

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

December 2023

Marion Edition - Monthly

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## Navigating the Holidays

How to Stay Merry and Mindful in the Season of Feasts

## Coping with Grief During the Holidays

## Life with Crohn's

A Comprehensive Guide to Medications and Management

## Promising Trends in Cancer Care

## Promoting Mental Wellness

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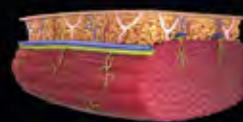
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# Navigating the Holidays:

## How to Stay Merry and Mindful in the Season of Feasts

By Elisha Lopez

**G**reetings, dear companions on the journey to wellness! With the arrival of that enchanting time of year known as the holiday season, we find ourselves immersed in a season brimming with joy, camaraderie, and, of course, delectable feasts. Yet, as we prepare ourselves for this delightful journey, let's not forget that upholding our healthy eating routines is more than just a matter of physical health—it's the secret to safeguarding our spirits and relishing the season we've eagerly awaited throughout the year.

### The Holiday Conundrum

The temptation of hearty, indulgent meals and sweet treats becomes ever more alluring. And let's face it, who can resist the aroma of freshly baked pies and the allure of a traditional dinner? While it's absolutely fine to savor these delights, it's essential to strike a balance between indulgence and maintaining our regular eating routines.

Remember the Mood-Food Connection? This is how the food we consume profoundly affects our mood. You see, the gut-brain connection we explored in previous articles plays a pivotal role here. The foods we eat can influence the composition of our gut microbiome, which, in turn, can affect our mood and overall well-being.

Research has shown that a diet rich in processed foods, sugar, and excessive saturated fats can lead to inflammation in the body, including the brain. This inflammation has been linked to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. On the flip side, a diet abundant in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can support a healthier gut microbiome and contribute to improved mental health.

The Holiday Challenge becomes harder and harder to navigate, but we can enjoy the festivities without derailing our healthy eating routines and subsequently our mood.

**Plan Ahead** - Before the holiday season kicks into high gear, take some time to plan your meals and snacks. Incorporate nutritious options into your holiday menu. For instance, opt for roasted vegetables alongside the mashed potatoes and enjoy a fruit salad alongside the pies.

**Practice Moderation and Mindful Eating** - Remember that it's okay to indulge in your favorite holiday treats, but in moderation. A small slice of pie or a single serving of stuffing won't derail your efforts. The key is to savor these treats mindfully and not overindulge. Pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues. Take your time to savor each bite, and engage in meaningful conversations with loved ones.

**Seek Support and Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself** - Share your commitment to maintaining a healthy eating routine with friends and family. They can provide support and even join you in making healthier choices during holiday meals. It's okay to slip up occasionally. The holidays are a time to enjoy and a little deviation from your routine won't undo all your progress. Be kind to yourself and focus on getting back on track.

By following these strategies, you can savor the holiday season without sacrificing your physical health or your mood all while keeping your joy. Instead of feeling sluggish and regretful after overindulging, you'll find yourself energized and content, ready to fully enjoy the festivities.

A balanced approach to holiday eating not only benefits your physical health but also nurtures your mental well-being. You'll be more present, joyful, and better able to connect with loved ones. After all, isn't that what the holidays are truly about?

When it comes to making significant changes to your diet or health routine, it's always a wise choice to consult with a healthcare professional. They can provide personalized guidance tailored to your unique needs and circumstances, ensuring that you and your family make choices that are safe and suitable for your bodies.

So, as we step into this season of celebration, let's remember that our healthy eating routines are not obstacles but allies in our quest for a truly joyous holiday experience. By nurturing our bodies and minds, we can thrive, flourish, and savor every moment of this magical time of year. Wishing you a season filled with love, laughter, and delicious, mindful feasts!



*Elisha Lopez is the owner of and a real estate broker with Ocala Realty World in Central Florida. Lopez has more than 20 years of experience in real estate with over 10 of them as a broker/owner leading a large team. She's also the founder of the ORW School of Real Estate, which serves real estate students seeking licensure in Florida. In her courses and training sessions, Elisha shares her unique real estate expertise, insider tips and digital marketing strategies. Elisha is a graduate of The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, where she earned a bachelor's degree in interior design. Elisha's No. 1 goal in business and in life is to help others. She operates Ocala Realty World with her husband and brokerage partner, Luis Lopez, who first encouraged her to start a career in real estate two decades ago.*



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# PROMISING TRENDS IN CANCER CARE

**T**he outlook for people diagnosed with cancer is becoming brighter all the time, thanks to a variety of ongoing advancements.

Over 18 million cancer survivors are living in the U.S. today, according to the American Cancer Society. Increasingly, many of the nearly 2 million Americans who will be diagnosed with cancer this year will experience cancer more like a chronic disease than a dim prognosis.

## Screenings Save Lives

Screening tests effective at finding many types of cancer before signs or symptoms appear are now available. The American Cancer Society has recommended screening guidelines for the following cancers:

- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Endometrial cancer
- Lung cancer
- Prostate cancer

Certain cancers are much easier to treat when detected early, preventing thousands of additional cancer cases and deaths.

Recommendations can vary based on your age, family history and lifestyle. Talk to your doctor about cancer screening, and do not skip or delay your recommended screenings. It cannot be overstated: Early diagnosis and treatment are substantial factors in surviving cancer.

## The Power of Genetics

Genetic screening and testing are powerful tools that enable oncologists to diagnose cancers faster and more precisely and rapidly develop customized treatments based on each patient's unique genetic makeup and mutations.

Genetic mutations inherited from our parents can increase the risk of developing certain cancers. Knowing personal risk factors for hereditary cancers can be lifesaving.

Genetic screening involves a review of personal and family cancer history, including type(s) of cancer and age(s) at diagnosis. Based on this information, specially trained genetics specialists can refer individuals for consultation and genetic testing, guide lifestyle changes or explore other preventive options to reduce future risk.

Clinical testing, known as Next Generation Sequencing (NGS), is an advanced form of genetic testing that can simultaneously detect mutations in hundreds of different genes derived from tumor cells. NGS testing provides a more precise understanding of an individual diagnosis. When oncologists know the specific genetic alteration a patient has, they may be able to identify a therapy that directly targets that exact mutation. The results also help to identify clinical trials a patient would be eligible for based on their molecular profile.

## Immunotherapies

Chemotherapy and radiation have been widely used for decades to target cancer cells. While effective, these treatments can also destroy healthy blood cells and harm the body's production of new cells.

Immunotherapies work to stimulate or boost the natural defenses of the body's immune system to work harder to fight cancer. They can be injected directly into a vein, swallowed through a pill or capsule form or applied topically through a cream rubbed onto the skin.

Immunotherapy may be used alone or in combination with chemotherapy, radiation and/or surgery. While side effects can occur, a key difference is that they are often less severe than those encountered with conventional therapies (like chemotherapy, radiation, etc.).

In the last few decades, immunotherapy has been approved for treating many cancers, including bladder, cervical, breast, colorectal, lymphoma and melanoma, among others. Patients may receive immunotherapy in a doctor's office, an oncology clinic or, in some cases, a hospital setting.

## Clinical Research Drives Cancer Treatment Advancements

Every drug or therapy in place today to treat cancer started in a clinical trial.

After promising results are seen in the laboratory, medical breakthroughs then require careful research through closely monitored studies conducted in humans, called clinical trials. These studies deserve credit for new treatments of cancers that were previously considered incurable.

Studies of new cancer drugs or medical procedures are not a last resort but an opportunity to expand an individual's treatment to include early access to the most effective and promising options.

## More Hope on the Horizon

Scientific researchers around the globe continue their work toward a cure for cancer at a very fast pace.

In particular, researchers are focusing on several major areas to improve immunotherapy. Even though immunotherapy can prevent or slow cancer growth, cancer cells have ways to avoid destruction by the immune system. An increased understanding of how cancer cells get around the immune system could lead to the development of new drugs that block those processes and ways to reduce the side effects of treatment.

Cancer vaccines are also a form of immunotherapy. While several vaccines are effective in preventing diseases caused by bacteria and viruses, the development of cancer vaccines is significantly more complicated due to several factors. Currently, four vaccines that can help prevent cancer and two that treat cancer have been approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

Increasingly, immunotherapy and other exciting new advancements are leading to the development of truly targeted therapies to achieve the best possible outcomes. Hope is clearly on the horizon. Patients with cancer and their health care teams have more options to pick from than ever before, with more on the way.



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# EMSCULPTNEO® for Back Pain

By Dr. Tina Chandra

**E**msculpt NEO is a nonsurgical body contouring device that combines high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology with radiofrequency (RF) energy. It strengthens and builds muscles while burning fat at the same time. It can be used to treat the abdomen, buttocks, biceps, triceps, calves the muscles in the back.

## EMSCULPTNEO®

### How does Emsculpt NEO work?

As mentioned above, Emsculpt NEO uses a combination of RF and HIFEM. The radio frequency is used to heat the muscles and the electromagnetic energy then builds muscles. The heating of the muscles is what causes the reduction of fat in the area being treated. While the HIFEM simultaneously causes thousands of muscle contractions in order to improve strength and muscle tone. Combining these two treatments offers optimal results.

