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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

April 2024

Marion Edition - Monthly

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**SUFFERING
FROM MEMORY
LOSS?**

**RECURRENT
UTIs**

Addressing the
Risk of Antibiotic
Resistance

**DIAGNOSED WITH
PROSTATE CANCER?
NOW WHAT?**

**ALCOHOL
AWARENESS**

**APRIL IS
NATIONAL
HEALTHCARE
DECISIONS
MONTH**

**FEELING
STRESSED?
IT SHOWS**

**WORK(OUT)
SMARTER, NOT
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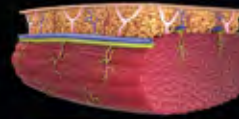
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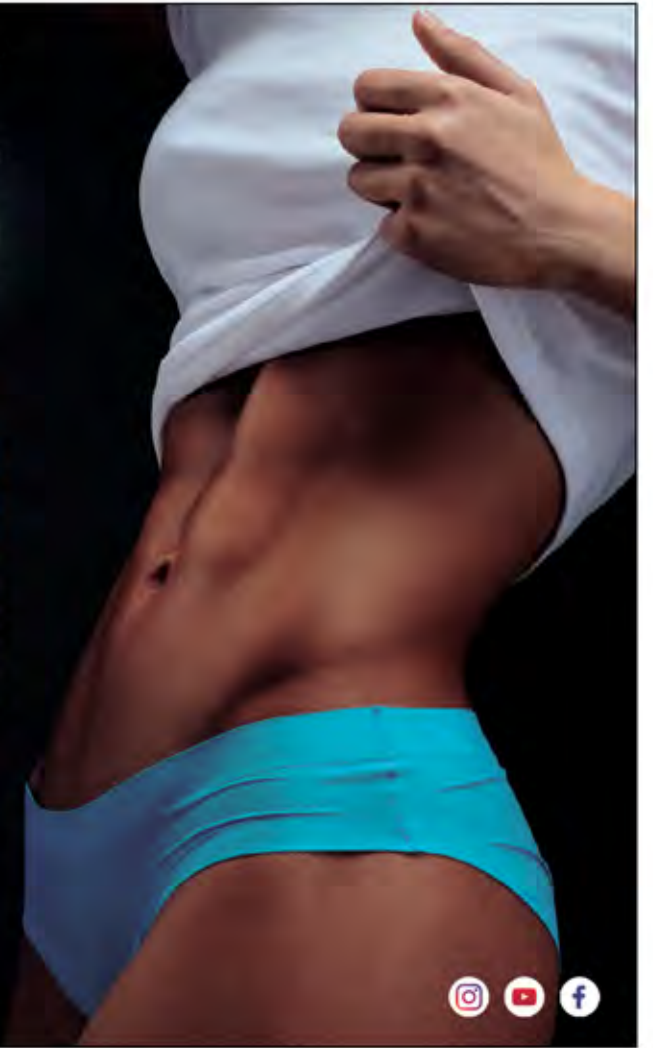
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From Burnout to Genetic Discovery

My Families Transformative Health and Wellness Journey

By Elisha Lopez

Once upon a time, in a land filled with deadlines and never-ending tasks, I discovered the hard way that my adrenal glands weren't too fond of my workaholic tendencies. They decided to pack up and go on strike, leaving me feeling like a deflated balloon in dire need of some self-care CPR. It was a wake-up call of epic proportions that forced me to embark on a journey of health and wellness, with a side of DNA exploration and a pinch of genetic quirks.

Thirteen years ago, my overachieving self finally hit a wall. My adrenal glands, those sneaky little glands responsible for producing essential hormones, declared, "Enough is enough!" They threw in the towel, leaving me wondering how I managed to burn myself out like a 10-course dinner at a fancy buffet.

As I sifted through the rubble of my exhausted state, I realized that it was high time I learned how to take care of myself properly. I had to bid farewell to my relentless workaholic ways and embrace the art of self-preservation. Cue the dramatic montage of spa days, yoga retreats, and long walks on the beach, accompanied by a soundtrack of birds chirping and soothing waterfalls.

But my quest for wellness didn't end there. Life had a twist in store for us, as my dear husband started grappling with chronic fatigue. Doctors scratched their heads, pondering the mystery of his perpetual exhaustion until one fateful day when we unlocked a secret that would change the course of our lives: a sneaky genetic mutation triggered by stress. Oh, joy!

Armed with this newfound revelation, we embarked on a journey of genetic exploration, peering into the depths of our DNA like a couple of scientific detectives on the trail of the ultimate truth. And guess what? Turns out, I had the same genetic mutation as my husband. The universe has a twisted sense of humor, doesn't it?

Not only that, but our three children also joined the genetic party. We had unknowingly passed down this special mutation, making our little clan a real genetic jackpot. We had front-row tickets to the "MTHFR Show" starring yours truly, the double mutant, and my husband, the original stress-induced superhero.



Armed with the knowledge of our quirky DNA, we dove headfirst into a whirlwind of research and lifestyle transformations. Our pantry morphed into a haven of nourishing wonders, a sanctuary for superfoods and healing ingredients. We bid adieu to processed junk and embraced the vibrant rainbow of fruits, vegetables, and nutrient-rich goodness that danced across our plates.

But our journey went beyond just food. We had to play the role of wellness warriors, exploring the realms of gut health and the mind-body connection. Healing our guts became a mission of biblical proportions, as we learned about the fascinating interplay between our diets and the intricate ecosystems residing within our digestive tracts.

Our minds, too, became a focal point, as we embraced the power of positive thinking and the art of stress management. We found ourselves donning the mantles of meditation masters and gratitude gurus, armed with an arsenal of relaxation techniques to combat the chaos of everyday life.

Of course, our newfound dietary habits raised a few eyebrows and earned us a fair share of bewildered looks from friends and acquaintances. But we simply shrugged it off, knowing that we were taking care of the one and only vessel we've been blessed with in this lifetime. We reveled in our quirks and embraced our unique dietary needs, unapologetically charting our own course toward wellness.

So, here we are, two and a half years into this remarkable journey of reclaiming our health

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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DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER? NOW WHAT?

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, other than skin cancer. With 1 in 8 men expected to be diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime, chances are high that everyone reading this article has been or will be touched by prostate cancer.

