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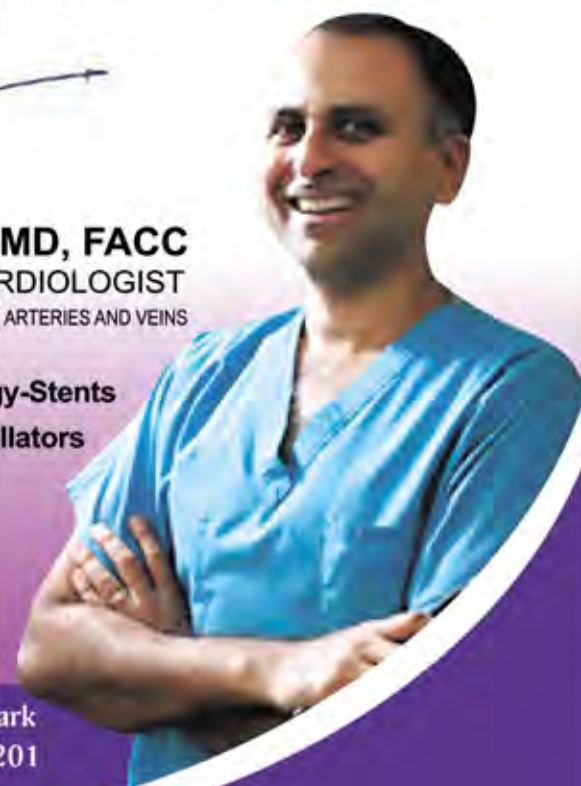
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SHOULD I GET CONTACT LENSES OR GLASSES?

When you notice your vision isn't quite what it used to be and you're in need of a first-time or updated prescription for lenses, you may wonder if glasses, contact lenses or both will best suit your vision correction and lifestyle needs. Let's compare the benefits of each so you can make the right decision for how you live.

10 BENEFITS OF GLASSES

Eyeglasses may be preferred over contact lenses for a variety of reasons and situations. Here are the primary advantages of glasses:

- 1. Ocular Health.** Because glasses don't come into direct contact with the surface of the eye, there is less risk of eye infection, irritation and allergic reaction associated with contact lenses and contact with fingers, particularly among people with sensitive, dry or allergy-prone eyes.
- 2. Superior Comfort.** Many people find glasses more comfortable, especially if they're not used to inserting and removing contact lenses. Some folks struggle with handling contact lenses, or to the feeling of wearing them, always aware of their presence. People prone to clenching their eyes, or to having eye redness or irritation, may find glasses more comfortable than contacts.
- 3. Convenience.** Glasses are easy to put on and take off, and there's no need for the daily cleaning routine and maintenance of contact lenses. When out and about, there's no need to remember to carry contact lens cases, cleansers, wetting solutions, etc.
- 4. Cost.** Glasses are often a more cost-effective long-term option when compared to the ongoing expenses of purchasing contact lenses and lens care products.
- 5. Multifocal Correction.** For people over 40 who experience presbyopia, multifocal or bifocal lenses can correct vision at various distances, including close-up.
- 6. Safety.** People with certain eye conditions, such as chronic dry eye or a history of eye infections, may not be suitable candidates for contact lenses due to the risk of exacerbating these issues. Also, people who are prone to neglecting to remove, clean or replace contacts on schedule may invite increased risk of infection, making glasses a smarter choice.
- 7. Compatibility.** For some jobs, such as those involving dusty, windy or dry environments, glasses may be more practical. For people who are in and out of the ocean or pool, glasses may be easier to manage than risking losing a contact lens to a sudden wave or splash.

8. Style. Eyeglass frames come in a vast array of sizes, shapes, colors and designer details that make them part of a person's signature style. With designs from classic to modern, professional to fanciful, glasses can become an essential piece of a smart, fashion-forward wardrobe.

9. Sunglasses. Prescription sunwear lenses come with 100% UV protection for clearer vision and crucial protection from the sun's damaging rays.

10. Environment Adaptable. Eyeglass lenses can include options that adapt to the environment, from UV-blocking polarized to photochromatic lenses that automatically transition to suit light conditions, for ultimate convenience.

8 BENEFITS OF CONTACT LENSES

While glasses come with a long list of advantages, contact lenses are often a superior choice based on the many benefits they can provide:

- 1. Cosmetic.** When you don't want to alter your appearance or interfere with others' ability to see your eyes directly, contact lenses let your face and eyes shine through unobstructed. And what's more beautiful than that?
- 2. Distortion-free.** High prescription glasses lenses can sometimes create a visual distortion between the lens and the eye. Contact lenses don't have this drawback.
- 3. Better Peripheral Vision.** Contact lenses offer a wider unobstructed field of vision than glasses, providing greater peripheral awareness for improved safety and accuracy.
- 4. Lifestyle Friendly.** Unlike glasses, contact lenses don't fog up or slide down your nose. If you're always on-the-go, contact lenses may be more compatible with physical activities like sports, dancing, outdoor adventures, playing with little ones, and other activities that might lead to damaged or lost glasses. Rain, changes in temperature, mask-wearing and other environmental factors don't diminish vision.
- 5. Anti-glare.** Unlike glasses, contact lenses don't produce glare or reflections, which can be especially important when doing things like driving at night.
- 6. Convenience.** Devotees of contact lenses report that contacts allow them to breeze through the day without thinking about their corrective lenses at all, allowing them to do everything without dealing with the fogging, smudging, limited peripheral vision and inconvenience of glasses.
- 7. More Options.** People with corneal issues such as keratoconus (cone-shaped eyeballs) were once ineligible for contact lenses. Today, scleral and Rose-K lenses make it possible for many people with corneal conditions to safely and effectively wear contacts.

8. Cosmetic Features. Colored contact lenses can let you change your eye color at will, creating a novel way to update your appearance. Specialty lenses, such as cat-eye or snake-eye effects, appeal to some for celebratory or theatrical purposes. Note that OTC novelty contact lenses are associated with high numbers of potentially dangerous eye infections, and should not be used by anyone. Prescription novelty lenses are a fun, safe way to enjoy special effects.

Hopefully, these points will help you evaluate the merits of each within the context of your individual needs, lifestyle and ocular health considerations. For many people, glasses are the safest and most practical choice. For others, contact lenses may be preferable for their aims and lifestyles. For a large third group, having both hits the sweet spot, as glasses are ideal for some needs, and contact lenses for others.

To know which lens type is best for you, make an appointment with your eye doctor to review or renew your lens prescription, provide any needed exams, and discuss which lenses will best enhance your vision, routines, endeavors and recreational pursuits.