The heating of the muscles from the RF raises the temperature of the muscles by several degrees. It is similar to what one would do in a warm-up activity before exercising, but much faster. This part of the procedure lasts less than 4 minutes. When the temperature of the fat is increased, apoptosis occurs. This means that fat cells are permanently damaged and are removed from the body.

The HIFEM energy contracts the muscle fibers in the area being treated at intensities that are not possible in regular exercise. This stress forces the muscles to adapt and results in increased growth of muscle fibers and cells.

### How can Emsculpt NEO help my back?

If you've ever had to visit a chiropractor, physical therapist, or orthopedic surgeon for problems with your back, it is likely that somewhere in the conversation your doctor told you that strengthening your core would help with your current back pain as well as help you to avoid future problems. While Emsculpt NEO won't cure your back problems, it can help to build and strengthen your muscles.

Your core is essentially made of your abdominal muscles. There are four groups of muscles that make up the abdomen: the transversus abdominis, the rectus abdominis, the external obliques, and the internal obliques. The importance of a strong core cannot be overstated when it comes to reducing the risk of injury during any number of activities that call for the use of both the upper and lower body.

Many people have such weak abdominal muscles that strengthening the core can feel almost impossible. Exercise in this zone can lead to pain and sore muscles that can be quite uncomfortable for days. For this reason, many people give up and live with recurring back pain.

This is where Emsculpt can help. This groundbreaking technology uses high intensity, focused electromagnetic waves to create supramaximal muscle contractions. The best part is that you can expect no lingering pain after the session. You can strengthen your core without risking further injury and help your spine along the way. Emsculpt will also burn fat while building muscle, so not only will you benefit from the stronger core, but you can also benefit from body contouring and toning as well.<sup>1</sup>

### What can I expect during an Emsculpt NEO session?

During a 30-minute session, an applicator is strapped to the area being treated, in this case, the patient's back. The sessions do not require the use of anesthetic or sedatives and the patient will typically be lying on their side or back. The technician then slowly increases the RF heat and the HIFEM pulsing depending on the client's comfort level. Throughout each session and in future sessions, the applicator will get warmer and the pulses will increase in intensity.

These pulses (or waves) cause contractions on the target site which may feel mildly discomforting and strange to the patient but will cause no actual pain. During treatment, the muscles in the target area will have contracted around 200,000 times; a feat that would take thousands of hours in the gym to replicate. This not only strengthens the muscles in the area but also destroys neighboring fat cells as well. The intensity of these contractions can also be fine-tuned to fit the specific needs of each patient.<sup>2</sup>

Clients will normally have one session a week for four consecutive weeks. Each session lasts 30 minutes and there is no down-time afterwards. The client can return to work or go to dinner immediately following a session.

If you are interested in learning more about Emsculpt NEO from trusted professionals with years of experience, contact Chandra Wellness Center today.

#### References:

1. How Emsculpt can help your back pain: Slim Studio bodysculpting, Slim Studio. Available at: <https://slimstudioatlanta.com/blog/how-emsulpt-can-help-your-back-pain/>.
2. Dr. Nash – Emsculpt for back pain (2022) drnashcares. Available at: <https://drnashcares.com/emsulpt/>

### DR. TINA CHANDRA

Dr. Tina Chandra is committed to providing her patients with excellence and quality care with the latest in technological advances. With her exceptional skill and unique training in cosmetic dentistry, neuromuscular (TMJ/TMD) and physiologic dentistry, sleep apnea, snoring and airway management, Dr. Chandra and her team pledge to exceed your expectations in a professional, caring manner with a personal touch.



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Ravi Chandra, MD, Ocala's leading vascular surgeon is the only surgeon in Ocala, Florida with outstanding credentials and is quadruple Board certified by the American Board of Endovascular Medicine, American Board of Vascular Medicine, the American Board of Surgery, and the American Board of Phlebology. Dr. Chandra has the extreme honor of being appointed to the Florida Board of Medicine by Governor Ron DeSantis on April 4, 2021.



With over 30 years of experience and serving his patients with above standard and excellence in surgical care, Dr. Ravi Chandra is excited to branch out and offer wellness treatments to help his vascular patients with incontinence problems. He and his team are committed to bringing health and wellness back into your life.



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# STOP OVERLOOKING SIGNS OF INCONTINENCE

**U**rinary Incontinence is a common medical condition that affects over 40 million Americans, yet it often goes untreated or unrecognized. The reason for this trend is multifactorial, spanning from embarrassment to speak about this topic to dealing with more acute or morbid conditions that require focused attention.

Nevertheless, it is a treatable condition that frequently affects the quality of life for patients. Incontinence is classified as stress, urge, mixed and overflow.

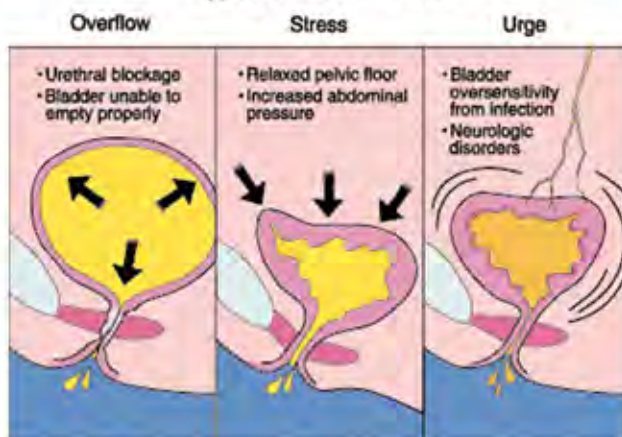
In this article we will address some particular issues about urge incontinence. Urinary urge incontinence (UII) is defined as a sudden uncontrollable urge to urinate with or without frequent urination and associated leakage of urine. With urge incontinence, the bladder contracts and squeezes out urine involuntarily.

## Accidental urination can be triggered by:

- sudden change in position or activity
- hearing or touching running water
- drinking a small amount of liquid

Patients with overactive bladder symptoms, such as urinary urgency, frequency and nocturia, may have associated incontinence over 60% of the time. Though more common in women than men overall, after the age of 70 the prevalence in both sexes is about equal.

## Types of Incontinence



There are two bladder abnormalities that are associated with UII: neurogenic overactivity and detrusor overactivity (DO).

Neurogenic bladder occurs when there is interruption in the normal nerve conduction from the brain or spinal cord above the sacrum to the bladder, and results in loss of bladder sensation and motor control. Conditions associated with neurogenic bladder include the following:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Intervertebral disk disease
- Cerebrovascular events
- Diabetes
- Traumatic brain or upper spinal cord injury
- Brain or spinal cord tumors

DO can occur due to multiple conditions, and many times as a sequel of others; frequently, it may be idiopathic. Dysfunctions of the detrusor muscle or nerve pathways are the culprits for the bladder overactivity. Conditions that can lead to DO include:

- Bladder polyps and tumors
- Urinary tract infections
- Bladder calculi
- Bladder outlet obstruction from BPH or stricture disease



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Medications, such as diuretics, increase the urgency and frequency of urination in some people, especially the elderly and bedridden. Dosage modification may ameliorate the bothersome symptoms. Dietary habits may lead to significant voiding symptoms. Caffeine (e.g., in coffee, tea, chocolate), carbonated beverages, spicy foods and tomato-based foods can irritate the bladder and cause detrusor instability, resulting in urge incontinence.

The treatment and management of urge incontinence includes nonsurgical and surgical modalities. An important factor, however, is identifying the potentially morbid or life-threatening conditions that may lead to incontinence, such as bladder cancer, recurrent UTI or neurogenic disorders.

# SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

**F**or today's seniors, the desire to stay at home is strong. In fact, the modern elderly population is much different from its past counterparts. Almost 90% of people over 65 want to live in their home and community as long as possible, according to a report by the AARP Public Policy Institute and the National Conference of State Legislatures. A whopping 80% believe they will stay in their home for the remainder of their life. Aging in place allows seniors to enjoy all the comforts their familiar home has to offer. Today's options to support seniors in their home offer seniors and their families the peace of mind and support to make staying at home a healthy option.



## AGING IN PLACE PROVIDES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Seniors have spent a lifetime building family relationships and likely years bonding with neighbors. Removing older adults from their long-time homes can make them feel like those connections have weakened. According to research published in *The Gerontologist*, the majority of seniors want to age in place because of the attachment and familiarity they feel with their home and communities.

## IT FIGHTS ISOLATION

That sense of community provided through aging in place does more than make seniors feel comfortable. It is also integral for fighting feelings of isolation, a dangerous trend among seniors. Researchers from the University of Chicago found a link between loneliness and high blood pressure in older adults. The study authors noted that feelings of loneliness can occur even when a senior is surrounded by people. This further demonstrates the importance of the familiarity and sense of community provided through aging in place.

Besides being preferred by seniors, aging in place offers another benefit: savings.

While it may seem that aging at home would be more expensive than moving to a nursing or assisted living home, the opposite is actually true. With help from a home healthcare worker, staying in your home costs about 20% of what a nursing home costs on a monthly basis.

## HOME HEALTH CARE CAN HELP

For many families and seniors, home health care is a beneficial choice – a safe and affordable solution that supports the family, while allowing seniors to stay in the comfort of their own homes and communities.