Thanks to ongoing advancements and treatment successes, survival rates for prostate cancer are incredibly high, especially when the cancer is found early and confined to the prostate or surrounding region. In the United States, the five-year survival rate for men diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer is more than 99%.

Understanding prostate cancer

The prostate, a gland found only in males, is located between the bladder and the rectum. Its primary function is to produce fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Cancer develops when normal cells in the prostate gland become abnormal and grow out of control. In many cases, prostate cancer is relatively slow-growing.

Know your treatment options

A urologist or medical oncologist will recommend the best treatment plan for each patient's unique needs. Decisions are made based on the type and stage of cancer, as well as the patient's age, overall health status and preferences.

Because prostate cancer grows slowly and takes years to develop or spread, your doctor may recommend "watchful waiting" and continue to actively monitor the prostate with blood tests, biopsies or other screenings.

A surgical procedure known as a prostatectomy is a long-established treatment that surgically removes the prostate, which eliminates localized cancer.

Several types of hormone therapy are used to treat prostate cancer. Androgen deprivation therapy seeks to reduce the amount of testosterone produced by the body, which helps to slow or stop cancer cell growth.

Radiation therapy, the use of high-energy X-ray beams to shrink and destroy cancer cells and malignant tumors, is highly effective in curing or slowing the progression of prostate cancer. Radiation can be delivered from a machine outside of the body (external beam radiation) that directs radiation at the cancer cells or from radioactive materials placed into or near cancer cells (brachytherapy) on a temporary or permanent basis.

Virtually all forms of cancer respond to radiation therapy, which can be used alone or in combination with other treatments. Treatments are precise, safe and tailored to each patient's needs. Increasingly, nonsurgical therapies such as stereotactic body radiation therapy can be delivered in short schedules, resulting in **better outcomes, decreased cost and optimal patient convenience.**



Should I get a second opinion?

A cancer diagnosis can be life-changing. Whether you are newly diagnosed or already receiving treatment, you want to be confident that your health care team is qualified and providing the highest-quality treatments to help you achieve the best possible outcomes. Little things can make a big difference, too. You will want to feel comfortable with your health care team to openly discuss personal information and issues that may arise throughout your treatment.

The importance of screenings

While prostate cancer can occur in men younger than age 50, the majority of cases (6 in 10) are diagnosed at age 65 or older. Research indicates that African American men are 60% more likely to develop the disease than white, Latino or Asian men.

Warning signs of prostate cancer can include:

- Frequent urination, often with the sudden need to urinate in the middle of the night
- Pain or burning during urination
- Blood in the urine
- Weak urine flow

Some men with prostate cancer have no symptoms — a fact that points to the importance of screenings. Early detection can make all the difference in treating the disease before it spreads, often resulting in a better outcome.

The American Cancer Society recommends prostate cancer screening beginning at age 50 for men who have an average risk and age 45 for African American men and any male with an immediate family member diagnosed with the disease before age 65.

Screenings may involve a blood test that measures the level of prostate-specific antigen (PSA), a substance made by the prostate. As a rule, the higher the PSA level in the blood, the more likely that a prostate problem is present. A digital rectal exam can also detect abnormalities in the prostate. If the result of either test is abnormal, your doctor may recommend a biopsy to investigate further.

Talk with your doctor to make the best personal decision about your prostate health and whether and when to undergo screening.

Ways to reduce your risk

While no one can control age and hereditary factors that can contribute to the development of prostate cancer, lifestyle changes can help decrease a man's risk. A healthy diet and regular exercise are key factors men can control. Following a plant-based diet, maintaining a healthy weight and increasing exercise have all been shown to lower the risk of prostate cancer.

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The Role of Alcohol and Kidney Health: What You Need to Know

Alcohol consumption has been a part of human civilization for centuries, serving various cultural, social, and even medicinal purposes. However, while moderate alcohol consumption may have some potential health benefits, excessive or chronic use can wreak havoc on several organ systems, including the kidneys. The kidneys play a crucial role in filtering waste products from the blood and maintaining fluid balance in the body, thus making understanding the relationship between alcohol and kidney health so paramount for maintaining overall well-being.

The Basics of Kidney Function

Before going into the effects of alcohol on kidney health, it's essential to understand the basic functions of these vital organs. The kidneys are responsible for filtering waste products and excess fluids from the bloodstream, which are then excreted as urine. Additionally, they help regulate electrolyte levels, blood pressure, and the production of red blood cells. The part of the kidneys that does the work is called the nephron. It is a complex structure consisting of a glomerulus and a tubule, where filtration, reabsorption, and secretion processes occur.

Alcohol Consumption and Kidney Function

The impact of alcohol on kidney function depends largely on the amount and duration of consumption. Moderate alcohol consumption, defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men, may not significantly affect kidney health in healthy individuals. In fact, some studies suggest that moderate alcohol intake, particularly red wine, may have protective effects on the cardiovascular system due to its antioxidant properties.

However, excessive alcohol consumption, or binge drinking, can lead to acute and chronic kidney injury. One of the primary ways alcohol harms the kidneys is through dehydration. Alcohol is a diuretic, meaning it increases urine production and can lead to dehydration if not counteracted by adequate fluid intake. Dehydration reduces blood flow to the kidneys, impeding their ability to filter waste products effectively.



Chronic alcohol abuse can also cause structural and functional changes in the kidneys, leading to conditions such as alcoholic nephropathy. This condition is characterized by inflammation, fibrosis, and impaired kidney function, ultimately increasing the risk of kidney failure. Additionally, alcohol abuse is a leading cause of hypertension (high blood pressure), which is a significant risk factor for chronic kidney disease (CKD).