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GET MOVING TO KEEP YOUR VEINS HEALTHY IN THE NEW YEAR

The shift towards remote and sedentary jobs has become increasingly prevalent in the ever-evolving landscape of modern work. Many individuals now find themselves engaged in occupations that demand long hours of sitting, whether working from home, spending extended periods at a desk, or performing tasks that necessitate prolonged periods of inactivity. While these jobs offer flexibility and convenience, they highlight the potential health risks associated with sedentary behavior, particularly the increased likelihood of developing varicose veins. In this modern work age, we need to think about the causes of varicose veins, the dangers posed by prolonged sitting, the pressure on the sitz bones, and practical strategies to incorporate movement into daily routines for individuals whose occupations demand significant amounts of time in a seated position. It is essential to comprehend these factors to proactively address and prevent the development of varicose veins, promoting overall vascular health.

Sedentary lifestyles, characterized by prolonged periods of sitting, can significantly contribute to the development of varicose veins. Varicose veins occur when blood vessels, usually in the legs, become enlarged and twisted. While various factors contribute to their development, prolonged sitting is a primary culprit. When you sit for extended periods, the blood flow in your legs may slow down, leading to increased pressure in the veins.

The primary cause of varicose veins is weakened or damaged valves within the veins. These valves normally regulate blood flow, preventing it from flowing backward. When these valves fail to function properly, blood accumulates and pools in the veins, causing them to swell and become varicose.

Sitting poses unique patterns of obstruction to venous outflow creating venous congestion in the calf and a very tight feeling that may include actual swelling. When we sit, we tend to sit on the soft portion of the mid-thigh. This compresses the femoral vein making venous drainage more difficult. Our upright posture creates acute angles at the groin and the knee, compressing the femoral vein further and the popliteal vein at the knee. This is exacerbated by being overweight and also short stature. Things that can alleviate the congestion from sitting position: 1. Sit forward with pressure primarily on the sitz bones rather than the mid-portion of the thigh where venous compression occurs.



2. Keep your feet on the ground to decrease pressure on the thighs. 3. Decrease the angle at the knee by stretching out the lower leg, decreasing compression of popliteal vein helping venous drainage from the calf. 4. Similarly, decrease the angle at the groin so the femoral vein at the groin is less likely to be compressed. 5. Walk every 1-2 hours activating the calf muscle pump that drives the venous system.

One practical approach is to invest in an ergonomic chair that provides proper support and encourages good posture. Chairs with adjustable features, such as lumbar support and seat height, can help distribute the weight evenly and reduce pressure on the sitz bones. Additionally, using a cushion or seat pad specifically designed to relieve pressure points can make a notable difference in enhancing comfort during prolonged periods of sitting.

Regular breaks to stand, stretch, or walk are crucial in preventing pressure accumulation on the sitz bones. Simple movements, such as standing up and performing gentle stretches or taking short walks, stimulate blood flow, reducing the risk of blood pooling in the veins. Integrating these brief breaks into the work routine benefits vascular health and contributes to overall well-being and productivity.

Furthermore, individuals can experiment with alternative seating options, such as stability balls or standing desks, to vary their sitting positions and alleviate pressure on the sitz bones. These alternatives engage different muscle groups and promote better posture, reducing the strain on the veins and supporting vascular health. This writer enjoys her under-desk elliptical to keep her veins pumping blood as she writes content for readers like you! I am stepping right now as I type this. Flexible slant boards that promote calf activation while sitting can also be helpful.

Additionally, engaging in exercises that target the calf muscles, such as calf raises or ankle circles, can help pump blood back up to the heart, reducing the likelihood of blood pooling in the veins. Maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise is also crucial, as excess weight can strain the veins.

Staying adequately hydrated is a crucial yet often underestimated aspect of preventing varicose veins, especially for individuals with sedentary jobs requiring prolonged sitting periods. Dehydration can exacerbate the risk of developing or worsening varicose veins, affecting blood viscosity and overall circulation. When you're dehydrated, your blood tends to become thicker, making it more challenging to flow smoothly through the veins. This increased viscosity can lead to slower blood circulation, raising the likelihood of blood pooling in the veins, which is a significant factor in the development of varicose veins. Drinking ample water throughout the day helps maintain optimal blood viscosity and supports efficient blood flow. Hydration is essential for overall vascular health, and it plays a key role in preventing blood stagnation in the lower extremities, where varicose veins commonly occur.

In addition to promoting proper blood circulation, staying hydrated benefits the elasticity of blood vessels and the overall health of the cardiovascular system. This, in turn, contributes to preventing varicose veins and other vascular issues.

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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 352-268-9841.



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HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HEART HEALTH IN THE NEW YEAR

T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

The health of the heart and vascular system are affected by many things like, stress, substance abuse and genetics, but the main offenders of heart disorders are being overweight, poor dietary habits, having high blood sugar levels and living a sedentary lifestyle.

Too Much Sugar

High blood sugar and cardiovascular disease have more in common than most people are aware. In our country nearly 30 million people have diabetes, and a vast majority of our population unknowingly has what's known as prediabetes, which quickly escalates into the disease within a short amount of time. If you have diabetes, it's critical that you see a cardiologist because it's not a matter of, "will I have heart issues," but rather "when."

Heart disease and the issue of high blood glucose are very closely associated because of many risk factors contributing to what's known as metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a condition in which the high insulin and leptin levels are resistant causing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, and visceral fat to become significant risk factors for heart disease and coronary disorders. When the vessels are circulating high-glucose blood, atherosclerosis occurs at a greater intensity. Atherosclerosis is a build-up of plaque and causes a hardening of the arteries.

Too Much Salt

When we ingest excessive salt, inflammation takes effect in our entire bodies and water is pushed and retained into the arteries, which causes high blood pressure and makes the heart work extra hard. Too much salt increases your risks of strokes and heart failure, along with other disorders and diseases.

Potassium can help to flush some excess salt out of your body. That is why most salt alternatives have a higher ratio of potassium in the mix. Many foods that contain potassium are bananas, plums, coconuts, avocado, potato and many more. But eating potassium to flush out salt is not a good idea, as it will take an excessive amount and potassium in excess causes other bodily harm like arrhythmias and muscle weakness.

Keeping your sodium low is one of the major keys to keeping your blood pressure and heart healthy. Eating whole foods is imperative to keeping your sodium

levels in check and also to make you healthier, by lowering cholesterol and upping the amount of antioxidants and nutrients you get from your meals.

Improve Your Diet

Shopping the periphery of the grocery store is a great way to avoid all of the processed foods, excessive sugar and salt in the center isles. There are exceptions of course, like frozen no salt added vegetables and fruit and dried spices to take the place of your saltshaker. For the most part, you should focus your shopping efforts on fresh produce, lean protein like poultry, seafood and eggs and some dairy.

