

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

June 2022

Marion Edition - Monthly

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FREE

Men's Health

Overall Fitness Includes
Health Screenings

Do You Know Your Testosterone Level?

Men - Take Charge of Your Health

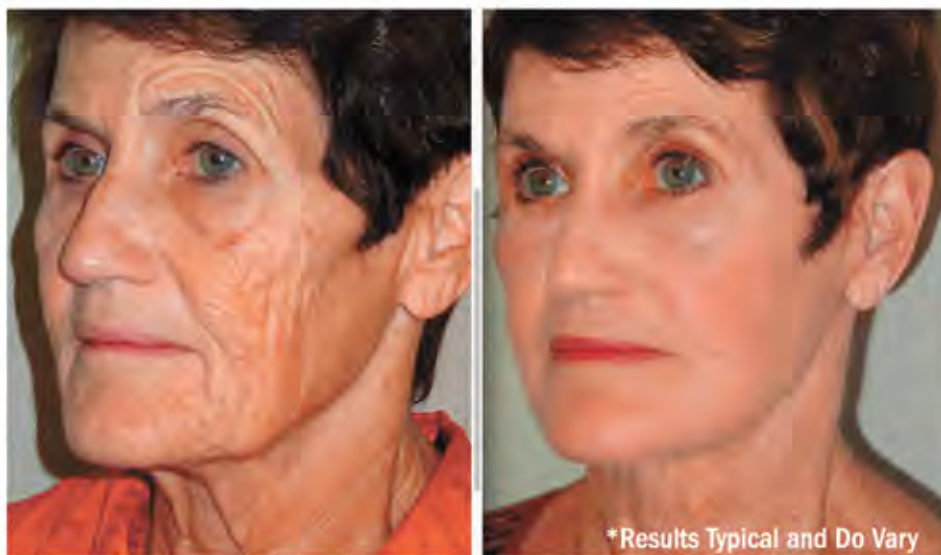
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MEN'S HEALTH: OVERALL FITNESS INCLUDES HEALTH SCREENINGS

June is Men's Health Month, drawing attention to easy ways men can address and help prevent common health problems. Historically, men have been somewhat hesitant to be proactive in their own healthcare, but in an effort to live their best and longest lives, more guys are taking steps to get ahead of disease and dysfunction before issues have a chance to pose a threat to their strength, vitality and full enjoyment of life.

Because many diseases don't produce symptoms early on, staying on top of health screenings is a proven way to discover potential problems before they have a chance to develop and become difficult – even impossible – to treat. We invite you to use the following guide as a reminder to schedule important health screenings as part of your overall fitness and health program.

Health Screenings for Men 18 and Older

High Blood Pressure Testing – High blood pressure gets more common as people get older, but even young men can have it, particularly now that we as a nation have become more sedentary, stressed-out and fond of sodium-rich fast and highly processed foods. Heredity can also play a role, even among men who exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet. Know your blood pressure and if it's high (130/80 or above), take steps to get your numbers into a healthy range.

Health Screenings for Men 20 and Older

Testicular Cancer Exam – Because most cases of testicular cancer occur in men ages 20-54, particularly among those with a family history of the disease and/or an undescended testicle, self-examination is important for men of every age. Check your testicles monthly for changes in shape or the presence of bumps or lumps. Have regular physicals and make sure your doctor includes this in your exam. Yes, avoidance is tempting – but it's quick and painless so don't put it off.

Cholesterol Screening – Men without added risk factors for high cholesterol should have a fasting lipid blood test at age 35 and at regular intervals thereafter. The early discovery of high LDL cholesterol promotes timely treatment to help prevent the formation of the sticky plaque that hardens and narrows arteries, a primary cause of heart disease and stroke. Men with a personal or family history of heart disease are at elevated risk, and should begin cholesterol screening at age 20.



Health Screenings for Men 40 and Older

Prostate Cancer Screening – Prostate cancer strikes 1 in 7 men, so regular screening is a key to protecting health and normal bodily function. Caught before it has a chance to spread, prostate cancer has a nearly 100% survival rate but, too often, a lack of routine screening allows this cancer to grow, spread and turn lethal. When to begin screening for prostate cancer varies among men based on certain criteria. Men whose fathers developed prostate cancer are advised to begin at age 40. Black men and men whose more distant relatives (grandfather, uncle, cousin) had prostate cancer may elect to begin at age 45. Caucasian, Hispanic and Asian men of average risk should start screening at age 50.

Manual prostate cancer screening is typically included in your routine men's health physical. Your medical care provider will recommend when it's appropriate for you to have a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test.

If your PSA is elevated or rising, you may be eligible for an MRI prostate scan, which can discover cancer earlier than other tests. If your provider recommends a prostate MRI, RAO offers noninvasive, radiation-free, high-field MRI testing, for fast, accurate answers.

Most cases of rising PSA are not cancer, but early diagnosis remains important in catching cancer when it is most easily and successfully treated.

Health Screenings for Men 50 and Older

Colorectal Cancer Screening – Colorectal cancer is the nation's number two cancer killer. Yes, this is a somewhat comedic statistic. Jokes aside, this stat is actually tragic and frustrating because most colorectal cancer cases are completely preventable. You see, most colon cancers begin as polyps that if caught

early, can be removed before they cause a single problem. However, too many men avoid colorectal cancer screening. If this applies to you, think about it: your life and wellbeing may depend on it.

All men ages 50 and older should have regular colorectal cancer screenings. Men considered to be at high risk may be advised to begin earlier. Discuss with your doctor your personal and family history to find out which screening tests are right for you.

Screening for Heart Disease – Since "how to know if chest pains are serious" is one of men's most commonly Googled search terms, of course heart disease is a primary health concern. Discovering plaque deposits and narrowing of the arteries before they impede healthy blood flow can stop a heart attack before it happens. If you have common risk factors that increase your chance of heart disease, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high LDL cholesterol, obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity, smoking or secondhand smoke exposure, or have a family history of heart disease, talk to your doctor about whether a cardiac scoring exam should be part of your preventive healthcare routine. A cardiac CT from RAO is a screening test used to discover the presence and location of calcified plaque in the coronary arteries. This quick, non-invasive exam can be used to allow early treatment of plaque build-up and arterial obstructions, and help prevent a heart attack before it can cause permanent damage or death.

