

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

October 2021

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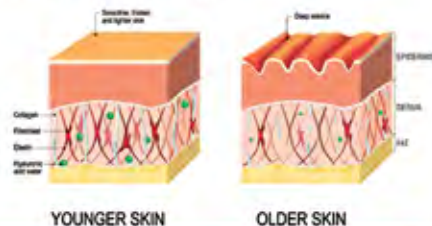
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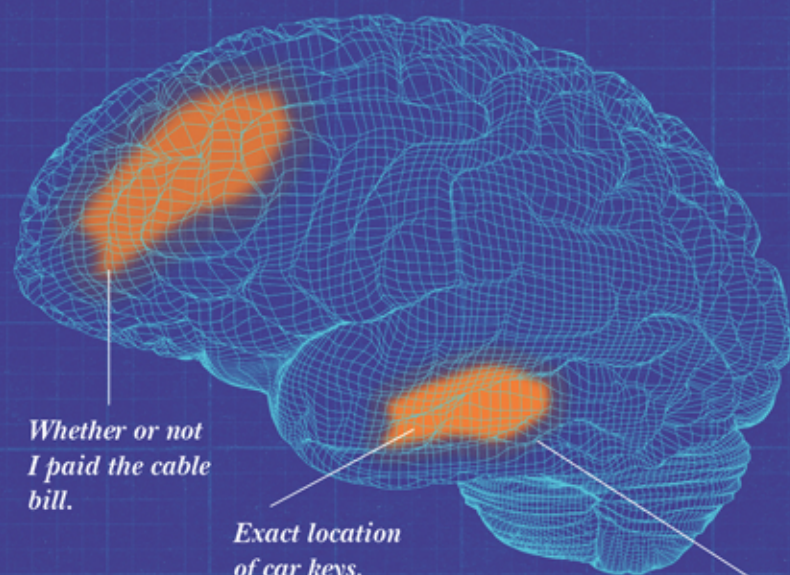
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GREY MATTER | Fig. 17

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# Lumbar Spine Pain: Symptoms, Causes & Treatments

By Regenexx Tampa Bay, Regenerative Medicine

**T**he body is an interconnected machine with each part working together in harmony. The lumbar spine is a crucial element of this machine. The hip, knee, and foot are all controlled by spinal nerves within the low back. A problem in the lumbar spine could create problems at any point in the lower body. Common lumbar issues include arthritis, foraminal and spinal stenosis, pinched nerves, disc problems, muscle atrophy, loose ligaments, and spondylolysis. In this article, we will give you a brief overview of these common lumbar spine problems along with their potential symptoms, causes, and treatments.

First, let's take a look at the spinal column and its parts.

## The Spinal Column

The spinal column is made up of vertebrae that are stacked one on top of the other with an intervertebral disc between each level to provide cushion and absorb shock. The cervical spine consists of the neck area and is made up of seven vertebrae (C1-C7). Following the cervical spine is the thoracic spine (T1-T12), the lumbar spine (L1-L5), the sacrum (S1-S5), and the coccyx. The posterior (back) portion of these vertebrae is known as the spinous process and on either side of these, connecting one vertebra to the next, are finger-joint-sized articulations called facet joints.

Another extremely important part of the spinal column is the spinal canal. This tunnel runs down the middle of the column and houses the spinal cord, which has many nerves that transmit muscle commands and sensory information throughout the body and to the brain. There are small holes in the spinal column where the nerves exit and branch off to other parts of the body. There is one at each level of the spinal column. One of these holes is called a foramen. Any of these structures can become damaged or diseased in some way and lead to pain, discomfort, or even disability.

## Foraminal Stenosis

When the spine is healthy, spinal nerves easily traverse through the tunnels transmitting sensory information from each body part to the brain and provide impulses to the muscles so they can contract and move the body part. However, when the spine is unhealthy, the flow of information can be disrupted.

The disc or cushion in between the spine bones can bulge and/or the spine joints can get arthritis causing the foramen to narrow. This narrowing of the tunnel is called foraminal stenosis and can cause the nerves to get pinched. The pressure from a pinched nerve can cause muscle tightness, weakness, numbness, tingling,



burning, or electrical pain in the specific distribution of that nerve. For example, if there is a lower lumbar foraminal stenosis, you could experience numbness in your big toe. Sometimes the symptoms slowly manifest over time from a more subtle pinching of the nerve. If the nerve is irritated, it may release inflammatory substances into the tissue to which the nerve travels causing that tissue to degenerate more rapidly than other areas leading to painful problems such as tendinopathy.

You could have laser spine surgery to open up the hole, but this surgery can have major side effects and serious implications. Another way to surgically treat stenosis is with a spinal fusion, but the mention of a fusion should be a huge red flag to seek out other opinions. Why? Adjacent segment disease (ASD). After a fusion, the motion of the fused segments is limited and the biomechanical loads are transferred to the segments above and below the level of the fusion. These adjacent segments could get damaged and become painful over time resulting in additional surgeries.

Surgery is often performed after an MRI diagnosis of the problem. An MRI indicating stenosis is not enough to appropriately diagnose that stenosis is the cause of pain. If you do have foraminal stenosis, you should not put all your trust in MRI results. Patients may or may not have pain with foraminal stenosis. The MRI is a description of the appearance of the spine. Many people have stenosis and no noticeable problems. An experienced physician knows that it's critical to treat the person, not the MRI. This can be determined by a thorough history and physical examination. Research also shows that skilled physical therapy is as effective as surgery in relieving stenosis symptoms.

Our approach to foraminal stenosis utilizes nonsurgical solutions to treat it before it progresses. Precise image-guided injections of the patient's own platelets into the foramen and around the nerve can help manage the problem.

## Facet Joint Osteoarthritis and Instability

The facet joints that we spoke of earlier can become injured from trauma or develop arthritis from cartilage breakdown due to wear and tear. Facet joints allow for and limit movement in the spine. When bending backward, these joints become compressed and when you bend forward, they open up. When damage or arthritis occurs, facet joints can become chronically painful, especially with movement. Facet arthritis is often referred to as Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD).

For facet arthritis or injuries, doctors may recommend a radiofrequency ablation (RFA) also referred to as a rhizotomy of the small nerve that senses pain from that specific facet joint. This is a destructive process that damages the nerve. Although this can be effective in some cases, it may leave the surrounding muscles weaker which can actually be a cause of back pain.

A surgical option is a lumbar fusion to bolt two or more vertebrae of the spine together to eliminate movement and therefore, pain. The nature of this surgery can also damage the muscles that stabilize the area. This is an irreversible procedure that can cause adjacent segment disease in the vertebrae above and below. This surgery should only be considered in the most extreme cases.

Our approach for DJD often includes high-dose PRP, platelet lysate, or stem cell injections precisely targeting the facet joints, surrounding ligaments, atrophied muscles, and around the nerves. This is a tissue preservation strategy that involves no cutting, surgery, hardware, or tissue destruction helping patients avoid pain medications and damaging cortisone injections.

## Disc Problems

Within the lumbar spine, there are four types of disc problems that can occur. A herniated disc occurs when the outer covering of the structure breaks open allowing the inner gel to herniate out. A bulging disc is when the outer covering doesn't completely break open, but the fibers are stretched and weak leading the gel to bulge. A torn disc means that the outer cover has a tear that causes or it may allow the leaking of chemicals on the associated spinal nerve. Lastly, a degenerated disc is one that has collapsed or narrowed due to insufficient living cells inside the disc not producing enough of the substances that keep the disc plump. A severely degenerated disc is usually not a source of pain unless it's bulging or leaking onto a spinal nerve. Earlier in the degeneration process, while the disc still has plumpness to it, tears in the back of the disc can be a source of low back pain that results in severe episodes of pain with sitting, coughing, sneezing, or lifting. When a disc is severely degenerated, it usually is no longer painful itself. However, the mechanical load of the compressive forces in the spine at that level are no longer being taken up by the disc and therefore get transferred to the facet joints leading to wear and tear and DJD as described above.



Generally, disc surgeries include either back fusions or disc replacement. Regarding fusion, the vertebrae are bolted together with hardware to keep them immobile. With disc replacement, the goal is to have fewer side effects than a fusion, however, research has shown that abnormal motion with an artificial disc can also lead to ASD. The other side effects of having a device implanted include wear-and-tear ions in the blood from the breakdown of the metal or plastic device, ongoing pain, and potential revision surgeries.

With our approach, herniated and bulging discs are treated based on the problem they are causing. For pinched nerves, instilling isolated growth factors or platelet lysate around the irritated nerve can help the nerve recover and become more tolerant of its narrow space. Injection of the surrounding ligaments and muscles provides for stability with better-controlled movements taking pressures off the disc and nerves. In some cases, bulging discs may be treated with a same-day stem cell treatment to reduce the size of the bulge or heal a tear. In other cases, cultured (grown) stem cells injected in a specific way may be required. Torn discs can be treated with either stem cell or PRP injections very effectively. Symptoms respond well to a treatment protocol focused on platelet and/or stem cell technology deployed to treat undesirable disc and lumbar segment movements due to lax ligaments and arthritic facet joints.

#### Pinched Lumbar Nerve

Pinched nerves can be caused by foraminal stenosis from bulging or herniated discs and facet joint arthritis as discussed. A pinched lumbar nerve can cause pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness anywhere along the route that particular nerve branch supplies. Pain may or may not be present in the low back.