The Mediterranean or the Dash diet are exceptional examples of what foods you should be eating, which provide essential nutrients for the brain's condition. All three of these diets emphasize eating plenty of vegetables, fruit, healthy fats, whole grains and lean protein (especially cold-water fish) while avoiding excess salt, sugar, simple carbs and saturated fats. Eating this way is thought to prevent cognitive decline by proving the heart, brain and entire body with antioxidants, and the good fats that it needs to function properly. Excessive sugar, simple carbohydrates, processed foods, and chemicals are known to cause inflammation and degeneration.

When you shop, check the labels on your food and if you are buying processed, convenient foods, invest in healthier low-sodium versions. If you're eating at a restaurant, ask for sauces of condiments on the side and use sparingly. Also, order steamed vegetables, lean meat and in general make wise choices.

Exercise

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, 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.

There have been significant studies on the benefits of water activities for individuals that suffer from cardiac diseases and disorders. These cases have proven that the level of oxygen in the blood increases in water, which is ideal for most vascular issues. The oxygen consumption (VO2) is three times greater in water than on land. Working large muscle groups

leads to this uptake of oxygen or VO2, but doing a lot of running and legwork on land increases the heart rate at a greater level than with water-based therapy. For obvious reasons, maintaining a lower heart rate is ideal for those suffering from any heart ailments.

Dr. V

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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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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.



The Chandra Wellness Center is an excellent addition to her unique qualifications. We are excited to introduce this advanced technology for a Better healthy YOU! **Strong and Healthy is the new SEXY!**

DR. RAVI CHANDRA

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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Making CBD Your Health Resolution 2024

Have you ever wondered what CBD is and why it's effective for so many different problems? I'm often asked how CBD can help with seizures, PTSD, anxiety, pain, inflammation, digestive issues, depression, sleep, blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, and more. CBD, or cannabidiol, is just one of over a hundred cannabinoids found in the cannabis or hemp plant. Since the farm bill of 2018, research that was previously impossible due to cannabis prohibition has become feasible.

CBD activates a system in our body called the endocannabinoid system, which is specifically designed to receive cannabinoids. Essentially, it's a system primed by nature to interact with one plant—CBD activates it. The role of CBD is to restore balance and homeostasis in our body. Activating this system prompts the body to produce appropriate responses: managing pain, reducing inflammation, regulating digestion, boosting the immune system, and maintaining mood, blood pressure, blood sugar, and sleep cycles.

In essence, it's our body performing as nature intended because we're providing what it needs to function optimally. Just like deficiencies in vitamins and nutrients impair our body's ability to heal and repair, cannabinoid deficiency affects our body's optimal function due to limited access caused by prohibition.

The most widely recognized benefit of CBD is its anti-inflammatory properties. Let me explain the chain reaction and how it works. Everyone experiences pain, even if they don't acknowledge it. As a society, we've learned to overlook much of our discomfort and push through. Whether physical or emotional, pain creates stress, affecting our sleep and impeding our body's natural healing response.

Sleep is vital for our body's recovery, but if it's disrupted by pain or an overactive mind, it initiates a cycle of dysfunction leading to reliance on various prescriptions. Inflammation is the body's immune response to fix issues, but when it overreacts, it can damage tissues and organs, mimicking conditions like arthritis. Reduced activity due to discomfort further disrupts our sleep, impacting mental capacities.

Reducing inflammation with CBD decreases pain, allowing for more activity during the day and better sleep at night. Think of CBD as a vital nutrient; consistency is key for desired benefits.



Finding the right dosage requires trial and error to determine what works best for you. Overdosing on CBD is not a concern, but it's essential to consult your doctor or pharmacist for potential interactions with pharmaceutical medications before starting a CBD regimen.



Glaucoma, a January focus, was also one of the few approved conditions to be part of the government's federal compassionate use cannabis program started back in 1978 to 13 patients which continues today to the remaining living participants. The Cannabis is grown at the university of Mississippi and each patient was sent a tin of 150 pre rolled cigarettes every month. Cannabis has shown to be effective at alleviating the pressure behind the eyes due to the constricting or narrowing of the blood vessels. Cannabis is known as a vasodilator opening the blood vessels to decrease pressure because of this property it may also help with blood pressure, migraines and headaches through vasodilation.

Sources: *The Science Beyond the Controversy.*
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK224386/>

<https://www.mpp.org/policy/federal/federal-governments-medical-marijuana-program/#:~:text=The%20Compassionate%20Investigational%20New%20Drug,be%20of%20very%20low%20quality.>

BANNER HARVEST

At Banner Harvest, we are passionate about CBD and believe it is a great natural alternative for many people. We strive to offer the highest quality options, unsurpassed in efficacy and consistency. All our products are farm to table which means grown, formulated, and made here in-house from scratch. We take great pride in our quality control; each individual product and batch is tested by ACS an accredited 3rd party laboratory. We test not only for potency, but also the full panel, which includes pesticides, residual solvents, microbials, and heavy metals. Each product includes a QR code which has the COA (certificate of analysis) which is the lab analysis report listing test results. It is critical for the consumer to understand and demand access to a product's test. Many CBD brands being sold are white labeling or private labeling their products from unregulated overseas sources or huge corporate distributors who do not have any quality or efficacy standards and worst of all, supply an altered COA or no testing at all. Trust your source.

With over 40 years of combined experience in the legal cannabis industry, our team at Banner Harvest strives not only to educate but also to create the highest quality Hemp and CBD products in the market. We conduct full panel lab testing at a 3rd-party DEA lab in Florida to ensure accuracy in formulation and labeling, ensuring you can trust the purity, safety, and efficacy of every product. With over 15 years of experience in patient advocacy and education, Banner Harvest stands as the 1st and only CBD company in the state accredited by the Better Business Bureau. Passionate about our work, we aim to share our knowledge. Education is our tool to undo over 100 years of propaganda against this God-given natural plant medicine. Through education, consumers can make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and their pets.

These statements and the products of this company are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.



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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.

