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March 2022

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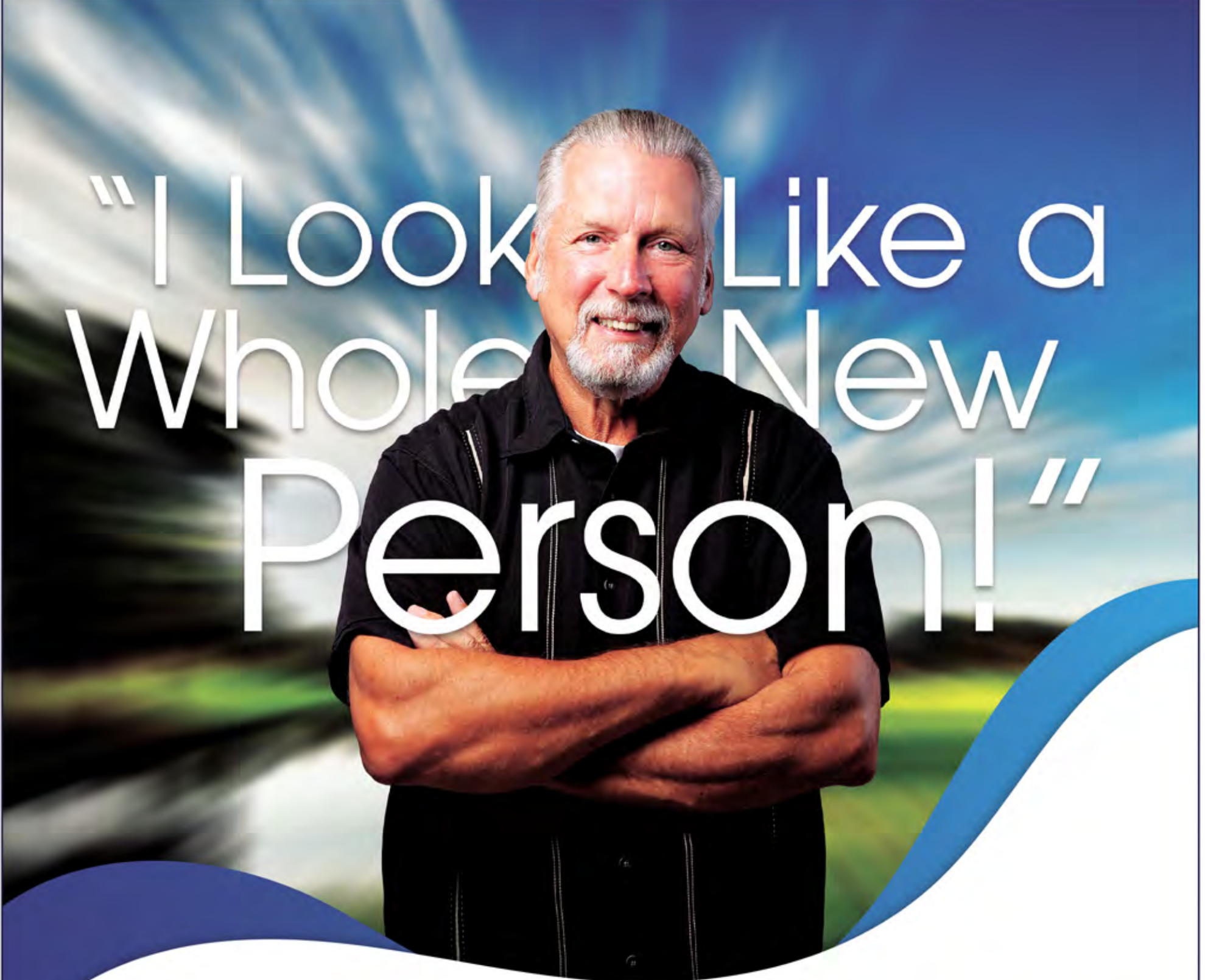
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EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

CT - AT THE FOREFRONT OF DIAGNOSTIC DISCOVERY

There are certain health and functional questions that demand deep, highly detailed investigation. Not long ago, many of these inquiries required exploratory surgery, but thanks to sophisticated imaging advances like computed tomography (otherwise known as a "cat scan"), many medical mysteries can be discovered, diagnosed and even treated, quickly, safely and with greater accuracy without invasive or risky procedures.

What is Computed Tomography (CT)?

CT is a highly sophisticated x-ray exam that produces 3D-quality cross-sectional images of internal organs and systems. The donut-shaped imager scans the area of interest with 360-degree thoroughness, capturing dozens of images of organs, soft tissues, bones and blood vessels with remarkable speed for the lowest possible radiation exposure. The numerous images are assembled into a composite image for painstaking inspection by your radiologist and referring clinician. Apart from an injectable contrast agent that may be used to enhance details, CT is non-invasive, completely painless and takes only minutes to perform. You simply lie still while the scanner captures images. Because RAO uses advanced helical CT, you can expect a quick and comfortable experience, with minimal interruption of your day.

What Conditions Warrant a CT Scan?

Because CT is so thorough and accurate, it can be used to diagnose a wide array of internal injuries, diseases and dysfunctions. Here we describe some of CT's most common applications, but the complete roster is more extensive.

CT's exceptional detailing is capable of capturing injury and disease nearly anywhere in the body. CT can detect problems in the joints and bones, from complex fracture to tumors to arthritic conditions. CT can discover even tiny abnormalities in the organs and tissues, including masses, internal bleeding, clots and infection. CT can be used to guide biopsies and plan surgery.

CT angiography (CTA) is used to study the heart and blood vessels for damage, disease, obstruction and other problems. CT is also used for a screening exam called cardiac scoring, which reveals the presence and severity of calcified plaque in the coronary arteries, so treatment can be used to help prevent a heart attack before it strikes.



CT enterography (CTE) is used to diagnose and evaluate gastrointestinal problems affecting the small bowel such as inflammation, tumors, obstructions, fistulas and diseases like Crohn's. CT enterography utilizes an oral contrast agent to capture fine details.

Parathyroid 4D-CT is a four-dimensional imaging exam used to examine parathyroid glands for even the tiniest tumors, lesions and abnormalities. Parathyroid 4D-CT can be beneficial to many patients who were previously considered ineligible for additional surgical treatment, providing for some a renewed chance for a cure.

Lung Cancer Screening

One of CT's most revolutionary uses is in the early discovery of lung cancer among high-risk patients. Low Dose Computed Tomography, or LDCT, is a specialized chest scan that can reveal the earliest stages of lung cancer before it produces symptoms and has a chance to spread. LDCT screening can catch lung cancer very early on, when it is highly treatable. While anyone can get lung cancer, it is by far most common among heavy smokers age 50 and older. People who quit smoking within the past 15 years are still considered at elevated risk. If you wonder if LDCT might be right for you, have an honest talk with your clinician.

Why Choose RAO for CT?