## HERE ARE TEN WAYS HOME HEALTH CARE CAN SUPPORT YOU:

1. Home health care professionals can be there when needed. If family and loved ones are a distance away, home health care can give you peace of mind. Trained and qualified professionals

can assess safety risks and make simple corrections in the home – from placing a rug on a slippery floor, to recommendations for ambulatory assistance.

2. Home care supports activities of daily living (ADLs). In-home services allow adults to receive day-to-day help with the personal care they need, preserving their dignity and maintaining a good quality of life. Assistance with activities of daily living can include bathing, grooming, and medication reminders.

3. Access to skilled nursing care at home. Skilled medical care can be delivered at home by thoroughly supervised nurses, certified, licensed and knowledgeable about high-technology medical equipment. Home health care can ensure that your loved one's complex medical needs are met.

4. Support with diet and nutrition. Adults age 65 and older, people with chronic conditions, and those recently discharged from a hospital or nursing facility are likely to be nutritionally at-risk. Aging, bed rest, illness, and injury can all contribute to the loss of lean body mass. Home care may include nutritional counseling and home-cooked meals to protect against malnutrition.

5. Medication management. Multiple prescriptions it can be confusing to manage. Home health care professionals can ensure the right medications are being taken at the right times to control health conditions and prevent harmful drug interactions.

6. Home health care professionals provide caring companionship. Research shows that aging adults stay healthier with social interaction. Home health aides can become trusted friends for walks, reading, cards, games, movies, meals, and other social activities. Accompaniment on errands such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other activities are also added benefits.

7. Home care helps with light household chores. When aging adults struggle the daily demands of housework, such as laundry, vacuuming, dishes, and simple chores home care helps to consistently maintain a safe and healthy living environment.

8. Home health care clients have comparable or better health outcomes. Research has shown that clinical results are comparable or better with fewer complications when home care is provided to individuals with chronic conditions such as pneumonia, diabetes, or COPD.

9. One-on-one focus and support. Home health care services are truly unique, providing meaningful, one-on-one personal and skilled care that builds strong bonds between professionals and their clients. According to the *Cleveland Clinical Journal* a person who is seen by a clinician in the comfort of home more readily trusts that the health care team places their needs first.

10. An affordable alternative to facility or hospital care. According to the National Association of Home Care, the average cost of care from a skilled nursing facility is \$544 dollars per day, while the average cost of home health care is \$132 dollars.

## OUR PROMISE

Through Trusted HomeCare Home Care Services, you can rest assured that your loved one and family will be safe and secure in a positive environment right at their home. Even if you simply have questions or want to understand how to better care for your elderly loved one experiencing the inevitable process of aging, we are able to help with that.

## TRUSTED HOMECARE SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT

As a whole group, our mission statement says that we are here to access the needs of each client to help them maintain their independence while living in their own homes and communities.

Contact our team at  
Trusted HomeCare and let's discuss  
how we can support  
you or your loved one  
**352-240-7522**

# COPING WITH GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

**D**eath can happen to anyone at any age. It can be a sudden accident or anticipated over a long period of time due to a critical illness. Coping with grief during the holiday season is especially difficult.

There's a song about the holidays being "the most wonderful time of the year." However, for those facing the imminent death or already grieving the loss of a loved one, this time of year can be hard as not only are they navigating the season without their loved one but lost traditions and celebrations.

Grief experts in hospice and palliative care organizations understand how difficult this time of year can be and are available to assist grieving families now or any time throughout the year. Especially during the holiday season they recommend making decisions the grieving person feels is right for them. Here are some tips:

- Be willing to change traditions by creating new rituals to help lessen the pain and loss; find new ways of celebrating the holiday while remembering them.
- Help reduce stress by prioritizing and focusing on projects that bring you joy; pare down the gift list and cards that get sent, or let someone else cook and host the dinner.
- Share stories about your loved one around the table.
- Consider that children grieve differently than adults; you may want to do something special with your child to help remember the loved one lost.
- Remember those who have died in a meaningful way that honors them; volunteer with an organization special to them or donate to their favorite charity.
- Make a plan, but stay flexible and remember you shouldn't feel pressure to do anything you're not comfortable doing.
- Take time for yourself; be sure to include self-care in how you spend your holidays.



Focusing on the positive memories and remembering the life shared with friends and family can help you cope. Hospice of Marion County is hosting **Keeping the Holidays Light on Thursday, December 18** at 1:00 pm at the Elliott Center, 3231 SW 34th Avenue, in Ocala. This free event is offered to remember those who filled our lives with love and light. It's an interactive grief workshop that includes creating a permanent memento in honor of your loved one using the photos you bring. RSVP to reserve your space by calling **(352) 873-7456**.

Grief is a process that takes time. Having a wide range of emotions is normal and different for everyone. Sharing your feelings with others can help you process your emotions and cope.

The Monarch Center for Hope and Healing, a program of Hospice of Marion County, provides grief counseling at no charge for Marion County residents. This service is provided by trained professionals and offers counseling sessions to children, teens and adults, individuals or groups. Everyone will eventually experience the loss of a friend or loved one and the Monarch Center grief counselors are there to help guide you through your grief journey. Visit [MonarchCenter-Marion.com](http://MonarchCenter-Marion.com) to learn more or call **(352) 873-7456** to schedule an appointment.

**HOSPICE** OF MARION COUNTY  **HOSPICE OF MARION COUNTY**

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

# THE IMPACT ON CANNABIDIOL ON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

By Dr. Nathalie Solomon: PharmD, CPH

Occasional feelings of anxiety or depression are nothing to be alarmed about. Nearly everyone will experience these unwanted feelings at some time or another. However, when the frequency and intensity of either begins to interrupt your day-to-day life, it may be time to get help. While avoiding certain places, people, and situations may be helpful, sometimes it is impossible. Living in a bubble just isn't possible or healthy. Having something to help calm your fears and worries can be beneficial.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is a cannabinoid from the Cannabis sativa plant. It, along with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), has been researched extensively and has been shown to bind to cannabinoid receptors in the brain. CBD, unlike THC, does not produce a "high" and offers a variety of health benefits. Among those benefits is the treatment of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety.

## Benefits of CBD

CBD acts on opioid and glycine receptors in the body. These receptors are mostly found in the central and peripheral nervous systems. They regulate pain in the body. It also acts on the neurotransmitter serotonin, which helps us feel good in general. Low serotonin levels are closely associated with depression and may also cause anxiety.

## Research has shown that some of the benefits of CBD can include:

- Reducing seizures
- Reducing inflammation
- Reducing pain
- Regulating the immune system
- Reducing anxiety

Conventional medicines generally used to treat low serotonin are called serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI). Their common trade names are Zoloft and Prozac. These are only available by prescription. However, some studies have shown that instead of using SSRIs to treat anxiety, some patients may be able to manage their condition with CBD instead. (Always speak to your doctor before making any changes to prescribed medications.)

## Cannabinoids for depression

Experts believe that CBD's potential benefits for depression are related to its positive effect on serotonin receptors in the brain.

Low serotonin levels are likely connected to depression. CBD doesn't necessarily boost serotonin levels, but it may affect how your brain's chemical receptors respond to the serotonin that's already in your system.

## Cannabinoids for anxiety

Depression and anxiety commonly occur together, and people with one are more likely to have the other. CBD does appear to help with both.

One study found that people who took 600 milligrams (mg) of CBD experienced significantly less social anxiety than people who took a placebo. Another study used a smaller dose of 300 mg, which reduced levels of anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

Anxiety may also have a link to low serotonin, so CBD's effect on serotonin receptors might partly explain these beneficial effects.

## How to use CBD for depression and anxiety

Since CBD has not yet been given clear FDA guidance, the best way to use CBD for anxiety and depression varies from person to person. Someone may find that a certain type and certain dosage works, while the same type and dosage has little effect on someone else. A bit of trial and error may be necessary in order to reach optimal effectiveness. (This is also true with conventional medicines too, so no need to be alarmed.)

## The following are some of the forms in which CBD is available:

- Vapes heat CBD oil giving off an inhalable vapor.
- Flowers (dried hemp plants) can be smoked.
- Gummies are chewable and sweet like the popular candies.
- Oils and tinctures are consumed orally usually from droppers.
- Sprays can be sprayed into the mouth, usually under the tongue.
- Capsules or tablets are taken orally.
- Creams and gels are absorbed through the skin.

Again, trying different types and doses may be necessary. For example, you may find that vaping is more effective than gummies while another may find smoking to be most effective. Trying the different types will help you find what is right for you.

1. Holland, K. (2019) CBD for depression: What are the benefits? Healthline. Healthline Media. Available at: <https://www.healthline.com/health/cbd-for-depression#for-anxiety>.

Usually the effects of oral CBDs, such as gummies or capsules, are felt within 30 minutes or a little more. Smoking or vaping usually has a more immediate effect.

These various forms can be used throughout the day to relieve anxiety. Some find it helpful to take them in the morning with breakfast.

If you are interested in learning more, *The Greene Pharmacist* offers a full consultation on any Hemp Extract needs you may have. Worried about dosages? Worried about drug interactions? Not sure if Hemp Extract can help you? Under the expertise of a licensed pharmacist, each product comes with the service of cannabis consultations, drug-drug interaction checks, assistance of product selection or dosage recommendations. With topical, oral, and pet products we have something for everyone in your household. Send us an email or message our Facebook page to speak to our pharmacist Dr. Solomon.