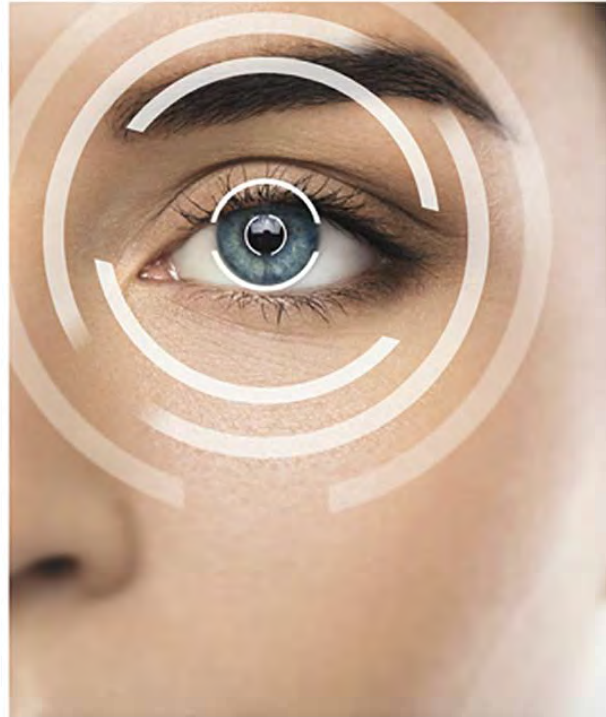
The optic nerve serves as the bridge between the eye and the brain, transmitting visual information. When glaucoma develops, this vital nerve sustains damage, often linked to increased intraocular pressure (IOP). There are several types of glaucoma, including primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) and angle-closure 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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MASTERING THE BALANCE:

Understanding the Vitality of Blood Sugar Control

In the intricate dance of maintaining good health, few things are as crucial as controlling your blood sugar levels. The balance of glucose in your bloodstream plays a pivotal role in your overall well-being, influencing everything from energy levels to long-term health outcomes.

At its core, managing blood sugar is about regulating the body's glucose levels. Glucose serves as the primary source of energy for cells, fueling vital bodily functions. However, maintaining this balance is delicate, as both high and low levels can lead to severe health complications.

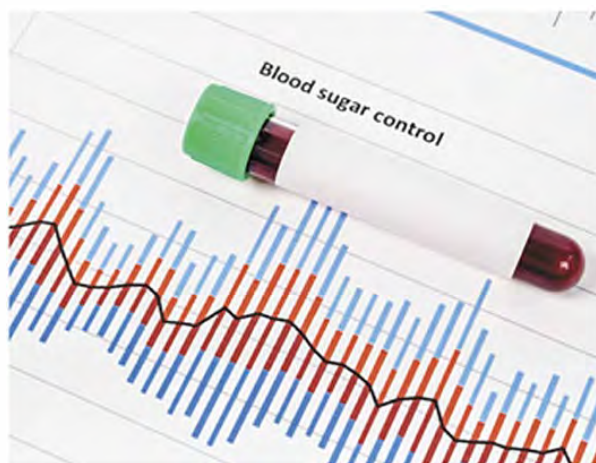
One of the most prevalent conditions related to blood sugar is diabetes. This chronic illness occurs when the body struggles to produce or effectively use insulin, the hormone responsible for regulating glucose levels. Unchecked, diabetes can result in numerous complications, such as heart disease, nerve damage, kidney problems, and even vision impairment.

Beyond diabetes, erratic blood sugar levels can impact anyone, regardless of whether they have been diagnosed with the condition. Spikes and crashes in blood sugar can lead to mood swings, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. Long-term, it increases the risk of developing chronic conditions like obesity, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome.

Controlling blood sugar isn't just about avoiding sweets or monitoring sugar intake. It involves a holistic approach to diet, exercise, and lifestyle choices. Consuming a balanced diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats helps regulate blood sugar levels. Additionally, portion control and mindful eating can prevent sudden spikes in glucose.

Regular physical activity also plays a pivotal role. Exercise aids in improving insulin sensitivity, allowing cells to better utilize glucose for energy. Even moderate activity, such as walking or cycling, can significantly contribute to managing blood sugar levels.

Furthermore, managing stress levels and ensuring adequate sleep are essential components of controlling blood sugar. Stress triggers the release of hormones that can cause blood sugar levels to rise. Lack of sleep can disrupt insulin production and increase insulin resistance, making blood sugar control more challenging.



Monitoring blood sugar levels is vital for individuals with diabetes. Continuous glucose monitoring systems and regular blood tests empower individuals to track their levels, enabling timely interventions to maintain stability. Moreover, keeping track of carbohydrate intake, medication, and physical activity helps in fine-tuning blood sugar control strategies.

Awareness and education about blood sugar management are crucial. Empowering individuals with the knowledge of how various foods and lifestyle choices affect blood sugar levels enables them to make informed decisions. Community initiatives, educational programs, and accessible resources can significantly impact public health by promoting proactive blood sugar management.

The significance of blood sugar control extends beyond personal health; it affects societal and economic aspects. The prevalence of diabetes strains healthcare systems globally, leading to increased medical costs and reduced workforce productivity. By emphasizing prevention and education, societies can alleviate this burden, fostering healthier communities.

In conclusion, mastering the art of controlling blood sugar is fundamental for overall health and well-being. Whether managing diabetes or striving for optimal health, maintaining balanced blood sugar levels through diet, exercise, stress management, and awareness is key. It's a journey that requires commitment and knowledge but promises profound benefits for a healthier, more fulfilling life.

How do I get started?

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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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Celebrating Life

As the start of a new year, January is often associated with new beginnings. But did you know the first month of the year also encompasses Celebration of Life Day and Hunt for Happiness Week? These lesser-known acknowledgments—falling on the first and third weeks of January, respectively—remind us not only to ring in a New Year but also to celebrate life and to take a closer look at what we define as happiness and what it takes to achieve it in our lives.

While there are many things worth celebrating, aging should be on the top of your list. At Sumter Senior Living, our compassionate, skilled care team understands that to find happiness is to celebrate life—yours and the lives of those around you. Though it's not possible to be happy all the time, our community provides the care, programming, health, and wellness resources necessary to thrive in an environment that's not just like home—it *is* home.

BETTER WITH AGE

Many factors play a role in happiness—chief among them being our perception as we grow older. Even as physical health and mental sharpness taper off, emotional well-being tends to increase alongside age. Studies have shown that—compared with young adults—those aged 50 and older consistently score higher, or more positively, on a wide variety of daily emotions.

A survey conducted by SeniorLiving.org of 800 American adults in 2022 sought to measure the life satisfaction of older adults. Following in the footsteps of a similar survey from AARP in 2017, SeniorLiving.org found that more than four in five seniors self-reported their "satisfaction with life" is the same, better, or much better than they expected as youths. Both surveys also found that though many younger Americans expressed a negative perception about aging, most older Americans reported feeling good about their lives.

This positive outlook that seems to have developed with age is based on several key factors, including participants reporting that aging means: life has more possibilities, there is more freedom to choose to live how we want to, friends become a bigger part of our lives, we will have healthcare coverage, and we'll know how to better cope with stress.

But happiness is more than just a long-term endeavor; it's also a day-to-day pursuit. And national samples repeatedly show that older adults tend to experience more positive emotions in a given day and fewer negative ones—independent of income or education. Several studies performed by psychologists from the University of California, Irvine, and Stanford University's Center on Longevity have reported that representative samples of adults repeatedly illustrate that older people have more ability than younger adults to soften the edges of a day—by paying for delivery, hiring help, staying comfortably homebound and, crucially, being able to have their needs met within their place of residence.