When your doctor prescribes a diagnostic CT scan, CTA or an LDCT screening, you have a choice of providers to perform your procedure. Why choose RAO? Locally-owned and operated since 1973, RAO consistently leads the field in today's most advanced medical imaging technologies and procedures. RAO features helical CT for optimal image quality, superior detection, reduced radiation exposure and faster exam times compared to standard CT. We also offer 128-slice CT for extremely high detail when needed for a rapid diagnosis.


Our Board-certified, subspecializing radiologists read all test results personally, and interact directly with your clinician. Our doctors are the exclusive imaging providers for AdventHealth Ocala, Ocala Regional Medical Center, West Marion Community Hospital and Bravera Health Seven Rivers in Citrus County.

Finally, and perhaps most important, RAO is the imaging provider friends and neighbors throughout the region know and trust. RAO's radiologists, technologists and talented support staff not only serve our community, they are part of it.

Should you need a CT scan, another diagnostic exam or an interventional treatment, we hope you'll come see us. RAO is here to provide advanced, accurate and considerate care, and assist your clinician with focused and effective resolutions.



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after her MRI
was done."

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Reforming Patient Care Through Choice



As the aging population of Americans grows, adjustments must be made to the way healthcare services are managed and provided.

One of those major changes rolled out last year when Medicare allowed total knee replacement surgery to be eligible for payment in the Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) setting as of January 1, 2020.

On January 1, 2021, Medicare added total hip replacements to its approved outpatient ASC list.



Dr. Thomas McCoy and
Dr. Jeffrey Mandume Kerina,
orthopedic surgeons

99% of patients are able to walk out of the surgery center and go home 90 minutes after hip or knee replacement surgery.

Thomas McCoy, M.D. and Jeffrey Mandume Kerina, M.D., orthopedic surgeons leading the UNOVA Hip & Knee Center in Lady Lake, Florida, are optimistic about these changes and what they mean for total joint replacement candidates. Drs. Kerina and McCoy have been performing outpatient joint replacement surgery since 2008, longer than most orthopedic surgeons in the country.

The majority of patients who require joint replacement surgery are covered by Medicare, however until recently they were not permitted to have their surgeries performed in outpatient centers. Drs. Kerina and McCoy's extensive experience allowed them to immediately begin

offering this service to their Medicare patients when this changed for total knee in 2000 and total hip in 2001. Now, 90% of UNOVA Hip & Knee Center's Medicare total joint replacement candidates are done in a freestanding outpatient surgery center. Call to find out more.



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You Can Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

When it comes to preventing cancer, little things can make a big difference, especially when it comes to making healthy lifestyle choices.

According to the American Cancer Society, nearly 1.8 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and more than 600,000 will die of this disease. Research shows that nearly 50% of these cancer cases and deaths are preventable. Getting healthy is definitely worth the effort and can lessen your chances of developing cancer.

SKIN CANCER AFFECTS 1 IN 5 AMERICANS - TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The American Academy of Dermatology Association estimates that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.

The good news is that skin cancer is also the most preventable cancer and, generally, is highly treatable. The two most common forms, basal cell and squamous cell, are highly treatable if detected early and treated properly. Melanoma, the third most common skin cancer, while treatable, is much more dangerous.

Skin cancer can affect anyone, regardless of skin color, and the risk increases as we age. While the average age at diagnosis is 65, melanoma is one of the most common cancers in those younger than 30, especially young women.

The majority of all skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun's ultraviolet light rays. For maximum protection, oncologists recommend applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher to all skin that is not covered by clothing. Clothing items with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label are now widely available. A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection are also recommended. Children and adolescents, especially, should be protected from the sun, since severe sunburns at younger ages may increase the risk of melanoma. Exposure to artificial UV rays with the use of tanning beds or sunlamps also increases the risk of skin cancer and should be avoided.

Especially here in Florida, it is important to take precautions to enjoy the outdoors safely and reduce skin cancer risk.

SMOKING AND CANCER

In the U.S., 80% to 90% of all lung cancer deaths are related to cigarette smoking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Even those who don't smoke are at risk, due to secondhand smoke.



Tobacco products, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco, have been linked to several other types of cancer, including colorectal, bladder, breast, throat, cervical, mouth and esophageal.

If you're not a smoker, don't start. If you smoke, it's never too late to quit. Your health will improve, and you'll reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and other illnesses. An effective first step, even if you've tried before, is to prepare a quit plan. A wide range of tools, tips and other resources can be found on the website SmokeFree.gov.

EAT HEALTHY & KEEP MOVING TO PREVENT CANCER

There is growing evidence that what we eat plays a significant role in some types of cancer. For example, studies have found a higher incidence of prostate cancer in men whose diets are high in fats, particularly animal fats, and low in vegetables. Certain types of breast and colorectal cancer have also been linked to what we eat. A diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains, and low in red meat and processed foods and sugar, is recommended to help reduce cancer risk. It's also important to limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.

Physical activity can also make a big difference – aim for at least 30 minutes each day. Exercise can help to control your weight and prevent obesity, with the added benefits of increased energy, reduced stress and a healthy boost to the immune system to help fight cancer and other diseases.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CANCER SCREENINGS

Thanks to ongoing research, screening tests are now available for many types of cancer. These tests are effective at finding cancer before signs or symptoms appear. When detected early, certain cancers are much easier to treat, preventing thousands of additional cancer cases and deaths. Early diagnosis and treatment is a substantial factor in surviving cancer.

Recommendations can vary based on your age, family history and lifestyle. Talk to your health care professional about cancer screening, and please do not skip or delay your recommended screenings.

World-Class Cancer Treatment Close to Home

About Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute, LLC: (FLCancer.com)

Recognized by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) with a national Clinical Trials Participation Award, Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) offers patients access to more clinical trials than any private oncology practice in Florida. In the past four years, the majority of new cancer drugs approved for use in the U.S. were studied in clinical trials with Florida Cancer Specialists participation.* Trained in prestigious medical schools and research institutes, our physicians are consistently ranked nationally as Top Doctors by U.S. News & World Report.

Founded in 1984, Florida Cancer Specialists has built a national reputation for excellence that is reflected in exceptional and compassionate patient care, driven by innovative clinical research, cutting-edge technologies and advanced treatments, including targeted therapies, genomic-based treatment and immunotherapy. Our highest values are embodied by our outstanding team of highly trained and dedicated physicians, clinicians and staff.



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Make Your Home Stand Out: Home Gyms and Meditation Rooms

TASHA OSBOURNE, BA - PREMIER SOTHEBYS INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Even though it is still a seller's market, making your home stand out among the rest is vital for grabbing the attention of potential buyer's attention and making a valuable sale. Sure, you can spruce up your home with fresh paint and furnishings (which is always a great idea), but many buyers are looking for something extra. They want that new vibe of an all-encompassing resort-style life.

Why not? We are all more comfortable in our own homes than ever before. Now, many people realize that going to the gym is overrated, and meditation has never before been more popular with all ages and backgrounds of individuals to relieve stress and live a healthier life. You know the saying "Health is Wealth," well, for the majority of individuals, nothing rings clearer. They want a healthy lifestyle that begins in the comfort of their own home.