Lung Cancer Screening – Men ages 50-80 who have reached 20 pack years (packs per day x years spent smoking) should ask their doctors about Low Dose Computed Tomography, or LDCT. This quick, painless scan can catch lung cancer before it spreads outside the lung and produces symptoms, when it is often too late to treat. LDCT is indicated for current heavy smokers and those who have quit within the past 15 years. With a clinician's referral, LDCT from RAO is 100% covered by most insurance.

Remember, men: routine health tests are readily available and designed to prevent and mitigate health problems. Keep time on your side by taking steps to control your health, function and quality of life today. For a full spectrum of health screenings, diagnostic tests and minimally-invasive treatments designed to promote your healthiest life, visit raocala.com or call 352-671-4300.



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Do You Know Your Testosterone Level?

Tired? Are your endurance and strength declining? Have you noticed a decline in your sexual function and lost interest in your sex life?

Every man could answer “yes” to at least one of these questions after age 40. Common symptoms of low testosterone, they can also result from a myriad of lifestyle, social, emotional and behavioral issues.

It is a physician’s goal to “treat the whole patient,” so we try to identify those issues that are most relevant to the symptoms. For decades, it was believed low testosterone was responsible for the above ... but not much else. Physicians were taught a decline testosterone was “normal” as men aged.

These beliefs have substantially changed in the last five years.

We now know a condition known as “metabolic syndrome” is intimately linked to low testosterone. Metabolic syndrome is a constellation of diabetes (or insulin resistance), hypertension, elevated triglycerides (fat levels in the blood), abdominal obesity and low testosterone. It’s estimated as many as 25 percent to 45 percent of American men over 40 may have metabolic syndrome and therefore a significantly elevated risk of stroke and heart attack.

How testosterone interacts with obesity, diabetes and cholesterol is not fully understood. It is also unclear whether low testosterone is the cause of the increased risk or it is involved in some other way. Clearly, low testosterone is more than simply a factor in declining strength and sexual performance.

Testosterone is essential for male development, libido and erectile function. Because of the success of medications such as Viagra in treating erectile dysfunction, low testosterone is often overlooked. However, low testosterone is a common cause of poor or declining response from ED medications and should always be considered when evaluating ED. Testosterone replacement may be all that’s required to restore sexual function.

The good news is managing low testosterone is easier and simpler than ever before. Just a decade ago, almost all testosterone replacement was by a painful, deep-muscle injection with oil-based testosterone administered every two weeks. Levels were difficult to manage and had dramatic swings with levels too high for the week immediately following the injection and too low for the week prior to the injection.



Today, testosterone is applied via a cream or gel that is applied to the skin daily. These preparations provide even absorption and steady testosterone levels. Small implants that release a steady, consistent level of testosterone in the bloodstream for eight to 10 months are also available.

Managing testosterone levels requires a thorough knowledge of treatment risks and benefits. Men with an enlarged prostate may be at greater risk for obstruction of the urine flow. Additionally, testosterone treatment should be considered only if prostate

cancer is not present, or has been successfully treated. Baseline levels should be checked in the early morning as levels normally decline in late afternoon or evening.

A thorough physical examination and additional blood tests are also important to evaluate low testosterone levels. Urologists specialize in evaluating and treating low testosterone, prostate disease, voiding, erection and testicular health, all of which can be influenced by testosterone levels.

Identifying low testosterone is as simple as a blood test, and modern management is as simple as a daily application of a skin cream. Every man should know his testosterone level. Normal testosterone levels can be an important aspect of maximizing longevity and maintaining quality of life.

If you have any questions regarding your testosterone level, you can contact Advanced Urology Institute at (855) 298-2273.



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MEN - TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

Would you rather mow the lawn or clean the bathroom rather than go to the doctor? You're not alone. A study from the Cleveland Clinic found that most men hate going to the doctor. **But this can be deadly.**

Don't wait to go to the doctor until you're sick. In fact, avoiding regular checkups can shorten your lifespan because chronic conditions need to be treated early before they become deadly.

Here are some important healthy tips:

- **Be honest with your doctor.** 1-in-5 men don't tell their doctor everything because they don't want to face a potential scary diagnosis or changes to their lifestyle. But your doctor needs to know so they can help prevent or treat conditions before they become too serious.

- **Take heart.** Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men, and **half of the men who die suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms.** But a 20 minute daily walk around your block can go a long way to combat this disease. Regular cardio and strength training can help lower your risk as well as keeping your waistline at 40 inches or less.

- **Eat the rainbow.** Add more fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet. You can still have foods with fat, salt and sugar, but remember—moderation is key.

- **R-E-L-A-X.** Stress is a killer. Really. Find activities that help you relax and decompress and do them more! If you're feeling overwhelmed, talk with your doctor.

- **Get more Zzzs.** Sleep is the best way for the body to heal and repair itself. A lack of sleep also increases health issues like diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression. Aim for at least 7 hours a night.

- **Watch what you drink.** A drink might be fun in the moment, but there are a lot of negative consequences to saying yes to happy hour. Alcohol increases blood pressure, disrupts sleep and increases the risks of certain cancers. Drinking also impacts mental health and there's no health without mental health. Try to limit drinks to 2 drinks or less per day.



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SKIN CANCER/MELANOMA

About one in five Americans are likely to develop skin cancer by the age of 70, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS), making it the most common form of cancer in the U.S. It is also the most preventable cancer. In fact, research indicates that protecting your skin before you turn 18 can cut your risk of some types of skin cancer by as much as 78%.

There are three major types of skin cancer – basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma, which is the most serious type.

Basal cell and squamous cell skin cancer are the most prevalent and least dangerous type of skin cancer. These cancers generally start in the top layer of the skin, the epidermis, and grow slowly. They are often related to sun exposure and found on those areas of the skin that are most often exposed to the sun. Spots, blemishes, freckles and moles are signs of sun-damaged skin. They are usually harmless, but if you notice them changing, see a doctor.

Melanoma skin cancer develops when melanocytes, the cells that give the skin its tan or brown color, start to grow out of control. While melanoma accounts for only about 1% of skin cancers, it is the cause of a large majority of skin cancer deaths. If not detected and treated early, it's more likely to spread to other parts of the body. When detected early, the five-year survival rate is 99%.

Melanoma can develop anywhere on the skin, but usually starts on the chest and back in men and on the legs in women. It is almost more than 20 times more common in Caucasians than in African Americans.

The ABCs of Skin Cancer

Older adults, people who are fair-skinned, or those who have a lot of moles are generally at greater risk, so it's important to know your skin well. It's a good idea to have an annual skin check by a healthcare provider. While many skin cancers are highly treatable, if you notice anything suspicious anywhere on your skin, you should report it to your physician.