CELEBRATE AT SUMTER

As part of the Grace Management family, Sumter Senior Living believes that celebrating life and curating happiness should be part of every day—not just to kick-off the new year. Which is why at Sumter Senior Living, conveniently located in The Villages® community of the sunshine state, we want you to live life to the fullest and embrace the hunt for happiness as a daily pursuit.

Take care of your health in our Fitness Center and indoor, heated therapy pool. Explore enriching interests at the Library, Theater, and Arts and Crafts Studio. Spend time with friends in our community rooms. And beyond our convenient on-site offerings, you'll also gain access to The Villages® Amenities. Because, at Sumter Senior Living, we provide all the ingredients our residents need to live up to their full potential.

From fitness lessons to therapeutic programs and everyday activities that define our vibrant community, everything we do is guided by a sense of purpose to provide great sources of joy, excitement, and relaxation—each and every day. We're always sure to make time for laughter, connection, and friendship, and include those ideals in everything we do.

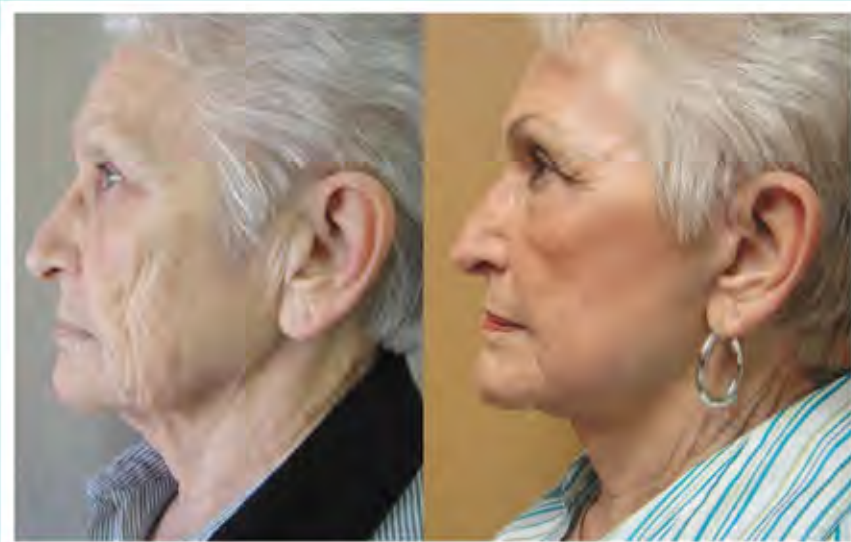
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Managed by Grace Management, Inc. (GMI), a leader in providing the best senior living experiences, Sumter Senior Living has been able to elevate industry standards by delivering exceptional living experiences while providing the resources and information seniors and their loved ones need to make important life decisions. Grace Management, Inc. is a subsidiary of CPF Living Communities and is ranked in ASHA's 50 largest seniors housing owners.

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- Fix Your Gut, Fix Your Problems
- Study Reveals Diabetes and Age

Skincancer

By April Hays, MD, Medical Director, Skincancer Center at the University of Florida Health System. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. In fact, more than one million new cases are diagnosed each year. The main risk factor for developing skin cancer is cumulative lifetime exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Individual risk factors include family history of skin cancer, fair complexion, and a history of sunburns.

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Featured Article

"The Other Side of Parkinson's Disease"

By Ramon A. Gil, MD - Medical Director, Parkinson's Disease Treatment Center of St. John's Hospital & Health Center. Parkinson's Disease (PD) is traditionally recognized by the motor signs that typically bring the patients to the physicians for medical evaluation. Tremor, rigidity, slowness of movement and changes in their gait pattern, associated later on with balance problems. These problems are due to:

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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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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.

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Living with an Autoimmune Disease – A Healthy Lifestyle Can Make a BIG Difference

Being well-educated about your autoimmune disease, such as Crohn's, Osteoporosis or Multiple Sclerosis (MS), is a powerful tool that empowers patients to participate actively in their healthcare journey. Understanding the intricacies of the condition can lead to more informed decision-making, increased adherence to treatment plans, and, ultimately, an enhanced quality of life.

Firstly, knowledge fosters a sense of empowerment. When individuals are well-informed about their autoimmune disease, they can actively engage with healthcare providers in meaningful discussions about their condition. This collaborative approach encourages a sense of partnership between the patient and the medical team, leading to more effective and tailored treatment plans.

Knowing about the symptoms, progression, and potential complications of an autoimmune disease allows patients to recognize changes in their health more promptly. Early detection of symptoms or shifts in the disease course can enable timely intervention, potentially minimizing the impact on overall well-being. Regular communication with healthcare professionals is key to this proactive approach.

Secondly, an understanding of the available treatment options and their potential benefits and risks empowers patients to make informed decisions about their healthcare. This knowledge allows individuals to actively discuss treatment plans, ensuring that interventions align with their preferences and lifestyles. It also facilitates realistic expectations about the outcomes of different therapeutic approaches.

Education about lifestyle factors that may impact autoimmune disease is equally crucial. Patients who are well-informed about the role of diet, exercise, stress management, and other lifestyle factors can make conscious choices to support their overall health.

- Engaging in regular physical activity is a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle for those with autoimmune conditions. Exercise can contribute to improved muscle strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health.

- Nutrition plays a pivotal role in managing autoimmune diseases. A well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can support overall health. Some studies suggest that certain dietary patterns, such as the Mediterranean diet, may have potential benefits for individuals with autoimmune conditions.

- Adequate rest and stress management are integral components of a healthy lifestyle, especially for those with autoimmune diseases. Sleep is essential for the body's repair processes, and chronic stress may exacerbate symptoms. Implementing stress-reduction techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, or yoga, under the supervision of a healthcare provider can be beneficial in managing the impact of stress on autoimmune conditions.

- Regular medical check-ups are crucial for individuals with autoimmune diseases to monitor their health status and adjust treatment plans. It is essential to maintain open communication with healthcare providers, promptly reporting any changes in symptoms.

Building a relationship with your medical team plays a vital role in the well-being of individuals with autoimmune diseases. At Sage Infusion we found that we can help answer questions and provide tools/educational materials to help our patients feel supported and to better understand their treatment and journey. This helps them communicate their needs more effectively to family, friends, and their healthcare providers, which creates a supportive environment that can positively influence the patient's emotional and mental health.

Being well-educated about autoimmune diseases like Crohn's, Osteoporosis or MS is a cornerstone of effective self-management. It empowers patients to participate in their healthcare actively, recognize changes in their health, make informed decisions about treatment options, and cultivate a supportive network.

Sage Infusion Can Help

At Sage Infusion, we've reimagined patient care. From a quick start to upfront pricing and financial assistance to compassionate care by our clinical experts in a serene environment, you will experience infusion therapy like never before. We develop long-term relationships with our patients and work with them to tailor their treatment experience and preferences to make them feel comfortable. We are committed to



making every infusion as comfortable, easy, and stress-free as we possibly can. We've designed our space to create an ambience of serenity.