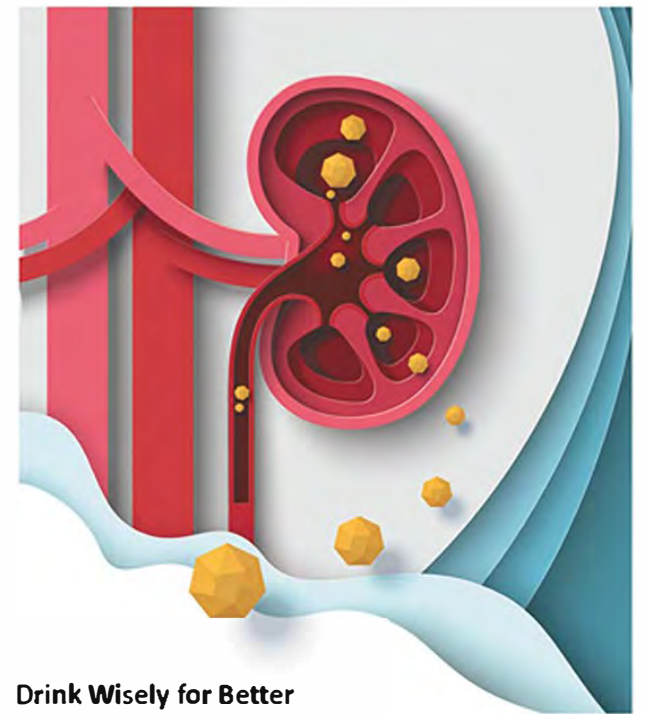
Other Risk Factors for Kidney Disease

It's essential to recognize that alcohol consumption rarely occurs in isolation and often coexists with other risk factors for kidney disease. For example, heavy drinkers are more likely to smoke, have poor dietary habits, and engage in sedentary lifestyles, all of which contribute to poor kidney health. It's also important to note that alcohol interacts with various medications, including those used to treat hypertension and other comorbidities, potentially exacerbating kidney damage.

Protecting Your Kidneys

If you choose to consume alcohol, it's crucial to do so in moderation and with consideration for your overall health. Here are some tips for protecting kidney health while consuming alcohol:

- Stick to recommended guidelines for alcohol consumption to minimize the risk of kidney damage.
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after consuming alcohol to counteract its diuretic effects and maintain adequate hydration.
- Maintain a balanced diet, engage in regular physical activity, and avoid smoking to reduce the burden on your kidneys.
- If you have risk factors for kidney disease or a history of heavy alcohol consumption, consider regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor kidney function.



Drink Wisely for Better Kidney Health

While moderate alcohol consumption may not pose significant risks to kidney health in healthy individuals, excessive or chronic use can lead to several side effects, including kidney disease. Understanding the relationship between alcohol and kidney health is essential for making informed choices about alcohol consumption and prioritizing kidney health. By practicing moderation and following the other precautionary tips, you can mitigate the potential adverse effects of alcohol on your kidneys and overall well-being.

Take charge of your kidney health today! Don't delay—take the first step towards a healthier future by calling VIPcare today. Call 352-558-6759 to schedule your appointment.



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Work(out) Smarter, Not Harder with Emsculpt NEO

By Dr. Tina Chandra

If you could lose fat and gain muscle without working out and see results in around 2 months, would you do it? 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.

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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.

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



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FEELING STRESSED? IT SHOWS

By Allison Weber, APRN-C

You may know what stress feels like, but do you know what it looks like? It's not new news that stress can take a toll on our physical and psychological health. But did you know that stress can also be seen visibly, as the effects wreak havoc on your skin, hair, and nails?

We live a world where stress has become our norm - ranging from small inconveniences, like traffic jams, to COVID health scares, to the threat of a world war. Society is so stressed, we even have a Stress Awareness Month (yes, it's April!).

Some stress can actually be a good thing. In fact, stress is an important part of human evolution's response to danger. When stressed, our bodies create more stress hormones, like cortisol, which triggers our bodies physiological process to fight or flight.

Humans need cortisol to help us respond to danger, like say, a burglary. But, when your brain encounters chronic stress, your body reacts like there's danger lurking in the shadows all day, every day. The resulting surplus of cortisol is where things start to go wrong.

SKIN

Acne: Cortisol stimulates excess sebum, our skin's natural oil, which clogs our pores. Increased oil production means more breakouts - whether you're acne prone or not.

Psoriasis, Eczema, Rosacea: When too much cortisol is released due to chronic or severe stress, it can dysregulate the immune system. The result is an inflammatory skin flare up common in psoriasis, eczema, and rosacea. To make matters worse, the stress that caused your flare up also contributes to the slow down of your skin cell recycle, affecting how quickly you will be able to recover from the scaly, itchy, red patches.

Aging: Remember that when we are stressed, our body focuses on keeping us alive - not youthful. While the exact mechanisms are still unknown, recent research has shown that stress decreases the amount of lipids your skin secretes, causing dryness and sagging. Under stress, your skin also produces less of the proteins that hold your skin cells together, leading to lines and wrinkles. And since stress slows down the recycling of skin cells, expect to appear dull and tired.



HAIR

Stress levels are high, and for some, that might mean a change in the hair on your head.

Telogen effluvium: Hair follicles have growth and resting stages. Recent research has determined that cortisol acts on cells underneath the hair follicle. A serious stress event (pregnancy, chronic illness, psychological trauma) can temporarily push the cells into a "resting" phase, when 70 percent of your hairs are shed all at once. The hair loss can occur up to three months following the stressful event, after which you can thankfully expect it to grow back.

Greying: The idea that stress causes gray hair was a myth - until science said otherwise. Hair color is determined by melanocyte cells, which live at the base of the hair follicle and produce the pigment melanin. As we age, these cells gradually disappear. The hair that regrows from hair follicles that have lost melanocyte cells has less pigment and appears gray. Science has shown that stress hormones are released in our hair follicles, causing the melanocyte cells to die. With no remaining cells, no new pigment can be made, and any new hair becomes gray, then white.

NAILS

Nails are not immune to showing outward signs of stress.

Breakage and peeling: A healthy nail will appear pink in color and will be free of imperfections, like ridges. Healthy nails also need nutrients like biotin, zinc and iron and protein. Stress stops the absorption of nutrients to the nail, causing them to become dry, brittle and to sometimes peel.

Beau's lines: Ever lose a nail? It seems to take a century to regrow. In fact, a fingernail takes approximately six months to fully grow out - a toenail may take a year.

Stress can further disrupt the regrowth of the nail plate, causing horizontal lines across the nail. Known as, "Beau's lines," they are literal markers of stress. If fingernails take 6 months to grow, that Beau's lines in the middle of your nail means you were pretty stressed three months ago.

Nail biting/picking: Stress-induced behaviors can also affect your nails. Nail biting, in particular, is especially common. Science actually tells us that there's a connection between nail biting and an emotional release. Translation: the more we bite, the more relaxed we feel. When we're stressed, we're also known to chronically rub or pick at the cuticle around the nails. Both behaviors damage the nail plate, can cause open sores, and a risk of infection.

