are highly effective for retraining the brain into making bigger movements, while incorporating stabilizing balance methods.



LSVT Loud trains Parkinson's patients to use their voice at a more normal level, and LSVT Big teaches the individual to use their small and large motor skills with more control.

Patient Education is critical to alleviate further injury and to promote the most efficacious healing, and maintain independent function, mobility and communication.

## Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists specialize in helping patients with Parkinson's disease to participate in daily activities. This might include modifying the way things are done at home to keep patients safe and also to keep them moving. For example, learning how to safely get in and out of bed or in the shower are critical for patient independence and safety. They can also help with things like domestic skills to help patients participate or take control of preparing meals and so forth. These are just a few examples of a long list of how occupational therapy plays a crucial role in the lives of patients and their caregivers.

## Speech Therapy

Speech Language Therapist help patients learn how to communicate better, and also to retrain areas of the brain involved in swallowing and eating. Speech therapist work one on one with Parkinson's patients to help them speak more clearly and to also project their voices.

**Innovative Therapies Group** provides physical, occupational, speech therapy and massage. They embrace alternative and eastern medicine philosophies and will help you explore new inventive ways to combat your condition.

Along with disorders like Parkinson's disease, Innovative Therapies Group offers comprehensive treatment and programs for orthopedic injuries, pre and post-surgical training, post stroke conditioning, balance disorders, MS, and other neurodegenerative conditions, and much more. Their services are always patient-focused and custom-tailored to your specific needs and goals.

## Examples of The Types of Therapies Available:

- 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
- Daily Living Activities Training
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy

## NEW LOCATION: NOW OPEN

Innovative Therapies Group has a new location at 805 S Main Street, Wildwood, FL.

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



**Innovative Therapies Group, Inc.**  
352-433-0091 | [innovativetherapiesgroup.com](http://innovativetherapiesgroup.com)

# Are you Still Contemplating Moving to The Villages, Florida? WHAT Are You Waiting For?

By Amanda Fincher

**A**re you tired of shoveling snow and freezing as soon as you climb out of your bed and put your feet on the cold floor? Perhaps you want a retirement lifestyle that is social, lively and full of outdoor activities with good friends. The Villages, Florida is known as the “Friendliest Active Adult 55+ Retirement Town.”

If you’re ready to leave behind the foul weather and months on end of being shut inside, it’s worth it to visit the Villages and see why so many love to call it home.

With multiple neighborhoods to choose from and various living arrangements such as single family homes, town home, condos 55+ and Independent living communities, the options are endless. Whether you want to take part in group activities, meet new friends or enjoy a peaceful, secure, safe place to call home, The Villages has it all.

From an amazing selection of recreation facilities and parks to the many social clubs and activities, residents are filling their days with purpose. Whether you want to learn something new, are looking to experience something very special, or ready to spend the day on the golf course, the opportunities you’ll enjoy are truly endless.<sup>1</sup>

*Reference:*  
1. *The Villages, Your Retirement Adventure Starts Here,*  
<https://www.thevillages.com>.



The Villages is a collection of quaint retirement neighborhoods located in the heart of Florida nestled between two beautiful coastlines, ports of travel and theme parks. Each neighborhood is unique in its charm and personality and connected in ways where all the lifestyle here for you to enjoy is just a golf car ride away.<sup>1</sup>



If you’re interested in buying or selling in The Villages, contact Amanda Fincher at **352-497-5673**.



**Amanda Fincher**

Broker Associate Amanda Fincher of Realty Executives is an award-winning, Multi-Million Dollar Producer. Amanda helps home buyers and sellers across The Villages, Ocala, Wildwood, Fruitland Park, and Lady Lake reach their real estate goals by tapping into her relationship-building prowess and high-level real estate training.

Amanda launched her career in real estate sales in 2017, bringing more than a decade of experience living and working in The Villages to her role. She quickly proved herself as a key player in the market, earning the “Rookie of the Year” award from her brokerage, Realty Executives in The Villages, which has ranked as a market leader in the local MLS year after year. She bolsters her commitment to advocating for clients by staying up to date with the latest technology and continuing her real estate education with some of the industry’s top mentors and coaches. Amanda lends her outgoing, detail-oriented, kind, and professional outlook to both her real estate endeavors and local volunteer fundraising efforts.