We provide expert patient-centered infusion care in a contemporary boutique environment. Sage Infusion eases your medical burdens by handling the care coordination process, including insurance authorization and patient progress updates. Our flexible scheduling meets our patient's needs with extended hours. Day, night, and weekend appointments are available. Our physician assistants and nurse practitioners follow the National Infusion Center Association guidelines and our proprietary clinical protocols. Sage Infusion offers a variety of comforting amenities, and patients can choose to receive treatment in the open lounge or private room. We want you to focus on getting better and living a healthier life.

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EMBRACING CHANGE

Ketamine Therapy and New Year's Resolutions for Overcoming Unproductive Patterns and Triggers

The start of a new year often heralds a period of reflection and resolution. It's a time when many of us embark on a journey of self-improvement, setting goals aimed at overcoming unproductive patterns and navigating triggers that impede our progress. This year, a novel approach to this pursuit of personal growth emerges with the integration of Ketamine therapy—a groundbreaking treatment showing promise in revolutionizing mental health care.

Ketamine, once predominantly known as an anesthetic, has stepped into the limelight for its transformative potential in addressing mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and chronic pain. Unlike traditional antidepressants, which may take weeks to show effects, Ketamine therapy offers rapid relief, often within hours. Its mechanism of action involves modulating certain neurotransmitters in the brain, leading to a profound impact on mood regulation and cognitive processes.

Pairing the therapeutic benefits of Ketamine with New Year's resolutions can offer a powerful strategy for individuals looking to break free from unproductive cycles and cope with triggers more effectively. Resolutions, when backed by the support of Ketamine therapy, can serve as catalysts for genuine and lasting change.

The first step towards personal growth often involves acknowledging unproductive patterns that hold us back. Whether it's procrastination, negative self-talk, or self-sabotage, these behaviors can hinder progress. Ketamine therapy, with its ability to potentially disrupt entrenched thought patterns and depressive cycles, can provide a window of opportunity to confront and modify these behaviors. Through introspection and therapy, individuals can develop strategies to replace unproductive habits with healthier alternatives.

Furthermore, the management of triggers—those stimuli that evoke negative emotions or behaviors—is an integral part of personal development. For many, New Year's resolutions include a commitment to handle triggers more constructively. Ketamine therapy, in conjunction with therapy sessions, equips individuals with a strengthened emotional toolkit to better manage these triggers. It aids in building resilience and providing a clearer mindset to navigate challenging situations.

However, it's important to note that while Ketamine therapy shows promise, it's not a standalone solution. It should ideally complement traditional therapy and holistic lifestyle changes. Resolutions to incorporate mindfulness practices, regular exercise, healthy eating habits, and a strong support network can significantly augment the benefits of Ketamine therapy.

As individuals embark on this dual journey of Ketamine therapy and New Year's resolutions, it's essential to approach it with patience and commitment. Progress might not always be linear, and setbacks may occur. Yet, the combination of therapeutic intervention and personal determination can lead to transformative growth and an enhanced quality of life.

In conclusion, the fusion of Ketamine therapy with New Year's resolutions geared towards confronting unproductive patterns and managing triggers presents a dynamic approach to personal evolution. By harnessing the therapeutic potential of Ketamine alongside proactive efforts to address ingrained behaviors, individuals can embark on a path towards lasting positive change, fostering resilience, and unlocking their full potential in the year ahead.

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Navigating Weight Loss with Ozempic/Semaglutide: IMPACT ON JOINT AND BACK PAIN TREATMENTS

By Physicians Rehabilitation

Weight loss and its connection to joint and back pain treatments have been areas of significant interest for those exploring the benefits of medications like Ozempic/Semaglutide. The correlation between weight reduction and pain management holds promise, but understanding their intricate relationship is crucial.

Ozempic/Semaglutide, known for its effectiveness in aiding weight loss by regulating appetite and reducing calorie intake, has drawn attention not only for its weight-reduction abilities but also for its potential impact on joint and back pain. Research suggests that obesity significantly contributes to joint and back pain due to added stress on weight-bearing joints and strain on the back muscles. Therefore, the weight loss achieved through medications like Ozempic/Semaglutide might alleviate these issues.

The mechanism behind this relationship lies in the reduction of excess weight. As individuals shed pounds while on Ozempic/Semaglutide, the pressure on joints lessens, potentially resulting in decreased joint pain. Moreover, weight loss can alleviate strain on the back, relieving discomfort and improving mobility for those suffering from chronic back pain.

However, it's essential to approach this connection with a nuanced perspective. Weight loss, although beneficial, might initially exacerbate joint and back pain for some individuals. Rapid weight reduction can lead to temporary changes in muscle structure and joint alignment, causing discomfort until the body adjusts to the new weight.

Additionally, Ozempic/Semaglutide might interact with certain pain medications commonly used for joint and back pain. Understanding these interactions is vital to ensure optimal pain management while undergoing a weight loss regimen. Consulting healthcare providers becomes imperative to navigate potential medication adjustments or considerations for alternative pain management strategies.



Incorporating a holistic approach that combines weight loss strategies with targeted exercises aimed at strengthening muscles supporting joints and the back can further enhance the positive outcomes. Physical therapy, low-impact exercises, and adopting ergonomic practices in daily activities play crucial roles in managing joint and back pain while on a weight loss journey with Ozempic/Semaglutide.

Nevertheless, individual responses to Ozempic/Semaglutide and its influence on joint and back pain treatments can vary. Some may experience significant relief, while others might notice moderate improvements or even initial discomfort before benefits manifest. Monitoring one's body, staying in touch with healthcare professionals, and maintaining open communication about experiences are pivotal during this process.

Furthermore, lifestyle modifications beyond medication play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable weight loss and managing joint and back pain.

Healthy dietary choices, adequate hydration, stress management techniques, and sufficient sleep complement the effects of Ozempic/Semaglutide, fostering an overall healthier lifestyle conducive to weight loss and pain management.



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In conclusion, Ozempic/Semaglutide's role in weight loss holds promise for positively impacting joint and back pain. While the connection between weight reduction and pain management is notable, it's essential to approach it with a comprehensive understanding of individual responses, potential interactions, and the need for a holistic approach combining medication, lifestyle adjustments, and targeted exercises. Ultimately, navigating weight loss with Ozempic/Semaglutide while addressing joint and back pain requires personalized strategies tailored to individual needs, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between patients and healthcare providers.

We, at Physicians Rehabilitation, have always taken a multi-modality approach to treating chronic joint pain and osteoarthritis by offering various types of injection therapies, physical therapy, bracing, and interventional pain management, but now we are also offering medical weight loss options to help you with your long-term health goals. We are focused on helping you gain mobility, improve your strength, and live a pain-free lifestyle, but also getting you to look and feel your best! Call us today to get more information on our weight loss program!