**Dr. Nathalie Solomon: PharmD, CPH**

Dr. Solomon is our licensed on staff pharmacist. She graduated from the University of Florida college of pharmacy and has 15 years of combined pharmacy experience. As a wife, mother, and provider to her family she discovered the medicinal value of cannabis. She decided to devote her career in creating valuable Hemp Extract products that are safely formulated and tested. She also wanted to guarantee that her Hemp Extract products came with the opportunity to be counseled by a pharmacist to ensure the consumer receive a product that can be trusted. There are not many companies that have a direct link to this kind of knowledge right at the customers fingertips and we are so lucky to have her!



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# Promoting Mental Wellness in Assisted Living Communities During Festive Seasons

By Elizabeth Mello, Executive Director

**T**he holiday season often evokes feelings of joy and togetherness. For individuals residing in assisted living communities, this time of year can be particularly significant in fostering mental well-being. The convergence of festivities, engaging activities, and the presence of friends and family can play a pivotal role in uplifting spirits and promoting positive mental health.

Assisted living facilities are increasingly recognizing the importance of integrating festive activities into their programs. These initiatives aim not only to celebrate the holidays but also to support the emotional and psychological well-being of their residents. From themed decorations adorning common areas to a diverse array of events and activities, these communities strive to create an ambiance that promotes joy, connection, and a sense of belonging.

Engaging residents in holiday-themed activities is a cornerstone of enhancing mental health during this time. Craft workshops for creating decorations, cooking classes for baking traditional treats, and music sessions featuring beloved holiday tunes are among the many activities organized. These activities not only spark creativity but also encourage social interaction and a sense of accomplishment, which can significantly impact residents' mental and emotional state.

Moreover, the presence of people around—be it fellow residents, staff members, or visiting family and friends—contributes significantly to the festive spirit and mental well-being. Shared meals, gatherings, and celebrations allow individuals to connect, reminisce, and build meaningful relationships. The warmth and support offered by these connections help combat feelings of isolation that some individuals might experience, especially during the holiday season.

It's essential to recognize that for some residents, the holiday season might evoke feelings of nostalgia, grief, or loneliness due to past memories or absence of loved ones. Assisted living communities implement support systems to address these emotions sensitively. Counseling services, support groups, and personalized care plans are often available to assist



residents in coping with these emotions, ensuring they feel heard, understood, and supported during this time.

Additionally, the integration of physical activities and mindfulness practices complements the festive celebrations. Exercise classes tailored to seniors' needs, yoga sessions, or nature walks amid decorated surroundings offer opportunities for relaxation, physical well-being, and stress reduction. These activities not only promote a healthy lifestyle but also contribute significantly to mental wellness by reducing anxiety and fostering a positive mood.

Beyond the immediate benefits to the residents, involving them in planning and organizing these activities empowers them to contribute actively to the community. Being part of the decision-making process and taking on roles in executing events fosters a sense of purpose and accomplishment, bolstering their self-esteem and overall well-being.

In conclusion, the convergence of festivities, engaging activities, and community interactions in assisted living facilities during the holiday season holds immense significance in promoting mental wellness.

By embracing these elements, these communities create environments that foster joy, connection, and a sense of belonging for their residents. The integration of diverse activities, the presence of people around, and the provision of support systems collectively contribute to ensuring that the holiday season is a time of celebration, connection, and mental well-being for all within assisted living communities.

We at AdviniaCare recognize that caring for loved ones with memory loss can both be a pleasure and a challenge at times. With our memory care programs, we can relieve some of the burden off of your shoulders and create a beneficial experience for both you and your loved one.



**352-512-9191**

**www.advincare.com**

4001 SW 33rd Court, Ocala, FL 34474

# TIS' THE SEASON TO SHINE

**R**eady or not – the holiday season is here and the countdown to Christmas is on. It's time to surprise and delight your friends and family with bath and body care gifts that will make them look and feel their best. Here's how:

## Inner Calm & Peace:

A gift of self care is an excellent way to promote mindfulness and wellness. Self care gifts encourage loved ones to escape the hustle and bustle to enjoy a soothing moment to themselves. Simple ideas include bubbly bath bomb sets, aromatic essential oils with a diffuser, or soothing face masks.

## Every Day Luxury:

High-quality skin care can promote the feeling of every day luxury without the high-ticket price. Gifting something as simple as a handmade soap, creamy body lotion or foaming body wash, can provide that feeling of indulgence and joy.

## A Complete Set:

You can't go wrong with a carefully curated skin care set. These sets are often filled with complementary products so that the recipient can enjoy a simple self care routine from start to finish. Examples include a face wash, face mask, face toner and face moisturizer. Skin care sets feature mini indulgences that will be enjoyed well beyond the holidays.



## Stocking Stuffers:

Fill your stockings with something they'll actually use. From hair clips to massagers to lip balms and butters, it's easy to affordably stuff your stockings with simple items that your friends and family will enjoy.

## Hostess Gifts:

Humorous holiday tea towels, Santa-themed wine stoppers and colorful Christmas soaps, are always a hit with the holiday hostess.

## Earth-Friendly Gifts:

From eco-friendly, super concentrated shampoo and conditioner bars, to plastic-free bar soaps, to laundry detergent sheets, go for gift ideas with high usage and minimal waste.

This holiday, it's time to glow with your gifting. Your thoughtful gifting will not only help your friends and family look their best but also remind them to indulge in a little self care this festive season.



*Skip the holiday hustle this year. Make your list. Check it twice. And get your holiday shopping done!*



[www.naplesssoap.com](http://www.naplesssoap.com)

Naples Soap Company has carefully curated a huge assortment of gift sets to make your gift giving a breeze this holiday season. From our coastal-inspired "Christmas on the Beach Box" to our all-new "Self Care Essentials Sets" to our fan favorite "Soap Stacks," we have something for every budget and for everyone on your list. Naples Soap Company has 13 stores across the state of Florida. Visit us at [naplesssoap.com](http://naplesssoap.com) to find a store near you or shop online and ship for free with orders over \$50.

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# Why You Should Get Your Omega-3 Index Measured

By Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

If you're like most Americans of a certain age, you regularly visit the doctor to get your cholesterol levels checked.

## But what about your omega-3 index?

Since 2004, the omega-3 index has been proposed as a tool for measuring a person's risk of cardiovascular disease. Today, some studies indicate the omega-3 index may be a better predictor of heart health than cholesterol levels.

Let's take a closer look at this important measurement and why it matters to our health.

## What Is the Omega-3 Index?

The omega-3 index measures the amount of EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids in the red blood cells.

The higher the number, the better. You want enough EPA and DHA, since these two fatty acids are essential for regulating the flow of nutrients into the cell and reducing inflammation (among other benefits).

Importantly, having a low omega-3 index is considered a risk factor for developing coronary heart disease. Your risk depends on where your number falls on the scale:

- Less than 4% is considered high risk ("undesirable")
- 4 – 8% is considered intermediate risk ("intermediate")
- Above 8% is considered low risk ("desirable")

## What Determines Your Omega-3 Index?

Your omega-3 index mostly depends on how much fish you consume. That's because EPA and DHA are predominantly found in fatty fish.

(You can also get EPA and DHA from fish oil supplements.)

Americans don't eat much fish by global standards, so it's no surprise that the majority have low omega-3 index levels as well. Indeed, an estimated 95% of Americans have an omega-3 index of 4% or below, putting them in the high risk category.

## Why Your Omega-3 Index Matters

Most of us try to eat a healthy diet. But often, it's hard to tell if our efforts are adequate.



That's where measuring your omega-3 index can be helpful. It tells you how much EPA and DHA actually gets integrated into your cells.

This knowledge matters since a person's omega-3 intake can be tricky to estimate. Even if you eat two or more servings of fish weekly (like the American Heart Association recommends), your fish might contain more or less omega-3s depending on the species, whether it's farm raised or wild caught, and how it's cooked.

Taking fish oil supplements isn't always straightforward either. That's because the amount of EPA and DHA you get can be impacted by the quality of the supplement – as well as individual factors like genetics, age, gender, and lifestyle.

## How to Measure Your Omega-3 Index

Some doctors regularly measure their patient's omega-3 index, just like they do with cholesterol levels.

If your doctor does not offer this service, however, several companies provide a quick finger prick test you can take at home.

## Tips to Improve Your Omega-3 Index

Since the omega-3 index came on the scene, it's proved to be a powerful health indicator. One study showed that people with low omega-3 index levels were 10 times more likely to die from sudden cardiac death compared to people with higher omega-3 index levels!

**The good news is that even if your omega-3 index is low, you can improve it by:**

### 1. Eating More Fatty Fish

Salmon and small oily fish, like sardines and mackerel, are great sources of omega-3s.

### 2. Taking an Effective Fish Oil Dose

Studies show that it typically takes between 1800 – 2000 mg EPA/DHA daily to move a person's omega-3 index by 4-5 percentage points.

Unfortunately, most regular fish oil supplements contain just 300 mg EPA/DHA per capsule. At that dose, you'd need to consume 6 - 7 capsules daily!