Chronic knee pain could actually be due to a pinched nerve in the lumbar spine. A doctor may mistakenly conclude that the knee is the source of the pain. This is exactly why we find it so important to consider the entire musculoskeletal system as a whole rather than in parts and to take an extensive history and physical.

The surgical approach to a pinched nerve depends on the root cause. For example, if a disc bulge is to blame, it could be a discectomy and graft and/or lumbar fusion. If it is a foraminal stenosis, laser surgery may enlarge the foraminal opening where the nerve is being pinched. Problems with invasive lumbar surgery are many, including long recovery times and often continuing pain. Ultimately, the structure never fully functions as it originally did.

Our approach includes examining the full musculoskeletal system to determine the source of pain and the pinched nerve and then developing an appropriate treatment plan. Treatment may consist of precise image-guided injections of healing growth factors isolated from a patient's own blood platelets, PRP, or stem cells.

#### Steroids, NSAIDs, & Other Drugs - Not Recommended

You may be presented with other treatments within the traditional orthopedics model for lumbar problems, including steroid shots or medications.



Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) come with a long and growing list of dangerous side effects, such as sudden-death heart attacks, stroke, gastrointestinal bleeding, addiction, and overdose.

Narcotics can provide pain relief but are not addressing the issue directly and of course, can be addictive. Overdose has become an increasing public health issue.

Steroid shots have been shown to destroy local cartilage in the joint which can progress arthritis and provide no significant long term pain improvement. In fact, pain relief usually diminishes with repeated steroid injections. The list of problems with these injections is also lengthy.

There are supplements that can be a good alternative for pain and inflammation. Chondroitin and glucosamine have been shown to be effective pain relievers and can preserve cartilage. Curcumin derived from turmeric can also decrease inflammation and relieve pain from arthritis and other issues.

Our spines are tuned to precision and attempting to rearrange the spine's biomechanics with fusions and surgeries is often a bad idea. It is essential to understand that where it hurts may or may not be where the primary damage is located.

Acting on a lumbar spine problem while it's still a small problem or when the issue first appears, will be less of an issue than trying to take care of it when it becomes a larger problem that spirals out of control. Conservative options may help in some cases, but if these options have failed, we urge you to seek out interventional orthopedic solutions!



#### Dr. James Leiber

James Leiber, DO, is the founder and medical director of Regenexx Tampa Bay. He is a former officer, physician, and educator in the Air Force, including personal physician

to the vice president and president at the White House. He is triple board certified in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine (AOBNMM), Pain Medicine (CAQPM), and Family Medicine (ABFM), as well registered in Musculoskeletal Sonography (RMSK).

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



**Ron Torrance II, DO And FAOASM** - Board Certified in Sports Medicine and recent co-author of *Exercise 2.0* for Regenexx and author of the 2018 best paper of the year on *The Concussed Athlete*. Dr. Torrance has achieved semi-professional ranking as a beach volleyball player and trains as a competitive CrossFit athlete.



**Ignatios Papas, DO**, is a non-surgical orthopedic physician specializing in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Regenexx Tampa Bay. Dr. Papas has taught courses in musculoskeletal ultrasound to residents across multiple specialties and to medical students at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte.

He is a member of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and the American Academy of Orthopedics just to name a few. When he isn't practicing medicine he enjoys spending time with his wife and new baby, playing soccer, practicing guitar, and listening to historical podcast


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# Early Detection of Breast Cancer Can Be a Life-Saver

Identifying any type of cancer at an early stage, before it has spread extensively (metastasis), provides a much better outcome for patients. That is certainly the case when it comes to breast cancer. The earlier cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat - and patients likely will have a more positive prognosis. In its earliest stages, where the cancer is localized and has not spread outside of the breast, the 5-year relative survival rate is 99%, according to the American Cancer Society. Sixty-one percent (61%) of cases are diagnosed at this stage.

Florida Cancer Specialists' physicians concur with the American Cancer Society's recommendation that women over 40, with no family history of breast cancer, should get a mammogram once a year; for women under 40, a clinical breast exam is recommended at least once every three years. In addition, monthly breast self-examinations can be an effective way of discovering any changes in the normal look and feel of the breasts. Since 2007, breast cancer death rates have continued to decrease in women older than 50; rates have remained steady for women under 50. Researchers believe these decreases are the result of several factors, including increased awareness, better screening technologies and improvements in treatments.

## Know Your Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

Regardless of age, race, or family history, all women - and about 1% of men - have some level of risk for breast cancer. Primary risk factors include age and gender, along with a number of other factors, such as obesity and alcohol use, which can be moderated through healthy lifestyle choices, awareness, finding breast cancer earlier through better screening technologies and improved treatments. The risk of breast cancer nearly doubles if a woman has a first-degree relative (mother, sister, daughter) who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. This is one reason why you should discuss genetic testing with your doctor, if you have a family history of breast cancer.



## Impact of COVID-19 on Breast Cancer Screenings

Breast cancer is one of the few types of cancer for which there is an effective screening (mammography); however, during the coronavirus crisis, many women have wondered if it is safe to go to certain medical appointments, including getting scheduled mammograms. Screening mammograms - at every age - are one of the best ways to diagnose breast cancer early, when it's most treatable. Women will need to make an informed decision with their physician as to whether or not to get a mammogram during COVID-19.

Remember - even if you are diagnosed with breast cancer, it does not necessarily increase your risk of having more serious complications if you do get COVID-19; however, for people in active treatment for breast or any type of cancer, there may be a higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 if their treatments cause them to become immunocompromised (have a weakened immune system) or have lung problems.

## Screening Guidelines for Women 55 to 75

The American Cancer Society (ACS) screening guidelines recommend that women ages 55 to 75 at average risk of breast cancer, with no family history, can be screened every one to two years. If you are between 55 and 75 and had a normal mammogram within the past year, you could choose to have your next mammogram up to 24 months after your last one, so that you don't have to be screened during the pandemic.

## Are Mammograms Necessary for Women Over 75?

Considering that older people have a higher risk for COVID-19, some are questioning whether mammograms are even necessary after the age of 75 for women with no family history of breast cancer, and a record of normal mammograms. The ACS recommends, "Women should continue screening mammography as long as their overall health is good and they have a life expectancy of 10 years or longer."

One study, cited by *BreastCancer.org*, confirmed the benefits of regular mammograms and emphasized that there is no upper age limit for mammograms. Again, every woman should discuss with their physician whether or not to get a mammogram during COVID-19.

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

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# National Physical Therapy Awareness Month

Submitted By Reconstructive Orthopaedics of Central Florida

**R**ehabilitating from an injury can be a long process, but one of the best tools in our arsenal is YOU. As orthopaedic surgeons, we see all ranges of injury from minor twists to traumatic and life-threatening bone breaks or joint death. As a patient, your experience with your orthopaedic surgeon may be during one of the most unexpected and difficult times in your life after a car accident or other accident. Or, you may have elected some surgery to enhance the quality of your life such as a Rotator Cuff Repair or the replacement of a knee through something like the CORI robotic system. Either way, the importance of your participation is vital to your recovery and the success of any procedure.



Dr. Siebuhr has trained as a Physical Therapist and values immensely the input these care providers bring to the table for patient care. Whether recovering from an injury alone or the added levels of surgery, the steps you take with your body and its natural healing process can be augmented with either Physical or Occupational Therapy. October is Physical Therapy Month, and we are honored to celebrate the partnership we have with these health care providers. The combination of self-care with guided training and exercising can make all the difference in day-to-day life but is an absolute game changer after surgery, or even non-operative recovery from injury.

Sometimes your surgeon may push you, in coordination with a therapist to do more than you think you can. And sometimes we tell our patients not to lift anything heavier than a coffee cup. Each body is different. Each injury is different. You may injure your left leg and experience recovery one way and later have a similar injury on your right leg and get markedly different results. It's important to be honest with your therapist AND your physician and his or her team (PA-Cs, APRNSs, etc) so that a plan that fits YOU can be created. Your health and healing will be so enhanced when your health care team has a plan of care for you.

Sometimes insurance companies may think you have 'plateaued (reached your best result)', but even if you don't have visits covered by your insurance at home or in an outpatient setting, you can always get information from your surgeon or from the therapists about exercises and stretches you can



continue to do under your own steam. It also doesn't require fancy tools – you can do some pretty amazing workouts with vegetable cans, tennis balls, partially filled milk jugs, jump ropes, and your walls and chairs. And after a good session at home, you can give yourself some 'cold therapy' with just a few bags of frozen peas.

Remember that the body does take time to heal and the concept of "It takes pain to get gain" is not really the mantra we seek. We tell our patients and physical therapists that the surgeons FIX the injury, and the therapists ensure that the FIX STICKS.

At Reconstructive Orthopaedics of Central Florida, we raise a toast to the many Physical and Occupational Therapists whose care helps us drive our patients to success stories – with or without surgery. In some cases, the work of these professionals helps our patients avoid surgery all together which is a fantastic result. We work in tandem, seeking the best plan of care to ensure the most fulfilling recovery.

It is a perfect pairing of skillsets, meant to give the patient more strength, more confidence, less pain, and better access to full living. We appreciate having Physical and Occupational Therapists as part of our team – Mending Bones. Restoring Lives. One patient at a time.

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# Urinary Incontinence

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

  
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# Want to Enhance Your Brain and Body's Performance?