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Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances: A Solution for a Good Night's Sleep

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

Sleep apnea affects more than 25 million people in the United States. It is a progressive condition that interrupts breathing patterns throughout a person's sleep. People who suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) may have episodes of stopping breathing up to hundreds of times per night for 10 seconds or longer, and along with this disruption comes many adverse side effects and morbidities.

What Is Sleep Apnea?

The short answer is the airway collapses during sleep. It is a relatively common condition and is related to lifestyle and age. Once the sleep pattern is disrupted, the lack of oxygen to the brain and heart can cause serious health concerns and implications. Left untreated, OSA can lead to heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and other serious complications.

What are the Side Effects and Complications Associated with Sleep Apnea?

- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disorders such as A-Fib
- Chronic disease
- Diabetes
- Brain health impairment

What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

- Snoring
- Gasping for air while sleeping
- Dry mouth
- Cognitive decline or brain fog
- Restless sleeping
- Daytime sleepiness/dozing

Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances: Have you tried CPAP therapy?

The customary first line of treatment for severe sleep apnea is a PAP device. For Mild and Moderate Sleep Apnea an oral appliance is an effective alternative.

Approximately 50 percent of patients are unable to tolerate the use of a PAP, and therefore are not achieving optimum treatment results. In many cases those individuals are going untreated. Those patients are candidates for Oral Appliance Therapy, or OAT. A custom-fit oral appliance is an effective therapeutic treatment option for Obstructive Sleep Apnea and can also help to eliminate snoring. By opening the airway, you increase your oxygen intake, as well as improve your sleep, and your overall health. The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine all recommend OAT to be prescribed by a Sleep Physician and fabricated by an ABDSM qualified dentist.

The negative effects of poor sleep are numerous. We all know the short-term results of not sleeping well and feeling terrible but what about the more serious health concerns? If left untreated, people may experience poor memory, decreased cognitive function leading to dementia and Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease including high blood pressure, insulin resistance, obesity and worsening symptoms of asthma and COPD due to lack of oxygen to the brain during sleeping hours. The good news is that if properly diagnosed and treated early, the effects of Sleep Apnea can be reversed over time.

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Laurel Manor Dental and SleepCare is not only qualified but is a Medicare approved provider as well. If you have Sleep Apnea, consider improving your health and your quality of life. Your body and mind will thank you!

Meet Dr. Rozensky

As a Diplomate of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and recognized as a qualified dentist by the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine. Dr. Rozensky earned his Doctorate of Dental Surgery degree from University of New York at Buffalo and then went on to serve our country in the United States Air Force, after which he has enjoyed private practice in General Dentistry for over 20 years. Dr. Rozensky now includes his passion for Sleep Dentistry in his practice and finds true joy in the life changing care he is providing.

At Laurel Manor Dental and SleepCare, Dr. Richard Rozensky and the entire team work closely with you so that you may make informed decisions about your health. In addition to sleep dentistry, all aspects of general dental care and treatment including restorative, cosmetic, implant restoration, hygiene and Invisalign™ are provided.

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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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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 effects 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:

www.CraigCurtisMD.com
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Does Taking Fish Oil Lower Cholesterol?

By Bo Martinsen, MD

Many people believe that incorporating omega-3s into their diet will solve their cholesterol woes. But the truth is much more nuanced; it's not as simple as taking a daily fish oil capsule or drinking a teaspoon of cod liver oil.

In this article, we'll uncover how these essential fatty acids impact your lipid profile – plus look at how much omega-3 you need to reap the benefits.

Cholesterol Is More Than One Thing

The term "cholesterol" often gets tossed around as though it were a single concept. But really, cholesterol includes several measurements. When you take a lipid test, the results are broken down into a few main components:

Triglycerides: Our bodies convert the extra calories, fat and sugars we eat into triglycerides. Having too high triglyceride levels is bad.

LDL: LDL, or low-density lipoproteins, is commonly referred to as the "bad" cholesterol. It builds up plaque in the arteries. LDL can be further analyzed by particle size. Small, dense particles are considered more harmful than large, fluffy particles.

HDL: HDL, or high-density lipoproteins, are the "good" cholesterol. Having a higher number is better.

Total Cholesterol: Your total cholesterol number is based on the other three components. Here's the formula: HDL + LDL + 20% triglycerides = total cholesterol.

Omega-3s impact these numbers in different ways. Let's take a closer look at what the science shows.

Triglyceride Levels

Studies show that taking omega-3s will consistently lower triglyceride levels. But the effect depends on how much you consume.

Higher doses of EPA and DHA omega-3s are needed to significantly reduce triglyceride levels. For example, a 2020 review from researchers in Norway highlighted the following trend:

- 850 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by only 3.4%.

- 2400 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by 16%.

- 5100 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by 27%.

On average, studies report that taking between 3000 – 4000 mg of EPA/DHA will translate to a 25% drop in triglyceride levels.

Of course, the actual impact for any individual will depend on many factors, like genetics, age, gender, and your baseline triglyceride levels. There's also the quality of the omega-3 product to consider, including the freshness level of the oil.

Can Fish Oil Pills Lower Triglyceride Levels?

Most regular fish oil capsules contain only 300 mg of EPA/DHA. With that serving size, you would need to take 10 or more capsules every day to get an adequate dose.

Concentrated omega-3 products can deliver higher doses of EPA and DHA in fewer servings. But even with prescription omega-3 oils aimed at managing hyperlipidemia, you have to take at least 4 capsules daily.

At Omega3 Innovations, we offer 3000 mg EPA/DHA in a pre-measured, drinkable single serving. This liquid form makes it easier for people to meet their omega-3 needs and experience beneficial effects.

LDL Cholesterol

While the benefits of omega-3s for triglyceride levels are widely known and accepted, their effects on LDL levels are more complex.

Again, there are different types of LDL cholesterol. On a lipid panel, people typically pay the greatest attention to the LDL-C value. Most studies show that omega-3s don't really impact LDL-C. However, one exception seems to be for people with very high triglyceride levels (>500mg/dl). For these people, omega-3s may increase LDL somewhat.

There's also Lp(a), or a type of low-density LDL that can create plaque in your arteries. Most studies (but not all) note a modest decrease in this value with omega-3s, which is good.

Finally, omega-3s seem to facilitate a shift from small dense LDL particles to bigger and lighter large buoyant LDL. This is positive, since small dense LDL is more likely to create arterial plaque. Indeed, shifting from small dense to large buoyant LDL is associated with lower heart disease risk.

HDL Cholesterol

When it comes to HDL cholesterol, research suggests that omega-3s have little effect in general.