STRESS CYCLE

It's like the question of the chicken or the egg - what causes what? Stress causes a flare up of eczema. Visible patches of itchy dry skin cause us to - you guessed it - stress more. Stress causes us to lose hair. Sudden baldness causes us to - yet again - stress more. It's a cycle that has to be broken, so it's important to work with your healthcare provider and a dermatologist to break the cycle of stress that can make your dermatological health worse.

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Recurrent UTIs: Addressing the Risk of Antibiotic Resistance

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are common bacterial infections that affect millions of individuals worldwide each year. While typically treated with antibiotics, the rising prevalence of antibiotic resistance poses a significant challenge in managing recurrent UTIs effectively. In this article, we'll explore the importance of addressing recurrent UTIs and strategies to mitigate the risk of antibiotic resistance, focusing on Utiva Cranberry PACs as a clinically effective prevention.

1. Overview of Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs):

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) occur when bacteria enter the urinary tract and multiply, leading to frequent urination, burning sensation during urination, and pelvic discomfort. UTIs can affect various parts of the urinary tract, including the bladder (cystitis), urethra (urethritis), and kidneys (pyelonephritis).

2. Importance of Addressing Recurrent UTIs:

Recurrent UTIs, defined as two or more infections within six months or three or more within one year, pose significant health risks and can profoundly impact quality of life. Individuals who experience recurrent UTIs often face frequent discomfort, disruption of daily activities, and an increased risk of complications such as kidney damage and sepsis.

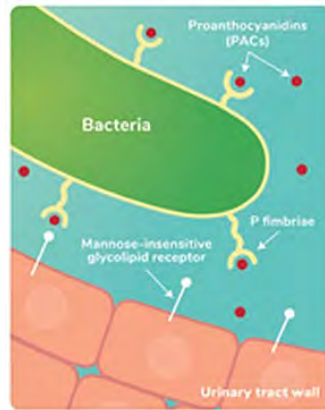
3. The Growing Concern of Antibiotic Resistance:

Antibiotic resistance has emerged as a global health threat, compromising the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating bacterial infections. Recurrent UTIs present a particularly challenging scenario, as they often result in repeated antibiotic courses, contributing to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. A 2019 study published in the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) found alarming rates of antibiotic resistance among UTI-causing bacteria, with more than 92 percent resistant to at least one common antibiotic and almost 80 percent to at least two.

(Source: NCBI Study)

4. UTI Prevention: Strategies to Avoid Unnecessary Antibiotic Use:

Given the risks associated with antibiotic resistance, it's essential to explore preventive strategies to reduce the reliance on antibiotics for recurrent UTIs. Healthcare providers emphasize the importance of adopting lifestyle modifications and hygiene practices, such as staying hydrated, urinating after intercourse, and



practicing proper genital hygiene to prevent UTIs. Additionally, avoiding unnecessary antibiotic use for non-severe UTIs and considering alternative approaches for prevention are crucial in combating antibiotic resistance.

5. Utiva Cranberry PACs: A Clinically Effective Prevention: Utiva Cranberry PACs offer a promising solution for UTI prevention without contributing to antibiotic resistance. Cranberry proanthocyanidins (PACs) have been extensively studied for their ability to inhibit bacterial adhesion to the urinary tract, preventing the colonization and proliferation of UTI-causing bacteria. A urogynecologist, Dr. Emily Rutledge emphasizes, "There is a lot of evidence that cranberry supplements are safe and effective. You can find all sorts of cranberry supplements but if they don't have that 36 mg PAC and are measured by DMAC/A2 then they are a waste of money." Utiva Cranberry PACs, with a standardized dose of 36 mg PACs measured by DMAC/A2, provide a clinically effective option for individuals seeking to reduce their risk of recurrent UTIs.

Recurrent UTIs pose a significant health concern, exacerbated by the growing threat of antibiotic resistance. Healthcare providers and patients play a vital role in addressing this challenge by adopting preventive strategies and exploring alternative approaches to UTI management. Dr. Colleen McDermott, another urogynecologist, recommends,

"Antibiotics are the first-line treatment, but there are clinically proven options to help prevent. When considering cranberry supplements, I recommend my patients select a product with 36 mg of PACs." Utiva Cranberry PACs offer a safe, evidence-based option for UTI prevention, empowering individuals to take proactive steps towards better urinary health and reduced reliance on antibiotics.

Sources:

- https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/antibiotics-resistance?_pos=1&_sid=51bf18b74&_ss=r
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6436442/>



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SUFFERING FROM MEMORY LOSS? Could it be Alzheimer's Disease?

By Craig Curtis, M.D.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

DIAGNOSIS

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

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

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

CAN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BE PREVENTED?

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

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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



CRAIG CURTIS, M.D.
US NAVY VETERAN 

DR. CRAIG CURTIS

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

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

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The Villages, FL 32159

APRIL IS NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS MONTH

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Making your healthcare wishes known is a win for everyone involved in your care. That is why during National Healthcare Decisions Month, healthcare organizations across the country highlight the importance of having advance directives. April 16 is celebrated as National Healthcare Decisions Day. This is a national program designed to inspire, educate, and empower the public to plan for the unexpected medical crisis.

What better time than during National Healthcare Decisions Month to make your healthcare decisions known by completing an advance directive. It is better to have the discussion sooner than later when it may be too late. Talking with your loved ones about what you want to happen should you not be able to speak for yourself and identifying who you want to speak for you is a gift that only you can provide. Having advance directives in place provide peace of mind and avoids burdening families with wondering what loved ones would have wanted.

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 can no longer speak for themselves. However, many seem to procrastinate, especially when it comes to talking about end of life matters as only about one third of Americans have completed one. It is one of those topics most people would rather not discuss but should, ensuring that their medical wishes will be carried out.

What are advance directives? These 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; think of it as a road map for your family and doctors. It is your right to accept or refuse prolonged medical care if you have a serious, sometimes terminal illness. 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 – make your wishes known to your family, healthcare providers and caregivers; you can change or update it any time.



An advance directive can be as simple as a two-page Living Will or as lengthy as the Five Wishes, a detailed 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.

In summary, advance directives can:

- protect your rights to make your own medical choices, especially if you are unable to communicate.
- help families avoid the stress of making tough decisions.
- assist physicians and caregivers by providing guidelines for your care, and
- limit life-prolonging measures when there is little or no chance of recovery if that is your choice.