If you have an extra bedroom, bonus room, or clean garage, these can be ideal spots to transform into meditation rooms, gyms, or a combination of each. The idea is to make the room feel "zen-like" and professionally done. Think lots of subtle colors, pictures or mirrors on the walls, a basket of yoga mats, potted plants that naturally clean the air (bamboo palm or mother-in-law's tongue), and clean lines.

It can be basic, but it has to look high-end, and it must be well-organized. Messy spaces and cheap-looking décor are not what we're going for here. You don't have to break the bank, but it should look like you did.

Ocala is Growing!

Real estate in Ocala is booming. If you're interested in buying or selling, make sure to go with an agent that is trusted for their quality and performance levels. Tasha Osbourne is one of the top Sotheby's Real Estate Agents in the area. Her clients speak highly of her hard work and dedication to buying and selling properties.



TESTIMONIALS:

Tasha was always friendly, professional, and comforting as we navigated a few challenges. She was always on top of all communications astonishing us at how she always responded so quickly no matter the time or the day. I would highly recommend her to anyone looking for a realtor and we will use her again! —KENNETH S.

Tasha is an amazing professional with expertise in the current real estate market! I purchased several homes with her guidance and couldn't be happier with our choices. She is an advocate for her customers and won't stop working for you until your goals are met! Thank you, Tasha! You're the best! —JOHN E.

Tasha is the most hardworking, kind, informed agent you could work with. She assisted me over a year long search online before I ever met her in person. I would never go to anyone else when looking in the Ocala area. Professional, always available and patient beyond words! You couldn't find a better representative. —KIM N.

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Stress Less for a Healthier Heart

know being physically active and eating healthy is good for my heart, but how does stress affect my heart?

We've all heard eating healthy and getting enough exercise is good for our heart, but did you know mental health can impact your heart, too? Research shows that conditions like chronic stress, depression and anxiety can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke. The good news is there are ways we can improve our mental well-being and help our heart*.

How stress affects our heart health

Too often, stress is considered a cost of having an active and productive life. But over time, stress can lead to serious health problems such as:

- High blood pressure
- Increased risk of heart disease
- Obesity
- Mental and emotional problems



Are you overly stressed?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I feeling stressed?

What is stressful for one person may not be for another. Sometimes, your stress can be managed by how you look at the situation. One driver stuck in traffic might get angry, while another might use the opportunity to listen to music.

2. Do I have control over the situation?

Sometimes you do. If you cannot control the situation, can you control your reaction or response to it?

3. How do I choose to respond?

Ask yourself, "does it really matter"? Is it something that's going to affect you in the long run? If it isn't, why worry about it?



Here a few other ways to help you keep the stress out of everyday life.

Just breathe and keep moving

There are many simple things you can do anywhere, anytime you're feeling tense. When you're able to relax, you reduce anxious feelings and regain calm and balance — which in turn helps your heart. Try these:

- Deep breathing
- Guided meditation
- Simple boxing moves

Remember to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Learn how to cope

Most Florida Blue Medicare members have access to our digital mental well-being program called **meQuilibrium****. This self-guided program improves coping skills and helps with mental well-being — something we can all use right now. If you're Florida

*All decisions that require or pertain to independent professional medical/clinical judgement or training, or the need for medical services, are solely the member's responsibility and the responsibility of their physicians and other health care providers.

**meQuilibrium is an independent company contracted by Florida Blue to provide health and wellness services and resources to members. This benefit is available to Florida Blue Medicare members in 2022 Medicare Advantage plans.

Blue Medicare member, you'll find the meQuilibrium in My Health Link™, your member account, under *Find & Get Care* section in the *Mental Well-Being* tab. Log in to floridablue.com/medicare to get started.

Additional resources

- New Directions Behavioral Health offers a resource center with information and self-help tools for stress and mental well-being.
- This American Heart Association article provides good information about how stress can affect our mental health and steps we can take to manage it.

We'll never eliminate stress, but we can prevent long-term health problems by training our body and mind to react positively to whatever life throws at us.

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T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

ARE YOUR SYMPTOMS RELATED TO ATRIAL FIBRILLATION (AFIB)?



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

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

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

The symptoms of an atrial heart arrhythmia are:

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

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

Treatment for AFib

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

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

Dr. V

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

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It should be
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INFLAMMATION: A COMMON PATHWAY FOR DEADLY DISEASE

By Nasser Razack, MD, JD

We've all heard of inflammation but what exactly is it? Inflammation is the response of our immune system to injury or infection. When it's short-lived and targeted for specific purposes such as recovering from a cold, it's a wonderful thing. However, long-term chronic inflammation can be deadly. That's because long-term, chronic inflammation results in horrible diseases such as cancer, heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, etc. Worst of all, chronic inflammation is not painful. Thus, the victims of chronic inflammation develop these deadly disease processes silently without any signs or symptoms.

For example, heart disease which includes stroke is associated with multiple risk factors, some of which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, smoking, and being overweight. We previously thought these risk factors led to the narrowing of blood vessels that supply oxygen to the heart and brain and that progressive constriction of these vessels resulted in heart attacks and stroke. However, more than half of all heart attacks occur in people with normal cholesterol levels. In addition to that, autopsy specimens from deceased heart attack victims demonstrate their vessels were not narrow enough to result in death. We now know that inflammation causes even minor plaques in vessels to erupt like miniature volcanoes, leading to the complete blockage of these blood vessels.

The problem is that inflammation in one part of the body results in inflammation everywhere. For example, inflammation that causes the narrowing of blood vessels doesn't just occur in one organ such as the heart but rather throughout the entire body. When inflammation of blood vessels occurs in the heart, we call this a heart attack. When it occurs in the brain, we call this a stroke and when it occurs in the legs, we call this peripheral vascular disease. When it occurs in very small arteries of the brain, it can result in vascular dementia.

Whether it's a heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease or vascular dementia, it's really the same disease process, namely inflammation. In addition to affecting blood vessels, inflammation also wreaks havoc on the brain. Dementia such as Alzheimer's disease is also caused by brain inflammation. But in this case, inflammation not only affects the blood vessels of the brain but also the spaces between brain cells and the brain cells



themselves. In fact, the parts of the brain more affected by Alzheimer's disease have higher levels of inflammation. This is important because inflammation results in brain cell death. Brain cell death causes brain volume loss which eventually leads to loss of brain function.

Periodontitis, an inflammatory disease of the teeth and gums, is another example of how we can better understand inflammation. This inflammatory disease of the mouth also increases the risk of other inflammatory diseases such as heart attacks, stroke and Alzheimer's disease. Twin studies demonstrate younger patients with severe periodontitis resulted in a fivefold increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. How can inflammation of the mouth be related to heart attack, stroke and Alzheimer's disease? Well, inflammation exerts its effects on the body through cells called inflammatory cells. Once these cells are activated, they act like little tiny soldiers programmed to destroy anything that crosses their path. These inflammatory cells are localized in the mouth in periodontitis. However, activated inflammatory cells can travel throughout the entire body via the blood vessels. They can reach the brain and cause stroke or Alzheimer's disease. They can also travel to the heart and cause a heart attack.