Amanda has been building lasting relationships, by providing top notch service in The Villages for the past fifteen years. Her strive to always stay up to date with the latest real estate technology, which keeps her clients equipped with the latest products. Amanda is very detail orientated and her customers are her number one priority. She shows great dedication to achieving results and providing exceptional services in this industry. Amanda has made a high level commitment to her real estate education, having been mentored and coached by several highly acclaimed real estate professionals.



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## Realty Executives In The Villages

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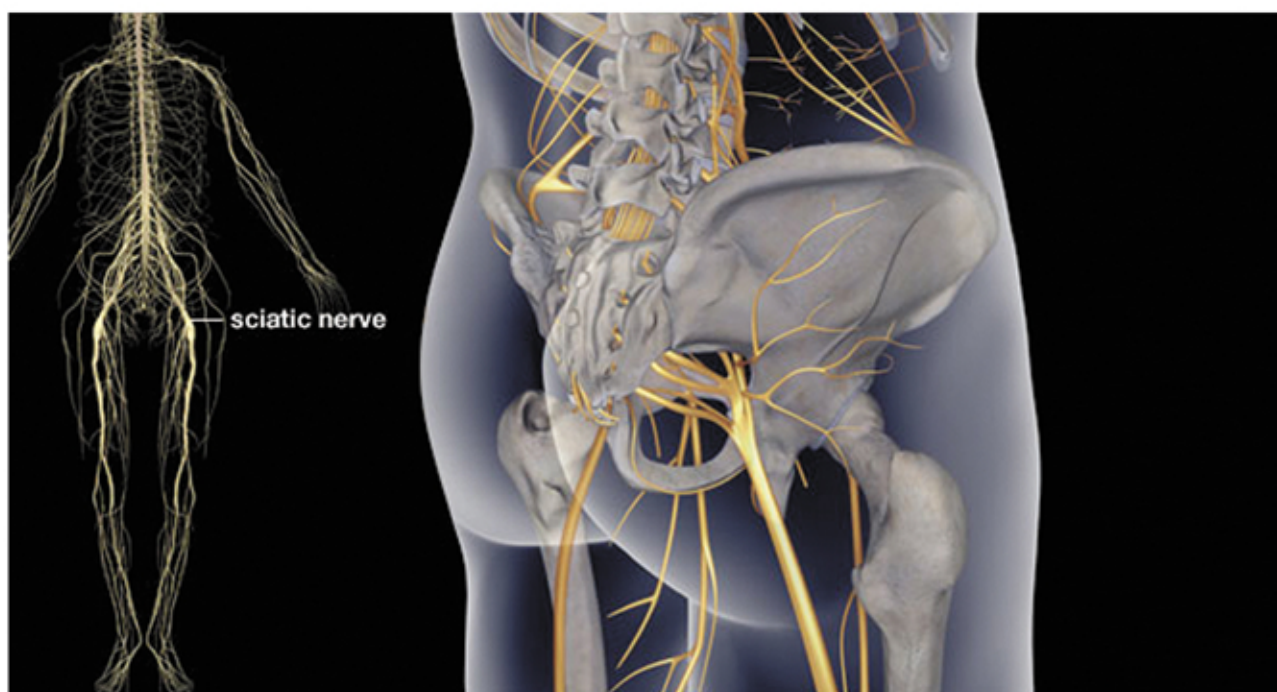
*Why waste your hard earned money! Our technique is covered by most insurances.*

By Compton Chiropractic Care

Currently there are millions of Americans who suffer from low back and leg pain. A recent survey showed, a large majority of these patients are over the age of 65. When you figure that the Villages has a population exceeding 100,000 and a majority are over the age of 65 then it becomes easier to understand why so many local residents experience this pain. In fact, seven out of ten patients who walk into Dr. Compton's office complain of low back or sciatic pain. It is common knowledge that Chiropractors treat low back pain among other muscular skeletal complaints. What is not well known is that there are over a dozen different techniques and treatment plans to treat the same condition. Different Doctor's feel one technique is better than another but the proof is in the pudding. What makes a Doctor truly unique and beneficial to their patients is being able to properly diagnose a condition the first time and realize when a particular protocol is not working and escalate care to the next level.