Here is an easy way to recognize if a mole or other skin lesion may be cancerous – just remember ABCDE:

Asymmetry: one half of the mole doesn't match the other

Border: is irregular

Color: is not uniform

Diameter: greater than 6 mm (about the size of a pencil eraser)

Evolving: size, shape or color changes



Ongoing Treatment Advances

Options for treating skin cancer will vary, depending on its location, size, type and depth of the lesions. Small skin cancers limited to the surface of the skin or precancerous skin lesions known as actinic keratoses may not require treatment beyond an initial skin biopsy or a procedure that uses liquid nitrogen to freeze and remove the entire growth.

In addition to surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy, researchers are focusing on the development of treatments that directly target specific mutations in melanoma cells or that harness the body's immune system to attack melanoma. These and other ongoing advancements are leading to improvements in survival rates for patients with advanced melanoma.

Slip, Slop, Slap & Wrap to Reduce Your Risk

The majority of all skin cancers are caused by overexposure to UV light rays – either from the sun (a natural source) or from an artificial source, such as tanning beds. On average, a person's risk for melanoma doubles if they have had more than five sunburns. Even just one blistering sunburn in childhood or adolescence more than doubles a person's chances of developing melanoma later in life.

Here are ways to reduce your risk:

- Whenever you are in the sun, wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30+.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Avoid exposure to harmful chemicals, including tobacco, so don't smoke.
- Watch for any changes in moles or new suspicious skin growths.
- Schedule an annual skin check with a healthcare professional.

Especially here in Florida, it is important to stay aware of the risks of too much sun exposure and take precautions to protect yourself and your family. To enjoy the outdoors safely, remember this simple formula: Slip, Slop, Slap & Wrap – Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat and wrap on sunglasses to protect your eyes!

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By Bruce Hancock

Discover More Options and Details Regarding a Reverse Mortgage

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.

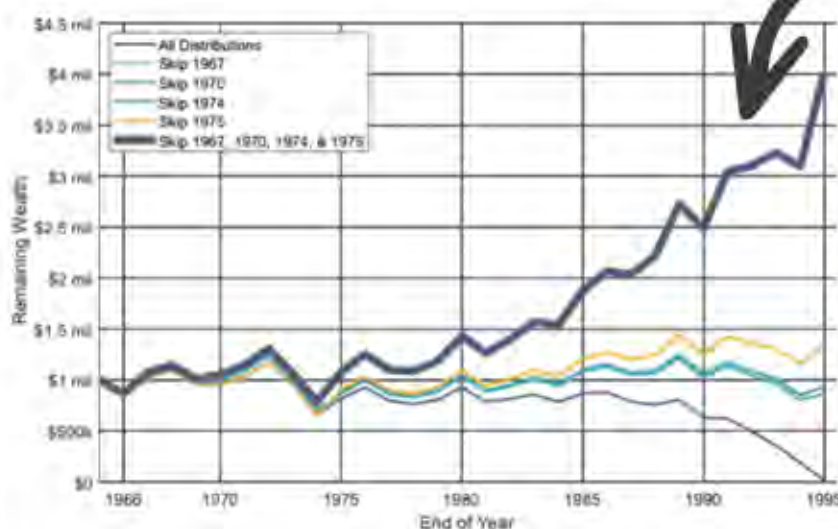
It's a common misconception to view a reverse mortgage as looming financial woe. Reverse mortgages are not to be looked at as a last resort to economic difficulty, but rather as an opportunity to build proceeds and profit for your retirement and perhaps your mounting healthcare bills.

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.

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*Sequence Risk and the Portfolio Impact of Skipping a Year of Distributions Using S&P Data, 1966-1995, S&P 500

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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.

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Summer Home Buying Tips

TASHA OSBOURNE, BA - PREMIER SOTHEBYS INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Whether you're a first-time homebuyer or a veteran real estate investor, if you're thinking about buying a home in summer, one fact holds true: with the nicer weather comes increased competition for the home you want. In fact, considerations such as "which is the best time to buy a home" are often pointless during the summer months. If you find the property you want, you need to do what you can to ensure you secure that property.

Many summer homebuyers approach the process just as they would any other time of year and miss out on that resident (or investment) opportunity they're searching for. But what they don't know is that many of the mistakes they made buying real estate in the summer could have, and should have, been avoided.

Here are three key mistakes to avoid when buying a home in summer that will boost your chances to land the home (or investment property) of your dreams.

MISTAKE #1: GOING IN WITH BLINDERS ON

There are many good reasons for buying a home in summer: The weather is ideal, there's less interruption for the kids, and, with foliage in full bloom, each would-be property looks its absolute best. But there are factors that make buying a home in summer challenging. Namely, elevated prices and an even more elevated level of competition for the properties you want. As you pound the pavement looking for your next property, you may encounter bidding wars and high-pressure situations in which you're forced to act quicker than you might like.

Contrary to popular opinion, summer is not the boon of plentiful inventory it used to be. The last decade has seen low-inventory rates during summer, even in the most unlikely of markets. Couple that with the fact many homebuyers are navigating their own home selling experience at the very same time they are looking to purchase a new property, and buying a home during summer can be one of the most stressful and frustrating experiences you can engage in.



Though there's no magic pill that can eradicate these conditions, it's important to focus on what you can control in the summer homebuying process: your loan application, your credit worthiness, your budget. Try not to give too much energy or focus to the things you can't control; your sanity (and homebuying prospects) will be better for it.

MISTAKE #2: NOT BEING READY TO CLOSE

If there's one rule to the real estate seasonality of summer homebuying, it's that there's "little time for blinking." The ability to take quick, decisive action is vital in any homebuying environment, and this is doubly true during the summer months.

This means doing the following:

- **Be prepared to make offers quickly:** Know your budget and what you're comfortable offering before you get into the nuts-and-bolts of looking for a home.
- **Don't expect a lengthy negotiation:** With low inventories and added competition, it's likely you'll get push-back on a request to the seller to lower the price.
- **Know your wish list:** Are there features you must have in a property? Is there a location (or two) that are deal-breakers in your home search? Know ahead of time what your homebuying priorities are so you can churn out those offers quicker than the competition.
- **Begin with the end in mind:** Do you want to move in before the kids start school in late August? Do you want to enjoy your first Labor Day barbecue in your new home? Well, it may take months to finalize a home purchase, so start looking earlier than anticipated.