Living longer should not be the end goal – Having a healthy mind and body for as long as possible should be what we all strive for.

**A**s we age our bodies are less efficient at delivering and processing oxygen the way it did when we were younger. Insufficient oxygen (hypoxia) is one of the primary reasons for onset of cognitive decline and the breakdown of the body. Oxygen is an essential element for optimal health; however, the air we breathe daily contains about 21 percent oxygen, which may not be enough for those with chronic conditions, age-related disorders or other ailments that can benefit from higher oxygen intake levels.

## Sufficient Oxygen Intake

Everything in your body depends on the brain. It's the command center of your body, and it craves oxygen. While it makes up only 2% of the body's mass, the brain uses over 20% of the oxygen we breathe in. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy involves breathing 100% pure oxygen in a special room known as a HBOT suite. The air in the suite is pressurized to above atmospheric levels, which increases oxygen levels in the body to 10-15 times higher than normal.

## HBOT Benefits

Numerous studies show that HBOT has neuroprotective and neurological regenerative effects on the brain, as well as numerous health benefits and reversal of many disorders. One new study out of Israel shows how HBOT assists the body with optimal aging by halting the cellular aging process.

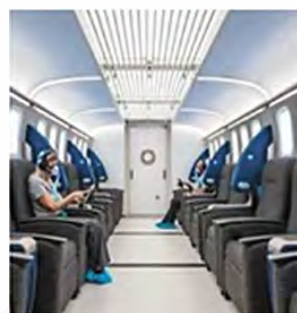
## A New Study Calls Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy 'The Holy Grail' of Healthy Aging

A study from Tel Aviv University (TAU) and the Shamir Medical Center in Israel found that hyperbaric oxygen treatments (HBOT) in healthy aging adults can stop cellular aging and reverse the aging process. The study found that two major causes of aging can be halted by implementing specific hyperbaric oxygen therapy. These aging components are cellular death or diseased cells and shortened telomeres.<sup>1</sup>

Telomeres are protective of our DNA and are attached to both ends of our chromosomes. As we age, they begin to shorten. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) reversed the shortening and increased the length of the telomeres significantly over time.<sup>1</sup>

The other issue is the accumulation of degenerating and diseased cells in the body, known as senescent cells. With HBOT, these were shown to clear and allow

room for replenishment of new cellular growth.<sup>1</sup> By examining and measuring the patient's blood, HBOT was shown to stop the shortening and, instead, increase telomeres by up to 38%. HBOT also decreased senescent cells by up to 38%.<sup>1</sup>



## Aviv HBOT is Unique

*There are two key processes that make Aviv Distinctive:*

- First, we increase the oxygen level you breathe through a mask in the HBOT suite. As you breathe it in, your blood stream sends this oxygen to tissue in your body that has been deprived of it. Oxygen-saturated blood can bypass blood vessels which have become clogged or narrowed with age. This gives the brain the energy it needs to turbocharge the healing process.

- Second, we fluctuate the level of oxygen you breathe when inside the HBOT suite. This variation in oxygen supply triggers your body's own regenerative mechanisms.

## What does this do to my body?

Your body is capable of powerful natural rejuvenation. By combining these two steps, we're essentially switching your rejuvenation processes on, while supplying the body with the abundant energy it needs to complete them. By the end of your treatment program, you should see a significant improvement in your mental and physical performance and feel better inside and out.

### Reference:

1. Hyperbaric oxygen treatment: Clinical trial reverses two biological processes associated with aging in human cells, American Friends of Tel Aviv University, November 20, 2020, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201120150728.htm>



**Aviv Clinics**  
Brain Performance

## About Aviv

Since 2017, Aviv's primary focus has been on healthspan—helping patients feel healthy, stay active, and enjoy the vitality of both mind and body. Aviv Clinics delivers a highly effective personalized protocol to enhance performance in the aging brain and body via the Aviv Medical Program.

Our unique, intensive Program aims to improve the aging process by increasing cognitive and physical performance in healthy aging adults. Based on over a decade of research and development the Aviv Medical Program is individually tailored to you, helping you achieve new standards of performance by your brain and body.

## HBOT | Personalized Cognitive & Physical Training | Nutritional Counseling

The Aviv Medical Program provides you with a unique opportunity to invest in your health while you age, helping you maximize your cognition, vitality, and quality of life. We have created a state-of-the-art Program which combines Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), personalized program of cognitive and physical training and nutritional coaching.

The aging process affects us all differently. This is why our multidisciplinary team of healthcare specialists uses in-depth assessments and analytics to create a plan fully personalized for you.

The result is a comprehensive treatment designed to help you enhance your cognitive and physical performance, and feel at your best, at any age.

**AVIV Clinics was originally founded in Israel, and operates a highly regarded research center there, as well as a world-class treatment center in The Villages, Florida.**

## Aviv Clinics at The Villages®

We're excited to launch Aviv Clinics at The Villages® in collaboration with The Villages Health. Together, our shared vision is to help you enhance and nurture brain and body to ensure a continuously happy, vital and healthy life.

Here, across our three specialty wings you'll have access to the latest advancements in treating and improving cognitive and physical performance:

1. The Hyperbaric Wing with our state-of-the-art hyperbaric oxygen treatment suites
2. The Neurocognitive Wing for cognitive evaluation and training
3. The Physiological Wing for physiological assessment and therapy

We have combined the world's most innovative treatment program for improving cognitive and physical performance improvement, with the opportunity to experience the amazing lifestyle available to you in central Florida.

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# AN ESSENTIAL FORCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER



**S**ince 1985, when the breast cancer awareness campaign was first launched, the month of October has seen pink ribbons appearing on everything from yogurt cups to sports jerseys - but to what effect? Believe it or not, awareness is actually making a difference in breast cancer survival rates. Since the advent of routine screening efforts, breast cancer continues to be caught earlier than before, and treated more effectively, lifting the five-year survival rate of localized breast cancer to nearly 100%. And thanks to advances in breast imaging, biopsy and treatment, breast cancer deaths among women over age 50 have seen a significant decline since the campaign was implemented. That's an amazing start.

Still, there's work to be done. Breast cancer continues to be the second leading cause of cancer death in women, affecting one in eight, and we can't stop promoting awareness until that changes. While certain lifestyle changes, such as limiting alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy weight and getting regular exercise - especially after menopause - can help reduce your risk, early detection remains the best way to beat breast cancer. When caught before it has a chance to spread, breast cancer can be treated most easily and successfully, with the best chance of preserving healthy breast tissue and the profile you know and love.

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT):

Yvonne Seymor-Palmer, Scheduler & Breast Cancer Survivor; Amanda Yancey, Manager of Digital Marketing; Dr. Amanda Aulls, Director Of Women's Imaging; Dr. Ridgely Meyers, Breast Imaging Specialist; Michele Barkley, MRI Modality Coordinator & Breast Cancer Survivor; Carrie Law, Manager of Clinical Training and Development



## TIME IS YOUR FRIEND

Sure, you have a lot going on in your life - family, work, education, volunteerism, social commitments, and the list goes on. And the Covid-19 pandemic only added to the stressors, so who has time to get a mammogram?

You do.

Invasive breast cancers tend to grow and spread quickly, so putting off routine screening until conditions are "perfect" increases the chances that treatment will need to be more aggressive, and potentially less effective. Making your regular screening a priority helps to ensure an easier outcome for you, as well as the people who depend on you. After all, your health impacts more than just yourself, and putting your health at the forefront also protects your loved ones, colleagues and cohort. Looking at it from a wider lens, tending to your health is one of the most selfless acts of all. And since the average mammogram takes about 30 minutes from start to finish - less time than a haircut - it's really not much of an imposition.

## BREAST IMAGING GUIDELINES

The American Cancer Society and other health agencies recommend that women at average risk of breast cancer get a baseline mammogram by age 40 to provide a healthy image for comparison with subsequent exams. Women with risk factors such as a first-degree relative (mother, sister or daughter) with breast cancer or genetic markers for breast cancer should consider starting even younger. Women ages 45-54 should have a mammogram every year. Women 55 and older have the option to switch to having a mammogram every two years, but may continue to have annual screening for added assurance.

Women at high risk of breast cancer, including those who test positive for BRCA mutations or have a strong family or personal history of certain cancers, may also be advised to include additional screening with a breast MRI, a supplementary exam that can fill in the gaps of mammography by providing additional multi-directional imaging. Radiation-free MRI is not a substitute for screening mammography, but rather an adjunct test that provides auxiliary details of breast tissue. Combined with routine mammography, breast MRI can produce the best chance to catching tiny cancers hidden deep within the breast, even among women with very dense breast tissue.

Routine screening mammography is 100% covered by most insurance providers without a referral, so you can make your own appointment. With a physician's referral, breast MRI screening may also be covered by insurance. RAO's helpful staff will be happy to look into your insurance policy so that you understand its coverage benefits.

## WHEN MORE INFORMATION IS NEEDED

When a screening mammogram or other test reveals something questionable, it can be unnerving, so speed and accuracy are of paramount concern. Most irregularities are benign, but until you know for sure, anxiety can be high. That's why RAO provides supplemental exam options, including MRI and ultrasound, and on-site image-guided biopsy for the most rapid response possible. Using the latest in ultrasound, MRI and stereotactic real-time image guidance, multiple biopsy samples can be collected quickly and precisely with minimal invasiveness and discomfort, for quick, accurate answers.