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Visit www.HospiceofMarion.org to download an advance directive at no charge.

ASSISTED LIVING FOR MEMORY CARE: UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS

Assisted living communities are designed to provide a comfortable and supportive environment for seniors who need assistance with daily activities. Memory care, which is a specialized form of assisted living, is designed for individuals who have been diagnosed with memory-related conditions such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Here at AdviniaCare at Paddock Ridge, we provide a secure and structured environment that is tailored to meet the unique needs of residents with memory loss.

AdviniaCare at Paddock Ridge offers many benefits to seniors with memory-related conditions, including:

A Safe and Secure Environment

We provide a secure environment that is designed to prevent residents from wandering or getting lost. AdviniaCare at Paddock Ridge has locked doors and security features that prevent residents from leaving the community without assistance. This provides peace of mind for family members who may worry about their loved one's safety.

Specialized Care

We provide specialized care that is tailored to meet the unique needs of residents with memory loss. Staff members are trained to provide assistance with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, and grooming, as well as specialized care for individuals with memory-related conditions.

Structured Activities

We provide structured activities that are designed to engage residents and promote cognitive function. These activities may include memory games, music therapy, art therapy, and other activities that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of individuals with memory loss.

Nutritious Meals

We provide nutritious meals that are designed to meet the unique dietary needs of residents with memory loss. Many memory care facilities also offer snacks and hydration stations throughout the day to ensure that residents are properly nourished.

Socialization Opportunities

We provide socialization opportunities that are designed to promote social interaction and engagement. Many communities have common areas where residents can gather, as well as planned activities and events that promote socialization and community.

24/7 Monitoring

We provide 24/7 monitoring to ensure that residents are safe and secure at all times. Staff members are trained to recognize the signs of memory-related conditions, such as confusion or disorientation, and to provide appropriate support and care.

Peace of Mind for Family Members

AdviniaCare at Paddock Ridge provides peace of mind for family members who may worry about their loved one's safety and well-being. Knowing that their loved one is receiving specialized care and support can alleviate the stress and worry that often comes with caring for someone with memory loss.

In addition to these benefits, AdviniaCare at Paddock Ridge also provides support and resources for family members. Many communities offer support groups, educational resources, and other services that are designed to help family members cope with the challenges of caring for someone with memory loss.

Memory Care Services Include:

- Assistance setting appointments and coordinating outside health care needs
- Daily verbal prompting for meals, activities of daily living, and life enrichment programming
- Daily bed making and routine night checks
- Coordinate diagnostics testing/scheduling transportation for doctor visits
- Daily personal assistance with grooming and/or dressing
- Personal assistance with bathing
- Personal escort to meals and activities
- Personal assistance with dining and menu selections
- Assistance with behavioral expressions
- Medications management is included



Choosing a Memory Care Community

When choosing a memory care community, it's important to consider the needs and preferences of the individual with memory loss. Some factors to consider include:

Location: Choosing a community that is close to family members and loved ones can make it easier to visit and stay connected.

Size: Some individuals may prefer a smaller community with a more intimate environment, while others may prefer a larger facility with more amenities.

Services: Consider the services and amenities offered by the facility, such as specialized care, structured activities, and nutritious meals.

Staffing: Ask about the staff-to-resident ratio and the qualifications and training of staff members.

Cost: Memory care communities can vary widely in cost, so it's important to consider the budget and financial resources of the individual with memory loss and their family.

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



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ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH: How it Affects Your Health and Your Heart

T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

In our social culture, drinking with family and friends is common for celebrating special occasions and in some instances coping with life. Drinking alcohol has become extremely accepted in our society, and with that acceptance and desensitization of the harmful effects, comes a lot more alcohol abuse than most people are aware of, or willing to acknowledge.

We all know the guidelines of the healthy version of drinking. A glass of wine or liquor for women and two for men is usually the allotted daily amount recommended for the health benefits to transpire. Despite the health claims in moderate drinking, not everyone should drink.

Alcohol damages the liver, kidneys, brain, and heavy drinking also damages the heart, which can lead to heart palpitations and irregular beating, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, and cardiomyopathy.

According to a study titled *Effects of Alcohol on the Heart* reported the following, Some evidence suggests that light to moderate alcohol consumption protects against cardiovascular diseases. However, this cardioprotective effect of alcohol consumption in adults is absent at the population level. Approximately 20 to 30% of patients admitted to a hospital are alcohol abusers. In medical practice, it is essential that patients' levels of consumption are known because of the many adverse effects that might result in the course of routine care. Ethanol damage to the heart is evident if alcohol consumption exceeds 90 to 100 g/d. Heavy ethanol consumption leads to increased risk for sudden cardiac death and cardiac arrhythmias.¹

In patients with coronary heart disease, alcohol use was associated with increased mortality. An early response to drinking was an increased ventricular wall thickness to diameter ratio, possibly proceeding with continuous drinking to alcoholic cardiomyopathy, which had a worse outcome compared with idiopathic dilative cardiomyopathy if drinking was not stopped or at least reduced (< 60 g/d). In the ICU, patients with chronic alcoholism have more cardiac complications postoperatively. These complications probably are caused by biventricular dysfunction, particularly with the occurrence of severe infections or septic shock, events that are three to four times more frequent among chronic alcoholics



than occasional drinkers or nondrinkers. To prevent further complications from drinking and for long-term management of drinking, patients with alcohol abuse and heart failure should be treated in brief intervention and follow-up programs. Prognosis is good even in patients with New York Heart Association class IV heart failure caused by cardiomyopathy if complete abstinence is accomplished. Noncompliance to smoking and alcohol restrictions, which are amenable to change, dramatically increases the risk for hospital readmissions among patients with heart failure.¹

Alcohol plays a significant role in your bodies overall health. A full 24 hours after an episode of drinking, your immune system is more susceptible to disease and infection and the entire body and it's organs experience an inflammatory response.

The functions that are damaged by alcohol abuse are often longstanding. If you stop drinking, some of the damage will lessen, or improve like problem-solving, memory recall, attention span, and motor functions, but this will take time. Researchers usually see improvements to the brain after several months or years after abstinence takes place.

There are benefits to moderate drinking, but the problem is that with the acceptance and social aspect of alcohol, many people are at risk of becoming dependent on it for one reason or another. It's quite common to start out drinking socially and to then need it more often as your tolerance level increases.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, and the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence shines a light on the first weekend in April every year as the weekend of abstinence. If you have trouble avoiding alcohol for those three days, they encourage you to speak to you physician or therapist about getting help.