MISTAKE #3: MISSING THE WARNING SIGNS

Summer is a pleasant time to look for a home, but the warm, dry weather can mask serious problems under the "hood" of your potential property acquisitions. For one, summer weather can hide moisture problems that may exist in a home. This can be countered by examining doors and window frames to ensure there's no warping, swelling or large gaps that let unwanted moisture and air into the property.

Another area to look at are walls and ceiling. Check for watermarks and don't forget to look for hints of mold or mildew that are warning signs there may be something more serious going on in the house. This whole cursory examination shouldn't be relegated solely to the interior of the property. Be sure to walk around the outside of the home; discolored patches of grass — surrounded by green — can indicate issues that need to be addressed. Though most homebuyers won't do this, stooping down and taking in a quick whiff underneath the house will often tell you more about a property than an open-house info sheet.

Most of these warning signs should be noticed during a thorough home inspection. Speed is a crucial part of your homebuying repertoire, and the more time and energy you spend on properties that won't end up satisfying you — or have serious structural issues — is time and energy that could have been spent on something far more to your liking.

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CATARACTS: KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

June is Cataract Awareness Month, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology wants to remind everyone, especially folks age 60 and older, that timely detection and treatment of cataracts is essential to protecting healthy vision.

Although anyone can develop a cataract, some people are more susceptible than others. Factors such as diabetes, family medical history, continued sunlight exposure, high blood pressure, eye injury, previous eye surgery, smoking, heavy drinking, obesity, extended use of corticosteroids and uveitis (eye inflammation) can increase the chance of developing cataracts. Ultimately, however, the most common cause of cataracts is simple aging. Time allows for the build-up of proteins and a loss of flexibility within the lens, diminishing its capacity to utilize light effectively. Over time, as the lens continues to thicken and its opaqueness becomes more severe, serious vision loss, even total blindness can occur. Nearly everyone who lives long enough will develop at least one cataract, and more often than not, both eyes will be affected.

Types of Cataracts

People with nuclear cataracts (which form in the center of the lens) may experience new or improved nearsightedness (close-up vision), but this improvement is temporary, and eventually, sometimes rapidly, vision will become blurred and distorted.

Cortical cataracts form on the outer edge of the cortex of the lens, appearing as cloudy or yellowish wedge-shaped growths.

Posterior subcapsular cataracts form near the back of the lens, diminishing light, colors and details, and causing glare and halos around light sources. These can progress faster than other types of cataracts.

Congenital cataracts, or cataracts people are born with, may and may not impact vision, but once they do, they can progress like other cataracts and should be addressed once vision becomes impaired.

Symptoms of Cataracts

Cataracts grow stealthily and vision changes can be so subtle that they often go unnoticed until problems become severe. Symptoms vary from person to person, depending on the size and location of the cataract, but the following symptoms can occur singly or in combination:

- Diminishing or poor night vision
- Halos around lights at night
- Clouded, muted or yellowed colors
- Distortion of fine details
- Sensitivity to light and glare
- Double vision in one eye
- Frequent need for new prescription lenses



Preventing Cataracts

While there is no concrete medical evidence that cataracts can be prevented, certain commonsense guidelines known to promote overall eye health may support cataract prevention and mitigation. It is wise to do the following:

Wear sunglasses – Sunglasses rated to block 100% of UV light can help protect your eyes from issues related to sun exposure, including photokeratitis (sunburn of the eyes), skin cancer of the eyelids, and cataracts.

Know your numbers – Having regular tests for blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and other health factors and taking steps to keep those numbers in line is smart for every aspect of your health, including your eye health.

Eat better – Add more vegetables and fruits to your diet. No vitamin supplement provides the same highly-absorbable and -useable vitamins, nutrients and fiber as does food. Adding more colorful vegetables and fruits to your daily routine will deliver quality antioxidants to help your eyes, body and brain enjoy optimal health.

Quit smoking – No matter how many times you have tried before, try again. Quitting smoking today provides rapid health benefits. New medications and other services can help more people quit than ever before, so talk to your clinician or eye doctor about what's available to help you quit once and for all.

Get regular eye exams – Only a dilated eye exam can reveal the full array of stealthy sight-stealing conditions like cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration. Whatever your age, schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye doctor, who will review your history, make recommendations about how often to get routine screening, and create a personalized healthy-vision plan to keep your eyes and vision clear and comfortable.

When to See an Eye Doctor for Cataracts

Certainly, you should make an appointment with an eye doctor if you notice sudden or obvious changes in your vision, including worsening eyesight, floaters, flashes of light, eye pain, inflammation or sudden headache. Even without symptoms, it's important to make an appointment for a comprehensive eye exam so a record of your healthy eyes can be established for future comparison.

As with all medical conditions, the earlier a problem is identified, the more easily it can be treated, halted or prevented entirely. So, planning for regular comprehensive eyes exams while your eyes are functioning normally is always the best path to a lifetime of clear, reliable vision.

An Eye Exam vs. a Vision Exam

While it's normal for anyone who needs prescription lenses to see an increase in their prescription needs over time, cataracts can accelerate and worsen vision changes, and a simple vision exam can't be relied upon to reveal cataracts. That's why everyone, especially people ages 60 and older, as well as those with added risk factors like diabetes or previous eye injury, should schedule a comprehensive eye exam every one to two years, not only to spot cataracts, but also to catch early signs of glaucoma, macular degeneration, chronic dry eye and other issues that can damage eye health and eyesight. By identifying problems before they have a chance to cause vision loss, your eye doctor can advise you about how to protect – and possibly restore – crisp, healthy vision.

Lake Eye for Complete Cataract Care

When it comes to cataract diagnosis and safe, effective treatment, experience counts. As a local eye care pioneer in the latest and most advanced technologies and procedures, Lake Eye (a US Eye Company) is the region's forerunner in cataract surgery and intraocular lens (IOL) replacement. With many years in practice and 40,000+ collective successful cataract surgeries behind them, our Board-certified eye surgeons offer unparalleled experience in the latest cataract treatments, including Femto refractive laser cataract surgery, combined cataract and glaucoma surgery, and precision mapping and placement of a complete range of IOLs, including toric, monofocal, multifocal, accommodating and extended range varieties from leading medical manufacturers.

If you're due for a comprehensive eye exam or would like more information on our array of options for cataract treatment, we invite you to contact your local Lake Eye. We're here to help you envision a wonderful life.