## THE RAO DIFFERENCE

RAO's team of breast health specialists collaborate under the guidance of our Women's Imaging Center Medical Director, Dr. Amanda Aulls. Having an exceptionally-trained, highly-skilled M.D. who also happens to be a woman at the helm lends additional perspective and personal experience to the importance of breast health. Of course, our male radiologists are every bit as compassionate, experienced and talented - we just believe that having a team able to see women's health from every angle sets us apart from many other centers.

All imaging results, from routine mammography to any supplementary exams, are read in-house by our Board-certified sub-specializing radiologists trained in analyzing images of breast tissue, including very dense breast tissue. It feels good to know that your RAO doctor has undergone additional focused education and study to achieve ultimate accuracy. Our radiologists have extensive experience in guided needle biopsy, and utilize leading-edge technologies most centers don't have, including the SCOUT® radar localization system. When a biopsy sample is taken, the FDA-cleared SCOUT is placed at the collection site, safely eliminating the need for a protruding, uncomfortable and unstable wire marker. The tiny SCOUT implant relieves the anxiety, discomfort, risk of dislodgment and demand for immediate surgery associated with wire markers. SCOUT can be placed up to 30 days before surgery, so surgical scheduling is convenient and supports your surgeon's ability to conserve healthy tissue.



RAO's breast health team includes dedicated professionals involved in every level of care, from scheduling your appointment to performing your imaging exam to making a diagnosis and consulting with your primary care physician. We share with you a genuine commitment to getting accurate answers as quickly as possible, and are devoted to your physical and emotional health every step of the way.

It is our team's comprehensive understanding, experience, next-generation technologies and genuine caring that have earned both RAO's Women's Imaging Center and TimberRidge Imaging Center "Breast Imaging Center of Excellence" designations by the American College of Radiology, an honor bestowed on only a select few women's healthcare providers in Florida.

Whatever life is presently throwing your way, nothing is more important than your well-being. A few minutes in our care can help ensure that life remains in full bloom for a long time to come.



[www.RAOcala.com](http://www.RAOcala.com)  
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# You Really Do Need That Mammogram

**M**aybe you've skipped your mammogram once or twice. There are good reasons not to. Regular mammograms have reduced breast cancer deaths by 40% since screening began in the mid-1980s, according to the American College of Radiology.

## **Mammograms arm you against breast cancer**

A mammogram is a safe, low-dose X-ray of the breast tissue. If you have a tumor, it will likely show up as a bright dense blotch on the X-ray. You can get your regular mammogram screening at no extra cost as part of your Florida Blue Medicare plan when you use a network provider.

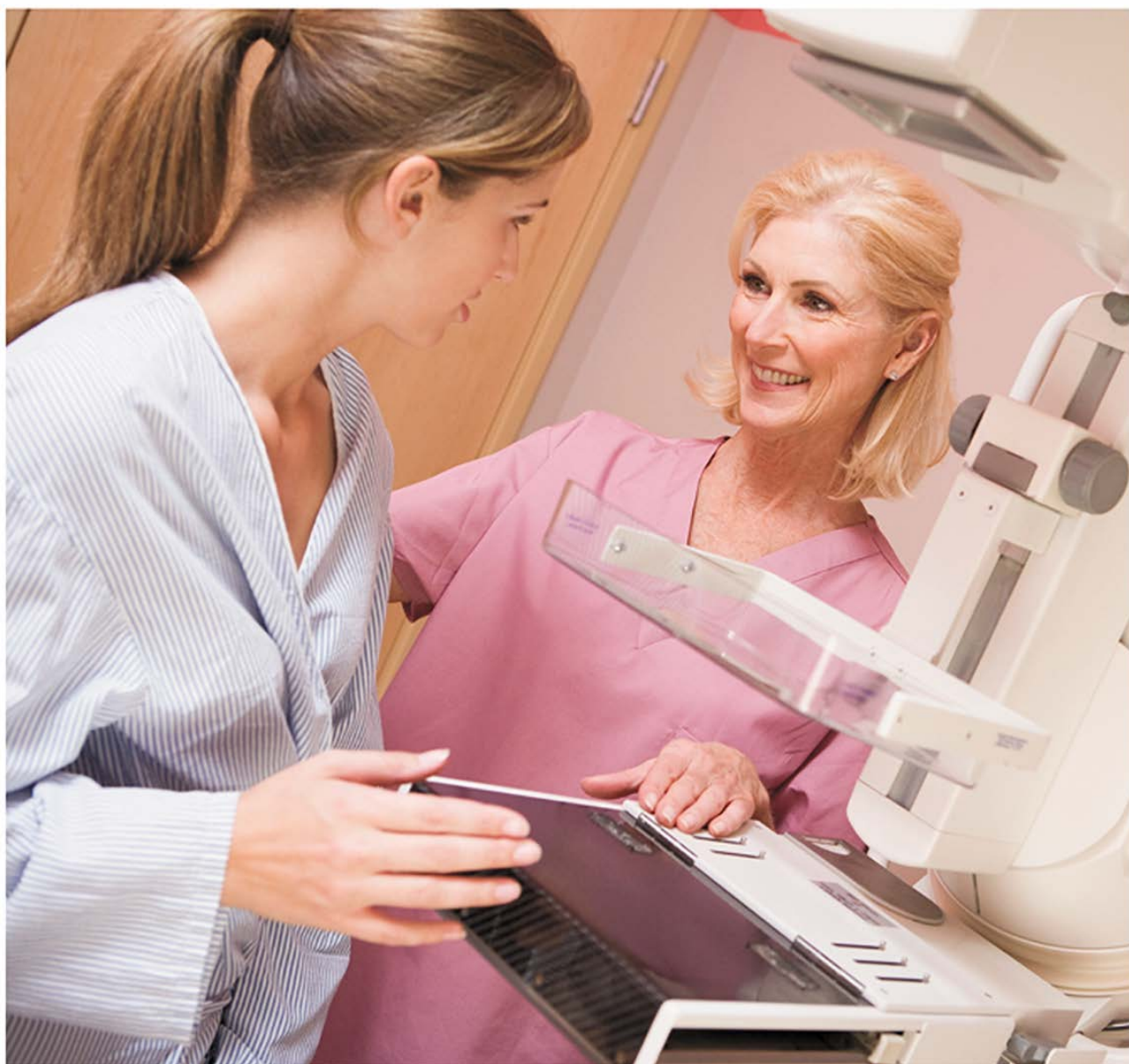
Even if you're doing a monthly self-exam or your doctor does regular clinical breast exams, you should still get your mammogram. That's because a mammogram can find tumors before you can feel them.

## **When do I need a mammogram?**

Women typically get their first mammogram when they are between the ages of 40 and 50, and then every 1-2 years after that. And just because you're older, doesn't mean you wouldn't benefit from the screening. Guidelines from the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommend mammograms continue through the age of 74. Remember, your doctor can help you decide when and how often to schedule your mammograms, based on your health history.

## **What happens if your mammogram shows something abnormal?**

First of all, don't panic! It doesn't necessarily mean you have cancer. Out of every 100 women who get screening mammograms, 10 will be called back for additional tests to rule out cancer. In most cases, follow-up tests show there are no signs of cancer. Or, they may show a benign (non-cancerous) condition exists.



Getting your regularly scheduled mammogram could save your life, and technology advances are making mammograms more effective than ever. Someone you love is counting on you to stay healthy. Make sure you get your next mammogram on time.

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# Clinical Trials and Research are Critical for Oncology Care

## A Local Oncology Group Paves The Way for Numerous New Therapies

**W**hen it comes to patient care, new drugs, new testing mechanisms, and targeted therapies for cancer patients, Ocala Oncology is leading the way in clinical trials.

Clinical research and trials are critical for implementing new oncology therapies, and for those patients that want to participate, Ocala Oncology makes their wish to join a study a reality with multiple ongoing trials within their three convenient locations. Bringing these trials here locally is critical for cancer patients seeking excellent, advanced care, and being innovative allows Ocala Oncology to be one of the top enrolling clinical trial sites for several trials in the United States and globally.

We caught up with Sanjit Nirmalanandhan, Ph.D., Research Lead at Ocala Oncology to find out more about the importance of these trials and how it benefits patients individually and as a whole across the country.

Dr. Nirmalanandhan explained, “We have a long history of running clinical trials. We have been the first to administer and study many drugs that are now widely used throughout the world for cancer treatment. Our studies include all phases of clinical trials I, II, III, and IV. We enrolled the first patients (globally) on a clinical trial for a new drug to treat ITP (Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura) and clinical trial for a melanoma vaccine.

### Innovative Trials in the Comfort of Ocala Oncology's Office Locations

“When many people think about clinical trials, they envision massive research centers that are far away from where they receive treatment. Cancer patients are often very ill or may feel lethargic and find it challenging or impossible to travel to research sites frequently. At our local facilities, we have 10 providers including board certified MDs in Hematology and Oncology that actively participate in these trials and follow their patients, report on progress, and are deeply involved in the research and outcomes of the treatment provided. We also have five nurse practitioners, dedicated Research Department and staff that are also thoroughly involved in the trials. These studies help to improve the science needed and address new testing methods or new drugs.