I'm sure all of this sounds quite depressing. But the good news is that if we fight inflammation in one part of the body, we fight inflammation everywhere! That's because inflammation is the same central disease process no matter where it's occurring. And the even better news is that we now have real hope in fighting inflammation.

There are incredible health-healing substances in nature called polyphenols. No doubt you've likely heard of some of these marvelous nutrients which are both strong anti-inflammatory agents and antioxidants. Among them is curcumin, which has a unique property that blocks the central regulator of inflammatory reactions within humans called nuclear transcription factor kappa beta. I know that's a mouthful but all you need to know is that it pretty much blocks inflammation in its tracks. Curcumin has also been demonstrated to reduce the formation of beta-amyloid plaque in the brain which is associated with Alzheimer's disease. In addition to curcumin, many other polyphenols have been proven to reduce the incidence of both stroke and heart disease. These polyphenols can also delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease and thus reduce its incidence.

Dr. Nasser Razack, MD, JD, is a Neurointerventional Surgeon who specializes in the endovascular treatment of stroke. He sees the devastating effects of stroke on a daily basis. That's precisely why he formulated Neurcumin® to reduce the effects of inflammation and prevent inflammatory related diseases like stroke, heart attacks and Alzheimer's disease. Neurcumin® is an all-natural nutrient which in addition to curcumin, contains many other polyphenols and other natural agents uniquely formulated to fight inflammation.

Neurcumin®

To learn more about Neurcumin® and the prevention of inflammatory diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke and heart attacks, please visit **Neurcumin.com**.

You may also call **727-289-7139** or email us at **info@neurcumin.com** for more information.

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About Nasser Razack, MD, JD

Dr. Razack currently practices in Naples, Florida. He dedicates a significant portion of his practice to educating in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of stroke. He completed his medical training at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. In addition to his medical practice, he currently serves as President of Raztec Health, LLC.

KIDNEY AWARENESS MONTH

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

The National Kidney Foundation Explains How The Kidneys Work Below:

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

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

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

According the National Kidney Foundation, these are the 10 most common signs of kidney disease:¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advanced Urology Institute

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

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As a patient, you can be certain that you are a critical member of our treatment team. We will answer your questions and strive to provide the best services and the best care, based on your individual needs, preferences, and choices. AUI Physicians emphasize the use of proven treatment guidelines within our specialty, to optimize clinical decision making. Through our internal measures, our involvement in research studies, and our passion for continuous learning, you can be confident that our treatment team is providing you with the best treatment options.



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Reference:

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

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WHY YOU SHOULD BE IN TOTAL CONTROL OF YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

Estate planning services include living wills, drafting of wills, trusts, and powers of attorney. Estate planning customizes the documents to match the needs of the clients, and to prepare provisions for their children, dependents and intended beneficiaries, and to also reduce the impact of estate taxes.

Many people are intimidated or afraid of hidden fees and high costs associated with estate planning, but Attorney Patrick L. Smith does things differently. Many attorneys bill their clients by the hour to handle their planning—Attorney Smith offers a complimentary consultation and has instituted a flat-fee system for his services. For example, a basic Will is a flat charge of \$75.00 and a Non-Tax Trust Package is \$695.00. This allows clients to know their costs from the start of planning and to determine their estate planning needs without surprises. Although Attorney Smith primarily practices in estate planning and asset protection, he regularly works to connect his clients with a network of attorneys to provide them with complete, affordable legal advice.

If you are putting off estate planning, here are few reasons you might want to take action now as opposed to later:

Health and Mental Capacity

In Florida, the state no longer recognizes Springing POAs (Power of Attorney). *Springing POAs* were able to “spring” into effect and make decisions after a loved one was incapacitated. These are no longer accepted. Instead, the State now requires a permanent POA that goes into effect at the moment of signing the document. If you or a loved one are being proactive about your estate planning or medical decisions, it’s critical to speak to an attorney to help guide you through the process and make the appropriate choices that are specific to your situation.

It’s essential to implement a power of attorney (POA) while someone is capable and competent of signing paperwork and evaluating needs.



If your loved one is unable to make sound judgments and decisions, it can be costly to navigate the court systems to try and retroactively gain control of assets and to make important financial and health-related decisions.

Unfortunately, neurodegenerative disorders are escalating in our country. It’s not uncommon that individuals need 24-hour care and nursing to help with daily tasks due to conditions such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease, or other debilitating disorders like COVID, cancers, coma, and those on life-support, to name a few. When there is no power of attorney in place to make decisions, such as hiring a caregiver, transitioning into a memory care facility, or implementing a hospice plan, these important decisions can turn into a challenging legal process.

Estate Planning Should be Under Your Control

Making decisions now is proactive. It should not be thought of as premature; it should rather be thought of as a wise decision for your family and those left behind that you wish to care for or donate to.



You DO NOT have to disclose all details of your assets to your family, but it is very important that they know where to find the information when they need it. Preparing and organizing your estate planning is critical.

Law Offices of Patrick L. Smith, PLLC

For your *free consultation* or to have Attorney Smith speak at your event or group, you may reach him at his Fruitland Park office by calling 352-204-0305 or visit: www.attorneypatricksmith.com.



Chronic Pain Intensifies Blood Glucose Levels

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

Chronic pain affects millions of Americans daily. Most people are aware of the psychological effects of chronic pain and the dangerous conditions it can cause; however, many people are unaware that chronic pain raises insulin and glucose levels significantly.

Studies have shown that when pain is administered, glucose levels rise, and it's not uncommon for people with diabetes to have chronic pain and vice versa.

Both acute and chronic pain decreases insulin sensitivity. It affects nonoxidative glucose metabolism. Finding pain relief can lower glucose metabolism, but it's important to note that if you have diabetes, strict control and maintenance of your blood sugar levels are critical.

The Truth About Treating Diabetes

If you listen to television ads or even well-meaning healthcare providers, you might be like the millions of people that believe diabetes is a disorder that is entirely manageable with medication and a sugar-free diet. While that might be true for a select few, the truth is that most individuals with diabetes are getting worse; their disease is progressing, leading to other states of chronic illness such as cardiovascular disease, dementia, cancer, and stroke.

Diabetes is a worldwide epidemic, but in the United States, the statistics are quite alarming. More than 30 million people in the U.S. have diabetes; while it's expected that a large number are undiagnosed, and many are what is determined as pre-diabetic, the diagnosis can be scary, and many people feel there is no way out and that they are destined to live with the disease forever.

Diabetic medications work blood sugar levels, but they stop working, and the dose will continuously need to be increased. The worst part is that these drugs are not making you better and are not curing diabetes—There are simply masking your problem. It's like putting a bandage 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 lifestyle choices such as diet or being sedentary.

When it comes to diet, the typical diabetic recommendations that we are all familiar with, like cutting out sugar, are important, but specific methods should be implemented, and each individual will need a custom-tailored tweak to the right way of eating. After all, we are all different. If you have an unknown allergy or trouble processing something like eggs, then eating eggs will only exacerbate your issues. Nutrition is a powerful mechanism to heal the body of many disease states, and it is undoubtedly the case with diabetes.