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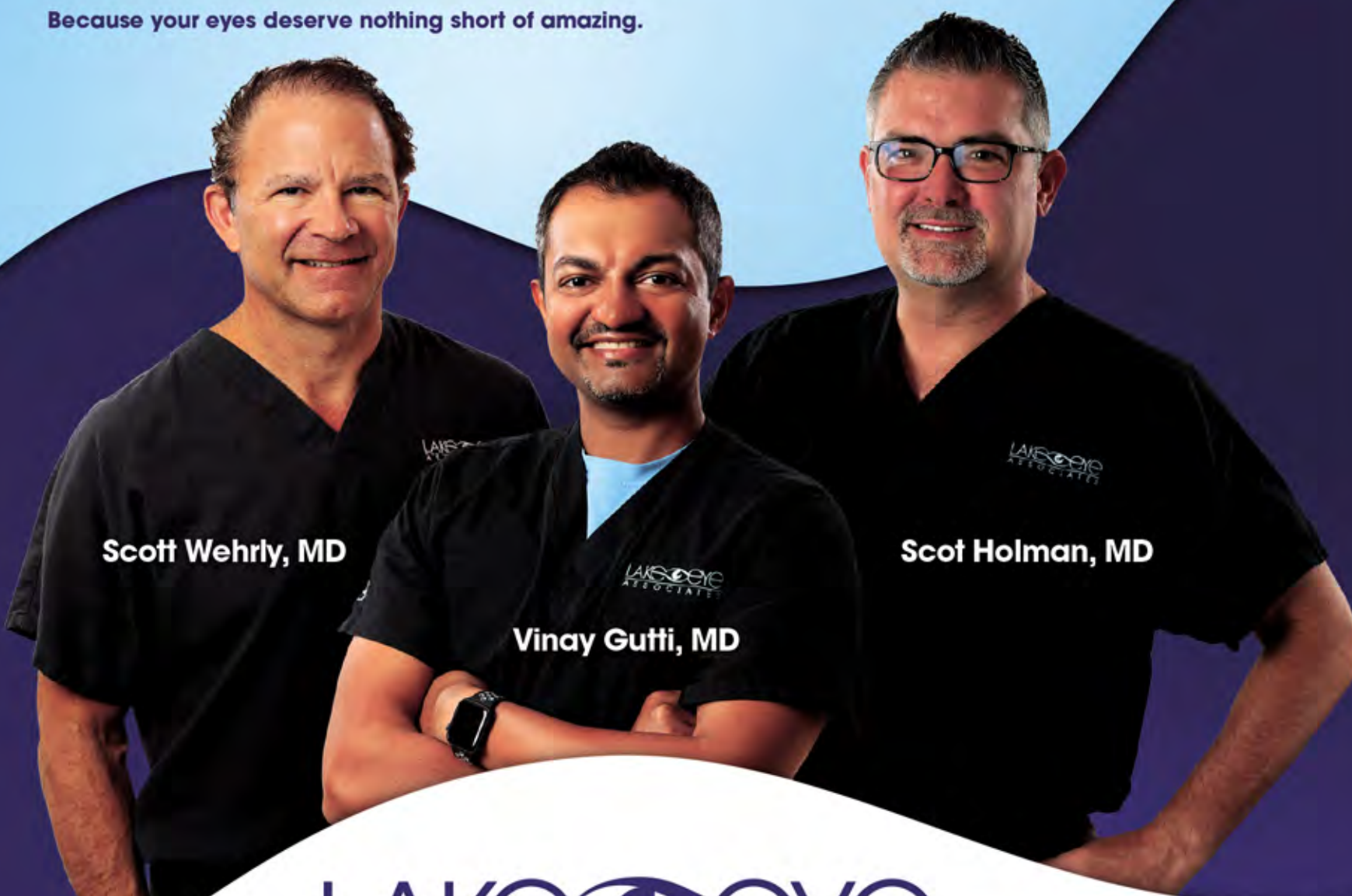
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9 TIPS TO PREVENT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

By Nasser Razack, MD, JD

Alzheimer's has a devastating effect that many people take for granted. Let's discuss nine ways to prevent the disease and promote better brain health.

1. Engage in brisk walking for at least 30 minutes five times a week. This can reduce Alzheimer's disease risk by 33%. Vigorous aerobic exercise performed three times weekly for at least 20 minutes can also bring it down to 50%. Quite simply, exercise delivers more oxygen and nutrients to your brain, helps repair damage, and removes toxins.

2. Partake in activities that are interactive and mind-engaging. These include playing challenging games such as chess or bridge. Other activities include learning a new instrument or a new language; you can also partake in a new practice such as yoga. These new and diverse activities allow your brain to grow by forming more neural connections. In a sense, all these are also exercise for the brain.

3. Avoid toxins. For example, midlife smoking can double the rate of dementia. Smoking is a fairly obvious toxin, but we are also constantly barraged by other harmful substances throughout our life without knowing it. Please visit Cosmeticsdatabase.com to find out what toxins may be affecting your health. You can check any product you currently use to determine their toxicity.

4. Engage in social activities. A recent Harvard study demonstrated individuals with at least five strong social ties (people they enjoy spending time with) had a 50% reduced rate of cognitive decline compared to those who were more isolated.

5. Have a purpose and life direction. Researchers at Rush University Medical Center demonstrated that people with the highest level of purpose and direction in life had a 2.4-fold reduced risk of developing dementia. So find your passion, pick a cause that is meaningful to you, and work on it regularly!

6. Relax and rejuvenate. There are different ways to do this including prayer, meditation, exploring nature, reading a book, visiting the spa, getting a massage, doing yoga and other forms of exercise. This is important because the opposite of relaxation is stress which can actually damage your brain.

7. Protect your head to prevent brain injury. Patients with head injuries have 2 to 4 times the rate of developing Alzheimer's disease. For most



people, the highest risk of head injury is while driving, so always wear your seatbelt and avoid texting. People who text behind the wheel increase their risks for accidents by as much as 23 times compared to those who don't. One study demonstrated this was equivalent to driving after having four alcoholic drinks. Head injury is also believed to result in increased inflammation, another factor associated with Alzheimer's disease. Recovery from stroke can also increase brain inflammation, with approximately 30% of stroke survivors unfortunately developing dementia.

8. Reduce inflammation. You can achieve this with a non-inflammatory eating plan such as the Mediterranean diet which favors 7 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. This diet also includes wild fish twice weekly, plus lots of nuts, almonds, walnuts, beans, and legumes. Additionally, there is a significant social component to this diet as advocates typically interact with each other while they dine.

