

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

January 2024

Marion Edition - Monthly

FREE 

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**New Year,
New Health:**

Turning Resolutions
Into Reality

**Keeping Bones
and Joints
Happy Through
Active Living**

**Staying Healthy
in 2024**

**Shining a Light
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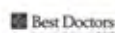
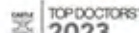
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NEW YEAR, NEW HEALTH: TURNING RESOLUTIONS INTO REALITY

By Elisha Lopez

As we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new one with open arms, many of us embark on a familiar journey—setting New Year's resolutions. It's a time-honored tradition, a chance to hit the reset button and strive for positive change. While resolutions may span various aspects of our lives, from career goals to personal growth, in this issue, we'll shine a spotlight on how your health can be at the forefront of your resolutions for the coming year.

The Resolutions Ritual dates back to ancient times, with roots in various cultures. It's a time when we reflect on the past and envision a brighter future. However, we also know that setting resolutions is one thing and sticking to them is another.

Health and Wellness: A Top Priority

In a world that constantly demands our attention and energy, it's easy to neglect our health and well-being. The holiday season's festivities often lead to indulgence, making January a natural time for many to refocus on their health.

1. Fitness and Exercise: Exercise resolutions are perennial favorites. Whether it's committing to a regular gym routine, taking up a new sport, or simply getting more steps in each day, physical fitness goals are a cornerstone of New Year's resolutions.

2. Nutrition and Diet: After the holiday feasting, adopting healthier eating habits often tops the list. From reducing sugar intake to embracing a more plant-based diet, resolutions related to nutrition can have a profound impact on overall health.

3. Mental Health: The importance of mental well-being has gained prominence in recent years. Resolutions that focus on stress reduction, mindfulness practices, or seeking therapy reflect a growing awareness of the significance of mental health.

Turning Resolutions into Reality

While the enthusiasm behind setting New Year's resolutions is commendable, the challenge lies in making them stick. Here are some strategies to help you turn your health-related resolutions into lasting habits:

1. Set Realistic Goals: Avoid the temptation to aim for perfection. Start with attainable goals that align with your current lifestyle and gradually build from there.



2. Create a Plan: Outline specific steps to achieve your resolutions. Whether it's scheduling workout sessions, meal planning, or allocating time for self-care, a well-defined plan increases your chances of success.

3. Seek Support: Share your resolutions with friends or family who can offer encouragement and hold you accountable. Consider joining a fitness class or online community that shares your health goals.

4. Track Your Progress: Keeping a journal or using a mobile app to monitor your progress can be highly motivating. Celebrate small victories along the way.

5. Be Kind to Yourself: Remember that setbacks are a natural part of any journey. Instead of being discouraged by occasional slip-ups, use them as opportunities to learn and grow.

Seeking Professional Guidance

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.

Embrace a Healthier, Thriving You

As a real estate broker who places a significant emphasis on health and wellness, I recognize the importance of setting attainable goals. By taking proactive measures to prioritize your health in the upcoming year, you're not just making an investment

in your well-being; you're also paving the way for a life that's vibrant and flourishing. Here's to a year ahead filled with improved health, greater happiness, and a thriving you!

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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STAYING HEALTHY IN 2024

Did you know that the yearly calendar we use today first came into use in the late 1500s? For centuries now, people have relied on calendars to structure their lives. These vital tools help us prioritize our time, stay productive and keep us on task.

Whether you prefer digital or paper formats, as you turn the page on your 2024 calendar this January, take some time to prioritize your health and well-being. Plan ahead and schedule appointments for recommended wellness checkups and cancer screenings.

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

Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) urges everyone to talk with their physician about cancer screenings and follow recommended guidelines. Here are some of the most common cancer screening recommendations:

Skin Cancer: Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. for both men and women. Screening involves checking your skin and any moles for changes that could be signs of cancer. An annual skin check by a dermatologist or your primary care provider is recommended, especially for those with a family history of skin cancer.

Breast Cancer: In addition to monthly self-examinations (encouraged for adult women at any age), the American Cancer Society recommends that starting at age 40, all women have annual screening mammograms. Talk to your doctor about what is right for you, based on your own family health history and risk factors.

Cervical Cancer: The National Cancer Institute advises women to receive a Pap test (Pap smear) beginning at age 21 and continuing until age 65. Women from 21 to 29 should have a Pap smear every three years. Beginning at age 30, a Pap test combined with human papillomavirus (HPV) testing (HPV/Pap cotest) is recommended every five years.

Colorectal Cancer: Colonoscopy screening for colorectal cancer should start at age 45 and be done every 10 years, unless recommended more often by your doctor, up until age 75. This type of screening not only detects cancer early, but in many cases it can prevent cancer from developing by identifying and removing polyps (abnormal, precancerous growths within the colon).

Lung Cancer: Low-dose CT scanning is recommended for some people who are at higher risk for lung cancer. This group includes adults, ages 50 to 80, who have a 20



pack-year smoking history and who currently smoke or have quit smoking. To determine a pack-year score, multiply the number of packs smoked per day by the number of years smoked. So, if you smoked two packs a day for 20 years, your pack-year score would be 40.

Prostate Cancer: The PSA test is used to screen men for prostate cancer; however, it is not clear if the benefits of testing all men outweigh the risks, such as finding and treating slow-growing cancers that do not require treatment. It is important to talk with your doctor about the risks and potential benefits, based on your personal and family history.

When It Comes to Lifestyle Choices, Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

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

SMOKING AND CANCER

In the U.S., 80 to 90 percent of all lung cancer deaths are related to cigarette smoking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco products, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco, have been linked to several other types of cancer, including colorectal, bladder, breast, throat, cervical, mouth and esophageal.

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

ENJOY THE SUN SAFELY

The majority of all skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun's ultraviolet light rays. For maximum protection, oncologists recommend applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher to all skin that is not covered by clothing. Clothing items with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label are now widely available.

A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection are also recommended. Exposure to artificial UV rays with the use of tanning beds or sunlamps also increases the risk of skin cancer and should be avoided.

EAT HEALTHY & KEEP MOVING TO PREVENT CANCER

There is growing evidence what we eat plays a significant role in some types of cancer. A diet high in fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains, and low in red meat, processed foods and sugar, is recommended to help reduce cancer risk. Limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Exercise can help to control your weight and avoid obesity, with the added benefits of increased energy, reduced stress and a healthy boost to the immune system to help fight cancer and other diseases.

Getting and staying healthy is worth the effort – make it count in 2024!