### Local Care with National Support

“We are also partnered with several large organizations that allow us to bring their targeted therapies directly to our patients. We have access to over 30



trials through *Tempus*’ and *Caris PharmaTech*’s *Just-in-Time* activation program. When patients have genetic mutations, next-generation sequencing allows our team to identify the mutations and provide these essential and targeted treatment options, which can be activated in our research site within less than two weeks. For difficult tumors and genetic mutations, these studies are incredibly important.

“We have three locations. Our main practice and research are in the Ocala office, and we also have locations in Timber Ridge and The Villages that allow patients the comfort of seeing physicians and participating in research locally.

“Currently, we have over 50 studies; however, this number is rapidly increasing as we constantly open more studies at our site when a patient is identified. These studies range from lung, breast, gastric solid tumors, unresectable or metastatic melanoma, prostate and targeted therapies to name a few.

### Patients Will Always Receive Their Standard of Care First

“The most important thing for patients to understand is that clinical trials are not always a last case scenario attempt at treatment. Several clinical trials attempting to improve the current treatments by adding new drugs and therapeutics to the standard of care are also available to our patients. These trials allow new therapies to reach our patients more quickly while getting their current standard of care treatments.”

### Ocala Oncology

Over the past 40 years, Florida Cancer Affiliates – Ocala Oncology has provided patients access to cutting-edge and innovative clinical trials in a comfortable and convenient setting. One of the largest and most reputable community-based research networks in the world, US Oncology Research has contributed to over 70 FDA-approved cancer therapies and approximately one-third of all FDA-approved oncology therapies. It also specializes in Phase I–IV oncology clinical trials and has participated in over 1,600 investigator-initiated and sponsor-initiated trials since its inception. The program brings innovative therapies and clinical trials to practices and patients in communities across the nation to help advance the science of cancer care while offering the best possible treatments and improved patient outcomes.

Ocala Oncology is proud of their participating role in the research and development of vital new cancer therapies through independent studies. This will allow a broader range of opportunities to offer their patients. Ocala oncology is dedicated to advancing cancer care by leading and participating in clinical trials that test the safety and efficiency of new or modified treatments.

And they are deeply committed to bringing clinical trials to their community, offering patients an opportunity to help shape the future of cancer treatment, while benefitting from the very latest in clinical trials. Florida Cancer Affiliates- Ocala Oncology is constantly offering eligible patients opportunities to join new trials.

At Florida Cancer Affiliates – Ocala Oncology, research is an integral part of their comprehensive efforts to provide cancer patients in the local community with access to the latest and most advanced therapies and treatment options.

To find out more, please visit [floridacancer.com](http://floridacancer.com) or call (352) 547-1954.





# Hearing Health: Sensorineural Hearing Loss

As one of the most common types of hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss is well-researched and fairly treatable. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed or is seeking a diagnosis, here's some information to help you learn more.



**W**hen it comes to hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss is the most pervasive. In fact, most people over a certain age experience some level of sensorineural hearing loss. Like our eyesight and memory, our sense of hearing can deteriorate over time. If you or a loved one is having trouble hearing or making out certain sounds, they might be suffering from sensorineural hearing loss. This article will touch on what this is, how it can be treated, and how to recognize it before it begins seriously affecting your life and relationships.

## What is Sensorineural Hearing Loss?

Before we assess the symptoms and treatment of sensorineural hearing loss, it's important to understand what it is. There are a few different types of hearing loss, which can be caused by blockages or damage to the auditory nerve. However, sensorineural hearing loss refers to the cochlea, a vital organ in the hearing process.

After sound is fed through your ear, it reaches the cochlea. This is a spiral-shaped organ lined with microscopic hairs. Inside the cochlea, the hairs pick up the sound and determine factors like frequency and volume. From there, it is fed to the brain and processed as sound. When the hairs within the cochlea are worn down and damaged, this can result in sensorineural hearing loss.

Sensorineural hearing loss can be experienced differently from person to person. Some people might have problems hearing certain pitches or voices, while others might struggle to hear anything at all. Because this form of hearing loss occurs gradually, a person might not know they have it until they receive their diagnosis. For that reason, it's important to remember and recognize the signs before their condition gets worse.

## Symptoms of Sensorineural Hearing Loss

As expected, the primary symptom of hearing loss is a general dulling of your hearing. However, this can be difficult to gauge on your own, especially if you've been living with hearing loss for a long amount of time. Your brain works overtime to help you adjust, and anything can become normal after a time. Because of that, gradual hearing loss can be very difficult to recognize. General symptoms of hearing loss can include:

- Trouble hearing in crowded or noisy rooms (cocktail party effect).
- Muffled sounds and speech.
- Trouble hearing certain voices.
- Difficulty hearing consonants in speech.

- Turning up the television or radio past the point of comfort for other people.
- Tinnitus, or ringing in the ears. Tinnitus can also manifest as humming, roaring, or buzzing.

That being said, it's important to remember that hearing loss itself is not the only symptom — people who experience hearing loss can also experience side effect symptoms like:

- Withdrawing from social situations and conversations.
- Feeling easily irritated or overwhelmed by sound.
- Trouble enjoying music, television, radio, or podcasts.
- Anxiety or paranoia that you're not aware of your surroundings.
- Feeling fatigued at the end of the day, seemingly for no reason.

The symptoms of hearing loss can vary between people. While some experience irritability and depression, others might not even realize they have hearing loss. Some of these symptoms might even go under the radar since they can be mistaken for separate issues. Most people who receive diagnosis and treatment report feeling better than ever, now that the root issue of their problems is gone.

Hearing loss has more of an impact on your health than you might think. In fact, it can cause depression and memory loss when left untreated. Losing a sense can strain your brain, leaving you tired and anxious. Finding a hearing care professional and seeking a diagnosis might be the first step to getting treatment — and treating your hearing loss is the first step to treating the issues associated with it.

## Treatment of Sensorineural Hearing Loss

Unlike many cases of conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss is not curable in the traditional sense. You cannot perform surgery or take medications to solve it. It is usually permanent, but that doesn't mean it's untreatable. In fact, seeking treatment can help prevent further damage, and alleviate the symptoms of sensorineural hearing loss altogether. When you receive a diagnosis, your hearing care professional (HCP) will speak to you about potential treatment options.

One such treatment option is hearing aids. While some people have a negative opinion of hearing aids, advancements in technology have made them one of the most effective avenues of treatment. While they might not completely return your hearing to its natural state, hearing aid manufacturers like Signia focus on delivering the most authentic experience possible.

Features like Own Voice Processing allow wearers to hear their own voice in a natural way, and add-ons like Bluetooth capability and direct streaming make it easier for hearing aid users to connect with their phones and other devices. Older models might have a reputation for being clunky and dissatisfying, hearing aid technology has progressed to the point where many people are opting to try a pair.

Choosing to purchase hearing aids is a big decision, so speak to your HCP about them. Getting fitted and trying out some hearing aids can give you insight on whether or not they are right for you. If you're curious about hearing aids, consider reading other entries in the Signia Hearing blog to get the full picture.

## Causes & Prevention of Sensorineural Hearing Loss

If you already have mild hearing loss or want to prevent it in yourself or other family members, you might be curious about how to prevent sensorineural hearing loss. Luckily, prevention is entirely possible. Achieving better hearing is a matter of prevention. Once damage to your ears has been done, it's extremely difficult to repair.

People who protect their hearing when they're young report lower levels of sensorineural hearing loss when they grow older. Meanwhile, people in certain occupations (construction, music, military) report higher rates of hearing loss due to noise exposure.

Prolonged exposure to noise degrades your cochlea, causing sensorineural hearing loss. For that reason, it's important to protect your hearing when entering loud situations. This includes concerts, clubs, shooting ranges, gun shows, auto races, and other loud activities. Wearing earplugs is the primary method of protection, aside from avoiding these situations entirely. It is also important to give your ears a rest after loud activities. Enjoy some peace and quiet, and give your ears time to recover.

If you work in loud conditions, like the military or construction, make sure you're wearing protection at all times. When you work in these conditions every day, it's extremely easy to damage your hearing. While you might feel fine in the present, the damage is still being done. Protect your hearing, so you can enjoy it once you're older.

If you enjoyed learning more about sensorineural hearing loss, you might find more useful information on the Signia Hearing blog. This blog catalogs a variety of hearing topics, from aural health to hearing aids. If you'd like to keep up with future updates and articles, the Signia newsletter can put you in the loop.

Source:  
<https://www.signia.net/en-us/blog/global/hearing-health-sensorineural-hearing-loss>

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# Vertigo: How to Stop Spinning—Fast

**V**ertigo is a condition that makes individuals feel sensations of spinning, which causes nausea, vomiting and other unpleasant side effects. A physical therapist will be able to determine if BBPV may be the cause of your symptoms. *(Vertigo may also be caused by a central nervous system disorder, and that type of spinning cannot be corrected with these maneuvers. Doing the maneuvers will help us to determine if the crystals are loose and if it's treatable with therapy).*

Within the inner ear, are semicircular canals. Calcium crystals, known as canaliths help signal movement and positions to the brain. As we age, these crystals slough off of their stem (utricle) and the loose crystals can become displaced within the semicircular ear canals, causing BPPV.

Dr. Epley created a technique to reposition the crystals and get them out of the semicircular canals. The technique is known as the Epley maneuver. Physical therapists (PT) are trained to use the Epley maneuver in their practices and they can also teach patients how to safely perform this technique in the comfort of their home when necessary.