Researchers also demonstrated that natural substances can reduce inflammation. Neurcumin® is an all-natural supplement which contains many natural agents uniquely formulated to synergistically fight inflammation.

9. Have a positive outlook. A positive mindset offers tremendous protection against Alzheimer's disease. In "The Nun Study", researchers demonstrated nuns who had the highest usage of positive words and emotions in their journals aged better and lived longer, healthier lives. Even more remarkable, these incredible women donated their bodies to science. When their brains were examined after death, the researchers found biomarkers typically associated with Alzheimer's disease (neurofibrillary tangles and beta-amyloid plaques). However, these nuns did not have Alzheimer's disease symptoms. It's as if they derived a neuro-protective effect by maintaining a positive outlook. Further, this is an extremely strong message that we have to reduce any negativity in our lives. Negativity is literally toxic, even deadly.

You can remember all of these preventative measures by simply recalling the acronym, "PREVENT AD".

P	Purpose and life direction
R	Relax and rejuvenate
E	Exercise daily
V	Very positive outlook
E	Engage in social interactions
N	No head injuries
T	Toxin avoidance
A	Activities that stimulate your mind
D	Diet (anti-inflammatory)

It also helps to partner with a prevention-oriented physician. Specifically, find a physician that understands the importance of exercise and nutrition in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease. Notice that this is the last item on the list because everyone must be proactive when it comes to healthcare. No one is more concerned with your health than you are. Partnering with a physician is great but you must be in control of your daily activities which, compounded over time, will either hurt you or help you.

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 strokenerd@gmail.com for more information.

available at 



About Nasser Razack, MD, JD

Dr. Razack currently practices as a neurointerventional surgeon 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.



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.



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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.



Hearing Loss Linked to Alzheimer's Disease

June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month. Hearing loss is connected to a number of other health conditions. Several studies have indicated a link between it and cognitive decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

Arthur Wingfield, who teaches Neuroscience at Brandeis University, has been studying cognitive aging and the link between memory and hearing. Wingfield's research has shown that untreated hearing loss can lead to an increased amount of stress and poorer performance when it comes to memory tests.

"Even if you have just a mild hearing loss that is not being treated, cognitive load increases significantly," said Wingfield. "You have to put in so much effort just to perceive and understand what is being said that you divert resources away from storing what you have heard into your memory." This suggests that when your brain has to put in more effort to properly process and make sense of auditory information, your ability to retain that information may suffer.

A number of studies have also come out showing a link between hearing loss and dementia. In a 2011 study conducted by Frank Lin, an otologist and epidemiologist at John Hopkins University, and his colleagues' indicated that seniors with hearing loss are more likely to develop forms of dementia over time than individuals with normal hearing. And in 2013 they found that "hearing loss is independently associated with the accelerated cognitive decline and incident impairment in community-dwelling older adults." Which means that hearing loss, independent of other causes and contributors, was found to put people at greater risk of cognitive impairment.

Some experts believe that treating hearing loss with professionally fitted hearing aids could help delay dementia. Unfortunately, for many different reasons, a majority of individuals don't seek treatment or tend to delay getting hearing aids for many years.

HOW HEARING AIDS SUPPORT HEALTHY BRAINS

Although research into the causal link between hearing loss and different forms of dementia is ongoing, a few studies suggest that keeping mentally active through social connections or other intellectual stimulation may lower the risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. Some ways to stay cognitively active and keep your brain healthy include:

Staying socially engaged: There are many benefits of being socially active, like reducing the risk of dementia and depression. Volunteering, joining a club, or just interacting with friends and family can keep your brain active and keep your mind sharp.

Maintaining a healthy diet: A diet that consists of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains while being low in fat and added sugar can keep your brain cells healthy and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, like obesity and cardiovascular disease. Eating foods with certain nutrients can help improve memory and slow down cognitive decline.

Getting regular exercise: A number of studies have found an association between physical activity and a reduced risk of cognitive decline. Participating in activities like walking, dancing, or swimming can help lower blood pressure, reduce mental stress, and increase blood flow to the brain, which all helps with the prevention of Alzheimer's.

Sources:
<https://www.signiousa.com/blog/hearing-loss-linked-alzheimers-disease/>

Stimulating your brain: Activities that are mentally stimulating help keep your brain healthy and have been shown to reduce the risk of dementia in seniors by as much as 75 percent. Simple ways to stimulate your mind include reading, word puzzles, and crafts.

The impact of untreated hearing loss shouldn't be ignored. It causes emotional and physical difficulties that reduce your ability to fully enjoy life. Addressing hearing loss by seeing a hearing care professional, and if needed, getting fitted with hearing aids, is one important, proactive step you can take to ensure your long-term physical and mental health.

Contact Premear Hearing today to find out more about your options to improve your hearing or to upgrade your hearing devices.

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Vestibular Balance Issues Should Not be Ignored:

A Physical Therapy Method has Helped Countless Individuals Find Restoration

At least 50 percent of the U.S. population will develop a balance issue, at some point in their lives. Balance disorders typically happen to the aging population, between the ages of 50 to 75, and most of these are related to vestibular disruptions.

Patients suffering from vestibular related disorders frequently experience vertigo, dizziness, nausea, migraines, gait issues (walking), and imbalance. In addition, many patients complain of mood changes and cognitive impairment. Usually, these symptoms stem from issues in the inner ear. More than 69 million Americans have experienced some form of vestibular problems in their lifetime, and that number is on the rise.

BPPV: The most common form of vestibular complications is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo or BPPV.

- Benign - Not life-threatening
- Paroxysmal - Brief spells that come and go
- Positional - Triggered by certain head positions or movements
- Vertigo - A false sense of rotational movement