Source: 1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11505330>

Dr. V

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

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All Americans have some degree of cataract change by the age of 75. As the country's population advances in years, cataract surgery has become one of the most common surgical procedures, nearing 4 million cases annually. Recent advances in cataract surgery, including computer-assisted eye mapping and laser assisted cataract removal, have made restoring clear, crisp vision safer and more predictable than ever.



Source: <https://www.eyeworld.org/2018/what-to-know-about-the-light-adjustable-lens/>

In yet another leap forward, Lake Eye Associates, Central Florida's leader in cataract surgery, is the first local practice to provide the revolutionary new RxSight Light Adjustable Lens®, or LAL.

Previously, ophthalmologists utilized sophisticated formulas to determine the power of post-surgical vision correction. Now, LAL gives Lake Eye's team of experienced, Board-certified

ophthalmologists the ability to fine-tune a patient's vision after cataract surgery, so the final outcome can be customized to be even sharper and clearer, often producing the best vision of a patient's lifetime.

The LAL is composed of a photosensitive material that responds to ultraviolet light, enabling ophthalmologists trained in the procedure to adjust the shape and power of the implanted lens. This enables eye surgeons to refine vision more precisely and ideally for each patient than ever before.

Multiple studies demonstrate that patients receiving the RxSight Light Adjustable Lens® with post-surgical refinements achieved higher rates of 20/20 vision or better without glasses than those who opted for standard lens implants. The LAL provides unparalleled customization for each person's eyes, vision and lifestyle goals.

"Post op, minor healing differences can result in small, unanticipated prescription changes after successful cataract surgery," says Lake Eye's Medical Director, Dr. Scott Wehrly. "With the LAL, we have the opportunity to correct for those small postoperative changes and give the patient clearer and sharper vision than ever before." As a surgeon who has performed over 26,000 successful cataract surgeries, and the first surgeon in Central Florida to perform the groundbreaking laser assisted cataract surgery, Dr. Wehrly is always determined to pursue the safest and most advanced technologies that deliver the most satisfying vision. "We're always striving to provide the best care possible for our patients, and with the LAL, we have another powerful tool to achieve that."

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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.

TRUSTED HOMECARE SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT

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

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THE ROAD TO ASSISTED LIVING IS NOT A DEAD END STREET

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

There are times in life when circumstances prove that a change in the direction we're going is necessary. Sometimes the situation is temporary, and other times it may have to be long term. When people think about a move to assisted living, the common belief is that you are now entering "heaven's waiting room" at a dead end street and there's no turning back.

That is not always the case.

When a person is hospitalized, there are discussions that must take place for discharge. After they've been admitted for several days or weeks, they will often go to rehab to regain some of their strength and mobility. However, whether discharged directly from the hospital or from rehab, the return home may not be a safe or realistic option – at least for the time being.

Returning home is always what is preferred. But when it's not an option, it may not mean it will never be. Perhaps a move to assisted living might be a good transitional plan. When additional therapy beyond rehab is needed, it can be continued in an assisted living. Upon discharge, orders are sent to a home health provider to provide therapy at the community. Payment will be covered under Medicare. Depending upon the orders, it might be covered under Part A or B, with a possible co-pay. While the individual gets stronger, the goal can always be to return home. **(Note - Medicare never pays for the stay at assisted living in any way – only the therapy portion.)**

This care can be accomplished with a short-term stay, or respite. Respite is a temporary stay in a furnished apartment and a daily rate is charged. All care, meals, housekeeping, laundry, cable, Wi-Fi, maintenance, transportation to doctors or specialists, and activities are included in the daily rate. Most communities require a minimum respite of 30 days. However, it may be more cost effective to have a long term agreement which is often less than the daily respite rate. Most assisted living communities have a 30 day cancellation policy for a long-term agreement whereby you simply provide written notice of termination at any time.

When the person is the primary caregiver for another, their loved one can move to assisted living and receive care in their absence. After discharge, it may be helpful to join them in the assisted living



together until strong enough to resume their caregiving responsibilities before returning home. Or it could be the other way around where the caregiver may wish to move to be together while keeping an eye on things. A smaller second person fee is charged along with care fees if needed.

If you are considering assisted living and have been in Florida for some time, the option of moving to be close to your family in the chilly northern states may not be appealing. In this case, an easier transition could be to move to assisted living close to where you currently live for the time being. When your care needs increase and you find that your children need to travel more often to help or make decisions for your care, that might be the time to consider a move near them.

If you do move to an assisted living and you are unhappy and you feel your needs and concerns are not being addressed, there is no reason you can't give notice and move to another. There are certainly plenty of choices for different communities! Keep in mind that it generally takes at least three months to fully transition to this new way of living – so give it time!

Although this article is about assisted living, it's also important to discuss independent living and regular apartment living. Most independent living communities are also month-to-month. However, in both assisted living and independent living, you are not necessarily required to give 30-day notice if your health declines and the community cannot provide the care you need. It's important to discuss the community's policy before moving in.

In a regular apartment complex (not independent living), a one-year lease is common. However, be sure to ask for an addendum that will allow you to break the lease in the event that your health declines. I recently helped a 90 year old gentleman

who had been living in an independent living community and decided that he wanted to move to an apartment. He signed the lease with the belief that his health would not decline in a year. But it did. He hired a private home care company to help. Shortly after, they called me with concern that it was not safe for him to live alone. Before we had a chance to look at assisted living communities together, he fell in his apartment, went to the hospital, then on to rehab and could not return home. His daughter contacted the apartment manager and they allowed him to break his lease, but he had to pay for the next 60 days regardless of the situation. During that time, he had to pay for rent, utilities, AND assisted living which was a significant financial drain.

You always have choices, but make sure your decisions are realistic. Take things in transitional stages. Look at the best options for your health, safety, and well-being now, re-evaluate it in a few months, and then decide what's best while keeping future needs in mind. It's not a dead end street!



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 either at home or to a community and has written "The Complete Guide to Assisted Living: Everything You Need to Know Before, During, and After a Move" available on Amazon.com. For more information, call 352-477-1866 or visit www.seniorliaisoncfl.com.