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Glaucoma: What You Need to Know

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month, the perfect time to raise awareness for this sight-stealing disease. Nearly all of us begin to experience some vision changes as we age, even if it's just having to rely on a cheap pair of readers from the grocery store. In order to remain independent as we get older, we need to know about age-related changes that could potentially affect our day-to-day lives. And vision loss – primarily glaucoma – is one of those changes.

What is Glaucoma?

According to the CDC, more than 3 million Americans have glaucoma, but only half actually know it. It is the second leading cause of blindness worldwide. Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damage the eye's optic nerve due to increased pressure inside the eye. The progression of the disease is usually gradual. However, once glaucoma has caused damage resulting in vision loss, the damage is permanent and irreparable.

Early Glaucoma Symptoms

Because vision loss caused by glaucoma cannot be restored, it's important that seniors watch out for signs and symptoms that could be an indication they have the eye disease. If caught early, glaucoma's progression can be slowed by various treatment methods, including surgery.

Some of the early signs of glaucoma include:

- Loss of side vision
- Inability to adjust to darkened rooms
- Blurred or foggy vision, especially when awakening
- Eye pain
- Severe headaches

Who's at Risk for Developing Glaucoma?

While anyone can get glaucoma, the risk is higher in people over the age of 60. Others with an increased risk of getting glaucoma include African Americans over the age of 40 and people who have diabetes. Glaucoma is also hereditary, so it's important to know your family history. According to the Glaucoma Research Foundation, your risk of developing primary open-angle glaucoma is up to nine times higher than average if one of your parents or siblings has the disease.



Other possible risk factors include:

- High myopia (nearsightedness)
- Hypertension
- Central corneal thickness less than .5 mm

Take Action to Prevent Glaucoma

Vision loss and glaucoma aren't a given just because you get older. There are steps you can take to protect your eyes and lower your risk of getting glaucoma. When it comes to this progressive eye disease, early detection and prevention are key.

Whether you fall into a high-risk category or not, make sure you're getting routine comprehensive dilated eye exams. These exams help to catch glaucoma and other eye diseases early when they are most treatable. Your eye care specialist will instruct you on how frequently you need to receive these exams. However, Medicare covers a glaucoma test once a year for people in high-risk groups, so be sure you take advantage of this benefit.

In addition to getting your eyes checked, you should try to do the following steps to help prevent glaucoma:

Exercise – Regular physical activity can help to lower intraocular pressure (IOP).

Maintain a stable weight – A high Body Mass Index (BMI) causes pressure in the eyes, while a low BMI can cause the optic nerve to press inward.

Stop smoking – Smoking causes thinning of the retinal nerve fiber layer, a symptom of glaucoma.

Monitor your blood pressure – Increased blood pressure results in increased eye pressure.

Glaucoma Treatment Options

Early onset of glaucoma usually affects your peripheral vision first – what you can see on the side of your head when looking ahead. If not treated in time and effectively, your central vision – vision used to see objects clearly – will also begin to be affected.

Early treatment intervention is vital to preserving your eyesight. Glaucoma is treated with eye drops, oral medication, and surgery. Treatment methods may be combined depending on your specific needs. The goal of treatment is to reduce the pressure in your eye.

You should always follow any specific directions given by your healthcare professional, whether it be your primary care provider or your eyecare specialist. Glaucoma is a highly detectable disease and one that can be managed properly. Make your eye health a priority. Schedule an appointment with a VIPcare provider to discuss your risk and what preventative measures you can take to protect your eyesight. Call 352-558-6759.



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New Year/New You Made Easier

By Dr. Tina Chandra

New Year's resolutions are a big part of US culture. Nearly half of us set goals at the start of every new year. However, studies show that less than half of us keep those resolutions for even as long as six months. So, what can you do if every year you have the same goal and it never works out? What if you've been trying year after year to lose weight and get in shape but your efforts fall short? Is there an easier way?

What if I told you that you could lose fat and gain muscle without working out and see results in around 2 months? Is it possible? Is there technology that can sculpt the body and make us look better? It's not a dream. The day has finally arrived!

Emsculpt 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, and calves.

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.

What can I expect in an Emsculpt NEO session?

During a 30-minute session, an applicator is strapped to the area being treated, the abdomen, for example.



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.

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.

What areas can be treated?

According to the brand website, Emsculpt NEO is intended to be used on the "abdomen. It is cleared for improvement of abdominal tone, strengthening of the abdominal muscles and development of firmer abdomen, along with the strengthening, toning and firming of buttocks, thighs and calves, and improvement of muscle tone and firmness for strengthening muscles in the arms."

What results can be expected?

Studies of the product have shown that clients see an average of 30% fat loss and an increase of 25% in muscle mass leaving a smaller waistline. The brand boasts a satisfaction rate of 88-100%.

Is Emsculpt NEO too good to be true?

EMSCULPT NEO and the embedded high intensity magnetic field (HIFEM) technology have been clinically tested for safety and efficacy through seven clinical studies. Moreover, 30 scientific publications make HIFEM the most intensively researched body contouring technology since its introduction in 2018.

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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Shining a Light on Thyroid Health:

Thyroid Awareness Month

By Elizabeth Mello, Executive Director

As January unfolds, so does Thyroid Awareness Month—a dedicated time to illuminate the often overlooked but crucial aspect of our well-being, the thyroid gland. Nestled discreetly in the neck, this butterfly-shaped organ plays a pivotal role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, and overall health. Despite its importance, thyroid disorders often fly under the radar, affecting millions worldwide. This article aims to shed light on the significance of Thyroid Awareness Month, encouraging readers to take charge of their thyroid health.

The Silent Orchestrator:

The thyroid gland may be small, but its impact is monumental. Responsible for producing hormones that influence metabolism, growth, and development, the thyroid acts as the silent orchestrator of various bodily functions. When this delicate balance is disrupted, it can lead to a range of thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and autoimmune conditions like Hashimoto's and Graves' disease.