Taking fresh liquid fish oil can be easier for many people. At Omega3 Innovations, we typically find that when people consume one tablespoon (or a single vial) of Omega Cure® Extra Strength daily, their omega-3 index measures around 11 – 15%. That said, there can be variations between people.

## 3. Waiting At Least 4 Months

Before reassessing your omega-3 index, remember that it takes time for the omega-3s to be fully absorbed into the red blood cells.

## 4. Reducing Your Consumption of Omega-6s

As you work on increasing your omega-3 levels, it's smart to simultaneously decrease your intake of processed omega-6s. This means eating fewer foods rich in omega-6-rich vegetable oils (like pizzas, doughnuts and fries).

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

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/why-everybody-should-get-their-omega-3-index-measured/>

## About Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

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



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# SUFFERING FROM MEMORY LOSS?

## Could it be Alzheimer's Disease?

By Craig Curtis, M.D.

**Is your memory not what it used to be?  
Are you experiencing or having trouble with:**

- ✓ Forgetfulness
- ✓ Focusing
- ✓ Short term memory
- ✓ Too many "Senior Moments"
- ✓ Friends or family concerned about your memory problems?

It's possible that your memory problems are simply a sign of aging as we all have some normal memory loss with age. But please do NOT ignore these "senior moments" as they could be a warning sign of something much more serious. Alzheimer's Disease currently affects 6.5 million Americans and over 10% of people 65 and older.

If you feel your memory is not what it used to be or seems to be getting worse, then you should know about recent advancements in the field of memory loss (and Alzheimer's Disease). Since Dr. Alois Alzheimer first published his important paper in 1907 describing the hallmark brain changes in Alzheimer's Disease, scientists all over the world have been searching for a treatment. Recently the United States FDA approved the world's first medication to successfully slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease. For the first time ever, a treatment now exists to slow the course of this devastating disease.

The search for a treatment began in 1901 when a patient named Mrs. Aguste Deter was admitted under the care of a brilliant young 37-year-old physician named Alois Alzheimer. Upon her passing, Dr. Alzheimer found abnormal clumps of "plaque" in her brain and theorized that this substance could be the cause of Mrs. Deter's memory problems. A few years later, in 1910, fellow scientists named the disease after the inquisitive Bavarian physician.

Then, in 1984, scientists finally isolated the "plaque" substance initially described by Dr. Alzheimer some 80 years earlier and named it Amyloid. They proposed that Amyloid becomes "sticky", accumulating in the brain leading to brain cell loss, memory problems and symptoms of dementia. Doctors and scientists all over the world then began the hunt for a treatment that would decrease Amyloid in the brain.



Recent research has finally led to a class of medications that successfully remove brain Amyloid and slow the progression of Alzheimer's Disease. Two such medications have recently been FDA approved - however, there is still much to be done to unravel this disease!

### DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosing this disease as early as possible could help preserve precious memories. According to a recent report from the Alzheimer's Association, most patients want a diagnosis, but sadly only 33% of patients receive one - leaving many caregivers and families in the dark while losing precious time to seek treatment that could possibly slow it's progression. Thankfully, there are multiple FDA approved scans that accurately detect brain Amyloid assisting in a rapid diagnosis. Dr. Curtis uses these regularly in the clinic and his research using these scans has been published in international Neurology journals.

### IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ALWAYS THE CAUSE OF MEMORY LOSS?

No. But Alzheimer's is the #1 cause of Dementia in about 80% of cases. There are many causes of memory impairment so a proper evaluation is critical as some causes of memory loss can be diagnosed, treated, and reversed. Two recent high-profile cases of non-Alzheimer's dementia have been in the news: the actor Bruce Willis was diagnosed with Frontotemporal Dementia/Aphasia and the comedian/actor Robin Williams was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia.

### CAN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BE PREVENTED?

My career has been spent studying prevention of dementia and Alzheimer's disease - and research shows it might be possible with certain diets (Mediterranean) that I will discuss in a future article! So, stay tuned!

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you, a friend, or a loved one are experiencing memory loss, currently taking a medication such as Donepezil or Memantine, or just interested in learning more, please contact Dr. Curtis at (352) 500-5252 or visit [www.CraigCurtisMD.com](http://www.CraigCurtisMD.com) to learn more and schedule a free in-office memory evaluation. There is no cost for the memory evaluation. Please do not delay.



**CRAIG CURTIS, M.D.**  
**US NAVY VETERAN** 

### DR. CRAIG CURTIS

Dr. Craig Curtis, MD, is a national expert on Alzheimer's Disease with 25 years spent researching treatments and brain health. He focuses on prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's Disease and his research has been published in leading national and international medical journals including the New England Journal of Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Neurology. Dr. Curtis is particularly interested in the underlying biology and prevention of memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's Disease - and pursuing the science that one day will lead to an effective treatment.

**To learn more about Dr. Curtis  
please visit his website:**

**[www.CraigCurtisMD.com](http://www.CraigCurtisMD.com)**  
**352-500-5252**

**1400 North US Hwy 441  
Sharon L Morse Medical Office Building 500  
The Villages, FL 32159**



# HAIR | SKIN | NAILS

By Anna Wilemon, Licensed Medical Aesthetician & Laser Tech

**W**hen it comes to hair, skin, and nails... we're kind of experts. Whether you're looking for less hair or more hair, to make your skin glow, or to grow your nails we've got a plethora of information just for you in this month's newsletter!

Let's talk hair! Hair can be a beautiful thing and a pain if it's not on the area of your body you desire! The good news is we treat all the above. If you are having trouble with hair loss, we have a few options to help with growth.



One treatment we have for hair loss on the scalp is PRP, Platelet Rich Plasma. This is described as "fertilizer for your garden". This means your plasma is "fertilizing" your hair follicles to cause hair growth that they otherwise would not. PRP is a series of 6 treatments over a period of 6 months. We draw your blood, spin it in a centrifuge to separate your blood cells from your stem cells/plasma and inject your own plasma into your scalp for a safe and effective treatment. Come in and see a provider to find out if you are a candidate for PRP! Another alternative is to go the medication route. Some common medications you might be prescribed for hair loss are spironolactone, finasteride (Propecia) and dutasteride (Avodart), or minoxidil (think Rogaine!).

On the other hand, we all have those areas that we want hairless right? My absolute favorite treatment we provide is laser hair removal. This treatment is great for dark/unwanted hair on ANY part of our body (like, anywhere). Laser hair removal can help with PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome), ingrown hairs, and razor irritation after shaving. There is a common misconception that laser hair removal is painful and expensive. But rest assured, not only is the treatment very tolerable, we also have pay-as-you-go options! Since laser hair removal is a multi-treatment regime, we allow you to pay each time you come in. Give me (Anna Wilemon) a call to schedule your laser consult to see if it's right for you.



Do you have that annoying white peach fuzzy hair on your face? Make an appointment for Dermaplaning. It's not as scary as "we use a scalpel on your face" sounds, just hear us out. This treatment removes that vellus hair and removes your top layer of dead skin cells using a medical grade scalpel and a trained, licensed medical aesthetician. Your skin will be glowing after dermaplaning, and look brighter, and healthy, and the best part is your skincare penetrates better along with your makeup looking flawless. We've got two aestheticians, Brenda at Jasmine and Lacy at Deerwood to take care of you.

**SKIN!** My favorite subject! My absolute number one piece of skin advice is to get your skin exam at least yearly from one of our providers. Skin exams can catch skin cancer before it's too late. And my second piece of advice... wear your sunscreen every day. Cloudy days. Days spent inside. Every. Day.

Along with those tips, we recommend having a good skincare regimen to fit your specific skin concerns. The best way to find out what you need is to book a facial with one of our Aestheticians (Brenda or Lacy). During your appointment, they can look at and feel your skin to help you with a good treatment plan, skincare products especially for your skin, and an at-home regimen. Good skin only happens by appointment.

Nail care comes from the inside out. Healthy nails can have a lot to do with supplements and vitamins. We recommend Elon supplements for your hair, skin, and nails. This supplement has many benefits and ingredients like biotin, fish collagen peptides, and L-cysteine

to help with thinning hair and brittle nails. The best part, it's available at any of our offices without a prescription. As a nail technician myself, I highly recommend applying solar oil to your nails a couple of times a day and massaging it in. This helps the nails stay hydrated and your cuticles moisturized to prevent them from peeling. This works even if you have gel, dip, or acrylic on your nails! You can usually purchase this from your nail tech.

In addition to all the healthy habits mentioned above by Anna, we got with Sierra Mahoney, PA-C to find out how sleep can aid in healthy hair, skin, and nails.

Sleep is awesome. It's the one time of the day that is truly all about you. Sleeping is a time to relax, recuperate, and replenish your...skin?! That's right! Sleeping is so important for skin health. Let's look at some of the wonderful benefits sleep has to offer our largest organ: 1) blood flow! Sleep is a great time to help encourage an increase in blood flow to your skin to help repair the damage done throughout the day ultimately leading to a lighter and brighter complexion in the morning. Damage done by UV rays throughout the day is best mended in the evenings. 2) less acne! Poor sleep hygiene can lead to an increase in stress, which is a leading culprit of acne and breakouts, even in adults!

## MidState Skin Institute Services:



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[www.midstateskin.com](http://www.midstateskin.com)

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

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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.