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 others 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.

If you are tired of living with diabetes and are worried about your future and your health, contact Denise for personalized coaching and accountability to live your best life in optimal health.

Reverse My Diabetes
Denise A. Pancyrz

Diabetes & Holistic Lifestyle Coach
Speaker • Author

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



GOOD SKIN ISN'T ABOUT LUCK.

By Allison Weber, APRN-C

Often, we find ourselves saying "we're lucky we caught this in time", but luck has nothing to do with treating skin cancer. Scheduling 6 or 12-month annual skin exams is an important part to early detection.

Precancerous lesions known as Actinic Keratosis are mostly found on the head, neck and extremities of men and women. They usually appear as a white/yellow flat or thickened scale on these regions. Sometimes people have 1 to 2 that can come and go, while others can have many in one specific area. This usually results from a lot of sun damage to this location. The importance of treating these lesions, stems from their potential to turn into a squamous cell carcinoma. It's very important to let your provider know if you are experiencing any lesions on the skin like this, because fast treatment of them may prevent surgery down the road.

Melanoma is a very serious type of skin cancer, that is important to catch early, due to its ability to spread to the lymphatic system. This type of skin cancer usually appears as an irregular shaped, flat, dark mole, >7 mm in size. I think the biggest misconception is that a bad skin cancer, like melanoma, would have to be raised. A majority of melanomas that we find are usually flat (though a melanoma can still be raised). That being said, a majority of us have multiple brown, flat, moles which are completely normal! This is why it is so important for even younger adults in their 20-30's to start having annual skin exams at a Dermatology office. Keeping a close eye on moles, and identifying any changes in a mole early, can make a huge difference in the patient's treatment outcome. It is also important to ask immediate family members if they have had any history of melanoma. This is because there have been two genes found that are primarily linked to familial melanoma.

Things to watch for:

- A- asymmetry of shape or color
- B- border irregularity
- C- color change
- D- different diameter
- E- evolving/changing

At MidState we like to go by the saying self-care is health care, and treating yourself to some top tier treatments can not only improve your physical health, but mental health too. Here are some top recommendations.



To treat acne scars:

- **Microneedling:** Increases collagen production, which helps with tissue growth and healing. It is important to know you will most likely need 3-4 sessions of microneedling to see optimal results!
- **Dermal Filler:** While not everyone may be a candidate for this, it's helpful to know it is an option for deep acne scars! They can be used to raise the scar tissue and give the scars a smoother appearance. And guess what?! For some, the filler can last up to 1 year!

Men need to treat themselves too!!

Neurotoxins like Botox and Dysport are for everyone! All our offices are trained to help achieve the look you are going for. For those only wanting a subtle enhancement, smaller dosing of neurotoxin works surprisingly well. While we do recommend follow ups every 3-4 months, everyone metabolizes the neurotoxin differently, and some may need it sooner, or later than others. Another great option is to come in 1-2 months prior to events. Especially, if this is something you are only able to do for special occasions, it's still worth it. Neurotoxins are great to help with fine lines and wrinkles, and some may even notice improvement in the texture of their skin.

Our office also offers the Emsculpt Neo. This machine helps to tone muscle, and eliminate fat. It's like doing 20,000 crunches in 1 session (recommending around 5 sessions). This is a great option for those who are already relatively fit looking for more definition, those looking to kick start their weight loss journey with a stubborn area, and even those recovering from sports injuries to strengthen specific muscle groups. My favorite advice with Emsculpt Neo is to use it as a great wedding prep, to get that little extra definition.

Good skin isn't about luck. Yes, it is true, some people are just blessed! But that "luck" definitely does not last forever. Many people come into the office saying, "my skin never used to look like this", "I've never had dark spots or freckles all over my face", and it's important to know a good amount of these things can be avoided!

Starting early is key. While everyone's skin routine may be specific to their own skin type and daily activities, EVERYONE should be wearing sunscreen daily. I always recommend a mineral based sunscreen. My absolute favorite is our ISDIN Eryfotona Ageless tinted sunscreen. Bringing the sunscreen down to the neck, chest, and hands is a must.

Don't leave your skin to luck.



MidState Skin Institute Services:



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Medical Dermatology

The science of treating the skin, hair, and nails to relieve or cure skin disorders.

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The practice of dermatology that specializes in surgical procedures & minimally invasive techniques to treat skin cancer.

Cosmetic Dermatology

The practice of improving the look and health of one's skin through medical or surgical procedures, to help patients look and feel their best.

Aesthetics

Treatment for the skin, hair or body that is meant to enhance the appearance of patients through minimally invasive techniques & personalized topical skin care recommendations.

Innovative Therapies Group Offers SaeboGlove for Neurological and Hand Injuries

For patients with orthopedic injuries or conditions such as stroke-related hand immobility, there is an advanced technological glove that helps to retrain the hand muscles and brain communication as well as offers immediate extension, flexion, and grip control.

If you are suffering from the adverse effect of hand function due to TBI, Stroke, spinal cord injury, radial nerve palsy or other hand injuries, SaeboGlove might work to get you back to adequate hand and wrist functioning, improved range of motion, and stability. Some conditions may not be suitable for the saeboglove, including severe arthritis, spasticity and wrist drop.

Advanced Characteristics of the SaeboGlove

- The cutting edge SaeboGlove helps clients suffering from neurological and orthopedic injuries incorporate their hand functionally in therapy and at home.
- The proprietary tension system extends the client's fingers and thumb following grasping.
- The lightweight, low-profile functional design is just one of the many innovative features that are offered with the SaeboGlove.

The unique features of the SaeboGlove are as follows:

Expandable

Lycra finger panels are made of an elastic material to promote a breathable and intimate fit.



Open

Tensioners assist the finger and thumb joints with extension. Five various sized tensioners allow for maximum adjustability and fit based on finger length and weakness.

Non-slip

Silicon liner minimizes migration and maintains proper alignment. Anti-slip fingertips improve traction during grasping.

Secure

Unique spiral forearm design supports the wrist in a functional position.

Always on the leading edge of technology and advanced techniques, Innovative Therapies Group provides SaeboGlove training in their facility.

Patient Education 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, mobility and communication is critical.

Source: <https://www.saebo.com>

Innovative Therapies Group also offers occupational therapy to help patients learn to use their new glove for daily living activities. Our Occupational Therapist, CHT (Certified Hand Therapist) is Certified in Saebo fittings and training.

Innovative Therapies Group

If you often experience pain, stiffness, immobility, or balance issues, being proactive about physical therapy treatments and techniques can help to alleviate or lessen these circumstances.

For patients suffering from pain, the first step to recovery is to receive a proper diagnosis so the cause of the symptoms can be determined. Physical therapists are trained to administer flexibility and strengthening tactics along with body mechanics and awareness techniques to get your body moving and creating a much less painful range-of-motion. With ongoing therapy, most people see remarkable outcomes and lasting results.