Understanding the Warning Signs:

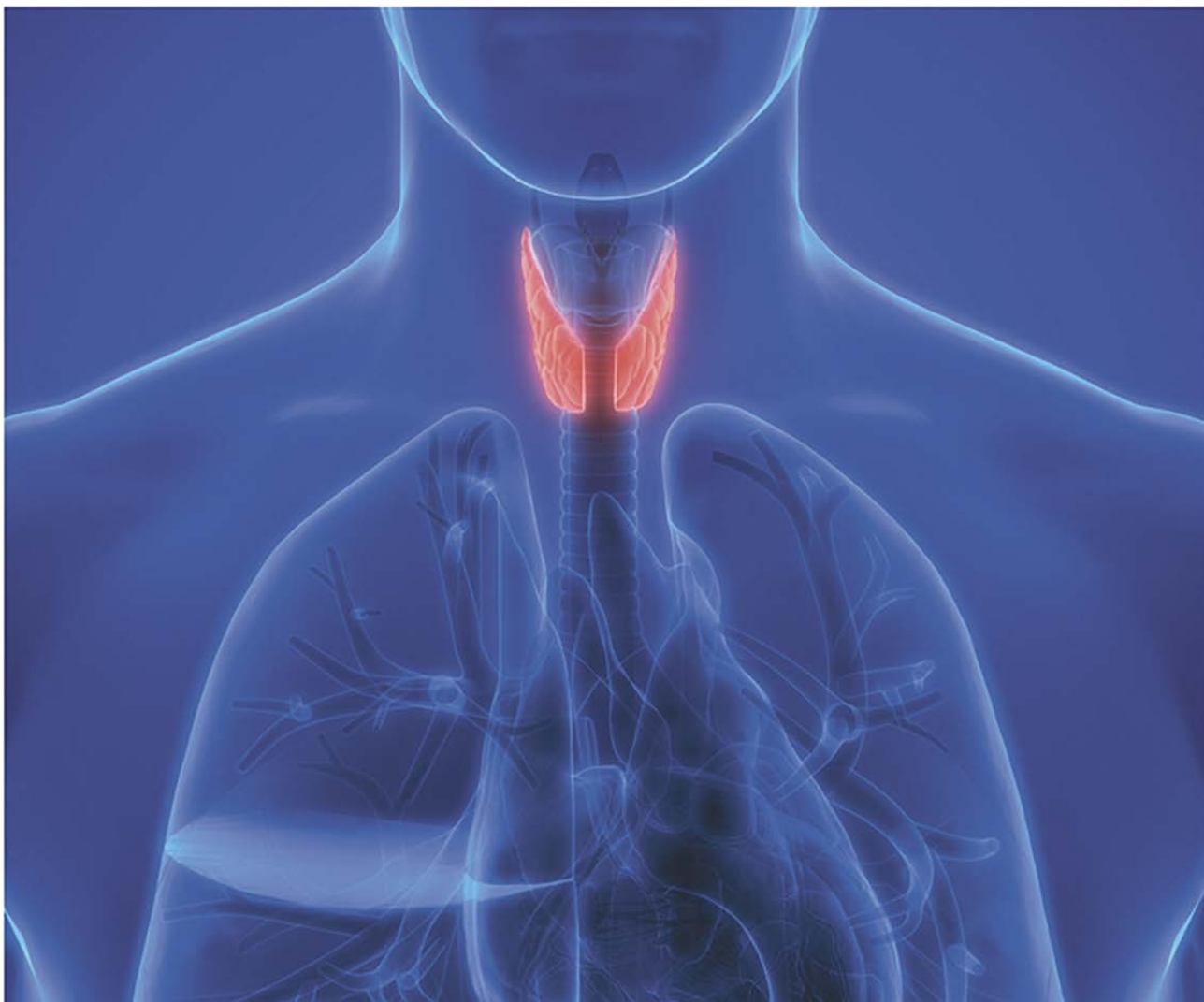
One of the challenges with thyroid disorders is that symptoms can be subtle and easily mistaken for other health issues. Fatigue, weight changes, mood swings, and changes in skin and hair quality are common signs that may point to thyroid dysfunction. By recognizing these red flags, individuals can take proactive steps to seek medical attention and address potential thyroid issues before they escalate.

Empowering Through Education:

Thyroid Awareness Month serves as a crucial platform for education and awareness. Understanding the risk factors, such as family history, age, and gender, empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health. Regular check-ups, including thyroid function tests, can aid in early detection and management of thyroid disorders. This month encourages people to engage in open conversations about thyroid health, fostering a supportive community that breaks the silence surrounding these often-misunderstood conditions.

Lifestyle and Thyroid Health:

While genetics play a role in thyroid disorders, lifestyle factors also significantly influence thyroid health. Nutrition, stress management, and regular



exercise contribute to overall well-being and can positively impact thyroid function. This month provides an opportunity for individuals to reassess their lifestyle choices, ensuring they prioritize habits that support thyroid health and overall vitality.

Raising the Flag:

Thyroid Awareness Month encourages the community to rally together and raise the flag for thyroid health. From organizing awareness events to sharing information on social media, individuals, healthcare professionals, and organizations alike can play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and dispelling myths surrounding thyroid disorders. By fostering a supportive and informed environment, we can collectively work towards early detection, effective management, and improved quality of life for those affected by thyroid conditions.

Conclusion:

As we navigate the complexities of our health please let Thyroid Awareness Month serve as a beacon, guiding us towards a deeper understanding of the thyroid's role in our well-being. By fostering awareness, education, and community engagement, we can empower individuals to take control of their thyroid health and inspire a broader conversation about the importance of this often-overlooked organ. Together, let's illuminate the path towards a healthier, more thyroid-aware future.



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An Easy New Year's Resolution: CREATE YOUR ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Each year, many people make New Year's resolutions; some include making healthier decisions about their diet, while others are about exercising, traveling and more. Some are kept and some not so much. There's one resolution that's easy to keep – deciding to have a talk with your loved ones about your healthcare decisions and wishes at end of life.

Making your healthcare decisions and relationships a priority is wise any time of the year. It's never too early to have those conversations with your loved ones – better to have the discussion sooner than later when it may be too late.

However, many find procrastination is all too easy, especially when it comes to talking about something unpleasant as the end of life. It's one of those topics most people would rather not discuss, but there's no guarantee on how long we'll live. Just as preparing a will is optimal when we are of sound mind and body, so is preparing for future healthcare needs. Having to make decisions for others is complicated, especially when that person – someone beloved – can no longer speak for themselves.

Advance directives are legal documents that include a living will or a durable power of attorney for healthcare, also known as a healthcare proxy. Either document allows you to give directions about your future medical care. It's your right to accept or refuse medical care. Advance directives can protect this right if you ever become mentally or physically unable to choose or communicate your wishes due to an injury or illness. Bylaw, the decision belongs to the patient, so make your wishes known to your family, providers and caregivers.