# The Power of Physical Therapy: Maximizing Recovery Through Proactive Care

**U**ndergoing orthopedic surgery involves more than just the procedure itself. A crucial aspect that often goes unrecognized is the role of physical therapy both before and after surgery. Did you know that engaging in physical therapy sessions prior to your surgery can significantly impact your recovery?

It's a common misconception that physical therapy starts after surgery. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Pre-operative physical therapy plays a pivotal role in enhancing your overall fitness and readiness for the impending procedure. The key lies in proactive preparation, aiming to strengthen your body and address any existing weaknesses or limitations.

One of the primary benefits of pre-operative physical therapy is its ability to address issues that might exacerbate during the lead-up to surgery. Loss of joint motion, weakened muscles, and poor movement patterns tend to worsen before a surgical intervention. Engaging in a pre-operative strengthening regimen helps counter these issues by reinforcing soft tissue mobility, reducing inflammation, and enhancing muscle balance and coordination.

For instance, individuals preparing for a total knee replacement require specific strengthening of the muscles supporting and stabilizing the knee joint. A tailored pre-operative strengthening protocol, curated by a skilled therapist, can make a significant difference in the outcome of the surgery.

Beyond physical preparation, pre-operative therapy also involves education and guidance. Therapists provide invaluable insights into the impending procedure, pain management strategies, and establish a supportive environment that diminishes fears or concerns related to the surgery.

Wondering how to kickstart this proactive approach? Simply ask your primary care physician, orthopedic surgeon, or any healthcare professional involved in your care for a physical therapy script aimed at pre-operative strengthening. This step opens the door to an evaluation of your condition and allows the therapist to determine the most beneficial treatment options tailored to your specific needs, ensuring the swiftest recovery possible.

But it doesn't stop there. Post-operative physical therapy is equally crucial. It's the bridge between the surgery and returning to your optimal functionality. Through targeted exercises, pain management techniques, and personalized care, post-operative therapy aims to expedite recovery, rebuild strength, and restore mobility.

The impact of physical therapy both before and after orthopedic surgery cannot be overstated. It's a proactive investment in your well-being, enabling a smoother recovery trajectory, minimizing complications, and ultimately allowing you to regain your active lifestyle sooner.

In conclusion, don't overlook the power of physical therapy in the pre- and post-operative phases of orthopedic surgery. By taking proactive steps to strengthen your body before surgery and engaging in a dedicated rehabilitation program afterward, you pave the way for a swifter, more successful recovery, ensuring you get back on your feet in no time.

## Physical & Occupational Therapy Benefits

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- Decompression
- Massage therapy
- Electrical nerve stimulation
- Help with daily tasks & Living
- Cold laser treatment

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.

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# Navigating Life with Crohn's: A Comprehensive Guide to Medications and Management

Living with Crohn's Disease demands a nuanced and individualized approach to management. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the specifics of managing Crohn's Disease with a focus on prominent medications, including Cimzia, Delzicol, Entyvio, Humira, Pentasa, and Skyrizi.

### Understanding Crohn's Disease

Crohn's Disease is a chronic inflammatory condition that primarily affects the digestive system. It can lead to a range of symptoms, from abdominal pain and diarrhea to fatigue and weight loss. While the exact cause is unclear, a combination of genetic, environmental, and immune system factors is believed to contribute to its development.

### MEDICATION SPOTLIGHT

#### 1. Cimzia (Certolizumab Pegol)

Cimzia, belonging to the class of biologics, specifically targets tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF-alpha) to reduce inflammation. Administered via injection, it has shown efficacy in inducing and maintaining remission for some individuals with moderate to severe Crohn's Disease.

#### 2. Delzicol (Mesalamine)

Delzicol, an aminosalicylate, works as an anti-inflammatory agent, primarily used for treating mild to moderate symptoms of Crohn's Disease. Typically administered orally, it releases mesalamine in the colon to reduce inflammation and maintain remission.

#### 3. Entyvio (Vedolizumab)

Entyvio, a gut-selective biologic, targets the alpha-4 beta-7 integrin to modulate the immune response specifically within the gastrointestinal tract. This makes it a valuable option for individuals who have not responded well to other treatments or those with concerns about systemic effects.

#### 4. Humira (Adalimumab)

As one of the most widely prescribed biologics, Humira inhibits TNF-alpha, reducing inflammation and providing relief for those with moderate to severe Crohn's Disease. Administered via injection, it has demonstrated effectiveness in inducing and sustaining remission.



#### 5. Pentasa (Mesalamine)

Similar to Delzicol, Pentasa is an aminosalicylate used to treat mild to moderate cases of Crohn's Disease. Administered orally, Pentasa releases mesalamine throughout the entire gastrointestinal tract, targeting inflammation in various parts of the digestive system.

#### 6. Skyrizi (Risankizumab)

Skyrizi, originally developed for psoriasis, is being explored as a potential treatment for Crohn's Disease. It works by targeting interleukin-23 (IL-23), a cytokine involved in the inflammatory process. Research on its efficacy and safety in Crohn's Disease is ongoing.

### NAVIGATING TREATMENT PLANS

Effectively managing Crohn's Disease involves collaboration between patients and healthcare providers to create personalized treatment plans. Factors such as the location and severity of inflammation, previous treatment responses, and potential side effects guide the decision-making process.

Regular communication with healthcare professionals is crucial to monitor treatment efficacy and adjust plans as needed. In some cases, a combination of medications or a switch to a different treatment may be recommended to optimize outcomes.

### CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

While these medications offer significant relief for many individuals, challenges may arise. Possible side effects, the need for regular monitoring, and

the potential for developing antibodies to certain biologics are factors that necessitate careful consideration and ongoing dialogue between patients and healthcare providers.

In the realm of Crohn's Disease management, a tailored and informed approach is key. By understanding the nuances of medications like Cimzia, Delzicol, Entyvio, Humira, Pentasa, and Skyrizi, individuals living with Crohn's can actively engage in their healthcare journey. Regular communication with healthcare professionals, a commitment to treatment adherence, and a holistic approach to well-being empower individuals to navigate the challenges of Crohn's Disease with resilience and hope.

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CHRON'S			
DRUG NAME	Retail Cost	Prescription Hope	Total Savings
Cimzia	\$5,193.00	\$60.00	\$5,133.00
Delzicol	\$192.00	\$60.00	\$132.00
Entyvio	\$7,854.00	\$60.00	\$7,794.00
Humira	\$6,654.00	\$60.00	\$6,594.00
Pentasa	\$103.00	\$60.00	\$43.00
Skyrizi	\$18,953.00	\$60.00	\$18,893.00



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# PROMOTING COMFORT AND SUSTAINABILITY: Bidets as a Game-Changer for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness

In a world where health conditions like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis affect millions, raising awareness is crucial. Beyond medical treatments and support, simple changes in daily habits can make a significant difference. Enter bidets – a solution that not only aids those with inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) but also promotes sustainability and well-being for everyone.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic inflammatory conditions that affect the digestive tract, causing symptoms like abdominal pain, diarrhea, and fatigue. Individuals battling these conditions often endure the discomfort of frequent restroom visits, exacerbating the irritation caused by toilet paper. This is where bidets emerge as unsung heroes, offering a gentle and effective alternative.

By reducing reliance on traditional toilet paper, bidets alleviate the risk of irritation and discomfort associated with Crohn's and colitis. The gentle cleansing stream of water not only provides relief but also promotes better hygiene, crucial for those with compromised immune systems. This simple yet impactful shift can significantly improve the quality of life for individuals managing these challenging conditions.

However, the benefits of bidets extend far beyond the realm of IBD. Embracing bidet usage introduces a sustainable approach to personal hygiene by



drastically reducing toilet paper consumption. With environmental concerns at the forefront of global conversations, bidets contribute to a greener planet by cutting down on the vast amounts of paper products used daily.

The environmental impact of traditional toilet paper production is substantial, involving deforestation, water usage, and energy consumption. Bidets, on the other hand, require minimal resources – a small amount of water to generate a cleansing spray. By adopting bidet technology, individuals can actively participate in reducing their ecological footprint and promoting a more sustainable future.

Moreover, bidets cater to a broader audience by addressing common issues associated with traditional toilet paper use. Skin irritation, discomfort, and even allergic reactions are common problems for many, and bidets offer a gentle and efficient solution. The soothing water stream not only cleans but also refreshes, providing a more comfortable experience for everyone.

As we advocate for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness, it's essential to recognize the interconnectedness of health, sustainability, and personal well-being. Bidets symbolize a shift towards a more compassionate and eco-conscious approach to personal hygiene. By embracing this technology, we not only stand in solidarity with those facing the challenges of IBD but also contribute to a healthier, more sustainable world for everyone. Let's make bidets a symbol of awareness, comfort, and environmental responsibility – a small change that can have a profound impact on individuals and the planet alike.

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Founded in 2022, House of Bidets is a small business based in Tampa, Florida. Given the scarcity of toilet paper in recent history, we reevaluated why toilet paper is used at all in the bathroom. It is wasteful, dirty, and plain ineffective compared to the cleaning you receive from a bidet.