The exception is again for people with very high triglycerides. In these cases, omega-3s may increase the HDL levels by more than 10%. This is positive, since HDL is the "good" cholesterol.

What's the Best Measure of Heart Disease Risk?

Many studies show that your ratio of triglycerides to HDL may be a more important number than looking at your total cholesterol. Having a high triglyceride:HDL ratio is associated with heart disease, insulin resistance, and low testosterone levels in men. Interestingly, the risk seems to be independent of bad cholesterol numbers or medication use.

Taking sufficient doses of omega-3s will typically reduce the triglycerides to HDL ratio. This improvement could be one of the reasons for the purported heart health benefits of these fatty acids.

For the full article and references, please visit:

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/does-taking-fish-oil-lower-cholesterol/>

Bo Martinsen, MD

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



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The Power of Physical Therapy: Maximizing Recovery Through Proactive Care

Undergoing 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

- Manual stretching
- Hip & Ankle Alignment Strategies
- 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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By Compton Chiropractic Care

When you have suffered an injury, Compton Chiropractic Care LLC can help you on the road to recovery. Our golf cart accessible facility located in The Villages, FL offers a variety of services to people just like you who are suffering with many different ailments. No matter what condition you are suffering from, the experienced team of professional Chiropractors at Compton Chiropractic Care LLC will work with you to properly diagnose and develop a personalized treatment plan to meet your needs.

Chiropractic care can help solve a wide range of problems that just don't include back and neck pain, we can also help patients who suffer from headaches, migraines, shoulder pain, arthritis, hip pain and personal injuries like car accidents. Our experienced physicians are also highly skilled in decompression therapy.

All four of our doctors are graduates from the Palmer College of Chiropractic. No matter what type of care you need, if you live in The Villages, you can certainly come to Compton Chiropractic Care and expect your needs to be met!

But don't just take our word for it—Find out what our patients have to say:

Patient Testimonials

"Doc thanks! My back is better than it has been for years." - Male Patient

"I wish I would have found your clinic years ago. I am playing the best golf of my life and without that lousy pain. Thanks again Doc. See you soon." - Female Patient

"Dr. Compton, I cannot begin to thank you enough for helping my husband and myself. We can actually enjoy our retirement now pain free." - Female Patient

"Doctor, I must be sure to mention again how very grateful i am for the care i was given at Compton Chiropractic. I am back north for the summer and I am feeling excellent. I will be making an appointment as soon as I return to Florida." - Female Patient

"I have been going to Chiropractors my entire life and I have never experienced a more genuinely sincere Doctor than yourself. I was very impressed with your extensive examination and ability to correct my pain so swiftly." - Male Patient

"Dr. Compton and staff have impressed me from the first phone call all the way to check out. The entire staff is pleasant and made me feel welcome. They were able to explain each step of my care and asked AND WAITED for response if I wasn't clear about an explanation. Dr. Compton explained what he was doing and why throughout my entire examination. He didn't seem bothered by my questions or long explanations that required more than yes or no responses. The therapist was great as well and she follows the same practice of explaining the hows and whys. I am very comfortable with Dr. Compton and staff and will continue with them for my chiropractic care. Great job!!!" -Female Patient

"I am happy with the sophistication and good "bedside manners" of the doctors and pleasant, effective service offered by the office personnel. In my two years as patient, I also have been satisfied with their handling the payments with fairness and full disclosure. This is an important part of chiropractic care which reimbursement by insurance is usually very difficult." -Male Patient

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- Call Today For A Free Consultation

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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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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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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. By law, 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
- Limit life-prolonging measures when there's little or no chance of recovery

Enable patients to make their wishes known about:

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Intravenous (IV) therapy
- Feeding tubes
- Ventilators (respirators)
- Dialysis

Regardless of age or health status, we owe it to those we love to discuss our wishes and follow through with a written advance directive, which is revocable at any time.

Advance directives are available to download at no charge on our website at HospiceofMarion.org all year long. Visit our website to learn more and check this New Year's resolution off your list.



HospiceofMarion.com

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: *⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For 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, *¹⁵ Then 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.**



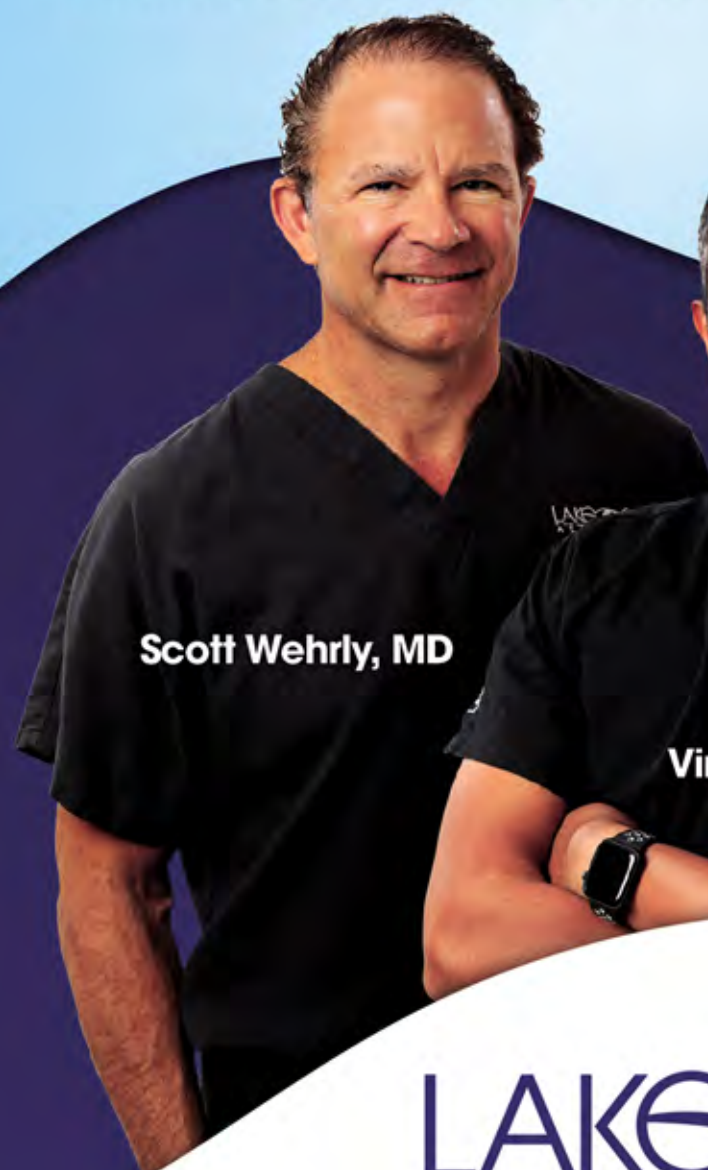
These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

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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