An advance directive can be as simple as a two-page *Living Will* or as lengthy as the *Five Wishes*, a detailed-yet-user-friendly booklet. In Florida, an advance directive requires neither an attorney nor a notary—just the writer's signature and that of two witnesses. Despite the simplicity of these documents, only about a third of all Americans have completed one according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Advance Directives can:

- Protect your rights to make medical choices that can affect your life



- Let families avoid the responsibility and stress of making difficult decisions
- Assist physicians by providing guidelines for your care
- Protect people who may be unable to communicate
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KATIE KEEL - COSMETIC NURSE PRACTITIONER

We made it to the first month of the New Year! If you had resolutions last year and kept them – good for you! If you never made a resolution and need an idea – consider the 44% of Americans for the 2023 New Year who made a pledge to eat healthier and the 48% who wanted to exercise more. Though most made these resolutions to lose weight there is an added benefit to eating healthy and exercise – clearer more radiant skin!

Exercise results in improved circulation to all of our body's cells as well as improvement in removal of toxins from the skin. Exercise also releases endorphins and decreases stress which can improve chronic skin conditions like acne, eczema, rosacea and psoriasis. If you weren't sold on exercise yet – a research study involving 65+ year olds that maintained a moderate aerobic exercise routine for three months found that the skin of individuals who were exercising more frequently more closely resembled healthy skin of patients in their 40s.

On to healthy eating – what does “healthy” actually mean? What foods should we try to incorporate into our diet for happy skin? Foods that are full of omega-3 fatty acids, as well as vitamins A, C, and E, antioxidants and minerals such as selenium and zinc. Great options include fatty fish (like salmon), avocados, walnuts, sweet potatoes, red/yellow bell peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, and saving the best for last – dark chocolate! I think this one deserves a little added love – a study found that after 6-12 weeks of consuming a cocoa powder high in antioxidants each day those participants had thicker, more hydrated skin that was less rough/scaly, with increased circulation and were less sensitive to sunburn. Red grapes are also on the healthy skin list due to their skin containing resveratrol which slows aging. This compound is also found in red wine but unfortunately there is not much evidence that the amount of resveratrol you get from a glass of red wine is enough to affect your skin and since it does contain alcohol there are negative skin effects.

Alcohol promotes dehydration and inflammation of the skin and the oxidative stress from alcohol can speed up the aging process. If you are choosing to drink choose wisely – cocktails that contain syrups and sugar can bring along added inflammation, accelerated aging by damaging collagen in the skin.



White wine and champagne typically contain a lot of sugar as well and are more likely to cause facial flushing. Also avoid dark liquors like bourbon and whiskey – they contain compounds called congeners which can cause worse hangovers and dehydrated, red, puffy skin. If you choose to indulge, reducing your intake, picking the right type of alcohol, and drinking plenty of water are the best places to start.

Finally, I want to touch on a hot area in nutraceuticals when it comes to skin health – collagen supplements. Their use has been rising but regulations are lacking when it comes to quality, absorption and efficacy. However, there are studies regarding the potential health effects. One literature review of eleven studies and over 800 patients found that preliminary results are promising for short and long term benefits of collagen supplements for both wound healing and skin aging. The studies found that collagen did increase skin elasticity, hydration, and dermal collagen density. This is a growing market as evidenced by the increase in products on our store shelves – 5 years ago collagen supplements were a \$3 billion dollar market and today it has doubled to a \$6 billion dollar market.

But how do you know you are getting a good supplement? When checking out supplement labels aim for 20g of hydrolyzed collagen per day and bonus points if you can find one that also contains hyaluronic acid. Hyaluronic acid produced in the body helps to keep skin hydrated, healthy and looking and feeling young. In fact, one gram of hyaluronic acid can hold six liters of water. As we age, though, our bodies produce less, contributing to signs of aging. Studies show that both oral and topical hyaluronic acid can be effective to restore levels and improve the appearance and feel of aging skin. A popular, easy to find collagen supplement that contains hyaluronic acid as well as bovine hydrolyzed collagen is Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides.

Your skin is your largest organ (and your most visible one!) and it is important to show it some love! One thing for certain – no one ever regrets investing in their health!

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ISSUES WITH INCONTINENCE?

YOU HAVE OPTIONS

What are the causes of urinary incontinence?

Urinary incontinence is caused by problems with the nerves and muscles that help the bladder to pass or hold urine. The pelvic floor muscles that support your urethra, bladder, uterus, and bowels may become damaged or weak after pregnancy, childbirth, or menopause. With weakened muscles, your bladder and urethra are forced to work harder to hold urine.

Unfortunately, the extra pressure or stress on the bladder and urethra can cause urinary leakage or incontinence. Urinary incontinence may also have other causes. You may experience incontinence due to aging of the bladder muscles, being overweight, nerve damage, or surgery in the reproductive organs, such as a hysterectomy.

Certain medications, caffeine, or infection may cause temporary incontinence as well. Furthermore, the condition may also be a result of urinary tract infection, multiple sclerosis, stroke, a brain tumor, Parkinson's disease, spinal injury, or urinary stones.

While urinary incontinence can happen for both men and women, it is twice as common for women. Women can have urinary incontinence at any age—though it is more frequent in older women due to hormonal changes during menopause. Plus, since the female urethra is shorter, any damage or weakness to it will likely cause urinary incontinence.

The 2 Major types of urinary incontinence

• Stress incontinence

As the name suggests, stress incontinence occurs when there is stress or pressure put on your bladder. Because your pelvic floor muscles are weakened, any stress or pressure easily triggers the release of urine.

When you have stress incontinence, everyday actions that use the pelvic floor muscles, such as sneezing, laughing, jumping, lifting heavy objects, or coughing, tend to cause urine leakage. This also includes sudden physical activity and movements.



Stress incontinence is the most common type of incontinence and the most frequent in younger women. The risk of this condition is increased when you are smoking, overweight, or have gone through childbirth.

• Urge incontinence

Also called overactive bladder, urge incontinence occurs when your brain and spinal cord do not work properly with the bladder to allow you to hold urine and release it at the right time. The bladder may suddenly empty itself without warning, or you may feel like you need to pass urine more frequently.

As a rule, urge incontinence is identified by having to pass urine more than eight times a day—and usually passing only a little urine once you get to the bathroom.

It is a common condition in older women and tends to affect those with nervous system disorders, such as stroke or multiple sclerosis.

Treatment Options

The treatment offered for urinary incontinence varies from case to case. For a less severe condition, your female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery (FPMRS) physician may advise small changes to your lifestyle.

You may be encouraged to quit smoking, avoid caffeine and alcohol, lose weight, practice urge suppression, retrain your bladder, and perform pelvic floor exercises.

Your urogynecologist may also prescribe medical devices, like urethral insert and vaginal pessary, to help you control stress incontinence.

Additionally, fillers such as carbon beads and collagen may be applied for plumping up the tissues where urine is released from the bladder to help hold it.