Innovative Therapies Group offers Hand Therapy Specialists, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy and Massage Therapy. They embrace alternative methods and will help you explore new inventive ways to combat your pain or disorders.

Types of Treatment Available with Physical Therapy

- Assessment and Evaluation Programs
- Difficulty Walking
- Fall Prevention and Balance Retraining
- Fitness and Wellness Programs
- Functional Training
- Gait Training and Balance Programs
- Manual and Massage Therapy
- Neurological and Neurodegenerative Retraining
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Colorectal Cancer: Take the Time to Get Tested

March is colorectal cancer awareness month, shining a spotlight on an insidious disease that will be diagnosed in an estimated 151,030 adults in the US this year.¹

Sharon M, of Citrus County, recently went to the doctor for what she thought were hemorrhoids, only to find out that her discomfort was due to stage 4 colorectal cancer.

"Up to the day where I had my colonoscopy, I was still thinking my pain was hemorrhoid-related; however, the gastroenterologist told me I had tumors and that I needed to see a cancer doctor right away," said Sharon.

Colorectal cancer starts in the lining of the colon or rectum as small clumps of cells called polyps, which can slowly become cancerous tumors over time, depending on the type of polyp formed.

Some risk factors make you more susceptible to developing the disease, namely advanced age, a familial predisposition, lifestyle choices like diet and exercise, smoking, and the presence of diseases like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Colorectal symptoms aren't the same for everyone as they can range from unexplained weight loss and weakness and fatigue to a change in bowel habits and rectal bleeding. What's concerning about this cancer is that symptoms can go undetected in the beginning stages, causing treatment to be delayed.

For people like Sharon, who are busy, working full-time, and leading an active life as a mother and grandmother, the thought of cancer couldn't have been further from her mind.

"I guess that was a shock for me. I have no insurance, so I didn't know what to do. And another note on not having insurance is that I didn't get any symptoms checked out because I felt like I couldn't afford to do that," said Sharon.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends those of us between the ages of 45 and 75 get screened for colorectal cancer.² It's a good idea to talk to your doctor regarding which screening is suitable for you: stool test, flexible sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy.

If possible, your doctor will remove polyps during your colonoscopy, which will be evaluated for cancerous or precancerous cells. Your doctor will prescribe appropriate treatment or a follow-up colonoscopy, depending on your biopsy results.



"I encourage anyone who has blood in their stool not to wait but go find out what's going on. It could be something simple, but it could be cancer. I'm facing stage 4 at this point, and I will get the chemo to see how it responds, and maybe it'll slow it down a little bit so I can have more time with my family and friends," said Sharon.

Sharon has spent the better part of 5 years dedicating her time to projects in the Caribbean through organizations like Islands in Motion and Kayifi.com, sister companies of Quick Care Med. Company missions and initiatives are geared towards helping revitalize Island commerce, offering locals self-sufficiency to thrive, personally and financially.

All of us at Quick Care Med are devastated by Sharon's recent diagnosis. She graciously offers so much of her time, energy, and spirit to family, friends, and co-workers. A cancer diagnosis is a heavy burden on all counts, including financially.

We've set up a Go Fund Me page and an online store (links below), with all proceeds going towards Sharon, to offer her peace of mind during this difficult time.

Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/0f1e5e99>
Store: www.SupportSharon.com

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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!

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How Caregiver Burnout Affects Your Health

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Most caregivers receive little or no support from their own families or other organizations and are basically on their own. In 2021, the Alzheimer's Association reported that more than 11 million Americans provided unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's or other dementias. These caregivers provided an estimated 15.3 billion hours valued at \$257 billion. Additionally, approximately 40% of these caregivers report that their own health has suffered due to care responsibilities.

Health of Caregivers Impacted

There's been a growing trend over the last few decades of closing mental health facilities, early discharge of hospital patients, and implementation of managed care practices which causes a shift and burden to families and caregivers. This often results in financial loss, strain among families, and caregiver health issues that manifest due to increased stress.

Studies consistently show the following impacts on a caregiver's health:

- Higher levels of depression and depressive symptoms than in non-caregivers
- Depressed caregivers are more likely to have coexisting anxiety disorders, substance abuse or dependence
- Chronic stress in caregivers sometimes is associated with an increase in hypertension, inflammation and decreased immune function
- Caregivers who experience chronic stress may be at a greater risk for cognitive decline

- Caregivers report having a higher incidence of stress, weight gain, headaches, and back strain among other physical ailments and pain associated with caregiving

Women tend to be, more often than not, the primary caregivers. However, being a caregiver whether male or female affects your quality of life and increases the challenge of balancing your personal schedule with that of the intense, demanding focus needed to be a caregiver.

Resources and Tips Available

Caregivers tend to put others first and themselves last. It's not uncommon to see the impact of ongoing stress from caregiving sometimes results in anger and resentment. It's vitally important for caregivers to make sure they are taking care of themselves mentally, physically and socially. How can a caregiver take care of a loved one, if they are not being mindful of their own needs and health? Below are some resources and tips:

- Don't be afraid to ask for help from family members or close friends who could run errands
- Practice meditation and exercise to help relieve stress—set aside early morning or evening for yourself
- Do something socially just for you—see a movie, have lunch with friends
- Check into your office policies to see if you have family leave benefits



Call Hospice of Marion County's Transitions program—This is a community supported volunteer-based resource program:
(352) 854-5200 or visit www.transitionsfl.com to learn more about this program's caregiver support groups, respite for the caregiver, providing assistance whether in homes or assisted living facilities.



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What You Need to Know About Viral Causes of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss isn't always caused by old age; it can be caused by several factors, including viruses. What viruses cause hearing loss and what are the symptoms?

It's a common misconception that hearing loss can only be caused by exposure to loud noises, old age, or a prenatal damage. However, many people experience hearing loss due to infections. Many of these infections are caused by viruses that affect the cochlea, blood vessels in the ear, or other parts of the body that deal with hearing.

There is no single virus that causes hearing loss, and not everyone's experience is the same. While one person might survive a serious childhood infection and end up with profound hearing loss or even deaf, another might experience a virus later in life. Hearing loss comes in many forms, and while we can draw patterns between them, every case is unique.

While there is no surefire way to avoid hearing loss, staying vigilant and recognizing symptoms of viruses early on can prevent them from spreading further. Proper diagnosis and treatment are also necessary, so it's best to know what kinds of viruses cause hearing loss in the first place.

What kind of viruses cause hearing loss?

Many different types of illnesses can cause hearing loss, but there are two categories for sorting viruses with this effect. Some viruses can cause congenital hearing loss, while others result in acquired hearing loss later in life. Certain viruses can even fall into both of these categories. When dealing with hearing loss, these categories help doctors determine what viral infection is present.

While some of these infections are rare, others might be more prevalent. For example, Cytomegalovirus, a virus that causes congenital hearing loss in children, affects about one out of every 100 babies.

Viruses that cause hearing loss

As mentioned above, viral causes of hearing loss can vary between congenital, acquired, and both. It's important to differentiate between these three in



order to successfully diagnose someone. If you or a loved one is suffering from sudden SNHL or sudden sensorineural hearing loss, it is vital that you seek help from a professional. While you can find information about potential viruses online, only a doctor can diagnose and treat you.