Sciatica is defined by The Mayo Clinic as: *Pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from your lower back through your hips and buttocks and down each leg. Typically, sciatica affects only one side of your body.*

Sciatica most commonly occurs when a herniated disk or a bone spur compresses part of a nerve. This causes inflammation, pain and often numbness in the affected leg. Although the pain associated with sciatica can be severe, most cases resolve with conservative chiropractic care in a few weeks. Interestingly enough; due to the anatomical location of the sciatic nerve, sciatic type pain can also be caused by Piriformis syndrome or sacro-iliac joint dysfunction. These two conditions masquerade around with similar signs and symptoms and can lead to improper diagnosis and treatment. This means patients spend money and do not get better, never a good thing.



The Doctors at Compton Chiropractic are board certified and have degrees from Palmer College (The First Chiropractic Medical School). Among other common conditions they treat low back and sciatic pain on a daily basis with great success. The Doctors are integrated with several local primary care physicians, urgent cares, neurologists, pain management physicians, and orthopedic surgeons. This level of integration means that the patient benefits faster and more effectively.

These days it's hard to walk around the golf course and not hear someone talking about their "sciatica". Unfortunately, the great game of golf tends to wreak havoc on ones spine and muscular systems. This is one reason why many top pro golfers (Tiger Woods, Tommy Armour) among other athletes have a chiropractic physician on staff. Certainly if professional golfers with great swings utilize chiropractic care, then local residents who have trouble swinging could potentially benefit more.

Compton Chiropractic has been serving The Villages since 2006 with knowledgeable Doctors and friendly staff who treat sciatica pain on a daily basis. They primarily utilize "Cox Flexion Distraction Technique" which was developed by Dr. James M. Cox in the early 1960's as a non-surgical method of treating disc related injuries. Since that time Doctors of different specialties around the country have studied and utilized these methods with great success.

Many residents are familiar with the terms herniated disc, sciatica, pinched nerve, bulging disc and stenosis. Many are also aware that surgery has been the most common treatment for these injuries in the past. However, years of research and technology have pushed us into the 21st century and now there is hope for those who suffer from this debilitating pain. It is now commonplace in medicine to try the most conservative means of treatment first. This approach is a win: win for patients and doctors alike because it means less wasted time and money.



**WHETHER OR NOT YOU'VE GOT A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN (PCP), AT DR. COMPTON'S OFFICE, ALL PATIENTS ARE WELCOME.**

**WE WORK WITH YOUR CURRENT PHYSICIAN:**

If you have a regular family practice relationship, your current PCP can treat you simultaneously, and all communications between Dr. Compton's office and theirs will be shared and interconnected.

**WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A PCP?**

Many patients come directly to Dr. Compton's office, as referrals are not required.

**WE CAN REFER YOU OUT IF NECESSARY:**

All cases and patients are different. For example, if we feel it's in your best interest to see an orthopedic specialist, or if you need additional images, we refer you out and can also coordinate this with your PCP's preferences.

Doctor Compton states that, "some patients will require surgery for pain relief", however in most cases he can postpone or prevent surgery for his patients.

The Doctors at Compton Chiropractic have received additional education on the Cox Technique among others. This conservative treatment has been shown to decrease disc pressure by approximately 75% thus allowing relief of the signs and symptoms of disc related pain (Sciatica).

The average treatment time is only about 15 minutes and most patients report feeling better in just a few visits.

**Patient Testimonial**

*"I suffered from sciatica for 25 years until a friend told me about Doc. After 4 treatments I was back on the golf course and out of pain." - K.R.*

Doctor Compton's office is located in The Palm Ridge Plaza off CR 466 and they accept all major insurances. Office hours are M-F from 9am to 5 pm.