In some cases, your FPMRS physician may recommend bladder-relaxing Botox, estrogen replacement therapy, or drugs like pseudoephedrine to help tone up the urethra. Likewise, electrical nerve stimulation procedures, such as sacral nerve stimulation and tibial nerve stimulation, are options that may be considered.

If these do not work, your urogynecologist may recommend surgery, such as the sling procedure or retro-pubic colpo-suspension to correct the underlying problem and relieve symptoms.

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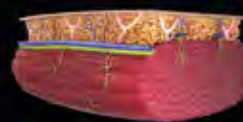
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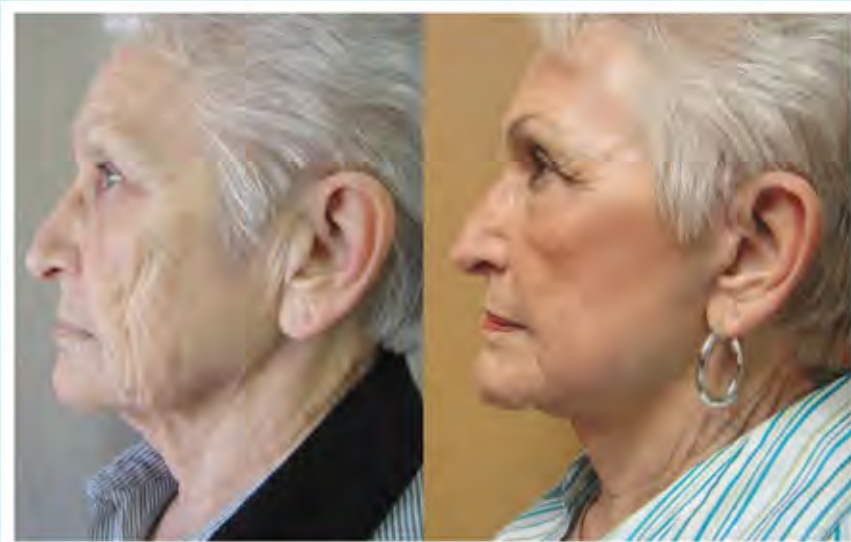
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SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

For 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.

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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 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:**

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KEEPING BONES AND JOINTS HAPPY THROUGH ACTIVE LIVING IN 2024

By Dr. Nam Dinh, MD, FAAOS

In an era where health takes center stage, prioritizing the well-being of your bones and joints is paramount. The new year serves as the perfect launching pad to embrace an active lifestyle that fosters strength, flexibility, and resilience within your skeletal structure.

As we step into 2024, the significance of regular physical activity cannot be overstated. Engaging in exercises that target bone and joint health not only safeguards against potential issues but also enhances overall quality of life.

The skeletal system forms the framework of our body, providing support, protection, and mobility. However, without proper care, bones can weaken, and joints may lose their flexibility over time. This deterioration often leads to conditions like osteoporosis, arthritis, and general discomfort.

To counteract these concerns, integrating weight-bearing exercises into your routine proves invaluable. Activities like walking, running, dancing, and weightlifting stimulate bone growth, enhance bone density, and fortify joint structures. By partaking in these exercises regularly, you actively strengthen your body's foundation.

Moreover, incorporating flexibility and stretching exercises can bolster joint health. Yoga, Pilates, and targeted stretching routines promote joint mobility, reducing the risk of stiffness and enhancing overall agility. These practices not only maintain joint function but also alleviate existing discomfort.

However, a word of caution accompanies these endeavors. Ensuring proper form and technique during exercises becomes paramount to prevent injuries. Consulting a fitness professional or physical therapist can guide you toward suitable workouts aligned with your body's capabilities and health status.

Diversifying your physical activities is key to a well-rounded regimen. Swimming, cycling, and other low-impact exercises offer alternatives that are gentle on joints while still fostering fitness. Additionally, integrating balance and coordination exercises, such as tai chi or balance-focused workouts, further fortifies joint stability and reduces the likelihood of falls or injuries.



Nutrition plays an equally pivotal role in maintaining robust bone and joint health. A diet rich in calcium, vitamin D, and other essential nutrients fortifies bones and supports overall musculoskeletal health. Incorporating dairy products, leafy greens, nuts, and fortified foods empowers your body's bone-building process.

Furthermore, hydration is often overlooked but essential for joint health. Adequate water intake lubricates joints, reducing friction and supporting their smooth functionality.

Remember, consistency is key. Making physical activity a habitual part of your routine yields cumulative benefits for your bones and joints. Whether through daily walks, structured gym sessions, or recreational sports, the continuous effort adds up to long-term improvements in skeletal health.

In tandem with physical activities, mindfulness and stress management techniques contribute significantly to bone and joint health. Chronic stress can exacerbate inflammation and discomfort within joints, impacting overall skeletal well-being. Practices like meditation, deep breathing exercises, and adequate sleep aid in stress reduction, benefiting your musculoskeletal system.

As 2024 unfolds, take charge of your bone and joint health by embracing an active lifestyle. Engage in activities that nourish and fortify your skeletal structure, promoting longevity, strength, and vitality.

Prioritize self-care and proactive measures to ensure your bones and joints remain resilient, enabling you to relish a life filled with movement and freedom.

In this new year, let your resolution revolve around the well-being of your bones and joints. Through dedication to physical activity, mindful practices, and a balanced lifestyle, you gift yourself the priceless treasure of a healthy, happy musculoskeletal system—empowering you to thrive in every step, leap, and dance through the chapters of 2024 and beyond.

About Dr. Nam Dinh

Dr. Nam Dinh is a board-certified, fellowship trained orthopedic surgeon at Optimotion Orthopaedics with special training in minimally invasive LATERAL total knee replacement ANTERIOR hip replacement surgery. To learn more information about Dr. Dinh visit optimotion.com.



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Understanding Glaucoma and Advanced Treatments for Retinal, Macular, and Vitreous Disorders

Thomas G. Ward, D.O.

Glaucoma stands as a silent threat to vision, stealthily encroaching on one's eyesight without noticeable symptoms until it reaches advanced stages. It's a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, often due to elevated pressure within the eye. As a leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide, it demands attention and comprehensive understanding.