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The Price of Procrastination:

How Ignoring Financial Planning for Retirement Adds to Anxiety and Can Affect Your Health

By Steve Schneider, MBA - CEO, Securenet Financial, LLC.

As we journey through life, retirement often stands as a beacon of hope—a time to relax, pursue passions, and cherish moments with loved ones. However, the dream of a stress-free retirement can easily transform into a nightmare if financial planning is neglected. Far from being a mere concern for the future, inadequate retirement preparation can significantly contribute to anxiety during retirement and have a profound impact on one's health. It is comforting to know that planning for retirement, emphasizing the importance of early preparation and the guidance of holistic retirement planners can make a world of difference.

Picture this: you've reached retirement age, bid farewell to the workforce, and eagerly anticipated the freedom that retirement promises. Yet, as the days unfold, you find yourself consumed by worry. Will your savings last? How will you cover unexpected expenses? The absence of a solid financial plan casts a shadow over your golden years, fostering anxiety that infiltrates every aspect of your life. Numerous surveys of retired people show their number one financial concern is running out of money. This is not an unreasonable concern; a 2022 study from the Consumer Bankruptcy Project reported 12.2% of all bankruptcies are filed by people over 65 and it was 2.1% in 1991. Most of which could be avoided with a good plan.

Financial uncertainty breeds anxiety. Without a clear roadmap for retirement, individuals may constantly fret over their financial security, leading to sleepless nights and a constant sense of unease. The fear of outliving one's savings or being unable to afford essential healthcare amplifies stress levels, contributing to a decline in mental well-being.

Moreover, the impact of financial stress on physical health should not be underestimated. Stress can be linked to numerous health ailments, including heart disease, hypertension, and gastrointestinal issues. The persistent strain of financial worries can weaken the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to illnesses and slowing down the healing process. Thus, the toll of neglecting financial planning extends far beyond monetary concerns.

However, there is a beacon of hope amidst the uncertainty: proactive retirement planning. By taking the reins early on individuals and couples can navigate the complexities of retirement with confidence and peace of mind. Conventional financial



advisors tend to focus solely on investments in clients' working years and don't adequately prepare clients for retirement and often do not have the tools or needed expertise. Financial Planners who focus on retirement adopt a comprehensive approach, considering various aspects of retirement, including budgeting, insurance, estate planning, and health-care expenses. All these items are handled differently in retirement.

Early planning is key. By starting early, individuals can harness the power of compounding, maximizing their savings and investment returns over time. Moreover, early planners have the luxury of exploring diverse retirement options and invest in a way that enables flexibility.

Holistic retirement planners like Securenet Financial, LLC. have tools, experience, and retirement expertise that play a pivotal role in crafting personalized retirement strategies tailored to individual needs and aspirations. They offer invaluable guidance in optimizing retirement accounts, minimizing taxes, and devising contingency plans to weather unexpected financial storms. Moreover, holistic retirement planners prioritize education, empowering clients with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed financial decisions before retirement and throughout their retirement journey.

Furthermore, holistic retirement planners recognize the interconnectedness of financial well-being and overall health. By alleviating financial stressors, they contribute to improved mental health outcomes and mitigate the risk of stress-related illnesses. Through proactive financial planning, individuals can cultivate

a sense of security and serenity in retirement, enabling them to savor life's precious moments without the burden of financial worry.

In conclusion, procrastinating or neglecting to plan for retirement can exact a hefty toll on one's well-being, exacerbating anxiety and compromising health. However, by embracing early planning and seeking guidance from holistic planners like Securenet Financial, LLC., individuals can navigate the complexities of retirement with confidence and vitality. Remember, the journey to a fulfilling retirement begins with a single step—take charge of your financial future today, and pave the way for a brighter tomorrow, it's rarely too early.



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Why Choose a Certified Hand Therapist or CHT for Your Upper Extremity Injury?

A Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) specializes in treating upper extremity disorder for the shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand. A CHT requires a high level of specialization including postgraduate education and extensive clinical experience. They work closely with orthopedic and general surgeons who specialize in the hand to maximize rehabilitation outcomes with acute functional return of upper extremity use after an injury or chronic condition.



Figure 1
1 Dynamic Hand Wrist Orthosis Splint
Figure 2
2 Dynamic Digit Extension Orthosis

Guidance by a CHT will help patients' regain range of motion, strength, nerve function, fine and gross motor skills and can also provide post-operative wound care and overall rehabilitation of the hand. A CHT is also able to fabricate onsite custom orthotic static, splints; dynamic traction splints, static progressive splints and casts individuals dependent on the diagnosis and their needs for recovery.



Figure 3



Figure 4

3 Single Digit/Finger Extension Orthosis
4 Dynamic Wrist Extension MCPJ Flexion and Thumb Abduction Orthosis

Furthermore, an accurate assessment performed by a Qualified Certified Hand Therapist will eliminate the need for multiple medical providers and help facilitate faster recovery, decreased medical costs and faster return to work and productive lifestyles and leisure activities.



Figure 5

5 Dynamic Custom Orthosis
6 Digit Extension Orthosis



Figure 6

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

Innovative Therapies Group

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

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

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

Types of Treatment Available with Physical Therapy

- Assessment and Evaluation Programs
- Difficulty Walking
- Fall Prevention and Balance Retraining
- Fitness and Wellness Programs
- Functional Training
- Gait Training and Balance Programs
- Manual and Massage Therapy
- Neurological and Neurodegenerative Retraining
- Vestibular Rehabilitation

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MAXIMIZING MEN'S HEALTH: UNDERSTANDING TESTOSTERONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

In the realm of men's health, testosterone plays a pivotal role, influencing everything from muscle mass and bone density to mood and libido. However, as men age, testosterone levels naturally decline, leading to a variety of symptoms that can affect overall well-being. Testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) has emerged as a potential solution to address these issues and enhance men's health. But what exactly is TRT, and how does it impact men's health?

Testosterone is a hormone produced primarily in the testicles and is responsible for the development of male reproductive tissues and secondary sexual characteristics. It also plays a crucial role in maintaining muscle mass, bone density, and cognitive function. However, as men age, testosterone production tends to decrease gradually, typically starting around age 30. This decline can lead to symptoms such as reduced energy levels, decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, loss of muscle mass, increased body fat, and mood changes.