Children who suffer from congenital viruses are at a greater risk of hearing loss. These viruses can include:

- **German Measles, or Rubella.** An RNA virus, Rubella is transmitted through fluids like phlegm and saliva. If a mother is infected with Rubella during pregnancy, her child becomes at risk of obtaining the congenital form of the virus. Rubella is also one of the TORCHS group, and hearing loss typically sets in 6-12 months after birth.

- **Cytomegalovirus.** This DNA virus is responsible for most non-genetic cases of SNHL in infants and children. CMV belongs to TORCHS, a group of viruses that frequently cause hearing loss in children.

In many cases, CMV-infected child will develop hearing loss after their SNHL screenings are finished. For this reason, it is important that parents remain vigilant if they have a CMV-positive child.

- **Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV).** While not transmittable through human-to-human contact, this RNA virus is transmitted through contact with rat feces, urine, and saliva. While hearing loss isn't as common in children infected with LCMV, it is a well-documented congenital effect.

Children and adults suffering from SNHL can also be diagnosed with the following viruses, which cause both congenital and acquired hearing loss after infection.

- **HSV Types 1 & 2.** Both HSV one and two belong to the herpesvirus family, and this virus can occur in children and adults. While adults might acquire this virus through contact, children with HSV1 or HSV2-positive mothers can become infected in-utero. To prevent infection of children from their mothers, therapies, medications, and cesarean births are recommended.

- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).** A well-known RNA virus that can lead to AIDS, along with a variety of other conditions and illnesses. By killing T-cells, children and adults suffering from HIV become susceptible to opportunistic infections. Hearing loss is a common side effect of HIV, with 2/3 of HIV-positive children suffering SNHL, and 1/2 of that group suffering from developed hearing loss.

The last group of viruses includes viruses that cause acquired hearing loss. This form of hearing loss typically occurs in those who are older and are not suffering from a congenital virus.

- **West Nile Virus.** Related to both yellow and dengue fever, West Nile is an RNA virus transmitted through insects -- typically mosquitos. While

hearing loss resulting from a West Nile infection is rare, every case but one ended with the patient spontaneously recovering from their hearing loss.

• **Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV).** A DNA virus also belonging to the herpes family. Zoster and shingles are both forms of the reactivated VZV. VZV can cause issues with the nerves of the face, auditory canal, and tongue. In some cases, the resulting hearing loss was reversed or alleviated through the use of corticosteroids and other medications.

• **Measles (Rubeola).** An RNA virus that previously accounted for 5-10% of all US cases of profound hearing loss. While vaccination has rendered this virus nearly extinct in the United States, outbreaks have occurred due to a number of factors. In places where measles vaccinations are not widespread, the virus continues to cause hearing loss.

• **Mumps.** Belonging to the same family that includes measles, mumps is an RNA virus that can cause a host of problems, including SNHL. With proper diagnosis and treatment, there is a chance this hearing loss can be reversed, but some cases become permanent.

It's also worth noting that viruses do not typically cause conductive hearing loss. This type of hearing loss is usually caused by fluid, bacterial infections, earwax buildup, and injuries to the eardrum.

Why sudden hearing loss warrants treatment

If hearing loss occurs in either of your ears, it is important that you take the matter seriously. If left unchecked, your condition can quickly worsen and result in serious side effects, including permanent hearing loss. To avoid hearing impairment, it is recommended that you seek help from a hearing care provider as soon as possible.



If you're concerned about the quality of your hearing, consider getting an audiogram. Online tests like our Signia hearing test can also be used to help determine if you are suffering from hearing loss. If you've recently noticed a drop in hearing ability, do a test to make sure there is nothing wrong. If you encounter any form of hearing loss, be sure to bring it up with a medical professional. It might be a symptom of a larger issue.

Preventing deafness and hearing loss

There are no surefire ways to prevent hearing loss and deafness. Certain congenital conditions leave no room for prevention, especially if the mother isn't aware she is carrying the virus. Likewise, it can be difficult to know you are suffering from a latent virus, as they show little to no symptoms. Getting tested regularly and staying on top of your health is the best preventative measure in these cases.

It is also important that you get yourself and your children vaccinated. While controversy has spread regarding this practice, even a single case of mumps or measles can result in acquired hearing loss. It is better to be safe than sorry in these situations, especially when your hearing is at risk.

Wider immunity should also be taken into account in these situations; even if your children recover from measles, an immunodeficient child might catch the virus and suffer serious health issues.

Along with preventing viral infections, it is also necessary to protect your ears. Avoid spending a lot of time in noisy environments and use protection while working in loud conditions. Get professional audiograms every few years, and use online hearing tests as benchmarks. While you cannot fully prevent hearing loss, you can shield yourself against it.

If you don't know where to get a professional audiogram, you can have a look at our Signia store locator to find the nearest or most convenient location.

Source:

<https://www.signia.net/en-us/blog/global/2021-02-24-what-you-need-to-know-about-viral-causes-of-hearing-loss/>

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Nutrition: Fueling The Body With High-Quality Nutrients is Key

We all know that getting enough sleep, exercise, and socializing are critical elements to aging well, but when it comes to nutrition, some information can be confusing. At Pacifica Senior Living, they understand that a combination of healthy foods that are delicious, comforting, pleasing to the eye, and beneficial for the body is important to their residents and provides the nourishment they need to thrive.

Increasing your intake of fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits is a great way to increase fiber, flavonoids, carotenoids, phytonutrients, and numerous vitamins in your diet. This will feed your cells and can even help to reduce some of the damage that may have taken place over the years. It's also wise to add in lean, good-quality proteins. These can be plant-based or animal products, or a combination of both. Nourishing your body with high-quality ingredients is essential for overall health.

After years of cooking and cleaning, residents at Pacifica Senior Living love that they can eat restaurant-quality meals each and every day without the hassle of shopping, cooking, and cleaning up. It's like a vacation from the mundane in a luxurious senior community that is full of friendly staff and other residents who become like family.

The chef-inspired meals at Pacifica Senior Living are bar none for their residents. A few of the favorites include the following:

- Hawaiian-inspired grilled chicken and pineapple
- Country-fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, and steamed vegetables
- Filet mignon with a demi-glaze, caramelized onions and peppers with couscous
- Roasted chicken with roasted potatoes and carrots and a side of broccolini
- Grilled salmon, asparagus, and rice pilaf
- Raspberry and roasted marshmallow-topped lemon curd

Meals can be custom-tailored to your specifications and dietary needs. They can also be delivered to your room if needed.



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At Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, you will find an award-winning community that is designed to give seniors in both Assisted Living or Memory Care a lifestyle that makes the most of these golden years. In our community, retirement isn't the end, but the next step in a grand adventure that is still filled with excitement and fun, while recognizing the need our residents have to relax and be cared for. We want to be more than the place that our residents live, we want to be the place they call home, and we work every day to make sure that happens.