## The Epley Maneuver

The Epley maneuver is performed when the patient is lying down, and a small pillow is placed behind their head. The Physical Therapist will position the head at various angles for holds of 30 seconds. If the holds are inadequate or too long, the maneuver will fail. That is why it's important to fully understand the technique before attempting it at home. Innovative Therapies Group PTs are highly trained in performing the Epley maneuver and instructing patients how to perform it safely at home.

Along with the Epley Maneuver, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo can be effectively treated with three other manual maneuvers that also move the crystals through the ear, improving and in many cases alleviating vertigo and the sensations of dizziness. These other techniques are known as the Semont maneuver, Foster maneuver, and the Brandt-Daroff exercises. These therapies can be performed in the convenience of Innovative Therapies Group's office.



## If you are dizzy or off balance, don't put off treatment.

It's dangerous to leave vestibular disorders untreated. If you have balance issues, your likelihood of suffering a fall with possible complications like broken bones, or impingements, which cause limited range-of-motion is much higher. Not to mention that the unpleasant side effects of nausea and painful headaches can be alleviated through the proper treatment, which will help you to get back to living a good quality of life.

Physical and Occupational Therapy is critical to alleviate further injury and to promote the most efficacious healing. Coupled with family participation, self-help management to promote and maintain independent function, and mobility is critical.

## In Florida, you do not need a referral to see a Physical Therapist

Physical therapy is used to help with numerous indications and conditions like retraining the body to improve gait and balance and also after hip, knee or shoulder replacement and so much more. There is no better way to alleviate pain, increase

range-of-motion and live a more mobile higher quality of life than through physical & Occupational therapy.

## Types of Treatment Available with Physical Therapy

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

Along with PT, Innovative Therapies Group offers Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Massage.

To find out more or to schedule your appointment, please contact Innovative Therapies Group today at **352-433-0091**.

**Innovative Therapies Group, Inc.**

352-433-0091

[innovativetherapiesgroup.com](http://innovativetherapiesgroup.com)



# Welcome to Pacifica Senior Living Ocala

**W**elcome to Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, where residents enjoy luxury retirement living in the heart of sunny Marion County.

At Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, residents enjoy life by their own design. With state-of-the-art amenities on campus, including vibrant life enrichment programming and chef-prepared meals, residents are invited to live with peace of mind about every aspect of their daily lives.

Our dedicated caregivers foster a community of comfort and belonging, creating strong bonds with residents as they administer care. We want our residents to feel welcome at all times, creating an environment that inspires feelings of home.

We offer assisted living and memory care services, creating a continuum of care that allows residents to transition from standard personal care to specialized assistance if they begin to experience memory loss. Our memory care community is equipped with safety features to minimize risks associated with conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Each resident at Pacifica Senior Living Ocala receives care tailored to his or her unique needs, as determined by professional assessments. Our licensed staff work with prospective residents before they move to identify their level of care, allowing our caregivers to provide an ideal balance of support and independence as they assist.

We treat all residents like family, from the moment they enter our doors. We take each resident's likes, dislikes, and needs into consideration when we create our customized service plans. As our caregivers notice changes in a person's routine, we reassess to implement the correct changes so each resident receives ample care while calling Pacifica Senior Living Ocala home.

Every person is unique. Our retirement living experience is centered around making each person feel like a priority, knowing help is always available when they need it. By offering customized services and amenities, we make it possible for our residents to enjoy the retirement living experience they always imagined.



During their stay, we invite our residents to enjoy a diverse range of amenities designed to make each day an exciting new adventure. Our life enrichment programming calendar features new activities and events every morning, afternoon, and evening, inviting residents to meet their peers and make friends by bonding over shared interests.

In the past, our life enrichment opportunities have included arts and crafts, group outings, exercise classes, and so much more. Our directors schedule programming with residents' preferences in mind, creating events they are sure to love.

Dining is a core part of our commitment to exceptional care, putting chef-prepared meals right at residents' fingertips for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Our dedicated culinary staff goes above and beyond to craft recipes that are guaranteed to satisfy, using fresh and wholesome ingredients.

Our daily menu features new recipes for residents to enjoy, creating endless delicious meals to look forward to. Best of all, we invite our residents to dine together in our beautiful restaurant-style dining room, sharing meaningful moments with one another as they savor their favorite meals.

At Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, our staff members are trained to provide a diverse array of personal care services. Our compassionate caregivers assist residents with their activities of daily living as outlined by their customized service plan, including bathing, dressing, grooming, and more.

With staff available 24-hours a day, residents and their family members can live with peace of mind knowing help is always available. While staff strive to anticipate residents' needs, each apartment home features an emergency call system to make requesting assistance easy.

Our apartments are designed to give residents a truly comfortable place to call home, with the freedom to decorate as they please. With daily and weekly housekeeping services, we invite our residents to live with peace of mind about their surroundings without lifting a finger. Our housekeeping services include general tidying, trash removal, and laundry assistance.

We understand the importance of meeting doctors and medical professionals on time for appointments. To help our residents get around town, we offer scheduled transportation services that virtually eliminate the need to own a personal vehicle.

With beautiful outdoor spaces, modern interiors, and comfortable apartment homes, Pacifica Senior Living Ocala sets the stage for residents to enjoy a resort-style experience. By providing a maintenance-free lifestyle, we encourage residents to live with peace of mind with extra time to enjoy activities they love.

At Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, each day is a new adventure. We invite families to learn more about our community by visiting our campus in person. We offer free tours, giving families an opportunity to talk to our caregivers, see our homes, and get a better idea of the experience incoming residents can expect while calling our community home. To schedule a free tour, please contact us via phone or email.



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# Supportive Care Can Help with a Cancer Diagnosis

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

**P**alliative Care is defined as supportive, comforting, soothing, calming and reassuring. It should not be confused with quick fixes offered in “pain clinic” settings. Palliative, or what many now call Supportive Care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. Its focus is to provide relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress—whatever the cause or diagnosis. You may need relief from:

- Pain
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Shortness of breath

While undergoing medical treatments, you also need to carry on with life’s activities. Supportive Care can help manage pain and symptom control, enabling you to enjoy a higher quality of life. This specialized comfort care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses and other specialists, who work together with a patient’s primary doctor and/or specialist to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and can be offered along with curative treatment.

## How can this type of care help with a cancer diagnosis?

Because patients are carefully regulated by their physicians with consultations from experts in Supportive Care, people can rest assured that their pain and symptoms can be managed (most within 24-48 hours) and their conditions monitored on an ongoing basis. The Supportive Care team can be called to:

- Aid in pain and symptom management
- Assist with relief of suffering – physical, emotional or psychosocial
- Discuss the course of disease and goals of care
- Assist attending physician, patient or family with clarification of development of your supportive plan of care
- Help establish the best possible quality of care as determined by patient and family
- Offer emotional support to patient and family, including anticipatory grief and bereavement counseling



- Review and complete documentation of advance directives
- Explain pros and cons of forgoing specific treatment and/or diagnostic treatments
- Facilitate transition to alternate care settings, such as home, nursing home or hospice when appropriate

## Who can receive Supportive Care?

Patients with serious illnesses are appropriate for Supportive Care. It is available to help with pain management, relief of suffering and education on their disease progression and prognosis. As a holistic approach to care, it’s about a person’s whole being, including family and loved ones.

Supportive Care addresses the patient’s medical, emotional and spiritual needs. It offers support to patients and their caregivers. Open discussion between patients, families and healthcare professionals is encouraged in determining the patient’s goals and medical plan of care. As a patient’s disease progresses, the Supportive Care team adjusts its services as those needs change. This special type of comfort care makes a better quality of life possible for patients and their loved ones by providing the best possible plan of care.

## How is Supportive Care paid?

It is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurances. A consult is available through one’s own physician or by calling for information about receiving services.

## Who can refer a patient to Supportive Care?

Well-informed consumers should know the facts. They can request Supportive Care if the outcome from surgery, accident or disease has left them in physical or mental distress. Supportive Care improves healthcare quality in three significant ways. It:

1. effectively relieves physical symptoms and emotional suffering,
2. strengthens patient-family-physician communication and decision-making, and
3. ensures well-coordinated care across healthcare settings.


Physicians can refer a patient by calling the Carewell Supportive Care office at (352) 291-5881; the office is open 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. If the patient is in a hospital, nursing home or assisted living facility, physicians may write an order in the facility for a consult. The mission of Carewell Supportive Care is to provide exceptional compassionate symptom management to relieve suffering and improve quality of life. Learn more by calling or visit [www.carewellsupportivecare.com](http://www.carewellsupportivecare.com).



**"Worsening illness is affecting our lives."**

Our Carewell Supportive Care team specializes in relief from ongoing pain, life-altering symptoms and emotional distress. Ask your doctor for a consult with one of our experts.

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# COVID-19 Update & the QCARD

**E**ach day, we learn new facts, figures, and protocols concerning COVID-19. Recently, we were informed by the FDA that they are investigating specific drugs and running expedited trials to see if they are effective at killing the virus. They are also running plasma testing from the blood of those that have recovered from COVID-19. At this point, we also know that the vaccine will take approximately 12 months to become available. As we navigate through the coronavirus pandemic over the next few months, disinfection and social distancing is the recommended preventative advice, and boosting the immune system is also beneficial. Healthier individuals are better able to fight the infection and make full recoveries. If you get sick, you need to be tested!