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# WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

I have recently found myself in the position that many family members face when moving their loved one to assisted living and the situation goes badly. I'm not a family member, but I was asked to help a resident at a long term nursing home who had become very dear to me. Helping people move to senior living is what I do for a living. I have done this for a very long time, yet I was unprepared for the significant snags that caught me off guard. I was also unprepared for the emotions of feeling helpless and terribly sad from the experience.

My friend had been living in a nursing home where I first met her nearly two years ago. She shared with me that she wanted desperately to move to assisted living. She wanted to sit in a garden, to paint, and to write. However, the obstacles of her health and her financial situation did not make it possible. Over time, she progressed in her physical abilities, and she was accepted for Medicaid.

I spoke with many employees at the nursing home to make sure that she was a candidate for assisted living. They all assured me that she was able to physically do the things she said she could do. One community came to evaluate her and determined that she was not appropriate for them. I reached out to another and asked if they would evaluate her as well. I fully explained all of her strengths and weaknesses (which are admittedly significant) and firmly requested that they have her demonstrate what she reported she was able to do. I also asked that they promise me that they would not accept her if they didn't feel they could accommodate her needs. I was worried about taking her away from her home and friends she had made in the last 2 years to a place where she knew no one and that her care might not be sufficient. When I told her they had accepted her, she was overwhelmed with joy!

There was no family to help with her transition. I worked with her in my professional capacity and as her "family." I was there to welcome her at her new assisted living apartment and helped to unpack her things and hung pictures to make it feel like home. When I was sure she was settled, I left happy that we had accomplished her wish.

And then it all fell apart. I have learned so much from this experience and it is what I want to share. First, expect the unexpected and accept that what



you believe is an obvious assumption is not always so. For instance, if a person is moving from home or another assisted living to a new assisted living, a supply of their medications are sent with them. When a person moves from a nursing home, it does not. Make certain that the new community receives the medication list so that they have adequate time to have the pharmacy deliver.

Ensure that they have all the personal supplies they need, including and most importantly, incontinence supplies. And be sure to understand who is responsible for ordering them and paying for them. Although she had some, it wasn't enough, and the community didn't check until there were none. Also, the delivery of medical equipment such as hospital beds, toilet and shower seats, walkers, and wheelchairs may be delayed due to their Medicare provider's approval process.

Then the phone calls began. She told me they weren't taking her to the dining room and she spent all day alone in her room. She told me they weren't helping her when she pressed the pendant, and she didn't have "this," and she didn't have "that," and the food was terrible, and on and on.

So, of course I called the administrator in anger and learned an entirely different side of the story. They had very good and valid explanations for all of my concerns that put an entirely different light on the story.

I was stuck in the middle. Just like anyone who has moved a parent or spouse and is feeling guilty. I felt that I had let her down.

I was reminded that there are always two sides to every story. There is always truth and denial from both sides. It's hard to understand the real story.

Yesterday morning she called me crying how awful it is. Today I received a text from the administrator telling me she spoke with my friend's family who visited and reported she told them she was happy to be there and is getting used to her bigger apartment.

I learned that I must allow them to figure this out and that she must make more of an effort to be her own advocate. I asked that all managers visit with her to tell her their responsibilities and how they can help with her concerns.

A transition to a new place is always difficult and it takes time. I preach this every day but have never fully experienced it. It's important to love deeply and to be supportive. But I also encourage you to communicate, listen, and acknowledge that there are things the staff are likely doing that you may not realize. Respect everyone's feelings and responsibilities.... But keep things in perspective and never stop being an advocate!



*Janice Martin is an author, educator, and specialist on senior living options and the owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc. She has written "The Complete Guide to Assisted Living: Everything You Need to Know Before, During, and After a Move." This award winning and #1 best seller is available on Amazon.com in paperback and eBook. For more information, call 352-477-1866 or email SeniorLiaisonCFL@gmail.com.*



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# Liver Health and Therapeutic Agents

By Dr. Eric Pearson, Chief Medical Officer, Vetirus Pharmaceuticals

**Y**our liver health may not be top of mind, but the minute it malfunctioned there wouldn't be much else on your mind. Cirrhosis, in which liver cells are replaced with scar tissue, can prevent your liver from doing its critical jobs. So can nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, a fast-growing epidemic among the obese, which can lead to cirrhosis. If your liver stopped working, toxins would accumulate, you couldn't digest your food and medications would never leave your body.

In fact — you can't live a week without your liver.

"It's an organ you could easily trash if you don't take good care of it," says Rohit Satoskar, MD, of the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute. "And once you trash it, it's gone." Your liver is about the size of a football and sits under your lower ribcage on the right side. It has several important things to do. It helps clean your blood by getting rid of harmful chemicals that your body makes. It makes a liquid called bile, which helps you break down fat from food. And it also stores sugar called glucose, which gives you a quick energy boost when you need it.

There's nothing tricky about keeping your liver in good shape. It's all about a healthy lifestyle, says Ray Chung, MD, medical director of the liver transplant program at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Taking care of your liver is far more about avoiding what's bad than it is about eating or drinking things that are particularly nourishing to the liver," he says.

The liver is your body's largest internal organ, weighing between 3 and 5 pounds. Your liver is located on the right side of your upper body, below the lungs, taking up most of the space in your rib cage. The gallbladder, which stores bile made in the liver, is found tucked under your liver. Your liver is made up of two separate sections, or lobes: the larger right lobe and the smaller left lobe. These two lobes are separated by tissue which anchors your liver in place.

Unlike the lungs or heart, we cannot feel our liver working. Your liver is an incredibly hard-working organ with more than 500 different vital functions. Only your brain has more functions than the liver. Many of the liver's functions are related to your metabolism. These metabolic functions allow you to convert food to energy, break down food to basic building blocks needed by your body and eliminate waste.

## The liver...

- Produces bile
- Produces proteins for **blood** plasma
- Produces cholesterol and special proteins to help carry fats through the body
- Converts unused glucose into glycogen for storage
- Regulates levels of **amino** acids in blood
- Stores iron processed from hemoglobin
- Converts poisonous ammonia, made during digestion, to urea
- Processes drugs and other poisonous substances to your body
- Regulates blood clotting (or our ability to stop bleeding)
- Fights infections by making immune factors and removing bacteria from the bloodstream
- Removes bilirubin from red blood cells

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is one of the most common chronic liver diseases. Astaxanthin, the active ingredient in Mitopak is a carotenoid, and beneficial effects of astaxanthin, including anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumor activity, have been identified.

Studies have shown that most carotenes have anti-aging, free radical scavenging, antioxidant, and anti-cancer effects, and have been widely used in the fields of medicine, food, cosmetics, and feed. Astaxanthin is the only carotenoid to penetrate the blood-brain and retinal barriers. It is frequently used as an antioxidant to treat brain injury and cardiovascular diseases and has been extensively studied in clinical practice. In addition, astaxanthin has shown anti-cancer effects in many cancers, including liver cancer, colon cancer, bladder cancer, oral cancer, and leukemia. In addition, many animal experiments have proved that astaxanthin plays an important role in regulating sugar metabolism, improving immunity and improving motor function.

## The Role of Astaxanthin in Liver Diseases

Astaxanthin has been used in the prevention and treatment of a variety of systemic diseases in vivo due to its various biological activities. In recent years, researchers have confirmed that astaxanthin plays an important role in preventing acute liver injury, alleviating insulin resistance and NAFLD, liver fibrosis and liver cancer.

## Liver Fibrosis

Liver fibrosis is a key link in the deterioration of chronic liver diseases such as viral hepatitis and fatty liver. Without effective intervention, 75–80% of these diseases can develop into cirrhosis, which seriously endangers human health. The reversibility of these factors also provides an important research target for the reversal of hepatic fibrosis. The mechanism of liver fibrosis is complex, involving the regulation of histopathology, cytology, cytokines, and their molecular levels. Mitopak can potentially prevent and treat liver diseases by inhibiting inflammation and improving glycolipid metabolism at the mitochondrial level.

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# Hypnotherapy the Way to Achieve Gut-Brain Health

By Patrick Watson, PhD

In the bustling world of health and wellness, we often overlook the vital connection that profoundly impacts our overall well-being and health. This is the relationship between our gut and our brain. This critical link has sparked growing interest in using hypnotherapy as a means of enhancing gut-brain health. Let's take a moment to take a deep dive into Hypnotherapy and discovering it's potential to improve our digestive health and overall well-being.

## The Gut-Brain Connection: A Complex Interplay

The gut-brain connection is also known as the "gut-brain axis" is a remarkable and intricate relationship. Our gut is not only a digestive organ, it's the hub of communication with our brain. This two-way interaction influences not only our digestion but also our emotional health and well-being.

The reasons why this balance is disturbed are stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety can trigger digestive issues like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), indigestion, and even more severe conditions like inflammatory bowel disease. When this balance is disturbed, chronic digestive problems, such as colitis, can lead to additional anxiety and could contribute to depression.

## Understanding Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is a therapeutic technique that taps into the healing power of the mind to achieve relaxation, heightened focus and an altered state of consciousness. Contrary to what you might see in movies, hypnosis does not involve mind control. Instead, it encourages individuals to enter a deeply relaxed and suggestible state, making it a valuable tool for addressing a wide range of issues, including those related to gut-brain health.