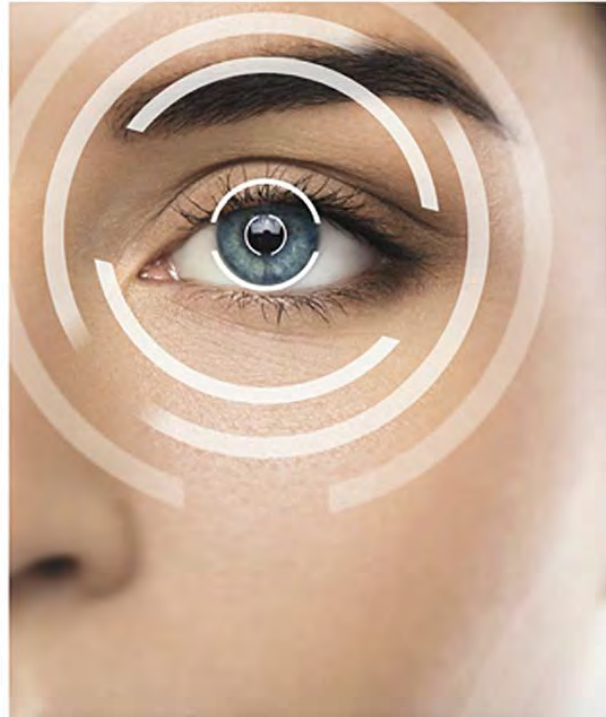
The optic nerve serves as the bridge between the eye and the brain, transmitting visual information. When glaucoma develops, this vital nerve sustains damage, often linked to increased intraocular pressure (IOP). There are several types of glaucoma, including primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) and angle-closure glaucoma. Each variant presents unique challenges in diagnosis and treatment.

Early detection proves pivotal in managing glaucoma effectively. Regular eye examinations, especially for individuals over 40 or those with a family history of the disease, remain crucial. Various tests, such as tonometry to measure eye pressure and optical coherence tomography (OCT) to assess the optic nerve, aid in diagnosing glaucoma in its early stages.

Once diagnosed, treatment strategies aim to reduce intraocular pressure to prevent or slow down the progression of optic nerve damage. This can involve prescription eye drops, oral medications, laser therapy, or surgery, depending on the severity and type of glaucoma. Recent advancements in minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) offer promising outcomes with fewer complications and faster recovery times.

Apart from glaucoma, disorders affecting the retina, macula, vitreous, and related structures pose significant challenges to vision. The retina plays a pivotal role in vision, converting light into electrical signals and sending them to the brain. Conditions like diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinal detachment, and vitreous floaters can compromise the delicate structures of the eye, leading to vision impairment or loss if left untreated.

Diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes, damages blood vessels in the retina, potentially causing blindness. Early detection through regular eye exams and optimal diabetes management are



crucial in preventing severe vision loss. Treatment options include laser therapy, injections, or surgery, depending on the stage and severity of the condition.

Age-related macular degeneration primarily affects the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. It comes in two forms: dry AMD, characterized by gradual macular deterioration, and wet AMD, involving abnormal blood vessel growth beneath the macula. While there is no cure, various treatments, such as anti-VEGF injections or photodynamic therapy, aim to slow its progression and preserve remaining vision.

Retinal detachment occurs when the retina peels away from the underlying tissue, leading to a sudden onset of vision loss. Prompt surgical intervention is often necessary to reattach the retina and restore vision. Vitreous floaters, though usually harmless, can sometimes indicate underlying retinal issues, requiring assessment by an eye care professional.

In recent years, advancements in retinal imaging, such as OCT and fundus photography, have revolutionized the diagnosis and management of retinal diseases. These technologies enable precise visualization of retinal layers, aiding in early detection and monitoring of conditions affecting the retina and surrounding structures.

The evolving landscape of treatments for these intricate eye conditions brings hope to millions affected by vision-threatening diseases. Ongoing research into innovative therapies, including gene therapy, stem cell transplantation, and artificial retinas, holds promise for further improving outcomes and potentially restoring vision in the future.

In conclusion, glaucoma and disorders affecting the retina, macula, vitreous, and related structures represent significant challenges to vision health. Early detection, regular eye examinations, and advancements in treatment modalities play pivotal roles in managing these conditions, offering hope for preserving vision and enhancing the quality of life for those affected by these sight-threatening diseases.

Dr. Thomas G. Ward is a board-certified ophthalmologist and a fellowship trained retina specialist. Dr. Ward completed his fellowship with Associate Retina Consultants in Detroit and was a staff physician at Kresge Eye Institute.

He has served as Chief of Surgery at Oak Hill Hospital, and on the Board of Directors of All Saints Surgery Center. In addition, Dr. Ward has served on the Board of Examiners for the College of Ophthalmology and taught as an associate professor at Nova Southeastern and University of South Florida.

Retina Group of Florida

If you are experiencing any changes in your eye health, whether it is blurry vision, pain, impaired vision, or any other visual irregularities, you should see an ophthalmologist right away. The earlier a disease is detected, the better the outcome and treatment options are for you. You will find a friendly and warm environment at Retina Group of Florida.

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BENEFITS OF HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

By Sandra Reddick

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is a medical treatment that involves breathing in pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber. The therapy has been used to treat various medical conditions, including decompression sickness, carbon monoxide poisoning, and diabetic foot ulcers. In recent years, HBOT has gained popularity as a treatment for a range of other conditions. Here are some of the potential benefits of hyperbaric oxygen therapy:

1. Improved wound healing: HBOT increases the oxygen supply to damaged tissues, which promotes the growth of new blood vessels and helps to repair damaged tissues. This can be particularly beneficial for people with slow-healing wounds, such as diabetic foot ulcers or radiation-induced skin injuries.

2. Reduced inflammation: Inflammation is a key driver of many chronic diseases. HBOT has been shown to reduce inflammation in the body, which may help to improve symptoms in people with conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis.

3. Enhanced cognitive function: HBOT has been shown to increase blood flow to the brain, which may help to improve cognitive function. Studies have suggested that the therapy may be helpful for people with conditions like traumatic brain injury, stroke, and dementia.

4. Increased athletic performance: Some athletes use HBOT as a way to enhance their performance. The therapy has been shown to increase the amount of oxygen in the blood, which can improve endurance and reduce fatigue.

5. Reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety: HBOT has been shown to have a calming effect on the body, which may help to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some studies have suggested that the therapy may be helpful for people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

While hyperbaric oxygen therapy has many potential benefits, it is important to note that the therapy is not appropriate for everyone. People with certain medical conditions, such as a collapsed lung or a history of seizures, may not be able to undergo the therapy. Additionally, HBOT can have side effects, including ear pain and temporary changes in vision. It is important to talk to a healthcare provider before undergoing hyperbaric oxygen therapy.