Pacifica Senior Living understands that along with providing the best patient care, providing the entire family the support and education they need is essential for enhancing understanding and contentment for families.



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If you would like to learn more about life at Pacifica Senior Living Ocala, please give us a call today, or schedule your own private, personalized tour and see what makes us great for yourself! We look forward to meeting our new neighbor.

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ACHILLES TENDON RUPTURES AND GETTING YOU BACK IN THE GAME

Achilles Ruptures are more common in men than women and the typical age group that is affected is between the ages of 30-50. Some other risk factors include race, genetics, medical conditions, musculoskeletal disease, ankle and foot alignment (pronation/hyper-pronation), obesity, sports, exercise, medication and smoking.

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body. It is connected to both the calf muscle and the heel bone and is a fibrous tissue that somewhat resembles twine. It is used when you walk, run, stand, jump and is especially stressed when you move quickly from side to side.

Although the Achilles tendon can withstand great stresses from running, twisting and jumping, it is extremely vulnerable to injury. A rupture of the tendon is a tearing and separation of the tendon fibers, so that the tendon can no longer perform its normal function.

People that are athletic and play sports or do extreme workouts are often times more frequently affected by Achilles tendon injuries. This is because they have jarring, ballistic movements. Sports like tennis, basketball and football all create these airborne movements. Also, exercises or workouts like jumping rope, or other high intensity movements can rupture the Achilles tendon. Corticosteroids and some other pain deterring injectables have been studied for their negative effect on the tendons, due to the medications actually breaking down the tissues and weakening the Achilles tendon.

When the tendon is ruptured, most notably, people remark of the popping sound they hear at the onset. It causes a tremendous amount of pain and unfortunately takes a very long time to heal.



There are several types of treatment options, both surgical and nonsurgical. The nonsurgical approach is to cast the foot in a pointed toe position and then gradually recasting to stretch the tendon back into place very slowly. The nonoperative repair has a much greater re-rupture rate than with surgery.

The surgical repair of the Achilles rupture involves several different options. All of the options will reconnect the two ends of the tear back together by suturing them back into place. Sometimes this is done with a flap drawn down from the gastrocnemius (calf muscle), while other times its achieved with a donated graft, or simply sewn back together with a specific suturing method that ties both sides down and reconnects the sutures in the midline of the tear.

Whichever of the treatment options that your physician may choose, expect the rehabilitation to be quite long. There is no weight bearing activity allowed for several weeks, and then from there their will be many weeks of therapy. The length of healing for the average person is usually around 4 to 6 months.

At week 8 after your treatment, your Achilles tendon will be primarily healed, but not strong enough to put undue stress on it. It must be over-protected for several months to insure that it is not reinjured. For competitive and exercise, or sports enthusiast, they can expect a good 6-9 months before being back to their normal extreme routines.

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Discover More Options and Details Regarding a Reverse Mortgage

By Bruce Hancock

Many people decide to move forward with a reverse mortgage for various reasons; loss of a spouse's income, running out of money as costs rise, fix up the home, have money sitting there should you need it someday, or just want to enjoy life a little better. Having access to the equity in your home could be the answer. As our population is living longer, people are searching for viable options to help them live out their best life. So, while the retirement age used to only last a decade, it is now lasting for two or more decades. Also, with this longer life, we can experience and make many more memories, but along with this merriment, longevity of life often comes with significant health issues.

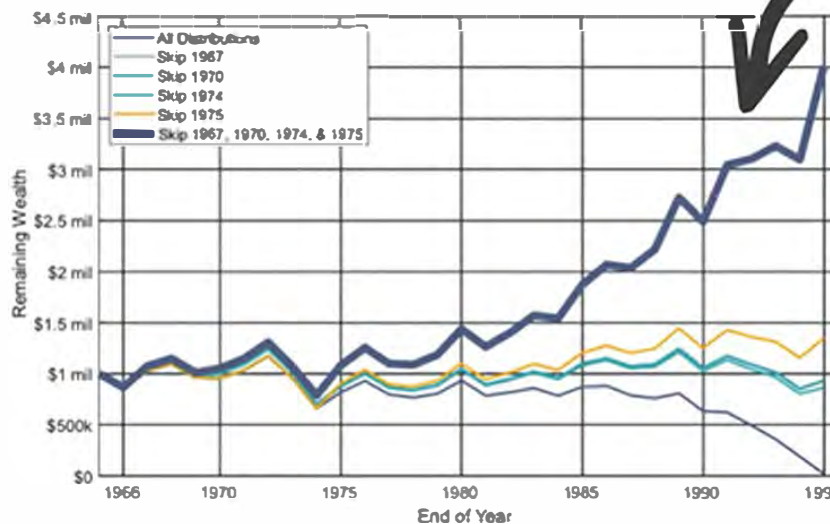
It's a common misconception to view a reverse mortgage as looming financial woe. Reverse mortgages are not to be looked at as a last resort to economic difficulty, but rather as an opportunity to build proceeds and profit for your retirement and perhaps your mounting healthcare bills.

In addition to costly matters such as emergency funds, home maintenance, travel and leisure, the healthcare industry is expensive. If you are diagnosed with cancer, your office visits, surgery, and treatment will be ongoing, and your cost associated with your care will be continuously escalating. The same holds true for many other age-related diseases and disorders.

Total projected lifetime health care premiums (Medicare Parts B and D, supplemental insurance, and dental insurance) for a healthy 65-year-old couple can be around \$400,000. Adding deductibles, copays, hearing, vision, and dental cost sharing, that number grows exponentially.

In cases where medical care is a major issue, reverse mortgages are helping countless individuals maintain their lifestyle of choice while receiving quality restorative treatment. With today's modern reverse mortgages, you remain in control, and the terms are more flexible than those of the past. As an example, you always own your home, you have a guarantee that you can never owe more than its' value.

You will remain the owner of your home's title throughout the entire reverse mortgage process. You are able to leave your home to family members, and your loved ones can even remain in the home if you were to pass away.



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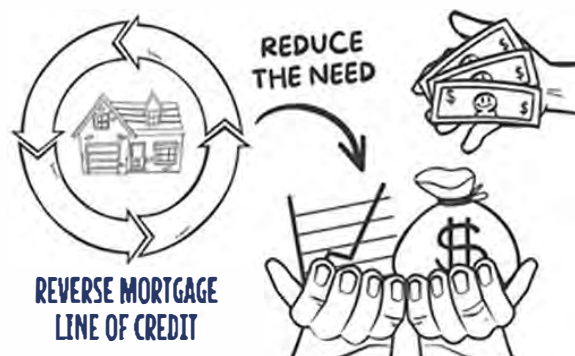
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Bruce Hancock, Reverse Mortgage Expert

Bruce Hancock is a reverse mortgage specialist working for Mutual of Omaha. He has been in the mortgage industry since 1984 and along with his highly sought-after mortgage expertise, Bruce takes great pride in helping seniors retire comfortably with better options. He has always been conscientious and dedicated to being the best, which is why he always listed as a top producer throughout his career.

To find out more details, contact Bruce Hancock today.



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Maintaining Healthy Friendships

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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