## Hypnotherapy and Digestive Disorder

For people experiencing digestive disorders like IBS, hypnotherapy offers an alternative to medications. Numerous scientific studies have found that hypnotherapy can significantly reduce the severity and frequency of IBS symptoms, including abdominal pain, bloating and irregular bowel movements.

In individualized hypnotherapy sessions for IBS at MindSet Solutions, Dr. Patrick Watson guides you into a state of deep relaxation and heightened focus. In this serene state, clients explore their thoughts and emotions, uncovering potential triggers for



their symptoms. Through a series of positive suggestions and guided imagery exercises, Dr. Watson will help you change your perception of pain and discomfort, teach you techniques to successfully manage your stress and anxiety, ultimately relieving these symptoms and the impact of these symptoms on your daily life.

One of the primary benefits of hypnotherapy for digestive disorders is its absence of side effects. Unlike medications, which often come with unwanted side effects, hypnotherapy is non-invasive and has no adverse reactions. This makes it an attractive option for those clients seeking relief from chronic gut issues without potential drawbacks of conventional treatment.

## Stress Reduction: The Key to Gut Health

Stress is an ever-present aspect of modern life, and significantly influences the gut and your overall well being. Chronic stress can lead to increased gut permeability, also known as "leaky gut", inflammation and disruption in the healthy microbes that live in a healthy gut, which contributes to digestive health.

During Hypnotherapy, Dr. Watson teaches you stress reduction techniques individualized to your particular needs. These techniques may include Breathwork, Neuro-Meditation as well as Integral Hypnotherapy with therapeutic suggestions and guided imagery. These techniques help our clients attain a state of tranquility, countering the detrimental effects on the gut.

By lowering stress levels, hypnotherapy not only alleviates digestive symptoms but also promotes long-term gut health. Studies have demonstrated that stress reduction through hypnotherapy enhances gut barrier function, reduces inflammation and supports a healthier balance of gut bacteria.

## The Mind Body Connection

The connection between mind and body is profound, and hypnotherapy recognizes this interplay. Through the power of suggestion, hypnotherapy can influence bodily functions that are typically considered involuntary, such as heart rate, blood pressure, and even immune system activity. This phenomenon, known as psychosomatic healing, underscores how our thoughts and emotions can profoundly impact our physical health.

In the context of gut-brain health, psychosomatic healing is particularly relevant. Hypnotherapy can be employed not only to address the physical symptoms of digestive disorders but also the emotional and psychological issues, rather than merely treating the symptoms. Hypnotherapy treats the cause and offers a holistic approach to healing.

## Unlocking the Potential Within

Hypnotherapy's ability to unlock the healing potential of the mind extends beyond treating specific conditions. It can serve as a valuable tool for personal growth, self-empowerment, and self-improvement. Individuals wanting to enhance their overall well-being can benefit from hypnotherapy by tapping into the power of the subconscious mind in creating positive, lasting change.

Through Hypnotherapy at MindSet Solutions, Dr. Patrick Watson works with clients on improving their self-esteem, overcoming fears and phobias, managing weight and mindful eating, quitting smoking, ending toxic lifestyle choices, comprehensive pain management, Managing Overactive Bladder, PTSD and enhancing sleep quality. These areas of personal development are closely linked to gut-brain health, as they often entail changing behaviors and thought patterns that impact physical well-being.

## Conclusion: Pioneering a Holistic Approach

As our understanding of the gut-brain connection deepens, so does our recognition of hypnotherapy's potential to impact and improve our well-being. This holistic approach uses the power of the mind to alleviate digestive disorders, alleviate stress and foster personal growth.

Your sub-conscious mind is an incredible resource and Integral Clinical Hypnotherapy with Dr. Patrick Watson gives you access to your mind's ability for self-healing, self-empowerment and personal transformation. Your goals and transformations can be made easier and more natural with the help of your sub-conscious mind.

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# Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

If you have bouts of anxiety, stress, fear and nervousness, you're not alone. Stress and anxiety are a normal part of life and usually short-lived, but for 40 million Americans, it's a daily battle. Whether it's anxiety due to biological, psychosocial, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the treatment options usually include behavioral therapy, counseling, and various prescription medications that block or dull different areas of the brain.

The typical treatment options for anxiety, stress and depression are medications and counseling therapy. Some of the most common drug classes prescribed are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, tricyclic antidepressants, and monoamine oxidase inhibitors. Widely known drugs, like Prozac, Zoloft, and Cymbalta affect how neurotransmitters affect the mood by lessening anxiety levels and creating a more serene outlook on life.

Medications are not always the best choice for all individuals and many people pair alternative methods with anti-anxiety drugs or alone to help stave off stressful episodes.

## Take Time for Yourself

It might be difficult, but carving out time to relax, take a bath, take a walk or simply shut yourself in the a separate room for 10 minutes to do deep breathing exercises can reduce anxiety significantly and over time, you will most likely notice that these personal care methods will help you to become calmer throughout the day.

## Get Moving

Talk with your physician about the right exercise plan for you. Most people can benefit from taking a brisk 30-minute walk or a 30-minute swim. Exercise increases circulation, reduces stress, it also improves nutrient and oxygen

rich blood flow, and helps you build strength and to lose weight. If you can work out harder, it's extremely beneficial to get your heart rate up daily with cardiovascular exercise.

## Meditation

Yoga helps to improve flexibility, blood flow, muscle strength, posture, immune function, bone health, decreases depressive episodes, and can regulate blood pressure. Meditation also reduces stress, reduces anxiety, promotes emotional wellbeing, can help fight addictions, can generate health and improve immune function, it can stave off memory disorders and increase neuronal plasticity.

In order to overcome stress and pain, we need a well-rounded treatment protocol that incorporates, medication (if necessary), stress management, nutrition, exercise, meditation, hormone balancing and other therapies that can help to stabilize our systems.

Quick Care Urgent Care offers more than just urgent care services, and they are preparing to add much more to their already vast list of therapies and services for the Ocala community!

## Quick Care Med Urgent Care

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

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

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

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

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

[www.quickcaredmed.com](http://www.quickcaredmed.com)

## 4 Locations in Ocala

3415 E. Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala, FL 34470  
(On Silver Springs Blvd. across from Publix)  
8119 SW State Rd 200, Ocala, FL 3448  
(Just past Walgreens)  
6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475  
(Across from John Deer)  
2205 N Young Blvd, Chiefland, FL 32626

**Quick Care Med**  
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# It's A Wonderful Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

SpiritualWellness

**E**very year around this time the old classic Christmas movies start coming on television. It is easy to start a conversation at work by simply asking, "So, what's your favorite Christmas movie?" Mine is Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Some of you might be able to relate to George Bailey this holiday season—lost, confused, stressed out, or at the end of your rope. Perhaps you are even thinking that it would be much easier to die than to go on living as you are.

Perhaps for you life isn't a joy right now. Maybe the debts are high and funds are low. It might even be difficult for you to even enjoy your family as you know you should. You may be wondering, "Is it really possible to live a wonderful life?"

I think the idea of a wonderful life is not that you can attain a wonderful life, but that it is an attitude that results from having certain issues settled in your life.

Truthfully, no one's life is wonderful—even Christ's life was filled with pain, hurt, loneliness, rejection, and sorrow. It is your attitude that determines how you "feel" about your life. You are the one responsible for settling the issues in your life and having an attitude of wonderment. So, what are the issues that need to be settled?

The first issue is to determine **what you are going to love**. To have a wonderful life, you start by having an attitude of love toward God and others. I say this first because where you choose to direct your love is going to affect every other area of your life. Love is a decision we make to place a high value on someone or something.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. Jesus died to prove how much He loved us. God desires more than anything else to have a loving relationship with His creation. We were created to love God and other people. Maybe this Christmas it would be good for you to find a person or family in need and help them by buying some food or gifts. If you want to feel loved... start by loving others.

The second issue to settle is... **how am I going to live?** To have a wonderful life, you need an attitude of joy. This attitude deals with how you look at life. Are you a positive person or a negative person? If you are a person with joy, it simply means that you are cheerful. Over 350 times the Bible talks about us having a spirit of joy or rejoicing.

Joy isn't a feeling that is produced only when good things happen. Joy is the attitude by which we look at the things that happen to us and then respond in a way that lets everyone know we are trusting in God's grace in spite of our circumstances. Remember the disciples in the Bible... they had many negative things happen to them, yet in spite of it all, they had joy.

I've heard it said that you don't feel your way into an action but rather act your way into a feeling. If you want to be a joyful person... start acting joyful around others and you will most likely begin to genuinely feel joyful.

The third issue to settle is...**who are you going to help?** If you want to have a wonderful life, you've got to get beyond serving yourself, and start serving others. Isn't that the lesson that George Bailey learned? His life was wonderful because of all the people he was able to help in his lifetime.

When Clarence showed him what life would have been like had he never been born he realized that he really was making a difference in the world! His life did have purpose! Mr. Potter only cared about making money. Violet only cared about pleasure. But George understood a greater truth: life is better when you are working to make other people's lives better.

Understanding these things can make all the difference in the world. You are not here to fall in love with money and things—you're here to love God. You're not here to point out all the things that are wrong with the world—you're here to spread the joy that God has placed in your heart. You're not here to serve yourself—you're here to serve God and others—thus making a huge difference in the world.



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