Why it's done

Your body's tissues need an adequate supply of oxygen to function. When tissue is injured, it requires even more oxygen to survive. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy increases the amount of oxygen your blood can carry. With repeated treatments, the temporary extra high oxygen levels encourage normal tissue oxygen levels, even after the therapy is completed.¹

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used to treat several medical conditions. And medical institutions use it in different ways. Your health care provider may suggest hyperbaric oxygen therapy if you have one of the following conditions:

- Severe anemia.
- Brain abscess.
- Bubbles of air in your blood vessels, known as arterial gas embolism.
- Burns.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Crushing injury.
- Deafness, sudden.
- Decompression sickness.
- Gangrene.
- Infection of skin or bone that causes tissue death.
- Nonhealing wounds, such as a diabetic foot ulcer.
- Radiation injury.
- Skin graft or skin flap at risk of tissue death.
- Traumatic brain injury.
- Vision loss, sudden and painless.

Reference:

1. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/hyperbaric-oxygen-therapy/about/pac-20394380>

Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center

Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center, the largest private center of its type in the Ocala, Florida, area, provides exceptional same-day and next-day care to patients from the Ocala area, The Villages, and the neighboring counties of Citrus, Lake, and Sumter. Haris Mirza, MD, and the team of infectious disease physicians have extensive experience diagnosing and treating infectious diseases and providing intensive care for slow-healing wounds and infections.

Managing an infectious disease and providing adequate care for a wound pose a major challenge to most patients. These health challenges often cause days off from work, high health care costs, and an uncertain prognosis. Patients find the care and support they need at Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center. The team goes a step beyond treating patients to provide disease education, increase social support, and improve the quality of life for patients and their families.

Infectious disease and wound specialists treat a vast number of conditions. The team at Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center take care of acute and chronic infections and wounds, frequently treating diabetic wounds, HIV, Lyme disease, venous leg ulcers, urinary tract infections, and lung conditions. Patients also receive the most advanced and effective therapies. Wound care incorporates specialized dressings and bioengineered tissue substitutes. At Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center, hyperbaric oxygen therapy is provided using the industry's largest and most comfortable chambers. They also offer infusion therapy and extensive lab work on-site, giving patients the convenience of comprehensive care in one location.

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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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THE 72 HOUR CRISIS

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

It is completely understandable that we wish to remain in our homes rather than moving to senior living. Our home is our sanctuary where we are protected from the dangers and uncertainty of the outside world. It's where we (mostly) have control of making our own decisions and have independence. A number of people will tell me emphatically that they will NEVER move to assisted living or a nursing home and plan to die in their own home. I support this 100% whenever possible. But I also understand that there may come a time when this is no longer possible.

Just like the promise to "never put me in one of those places," and the belief that you will remain in your home regardless of the situation, it is often made when the possibility of future needs are not fully appreciated. There may come a time when a person's care needs, safety, or physical and emotional toll on the caregiver are too great. Although your desire is to avoid it – if that time does come, I urge you to be prepared.

The situation that often presents itself is when an individual has been living in their own home with minimal care needs. Everything is going along fine until one day a significant event occurs. It could be a stroke, a fall, a diagnosis, or an accident, and suddenly your plan is no longer an option. The person is sent to the hospital and then transferred to rehab. The rehab social worker connects me with the family and I'm told that this person now needs 24 hour care and cannot be safely discharged home. I speak with the family, and they tell me that the person is nowhere near their "100 days" and they're not ready to talk about options until they see how much progress is made with therapy.

What is misunderstood is that the 100 days are not guaranteed, and the rehab has no control over the discharge date. It is completely determined by the Medicare provider and if your loved one is on an advantage plan, it can be sooner than the family believes is a safe discharge. I have received many phone calls from families telling me they had a care plan meeting with the rehab at 2:00 and told it could be a few weeks until discharge. Then at 5:00, social services receives a notice from insurance that the person is being discharged in 72 hours and crisis ensues.

If you have made no preparation for the next step and your loved one is not safe to return home and/or needs 24 hour care, you now have less than



72 hours to find a place that has availability, visit it, do the paperwork, arrange for a mover, schedule transportation to the new community, and try to breathe. AND, that discharge date could be on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday when many assisted living communities don't allow for admissions.

I encourage you to consider that alternatives to returning home should be discussed on the day of admission to the rehab. Ask the social worker to connect you with a company such as Senior Liaison of Central Florida to help you navigate all options available to you and to locate a good assisted living if that is what is recommended. If you merely talk about assisted living, or discuss the different kinds of assisted living based on care needs, visit assisted living, or have an assisted living come to do an assessment, you are not obligated to make a move or even a decision at that moment. But at least you are taking some control of the situation that will go a long way to reducing everyone's stress when the discharge date is looming in front of you.

If your loved one is determined to return home and insists on 24 hour care, the cost can be staggering at \$30 an hour. Consider the math...\$30 times 24 hours equals \$720 a day! That's \$5,040 a week; \$21,600 a month vs. about \$4,200 for an assisted living studio apartment with care.

Therapy can be continued in the assisted living community through Medicare as an outpatient. Communities generally have a physical therapy room with equipment, or a therapist can go to their room to provide therapy. The discharge planner at the rehab can provide orders for home health which includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and additional nursing services. The agency is always patient choice and based on the Medicare provider.

The sooner there is a discussion about assisted living, the more options you will have. A move to assisted living does not need to be a permanent decision. **It can be a temporary transition or a stepping stone to get stronger before returning home.** Assisted living contracts can be ended with just 30 day's notice. The decision to return home too soon can result in a relapse or another fall that could land you back in the hospital or rehab far too soon. The goal can certainly be to return home, but it's important that it is done wisely and safely. Please consider that your current situation may not always be realistic and begin the discussion now.



Janice Martin is an author, educator, and specialist on senior living options and the owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc. She assists families in locating senior options and communities and 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 visit www.seniorliaisoncfl.com.



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Weight Loss and Physical Therapy

Here we are in a brand-new year and many of us are thinking about the goals we want to set as we start 2023. The majority of New Year's resolution made by Americans revolve around health and weight loss. Sadly, less than half of those who make such resolutions will keep them even a full month! This is often because we set goals that are unrealistic and unsustainable. That's why many of us make the same resolutions year after year, never really attaining our goals.

Everyone's journey with losing weight is different, but increasing your physical activity is a great starting point. Some people exercise alone, some take workout classes, and others enlist the help of a physical therapist. Weight plays a big role in a person's overall well-being. Physical therapists can work with you on your journey to lose weight, so be sure to communicate your goals to your PT so the both of you can work together.