## Quick Care's Answer for Those without Medical Insurance

If you don't have health insurance, things can get pricey rather quickly. Luckily the QCARD is an alternative to conventional health insurance giving you access to the Quick Care medical professionals with ease and affordability. The QCARD is a program based for self-pay patients or anyone without medical insurance. Quick Care Med always takes the lead in finding innovative ways to help their communities and their patient demographic. They implemented this program to offer a well-needed resolution for so many individuals and families.

## Who can benefit from the QCARD program?

Almost anyone without medical insurance will find QCARD to be a valid answer to their healthcare needs. For example:

1. Headaches
2. Influenza or colds
3. Injuries or trauma
4. Asthma or allergy Issues
5. Twisted ankle
6. Your child has a bad cold or is colicky.
7. And the list goes on and on

\*QCARD's copay is \$10 per visit. Average medical office visits can be hundreds of dollars!

## The QCARD works in 3 easy steps!

1. Patient can sign up online or in the office
2. Patient pays \$1 a day plus a \$10 copay at time of service
3. Patient can be seen as many times in a month as they like for just the \$10 co-pay



## Where can you use the QCARD?

Quick Care Med has 10 locations in Alachua, Citrus, Levy and Marion Counties. We have 3 offices in the Ocala area, plus other locations in Dunnellon, Beverly Hills, Crystal River, Homosassa, Inverness, Newberry and Williston.

## Why get the QCARD now?

If you don't have insurance, then you should get the QCARD now. It is a good idea to have at least a basic healthcare plan to deal with life's unforeseen events. It will give you access to medical professionals when you need it the most.

QCARD is a great healthcare plan for the following:

- Those with no medical insurance
- Part timers
- Snowbirds
- Just off parents insurance
- Agricultural workers
- New to the area

If you have insurance and want to avoid high deductible, the QCARD is perfect for you. It is a great companion to high deductible insurance plans, as you can keep the insurance to cover only catastrophic events. You will save money by not having to pay the high deductible.

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**www.quickcaremed.com**

## Quick Care Med Urgent Care

If your health needs are not emergent and in need of life-saving measures, the benefit of urgent care in comparison are numerous. To name a few, the wait time will be much shorter. For the most part, urgent care can see their patients within an hour. The cost is also much less with urgent care than it is with emergency room treatment. Quick Care Med urgent care provides you with the proper paperwork to follow up with your primary care physician or specialist, as urgent care takes initiatives to keep the line of communication open to make certain that your treatment is a top priority.

There are numerous reasons people go to urgent care, from sore throats, skin infections, school sports physicals, vaccinations, colds and flu, sprains, heat exhaustion, animal bites, dehydration, broken bones and much more. Before you go to the ER, consider if you could instead be treated at urgent care because of the numerous benefits to you and your loved ones.

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

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

**Quick Care Offers The QCard—Affordable Healthcare for Just \$1 a Day, Ask us How or Visit us Online!**

**www.quickcaremed.com**

## 4 Locations in Ocala

3415 E. Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala, FL 34470  
 (On Silver Springs Blvd. across from Publix)

8119 SW State Rd 200, Ocala, FL 3448  
 (Just past Walgreens)

6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475  
 (Across from John Deer)

**NEW LOCATION: Chiefland**  
 2205 N Young Blvd, Chiefland, FL 32626



# Meet the Kidneys

**T**hey are a pair of bean shaped organs, each roughly the size of a fist on either side of your spine, below your ribs and behind your belly. Most people are born with two kidneys, but it is possible to be born with one kidney and have a normal life.

Our kidneys are master chemists that always balances the chemical composition of blood regardless of what we eat or drink. Did you know that they process 1800 liters of blood in 24 hours? Kidneys have two distinct layers - the cortex which is the outer layer and the medulla which is the inner layer. Both layers contain about a million specialized filters called nephrons that process and filter our blood. Each heartbeat sends 25% of our blood to the kidneys for processing which involves filtration of blood, reabsorption of important minerals and elimination of excess water, toxins and waste products - better known as urine.

## The functions of the kidneys:

- 1. Blood pressure control** - the kidneys regulate our body's arterial blood pressure in various ways, including hormones, salt and water regulation.
- 2. Volume control** - the kidneys regulate salt and water balance to control our body's total fluid volume. Have you ever noticed that your urine is darker when you drink less water and clearer when you drink more?
- 3. Mineral balance and toxin elimination** - as mentioned in the introduction, when the kidneys process blood, they filter out unwanted toxins into the urine whilst retaining the minerals the body needs in a constant cycle to maintain balance.



**4. Red blood cell production** - A red blood cell has a lifespan of 120 days. The medulla senses and sends signals to the bone marrow telling it to make new red blood cells. If your hemoglobin or blood count is low, it can be a sign of poorly functioning kidneys.

**5. Bone health** - Strong healthy bones require dietary calcium, phosphorus and plant and animal sources of Vitamin D. Whether you take supplements or spend lots of time outdoors in the sun you need your kidneys to activate Vitamin D to help your intestines absorb these minerals from food and strengthen your bones.

Our kidneys are truly remarkable organs that perform life-saving functions for our bodies. No wonder it is the most transplanted organ!

**Sunshine Kidney Care Nephrology Associates**  
**352.388.5800**

Ste 522 The Sharon Morse Medical Office Building  
1400 US Hwy 441N, The Villages FL 32159

## About Us

Sunshine Kidney Care Nephrology Associates is the newest Nephrology Practice in Central Florida led by our board-certified nephrologists - Dr. John Hayes and Dr. Ingrid Calliste who together offer a combined 24 years of expert care and experience. Our patients can expect quality, collaborative, comprehensive, holistic and compassionate medical care delivered by an excellent provider team. The practice offers a range of clinical services including hospital consultations, office consultations and dialysis care. We also offer education, planning and management of renal replacement therapies and pre and post kidney transplant care. We have partnered with Fresenius Medical Care and DaVita Kidney Care to treat dialysis patients at 8 area dialysis centers. We will help you to navigate your individual treatment plans with our personalized approach to healthcare.

## Welcome to the Sunshine Kidney Care Nephrology Associates Family!

### OUR CARE TEAM:

John Hayes, MD | Ingrid Calliste, MD  
Donna Jackson Sharpe, ARNP

### Conditions we treat:

- Acute kidney disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Hypertension
- Anemia of chronic kidney disease
- Inflammatory diseases of the kidney
- Cystic diseases of the kidney
- Bone mineral disease of the kidney
- Kidney stones
- Electrolyte disorders
- Gout
- End Stage Kidney Disease
- Post-Transplant Kidney Care

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# Interleukin-6:

## The Inflammation Marker You Need to Know

By Bo Martinsen, MD

**B**esides getting the jab, keeping your immune system in top shape is critical for surviving COVID-19. But how do you know if your immune system is in good condition?

Research shows that interleukin levels may be one of the strongest predictors of future health outcomes, including for COVID-19 patients. This article aims to provide a simplified explanation of what interleukin-6 does – and what factors can reduce high levels of interleukin-6 in the body.

### What Are Interleukins?

Interleukins are cell proteins that are heavily involved in controlling our immune system.

Having too many – or too few – of these interleukins is equally bad and puts us at risk. These immune system markers can be measured (typically through blood or saliva tests) in order to get a better indication of our bodies' readiness to fight disease.

While there are many different interleukins, let's focus on interleukin-6 (IL-6), which has been rigorously researched since its discovery over 30 years ago.

### What Does Interleukin-6 Do?

IL-6 has been described as a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" molecule, with both pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory functions.

Because of its dual role, some conditions – like immunodeficiency – are characterized by too low levels of IL-6. In the majority of cases, however, people suffer from having too high levels.

High IL-6 levels are strongly associated with chronic inflammation and most pro-inflammatory diseases, including obesity, arthritis, and cancers. For this reason, IL-6 is used as an inflammation marker. While examining IL-6 levels will not give you a diagnosis of what's wrong, it's a revealing alarm bell.

### A Predictor of Early Death

High IL-6 levels are a strong predictor of all-cause early mortality in older adults. Particularly, if a patient's IL-6 levels do not go down during treatment for cancer or severe infections, it is an ominous sign as to the patient's outcome.

This pattern holds true for COVID-19 patients as well. In studies, patients who were classified as "critically ill" with COVID-19 had higher IL-6 levels at the start of their illness – and their levels continued to rise (rather than decrease) despite treatment.

### Ways to Decrease Interleukin-6 Levels

As mentioned above, almost all pro-inflammatory conditions are characterized by increased IL-6. So how can we reduce IL-6 levels?

As it turns out, many common wellness strategies can make a significant difference.

#### 1. Get Good Quality Sleep

It's no surprise that getting a good night's rest is important. A meta-analysis of 72 studies found that sleep disturbances were associated with higher IL-6 levels.

For those who do not sleep well, a sizable body of research has also documented that taking the "sleep hormone" melatonin can also reduce IL-6. Indeed, some studies found that IL-6 levels dropped as much as 34% after high dose melatonin supplementation.

#### 2. Eat a Nutrient-Dense Diet

Eating fast foods loaded with processed ingredients and sugar is associated with high IL-6. On the other hand, studies show that people who follow a Mediterranean diet – rich in fibers and polyphenols from nuts, legumes, fruits and vegetables – typically have lower IL-6 levels.

Consuming enough probiotics and seafood also has a significant beneficial effect.