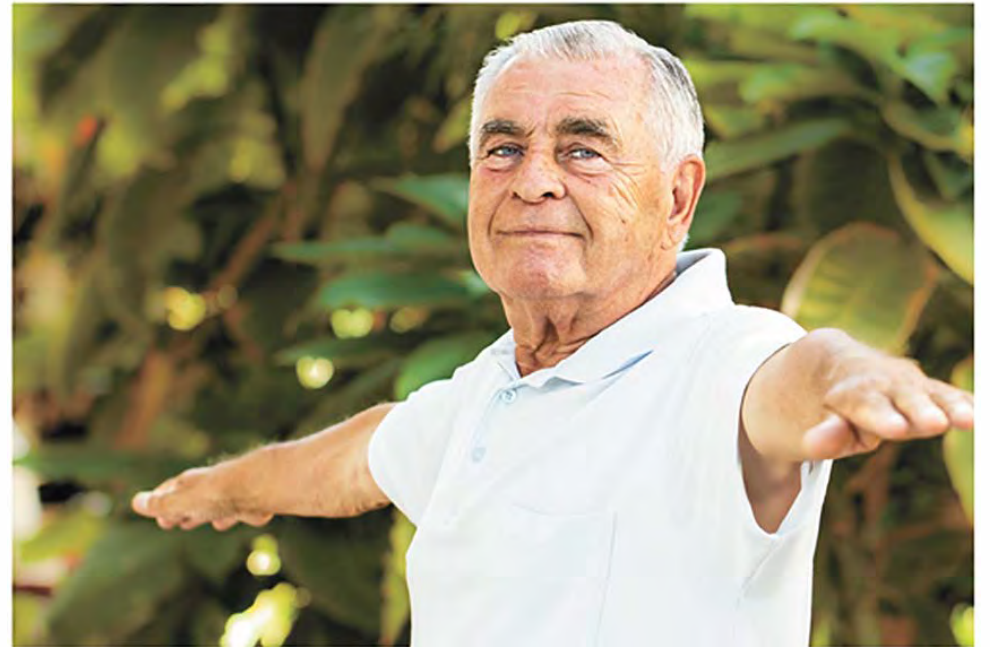
Tiny calcium crystals (otoconia) in the inner ear that slough off and get lodged in the fluid of the ear canals (labyrinth) usually are the cause of BPPV. Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo

can be effectively treated with one of two simple manual therapies that move the crystals through the ear, improving and in many cases alleviating vertigo and the sensations of dizziness. These therapies can be performed in the convenience of Innovative Therapies Group's office.

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.

Patient & Occupational 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, and mobility is critical.



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.

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

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5 Ways a Move to Senior Living Can Increase Well-Being

The choice to move to senior living can be difficult and emotionally charged. Most people understandably prefer to stay at home as long as possible. But, what I have learned through the years is that many folks who could benefit from a senior living community wait too long before making the decision. In fact, I have heard many residents say they wish they had made the move sooner. Here are the top 5 ways that a move to senior living can improve health and well-being.

- **Safety and Security.** The first and perhaps one of the most common reasons for seeking senior living is safety and security. And indeed, that is a big benefit. But there are others, some of which may be unanticipated.

- **Social contact.** Many older adults who are living alone have too little socialization. Almost all of us have heard the research on the importance of having daily social contact. Seniors who live in isolation are at greater risk for a number of health conditions and even of dying. But, I think few people realize how much better they will feel both physically and emotionally when adequate social contact is restored. Like a wilted plant that is given water, many seniors blossom as a result of living with others in a community setting.

- **Improved nutrition.** Poor nutrition is associated with social isolation. Eating is a social time for most of us. When a person lives alone, there can be a lack of motivation to eat and to prepare balanced, nutritious meals. Many older folks who live alone exist on packaged prepared foods that lack good nutrition. Living in a place where nutritious food is readily available and is enjoyed in the company of others makes a big contribution to well-being.

- **Finding new purpose.** Many older adults have experienced a loss of purpose, whether because of declining health or changing roles in life. Loss of purpose is one of the things that some people believe to be an expectation of growing older. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many older people who move into a community setting are surprised by the new purpose they find.



Research studies have shown that those who have a higher sense of purpose have lower rates of dementia and other chronic health conditions.

- **Better access to health care services.** Almost all senior living communities have some level of health care services. These can include a wellness nurse, visiting physician and/or nurse practitioner, therapy services, and daily wellness checks. This can mean that any changes in health will be noticed and addressed sooner, hopefully avoiding a serious problem and/or a hospital visit.

So, if you or a loved one is considering a move to senior living, think about the many benefits that truly outweigh the difficulty of making such a move. Many people before you have done it and are thriving as a result.

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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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Living with Memory Loss and Dementia

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Have you ever had a ‘senior moment’ -- momentarily forgetting why you walked into a room, forgetting where you put something? You laugh about it, calling it an age-related problem, but later wonder was it really a temporary lapse in memory or could it be something more serious?

When is it a serious memory problem?

If you don’t remember your own phone number or address, or forgetting things on a regular basis that your spouse or family member has noticed is an increasing frequency, then you may want to seek further evaluation from your physician. These scenarios could be an indication of memory decline versus a momentary senior moment:

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

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

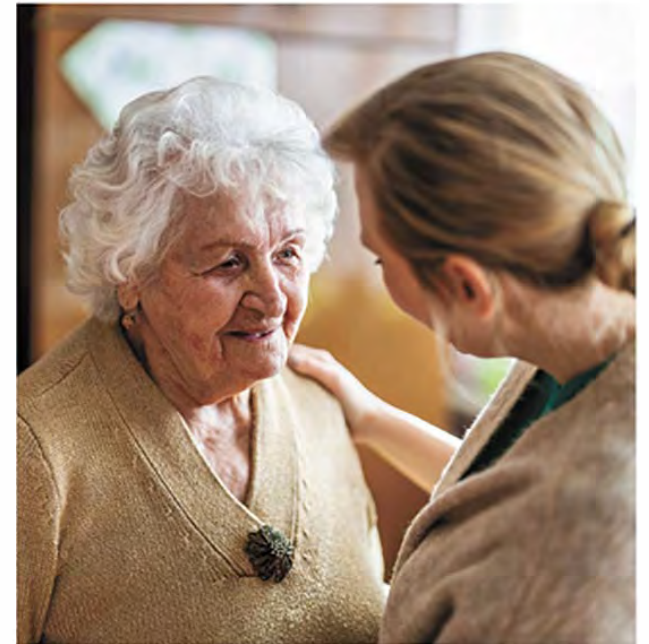
How the brain stores memories

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

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

There are some things to help improve memory such as:

- Make lists, use notes
- Stick to routines and use calendars
- Make associations—connect things in your mind
- Put frequently used items in the same place each time
- Learn new things, do brain games, learn a new language
- Exercise, meditation, and deep breathing
- Hydration is important
- Preventative measures such as stop smoking, drink alcohol in moderation
- Sleep is especially important, regenerative and restorative



Coping with a loved one’s dementia

Hospice of Marion County offers sensitivity training which enables caregivers to have a better understanding of what it’s like to be someone living with dementia. This training includes the Virtual Dementia Tour® which helps caregivers understand the challenges people living with dementia face on a daily basis, including Teepea Snow’s Positive Approach® techniques which teaches HOW to live in a relationship with someone living with dementia. If you are interested in going through this workshop, simply contact Community Education Liaison RN DJ Ryan, who is a Virtual Dementia Tour® Certified Instructor. DJ can be reached at (352) 857-7644 or at dryan@hospiceofmarion.com. Classes are offered monthly in the Elliott Center.