How Physical Therapists Aid in Weight Loss

Physical therapists are experts in movement, mobility, and exercise. They know exactly what you need to do to get your heart rate up, burn fat, and build muscle. When it comes to weight loss, their goal is to get their clients on the right track so that they can continue to exercise effectively once the therapy has ended.

When you work with a physical therapist, they'll create an individualized activity plan for you. Everything in your plan will be adjusted to your goals and your current abilities. While online resources and workout classes at the gym can be great ways to get inspired and start exercising, not all of the movements may be right for you at this time. Physical therapy is specific to you, so



you may see better results with this treatment than you would if you start exercising on your own.

Physical therapists understand the health issues and other obstacles that may get in your way, too. Being overweight or obese puts you at risk of developing a number of other health conditions, which may make it harder to exercise safely and comfortably. Because physical therapists are so knowledgeable about these concerns, they can help you find the forms of exercise that are effective without putting you at risk.

Weight Loss Decreases Body Pains

Our bodies are amazing machines that can do so much, but only when we challenge it and keep it shape. Like anything else, if you neglect it, it can fall into disrepair. In this case, your body will start to react differently depending on how much weight you gain and there might be limitations to what can be done.

Some common issues that those overweight might experience include:

- Decreased movement and flexibility
- Decreased endurance for daily activities
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of strength resulting in fatigue
- Hip, knee, ankle, or general joint pain
- Foot pains

Changing your diet is the first thing you need to do, but often pushing back from the table just isn't enough. The other part of weight loss is an exercise plan. Movement is important. Your body will thank you for it, and you'll feel better about it too.

For both children and adults who are overweight, physical therapy can help restore flexibility, increase strength and cardiovascular endurance, reduce pain, and get at any posture and balance issues. You PT will also work to prevent any disabilities caused by excess weight from settling in.

There are many wonderful uses and benefits of physical therapy, some that people aren't even aware of.

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UTILIZING CBD FOR RELIEF OF SYMPTOMS WITH SCHLERODERMA

By Dr. Nathalie Solomon: PharmD, CPH

This article is dedicated to Sophie Doffegnies. Sophie was diagnosed 5 months ago and has been using CBD/CBG drops for the relief of the symptoms caused by schleroderma.

Schleroderma is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by the hardening and thickening of the skin and connective tissues. Traditional medications like Plaquenil, commonly used to manage symptoms, often come with a range of side effects and can be difficult to tolerate. In recent years, there has been growing interest in exploring alternative therapies for symptom relief. One such alternative is cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive compound derived from the cannabis plant. This article examines the potential of CBD in alleviating Schleroderma symptoms, while considering its advantages over conventional medications.

Understanding Schleroderma

Schleroderma is a rare autoimmune disorder that affects the body's connective tissues. It leads to the overproduction of collagen, causing skin thickening, organ damage, and circulation problems. Symptoms can vary widely, ranging from localized skin involvement to systemic manifestations affecting internal organs. While the exact cause of Schleroderma is unknown, it is thought to involve a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Managing the symptoms of Schleroderma can be challenging, as conventional treatments often carry significant side effects and may not be well tolerated by all patients.

Limitations of Conventional Medications

One commonly prescribed medication for Schleroderma is Plaquenil (hydroxychloroquine). While it can help manage symptoms and slow disease progression, it is not without drawbacks. Plaquenil may cause adverse effects such as gastrointestinal issues, vision problems, and liver damage. Moreover, not all patients respond favorably to this medication, and some may find it difficult to tolerate due to its side effects. As a result, researchers have been exploring alternative approaches to improve the quality of life for Schleroderma patients.

The Potential of CBD for Symptom Relief

Cannabidiol (CBD), a compound derived from the cannabis plant, has gained attention for its potential therapeutic benefits. CBD interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system, which plays a role in regulating various physiological processes, including inflammation and immune responses. Studies have suggested that CBD possesses anti-inflammatory,



immunomodulatory, and antioxidant properties, which may be beneficial for individuals with autoimmune conditions like Schleroderma. Preliminary research indicates that CBD may help alleviate pain, reduce skin fibrosis, improve vasodilation, and enhance overall well-being in Schleroderma patients.

Advantages of CBD over Conventional Medications

Compared to conventional medications, CBD offers several advantages. Firstly, CBD is generally well-tolerated and has a favorable safety profile, with minimal side effects reported. This is particularly important for individuals who struggle with the side effects of traditional treatments. Secondly, CBD is available in various forms, including oils, capsules, and topicals, providing flexibility in administration and personalized dosing. Additionally, CBD is non-psychoactive, meaning it does not induce the intoxicating effects associated with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), another compound found in cannabis. This allows patients to experience the potential benefits of CBD without compromising their daily activities or cognitive function.

Cannabidiol Therapy, EHP-101, Put on Fast Track by FDA

Emerald Health Pharmaceuticals, the company developing EHP-101, is opening a Phase 2 clinical trial (NCT04166552) in Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. This study, yet to start enrolling, will test the therapy's safety, tolerability, pharmacokinetics (its absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion) and preliminary efficacy, at low and high daily doses, in an estimated 36 adults with diffuse cutaneous scleroderma.¹

Cannabis sativa as a Potential Treatment for Systemic Sclerosis

Cannabinoids are a group of compounds that can be categorized as endocannabinoids, phytocannabinoids, synthetic cannabinoids, and purified cannabinoids.² They act on the endocannabinoid system, discovered only in the early 1990s, through different types of receptors.³ Two of the most studied receptors are cannabinoid receptor type 1 (CB1) and type 2 (CB2) that immune cells and fibroblasts are able to express.² There has been increasing evidence on the immunomodulatory effects of cannabinoids. Some studies postulate the modulation of Th1/Th2 cells balance towards the enhancement of Th2 cell response, inhibition of the fibroblast activation, and reduction of transforming growth factor-beta (TGFβ) levels, in mouse models of scleroderma.³ In another murine model study, a CB2 agonist prevented the development of skin and lung fibrosis and decreased the levels of anti-DNA-topoisomerase antibodies and fibroblast proliferation.² A novel oral selective CB2 agonist is currently in a phase 3 trial (clinicaltrials.gov, NCT03398837), and has already demonstrated a satisfactory safety profile as well as a statically significant reduction on the modified Rodnan Skin Score in diffuse SSc patients (clinicaltrials.gov, NCT02465437).

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.

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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!

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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Remember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

²In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.*

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. **Contentment means this:** I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, *¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."* Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:

- **My life is a rat race.**
- **I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.**
- **I am just so exhausted.**
- **I don't know how much more of this I can take.**
- **I just want to escape.**



These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.

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