*"Putting your families health in our families hands"*

Providing Quality Chiropractic Care to patients in and around The Villages, Florida.

**Our Philosophy**

- Treat patients as individuals identifying their unique needs and set of problems
- Perform a thorough Orthopedic and Neurologic examination with all new patients
- Use the highly reliable and world-renown Palmer "hands on" technique of Chiropractic care
- Provide patients with non-surgical alternatives to pain
- Avoid long-term treatment plans or large out-of-pocket expenses

**Our Facility Offers**

- Medicare accreditation for DME bracing
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- Clinical Nutrition
- Quality care without the wait

**Accepting**

- Medicare • Medicare Replacement Plans
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- Medicaid • Workers Compensation
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# 3 Tips for Relieving Dry Eye Symptoms with Omega-3 Supplements

By Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

**F**rom eye drops to topical lubricants, Americans spend an astounding \$3.8 billion on dry eye relief every year. Not only are many of these treatments inconvenient and uncomfortable to apply, but often the results are disappointing, too.

Research suggests that chronic inflammation is at the heart of most dry eye issues. Since omega-3s fight inflammation, can these nutrients also help with dry eye symptoms?

## How Do Dry Eye Symptoms Start?

While a number of environmental and behavioral factors can contribute to dry eyes, the most common cause of dry eye disease is Meibomian Gland Dysfunction (MGD).

Located behind the upper and lower eyelids, the meibomian glands are responsible for producing meibum – a rich mixture of oils that keeps the eyes moist and comfortable – every time you blink.

Whether due to chronic inflammation or other factors, the meibomian glands can become clogged. Clogged glands prevent the meibum from lubricating the eyes correctly.

Without meibum, the eyes have to rely on lower-quality tears that evaporate quickly, leaving the eye surface unprotected. This results in dry eye symptoms, like burning, tearing, redness, and blurry vision.

Over time, clogged meibomian glands can deteriorate, causing MGD. In the early stages, blocked meibomian glands may occur without a person experiencing significant symptoms.

## Why Are Omega-3s Beneficial for Dry Eyes?

Scientists have several theories for why omega-3 fatty acids could relieve dry eye symptoms.

First of all, the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA are known to prevent and resolve ongoing inflammation. Less inflammation can potentially lower the risk of MGD developing – and reduce discomfort after the disease has progressed.

There's another potential benefit, too.

Meibum consists of a mixture of wax esters and beneficial fatty acids. Since many MGD patients have an abnormal meibum consistency, it's believed that



getting enough omega-3s may improve the fatty acid make-up and quality of the oil in our tears.

## Clinical Studies on Dry Eyes and Omega-3s

To date, many clinical trials have found that getting an effective dose of omega-3s may improve tear production, decrease tear evaporation rate, and provide relief for dry eye discomfort.

But some results are conflicting. In 2018, a NIH-funded study found that a high dose of omega-3s did not make a significant difference in terms of relieving dry eye symptoms compared to placebo.

In May 2019, however, two meta-analyses re-examined the data. In both, the scientists concluded that omega-3 supplementation did improve dry eye symptoms and metrics – including tear breakup time, Schirmer test scores, tear osmolarity, and ocular surface disease index scores.

## How to Get Benefits from an Omega-3 Supplement

Many MGD treatments (like eye drops) only provide temporary relief. But increasing your intake of fresh omega-3s may be an effective way to make improvements long term.

If you're considering taking fish oil for dry eyes, here are 3 key points to remember:

### 1. Get an Effective EPA/DHA Dose

For any omega-3 supplement to be effective, getting the right dose of fatty acids is crucial.

Numerous studies suggest that the omega-3s' anti-inflammatory effects don't kick in unless you get more than 2000 mg of EPA/DHA daily.

Regular fish oil and cod liver oil supplements typically only provide 300 mg of EPA/DHA per capsule, so check the supplement facts to make sure you get an effective serving.