#### 3. Practice Good Oral Health

Oral hygiene usually doesn't make the list of lifestyle recommendations, but there's good reason to consider it: The mouth is one of the body's key entry points for bacteria, and plays a surprising role in the development of disease.

High IL-6 levels are typically documented in patients with oral issues like periodontitis, gingivitis and cavities. Thankfully, studies show that practicing good oral hygiene can help lower IL-6 levels again.

#### 4. Take Enough Omega-3

As noted above, eating more seafood is associated with lower IL-6 levels. In addition, research consistently shows that taking omega-3 supplements may reduce IL-6 levels, too. For instance, one 2018 study found that taking 2500 mg of EPA/DHA daily reduced IL-6 levels by 22% over 8 weeks.

Omega-3 supplementation appears to be so effective for reducing IL-6 that three recent systematic reviews called it "one of the most promising treatments targeting inflammation in older adults."

Getting an effective omega-3 dose, however, is important. Studies have found that people typically need more than 2000 mg of EPA/DHA per day to reduce the production of proinflammatory interleukins. In addition, higher EPA/DHA doses may be needed to reduce proinflammatory interleukin levels in obese individuals.

*For the full article and references, please visit:*

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/interleukin-6-the-inflammation-marker-you-need-to-know/>

### About Bo Martinsen, MD

Dr. Martinsen is an omega-3 specialist, innovator, and advocate for natural foods. As co-founder and CEO of Omega3 Innovations, he has created several medical food products that combine effective doses of omega-3s with soluble fibers and other nutrients. Before Omega3 Innovations, Dr. Martinsen practiced medicine in Norway for 20 years.



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# COVID's Effect on Those with Diabetes

Denise A. Pancyrz - Diabetes Reversal & Holistic Lifestyle Coach, Speaker, Author

**A**s with most infections and viruses, COVID-19 raises blood sugar levels and increases the inflammatory response within the body. Therefore, those with underlying health conditions like diabetes have a more challenging time fighting the virus and often end up in the hospital.

According to the American Diabetes Association, *In general, people with diabetes are more likely to have more severe symptoms and complications when infected with any virus.*

*Your risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 is likely to be lower if your diabetes is well-managed. Having heart disease or other complications in addition to diabetes could worsen the chance of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, like other viral infections, because more than one condition makes it harder for your body to fight the infection.*

*Viral infections can also increase inflammation, or internal swelling, in people with diabetes. This can also be caused by above-target blood sugars, and that inflammation could contribute to more severe complications.*

**THE KEY IS MAKING SURE YOUR DIABETES IS WELL-MANAGED**



## Why medications are not a long-term answer

Diabetic medications work to lower blood sugar levels, but they stop working, and the dose will continuously need to be increased. The worst part is these drugs are not making you better, and they are not curing diabetes—There are simply masking your problem. It's like putting duct tape on a firehose to stop the flow of water. While these drugs may be essential in the beginning diagnoses for severe cases where A1C or fasting glucose levels are extremely high, these drugs are not a long-term answer. The root cause of your disorder is usually found in life-style choices such as diet or being sedentary.

Denise Pancyrz understands your diabetic challenges, frustrations, and life-threatening health risks. She was once in your shoes but discovered a breakthrough and reversed her disorder. She now coaches other people that struggle with diabetes to help them get their lives back.

## DENISE A. PANCYRZ'S STORY

National Diabetes & Holistic Lifestyle Coach - Speaker - Author

I was a diabetic who was angered being burdened with diabetes. I was tired of taking medications and four insulin shots per day that did NOT make me feel better. The food I was taught to eat as a diabetic was not bringing me to a state of optimal health. It was keeping me medicated and constantly visiting Walgreen's, Diabetes Educators and the doctors.

I wanted my life to be different and the medical community told me it was highly unlikely. In fact, I was told the amount of medication and insulin would increase as I age. However, I learned that you could improve or eliminate disease with proper nutrition, not with unnecessary medication.

I feel better and stronger in my 50s, than I did in my 40s. I have more energy, reversed diabetes, eliminated inflammation that was leading me to heart disease, eliminated IBS and intestinal issues ~ no more stomach aches after meals, my seasonal allergies are gone and a slight skin issue on my elbow healed. I almost forgot, I lost weight in the process.

I know it sounds too good to be true that proper nutrition was able to heal me—I'm living proof. As a national coach, speaker and author, my mission is to help others to achieve optimal health through holistic lifestyle changes. Certified in holistic nutrition and homeopathy, I can bring awareness to diabetics to make lifestyle changes for a lifetime and reverse the effects of diabetes.

To find out more please visit  
ReverseMyDiabetes.net, call 888-848-1763 or  
email Denise at Info@ReverseMyDiabetes.net.



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# How Microneedling Can Help Restore Collagen

## Natural Anti-Aging Methods

**C**ollagen is a protein in the body and is necessary for keeping the skin elastic, supple and smooth, along with other health benefits. To combat the effects of aging such as sagging skin, fine lines and wrinkles, collagen plays a major role in helping to halt these aging issues. The problem with many products that contain collagen is that collagen molecules are too large to actually penetrate the skin's dermal layers.

As we age, collagen diminishes and wrinkles, sagging skin and other issues like cellulite will progress, and since topical creams or serums are unable to penetrate the deep layers of the dermis on their own. The treatment that so many individuals are drawn to is microneedling with PRP.

To further enhance the body's ability to utilize collagen and decrease the signs of aging. Microneedling with PRP or collagen infused products is extremely beneficial, offering remarkable outcomes.

### How it Works

Microneedling uses a handheld device covered with very small needles to trigger your body's natural healing response and increase collagen in the skin. The device is gently rolled over your skin, making tiny punctures. A topical anesthetic is applied first and there is little to no pain or downtime. Stimulating collagen can improve the skin's texture, lines and wrinkles, sun damage, acne, scars, stretch marks, and other signs of aging.

### PRP

PRP (platelet-rich plasma) are cells in your blood that are responsible for regeneration and healing. A small sample of your blood is spun in a centrifuge to help concentrate the platelets, which are then applied to the skin before microneedling. This allows the PRP to absorb rapidly and deeply into the dermal layers. Microneedling coupled with PRP can help improve skin tone, texture, pore size and age-related skin conditions.

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.

### What is Functional Medicine?

At Total Nutrition and Therapeutics, we have made it our mission to help our clients look at their health as



their most valuable asset and protecting it requires a proactive mindset. Why wait until you feel bad to seek out help. Recognizing that our bodies can be in a state of dysfunction years before a disease starts, this approach to your "health care" can help you reduce unnecessary medical expenses and more importantly, down time from the enjoyment of life that you desire. Functional medicine, also known as integrative or lifestyle medicine, focuses on identifying the "root cause" of your dysfunction, listening to your story, completing predictive lab testing and other diagnostic testing looking at markers that identify this dysfunction and then, what sets TNT apart is what comes next. Our team of passionate, experienced, educated and creative providing you the tools to take control of the direction of your health. This approach has the power to help you live a life full of energy and joy!

### Total Nutrition & Therapeutics

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# Cancer.

By Paula Swift, CHTP

**J**ust one word evokes a diverse response. Whether you've experienced it yourself, or walked alongside others through their crisis, fear, anger and sadness tend to dominate. So, it might sound strange when some will remark this time in their life to be the best event that ever happened to them. I am one of them.

When I reflect on my own experience with breast cancer, I find that there is one common ground with others who also claim that cancer was one of the best thing that happened in their life. And it all comes down to faith. With varying beliefs and religious practices, there is always a foundation of faith in a higher, greater power, with the majority having a very personalized relationship with God. There is incredible beauty found in each individual as their faith grows, and their spirit and life begin to flourish with profound discoveries and meaning, regardless of what their body might be doing.

Upon receiving that phone call from my doctor to confirm my cancer diagnosis, I wasn't quite sure how to feel. My immediate prayer was that God would bring to me the right people who would support me in the way that He wanted for me. He answered that prayer immediately that very night with a dear friend. I knew in my heart that I wanted to take a different direction than the standard medical protocol, and she was my first cheerleader, offering the beginning of what would be a long road of research and education that continues even today. I set my heart and eyes on my ultimate Healer, my Creator, my Heavenly Father, for this direction. And the intimacy with Him grew exponentially as He offered comfort and guidance.

Sunday morning following the diagnosis, I was on my way to church at a very early hour. During the quiet, 20 minute drive during sunrise, I was asking Him how will I know which protocol He wanted me to do. His voice was so clear that it was nearly audible with my human ears, "I've got this, Paula. I've got you". Okay, okay, I get it, Lord. One step at a time it will be. From then on, those words were



repeated countless times throughout my healing and the more I allowed the time and space to listen, the more I heard His voice and the more I recognized when His Spirit was moving me. It became very clear that the path He was leading me on was for the sole purpose of serving Him and serving others.

Reflecting on my healing experience and life since, the joy and peace that have filled my soul exceeds all I've ever known prior. The intimacy with my Heavenly Father continues to grow closer in ways that my heart had yearned for throughout my lifetime as a believer. When focus continues to be with Him, fear does not prevail and pain has purpose. It is because of all He continues to teach me, and His overflowing unconditional love, that I am able to live my life serving

others seeking whole healing of their body and spirit. Healing comes in many ways and sometimes it is not on this side of heaven. But healing the spirit is eternal, and we recognize that our days in this body are temporary, it sets our sights to what is forever. And that is where the adventure really begins!



**Paula Swift, CHTP**

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