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When is it safe to travel after joint replacement surgery?

Helpful tips for traveling after hip or knee surgery

Hip and knee replacements empower thousands of patients each year to resume active lifestyles. Each patient's recovery is different, and some may return to daily activities, sporting activities and travel sooner than others. This varies based on the patient and the procedure. Travel can take a toll on anyway, so patients in the post-surgical recovery phase need to be especially careful.

Risks of traveling after hip or knee replacement

In general, patients should wait six weeks to travel. Six weeks after surgery is considered the immediate postoperative period and is the optimal time for complications, if any should arise. The main risks of traveling—whether by plane, train, or automobile—are associated with prolonged sitting, dehydration, and blood clots. When you are inactive or seated for extended periods of time, your body can have a difficult time reestablishing blood flow around your surgical site.

Why is blood flow an issue after hip or knee replacement?

When you are active, the muscles of the lower extremity pump blood in a rhythmic state of contraction and relaxation. When you are not active, such as during travel, blood may pool resulting in increased risk of DVT or blood clots. The blood clots can sometimes migrate to the lungs and lead to significant breathing problems and possibly death.

Mitigating risks of complications during travel

Helpful strategies for traveling after surgery

Only you know how your body is feeling and healing after surgery. If you don't "feel up to it," – don't do it. Most airlines will reschedule due to a medical condition. However, if travel is absolutely necessary or if you are traveling between the six- and twelve-week mark, please review these tips for helping to keep you comfortable and safe during travel:

For any travel—plane, train, or automobile:

- Don't overexert yourself. Give your body time to heal.
- Stay well hydrated
- Avoid alcohol
- Take your time and use a cane or rely on your spouse/partner/friend as support
- Wear compression socks/hose to help with blood flow
- Walk/stretch every half hour to an hour in the aisle or on the road to avoid deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Do ankle pumps while seated between walking in the aisle or stopping to walk while on the road
- Use wheelchair services when available
- Take medication just before boarding and/or long excursions
- Avoid large crowds if possible

As a final note, always listen to your body (and your surgeon). If you don't feel comfortable traveling, then push it back a few weeks. Better to be safe than sorry.

IMPORTANT: Always consult with your surgeon about any travel plans before you have your surgery. They may impact your recovery and you may need to move the surgery in order to accommodate your travel plans. Your safety is the number one priority, so always adhere to your surgeon's orders. Each patient is different. There is no "one size fits all" plan for travel after surgery. So, while you can get some idea of when you can travel or tips for traveling, your surgeon's word should be final. This will help ensure the long-term success of your surgery and quality of life. This content is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

99% of patients walk out and go home 90 minutes after surgery, learn how:

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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**.

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Common Foot and Ankle Injuries in Pickleball

1. Ankle strain/sprain – Pickleball involves sudden movements of the feet and ankles forward, backward, and side-to-side. These movements place stress on the ligaments surrounding the ankle joint. Moving side to side can cause the most common ankle injury in Pickleball – the inversion ankle injury. This is an injury where the foot rolls under the ankle and turns under. It produces a strain/sprain to the outside ankle ligaments. The ligaments can become stretched or torn. Repetitive ankle strain/sprains can weaken the normal stability of the outside of the ankle making you prone to repetitive ankle injury. The use of a functional ankle brace that allows full natural ankle range of motion while providing support and stability to the ankle joint is helpful to use for players experiencing ankle strain/sprain. Also, it is extremely important to warm up before every game or practice. Schedule time at least 5 to 10 minutes for warm-up. Start with some easy cardio (i.e., a fast walk, jog, or bike ride) to get your core temperature up. Then, do some light stretching. After play, be sure to cool down by taking a slow walk and doing a bit of stretching too.

2. Achilles tendonitis – Achilles tendinitis occurs from repetitive stress to the Achilles tendon. Pain can appear anywhere along the tendon, from the calf muscle to tendon's attachment at the back of the heel bone. Risk factors associated with Achilles tendonitis are tight calf muscles and suddenly doing activities that put extra stress on the Achilles tendon. With the physical maneuverings of pickleball, this certainly stresses the Achilles tendon. Symptoms include pain and stiffness along the Achilles tendon in the morning or after periods of sitting or rest. The pain at the back of the heel worsens with activity and swelling can occur. Treatment of Achilles tendon strains includes rest, focused stretching of the tendon before/after activities, and eccentric loading exercises.

3. Achilles tendon tear – Achilles tendon rupture can be a complete or partial tear. This happens when the tendon is stretched beyond its ability. This can occur with a forceful and abrupt downward (plantarflexion) movement of the ankle. The Achilles tendon can also be torn when there is sudden forceful pivoting or sudden acceleration in running. This may occur during falling or tripping which, is quite common in "weekend warrior" pickleball players. Many patients describe a snapping sensation with a sudden pain in the back of the ankle or calf. Pain is severe in the back of the ankle and usually there is difficulty to bear weight on the affected foot/ankle. With a complete rupture of the tendon, most cannot flex their foot downward from the ankle. This type of injury will often require surgical repair. Prompt evaluation is imperative for optimal long-term outcome.

4. Plantar fasciitis/heel bruise – Plantar fasciitis and heel bruising will result from overuse or repetitive pounding



on the hard playing surface. Pain can be in the arch area or bottom of the heel. Often, it is in both areas. Pain is sharp in nature to the bottom of the heel and often more painful after inactivity or rest. This is often treated with activity modification, rest, stretching, intrinsic foot exercises, and potentially shoe orthotics or heel cups.

5. Blisters – Blistering of the foot is usually associated with prolonged use of improper footwear and socks. Wear anti-friction socks. Make sure your shoes fit properly. You should NOT be using regular walking or running shoes on a pickleball court. These types of shoes only provide traction when you are moving in a straight line. Pickleball involves fast and frequent side to side movements. Wearing these types of shoes can cause the foot to "stick" and an injury will likely occur. Court shoes are made with a smoother and rounder sole. They do not have deep treads on their sole. The treads are also smaller and closer together than other types of shoes. These court shoe modifications allow you to move and glide on the court.

Disclaimer: This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

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Spiritual Wellness

When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Tim Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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