### 2. Give It Time

It takes time for the omega-3 fatty acids to build up in the cells and have an effect. Studies indicate that dry eye relief tends to occur after 6-12 weeks of daily supplementation.

Since changes are gradual and can vary from individual to individual, keeping a journal can be a helpful way to monitor your progress.

### 3. Find a Fresh Fish Oil

While omega-3s are highly beneficial for reducing inflammation, these fatty acids have a molecular structure that makes them prone to oxidation (or spoiling).

Numerous independent studies have found that many omega-3 supplements have turned rancid long before their stated expiration date. Not only are oxidized omega-3 products less potent, but consuming rancid fish oil can also be harmful.

Just like fresh fish, truly fresh fish oil should not taste or smell fishy. If you're taking fish oil capsules, break one open to taste and smell the contents. If it gives off a bad taste and smell, throw it out!

*This article was abbreviated from a longer version published on [omega3innovations.com](https://omega3innovations.com). For the full text and references, visit:*

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/5-tips-for-getting-relief-from-dry-eyes-with-an-omega-3-supplement/>

## 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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# Neuropathy? Or is it?

**Dr. Brent Carter**

**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**



**Dr. Brent Carter**

Podiatric Physician & Surgeon

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# The Art of MRT

By Alexander C. Frank, DC, DACNB, FABES

**D**id you know that with muscle testing you can pose questions to the body and the body can answer? Muscle Response Testing (MRT)/ Kinesiology is an assessment technique which enables the physician to localize areas of the body that are operating *less-than optimally*. MRT is practiced not only by chiropractic physicians and other “alternative” health care providers, but also by medical (allopathic) physicians. MRT assess for disruptions in optimal body function by the utilizing the fact that muscle turns on and off. Dr. Frank utilizes MRT to further assess your health from another facet/set of lenses. (MRT) is performed as part of an individual’s overall assessment.

Muscle Response Testing (MRT) is utilized for the assessment of health issues such as nutritional deficiencies, environmental sensitivities, & food allergies. MRT has been successful in helping those both with immediate reactions to foods (IgE), as well as those that have developed chronic sensitivities (IgA, IgG). MRT is also utilized during sessions where emotional issues /triggers are addressed.

## How is MRT performed?

The practitioners selects a muscle to be used for the assessment. The muscle can either be strong or weak; what is being assessed for is a change in the tone of the muscles. If the patient’s muscle strength is able to resist that of the physician’s pressure, we considerate it to be strong or “locked” indicating an affirmative response. When muscles give way to pressure they are considered weak or “unlocked” and indicate a problem/fault. Conversely if a muscle is weak, locating the fault “restores the circuitry” and the once weak muscle “turn on” and becomes locked/strong. Treatment is then applied to the fault, and a MMT reassessment is then performed.

There is considerable evidence about the reliability and validity of MMT as an examination tool. Even the American Medical Association has accepted MMT as a reliable tool and advocates its use for the evaluation of disability impairments.

## What is NAET?

NAET, a non-invasive, drug free, natural solution to alleviate allergies of all types and intensities using a blend of selective energy balancing, testing and treatment procedures from acupuncture/acupressure, allopathy, chiropractic, nutritional, and kinesiological disciplines of medicine.



*The smell of certain foods and scents cause my nose to swell; I cannot then smell for days. I was directed to Dr. Frank by a friend who had suffered from emotional issues and had improved with the kinesiology treatments she received with Dr. Frank. The examination muscle response testing (along with blood work) guided Dr. Frank to my “tailored treatment plan”. Within a few treatments I noticed my reactions had begun to lessen. Dr. Frank also taught me how to “treat myself”, along with giving me exercises that keep the positive changes moving in the right direction [neuroplasticity]. It was also a breath of fresh air that I did not need to take an abundance of supplements in order from my program “to work”. Dr. Frank and the Muscle Response Testing, (MRT) have opened my eyes to an entirely new lens on which to view my family’s health. –Jill*

One allergen, such as egg, wheat, pollen, etc., is treated at a time. If you are not severely immune deficient, you may need just one treatment to desensitize one allergen. A person with mild to moderate number of allergies may take about 15-20 office visits to desensitize 15-20 food and environmental allergens.