For men experiencing symptoms of low testosterone, TRT offers a potential solution. TRT involves the administration of testosterone through various methods, including injections, patches, gels, or implants. The goal of TRT is to restore testosterone levels to within the normal range, alleviating symptoms and improving overall quality of life.

One of the primary benefits of TRT is its ability to improve sexual function. Studies have shown that TRT can increase libido, improve erectile function, and enhance overall sexual satisfaction in men with low testosterone levels. By restoring testosterone levels to normal, TRT can help men regain confidence and enjoyment in their intimate relationships.

In addition to its effects on sexual function, TRT can also have positive impacts on physical health. Testosterone plays a crucial role in maintaining muscle mass and bone density, so optimizing testosterone levels through TRT can help prevent muscle loss and osteoporosis, especially in older men. This can lead to improvements in strength, physical performance, and overall mobility, reducing the risk of falls and fractures.

Furthermore, TRT may have benefits for mental health and well-being. Testosterone has been linked to mood regulation, and low levels of testosterone have been associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety in some men. By restoring testosterone



levels to normal, TRT may help alleviate these symptoms and improve overall mood and emotional well-being.

However, it's essential to recognize that TRT is not without risks and potential side effects. Like any medical treatment, TRT should be carefully monitored by a qualified healthcare provider to ensure its safety and effectiveness. Possible side effects of TRT may include acne, fluid retention, breast enlargement, and an increased risk of cardiovascular events, particularly in older men with pre-existing heart conditions.

Moreover, TRT may not be suitable for everyone. Men with certain medical conditions, such as prostate cancer or severe heart disease, may not be candidates for TRT due to potential risks. Additionally, the long-term effects of TRT are still being studied, so it's essential for men considering TRT to weigh the potential benefits against the risks and discuss their options with a knowledgeable healthcare provider.

In conclusion, testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) can be a valuable tool in optimizing men's health, particularly for those experiencing symptoms of low testosterone. By restoring testosterone levels to within the normal range, TRT can improve sexual function, physical health, and emotional well-being, enhancing overall quality of life. However, it's crucial for men considering TRT to work closely with a qualified healthcare provider to ensure safe and effective treatment.

MEET THE TEAM

Elite Medical is comprised of a team who is dedicated to helping you on your journey to better health.



Christopher Bagley, APRN

Chris is lifelong a resident of Marion county. Chris graduated with a Bachelors degree from the University of Florida in Health Science Education with a specialization in Health Promotion. Chris worked as a firefighter, paramedic and registered nurse prior to becoming a nurse practitioner. Chris has worked primarily as an ER nurse practitioner but also has experience in primary care and long term care.

Chris has always had a passion for health and after committing himself to his health, he was inspired along with Eldon, to open Elite Medical, a comprehensive wellness practice that focuses on health and well-being to prevent sickness and chronic diseases.



Eldon Waters, MSN, APRN

Eldon is a Marine Corps veteran and attended the College of Central Florida, University of Virginia and completed a Bachelors of Science in Nursing from University of Central Florida. Eldon also completed his Masters of Science in Nursing from South University.

Eldon started as an EMT/Medic at the University of Virginia Medical Center, a level 1 trauma center and teaching facility. He went on to work at Advent Health Ocala as a tech then registered nurse. After gaining more experience, Eldon worked at Ocala Health in the ER as a Nurse Practitioner.

To find out more or to schedule your appointment, please contact Elite Medical today.



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Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

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

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

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

Take Time for Yourself

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

Get Moving

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

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

Meditation

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

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

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

Quick Care Med Urgent Care

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

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

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

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(Just past Walgreens)
- 6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475
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BENEFITS OF HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

By Sandra Reddick

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Why it's done

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

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

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

Reference:

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

Ocala Infectious Disease and Wound Center

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

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

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

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When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Discover Superior **Pain Management** at The Interventional Pain Institute with Dr. Brent Compton in The Villages and Ocala, Florida

When it comes to pain management, The Interventional Pain Institute (IPI) is the new name creating waves in The Villages and Ocala, Florida. Led by Dr. Brent Compton, the institute offers a comprehensive array of interventional pain services designed to alleviate chronic and acute pain, thereby enhancing patients' quality of life.

Dr. Brent Compton was raised locally in Lady lake, FL and after finishing his medical training and work in Texas has relocated his family back home to The Villages where he opened the practice in August of 2023. His vast experience, combined with a deep commitment to patient care, is the propelling force behind the success of IPI. Dr. Compton's approach integrates the most advanced medical technology with a compassionate understanding of each patient's journey, resulting in personalized treatment plans that address both the physical symptoms and the emotional impact of pain.

Regardless of if you are experiencing acute (new) or chronic (long term) pain, The Interventional Pain Institute has a treatment option specific to you. Dr. Compton knows every patient is unique and every patient is treated as such. Some patients require medication while others do not. This clinic specializes in a wide range of interventional pain services and our goal is to provide pain relief with the most conservative means possible. Our services include but are not limited to:

1. Epidural Steroid Injections: These are employed to relieve pain in the neck, back, arm, and leg caused by



inflamed spinal nerves due to conditions such as spinal stenosis, disc herniation, radiculopathy, and sciatica.

2. Facet Joint Injections: These injections can help identify the cause and location of pain while providing relief by reducing inflammation and irritation.

3. Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA): This technique uses heat generated by radio waves to target specific nerves and interrupt their ability to send pain signals.

4. Spinal Cord Stimulation: This involves the stimulation of the spinal cord with mild electrical pulses to block the sensation of pain.

5. Sacroiliac Joint Injections: Used to diagnose and treat pain associated with sacroiliac joint dysfunction.

6. Trigger Point Injections: These are used to treat painful areas of muscle that contain trigger points, or knots of muscle that form when muscles do not relax.

7. Peripheral nerve stimulation: This unique and newer technique uses stimulation technology that was once reserved for the spine only and now allows us to treat extremity pain as well.

8. Minimally Invasive Lumbar Decompression (M.I.L.D): Offers relief for patients with spinal stenosis with a minimally invasive procedure.

9. Medicare and insurance approved Back and knee braces.

10. Kyphoplasty/Vertebral Augmentation: Treatment for compression fractures of the spine.

At The Interventional Pain Institute, each patient's pain is thoroughly evaluated and a customized treatment plan is developed. Dr. Compton and his team are dedicated to treating every patient with the utmost respect and care, with a mission to help patients regain functionality and improve their quality of life.

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