Basic essential nutrients are treated during the first few visits. Chemicals, environmental allergens, vaccinations, immunizations, etc. are treated after completing about ten basic essential nutrients. NAET has helped many who have suffered with food and other sensitivities.

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.

Current course works includes Fellowship studies in Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation, Vestibular and Concussion Rehabilitation, Childhood Developmental Disorders, and more.

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# Cannabis & Coronavirus

**Covid-19** has slowly spread its way into the lives of almost every person starting with financial distress and ending in the constant fear of carrying on with everyone's daily routine. These strange times have called for unorthodox measures to be taken in order to flatten the curve of the spread such as work from home, tele-medicine, and other contact free options of their previous counterpart. As such, the Florida Department of Health has now temporarily allowed patients to re-certify their marijuana prescriptions over the phone up until April 15th, giving them an alternative to the typical doctor office visit. The clinical side of the industry isn't the only side taking preventative measures; dispensaries are now doing minimal contact purchases as well as ramping up the delivery sector to protect patients especially for those who are immunocompromised.



What this entails for the future of the industry will ultimately be within the hands of the state of Florida with many hoping tele-medicine is here to stay past the April 15th deadline. Those who are bedridden or unable to go out in public collectively breathed a sigh of relief despite the temporary nature of it all. This opens up the question if telemedicine could be a permanent option in the small percentage of cases and possibly hail an increase in demand for being a card holder as it will open up a completely untapped demographic. The convenience being the obvious factor in this but meeting at some point down the middle seems crucial to those wanting to become a cardholder and are unable to be in public disregarding the current situation with the virus. Regardless, as we all go through the unknowns of this novel coronavirus, let's continue to observe the way this industry reacts to this unfortunate scenario (from 6 feet away, of course).



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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.

If you'd like to learn more about how our PEMF devices can help you eliminate, or greatly alleviate, your pain contact Sheryl at (949) 220-4900. Please leave a message and someone will return your call within 24 hours. We do have weekly presentations.

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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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# 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.*

# When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**H**ave you ever been at your wits' end? Have you ever been so confused that you didn't really know which way was up? Have you ever had the feeling, "I know I need to do something...but I don't know what 'something' to do."

The Bible tells the story of a group of sailors who went out to sea and encountered a huge storm that almost killed them:

*<sup>23</sup>Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. <sup>24</sup>They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. <sup>25</sup>For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. <sup>26</sup>They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. <sup>27</sup>They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. <sup>28</sup>Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. <sup>29</sup>He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. <sup>30</sup>They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. <sup>31</sup>Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Psalm 107:23-31*

**Can you relate to this group of sailors?** Maybe the circumstances in your life have caused your courage to melt away. Perhaps you are going through a storm of your own. You may find yourself at your wits' end without any clear direction as to what to do next. If so, follow the example of the sailors in the Bible.

The first thing they did was cry out to the LORD in their trouble. Don't underestimate the power of prayer. An old gospel song says, "when God is all you have, you'll find He's all you need." God responded to the sailor's prayer by bringing them out of their distress. In fact, it says he stilled the storm to a whisper and the waves of the sea were hushed. God can do that in your life and in your situation as well. Call out to him. His timing is not always as quick as we may like but He knows what is best for each of us.

When the storm was over, the text says that God guided the sailors to their desired haven. They found their place of rest and peace. Storms don't last forever... and neither will yours. Keep your faith in God. Cry out to Him in your pain. Trust that He knows what's best and keep praying and seeking your desired haven... it may be just around the corner.

And then, don't forget to thank God when He does bring you through the storm. The story concludes by saying, "Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

Storms, crises, pain and problems are an unfortunate reality of life. We grow through the pain and learn valuable lessons during these times. Don't give up, give in, or quit. When you find yourself at your wits' end... hang on, cry out to God, and look for His deliverance.



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