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May 2024

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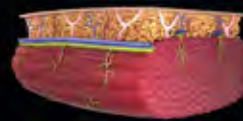
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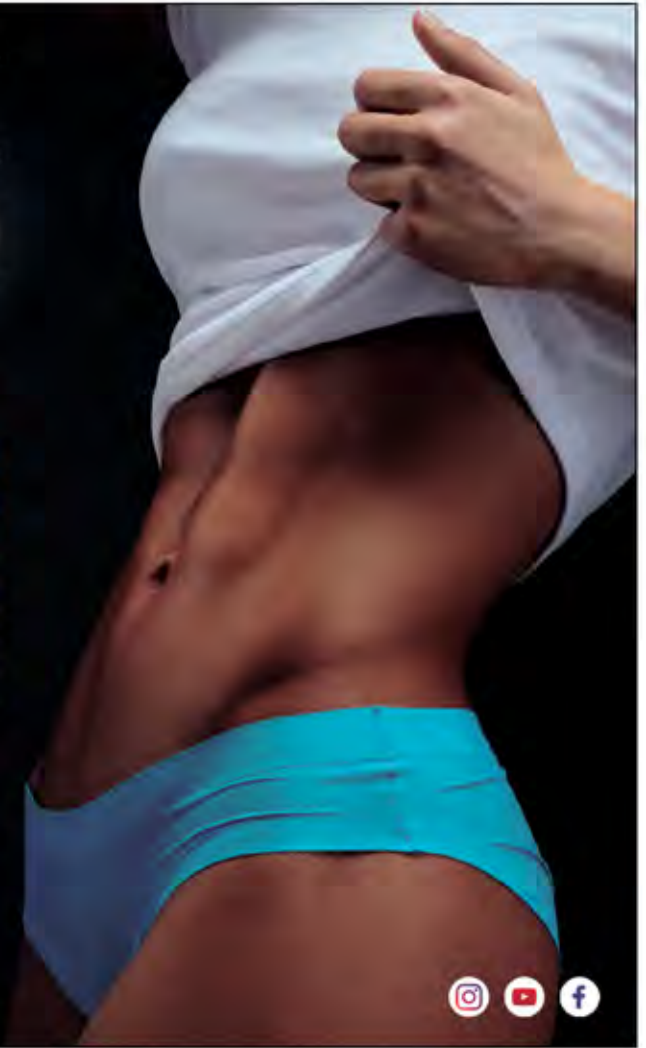
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PREVENTING VARICOSE VEIN BRUISING: TIPS FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Varicose veins, characterized by twisted, enlarged veins often visible beneath the skin, are a common condition affecting millions worldwide. Alongside their discomfort, varicose veins also pose a risk of bruising, adding another layer of concern for those affected. Understanding the mechanisms behind varicose vein bruising and adopting preventive measures can significantly improve overall vascular health. Here's what you need to know:

What Causes Varicose Vein Bruising?

Varicose vein bruising, also known as spider vein bruising, occurs due to increased pressure within weakened vein walls, which are susceptible to rupture even with minor trauma. Blood pooling in these veins exacerbates the condition, leading to visible bruising. Factors such as genetics, age, obesity, pregnancy, and prolonged standing or sitting exacerbate the risk of varicose veins and subsequent bruising.

Importance of Prevention

Prevention is crucial in managing varicose veins and reducing the likelihood of bruising. Incorporating simple lifestyle changes and adopting preventive measures can significantly alleviate symptoms and enhance overall vascular health.

Additional Preventive Measures:

1. Maintain a Healthy Weight: Obesity is a significant risk factor for varicose veins. According to the American Heart Association, approximately 70% of American adults are overweight or obese. By maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise, individuals can alleviate pressure on veins, reducing the risk of bruising.

2. Elevate Your Legs: Elevating the legs above the heart level helps improve blood circulation and reduces swelling in the lower extremities. Incorporating leg elevation into daily routines, especially after prolonged standing or sitting, can alleviate pressure on varicose veins and minimize bruising.

3. Stay Hydrated: Proper hydration is essential for maintaining optimal blood flow and preventing vein distention. According to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, dehydration can lead to reduced blood volume and increased blood viscosity, exacerbating venous insufficiency. Drinking an adequate amount of water daily helps maintain vascular health and minimizes the risk of bruising.



4. Avoid Tight Clothing: Tight clothing, particularly around the waist, groin, and legs, can impede blood flow and exacerbate varicose vein symptoms. Opting for loose-fitting, comfortable clothing promotes healthy circulation and reduces the risk of bruising.

5. Regular Medical Check-ups: Routine medical check-ups are essential for monitoring varicose vein progression and identifying potential complications. Consulting with a healthcare professional allows for early intervention and personalized treatment plans tailored to individual needs.

Varicose vein bruising poses a significant challenge for individuals managing this condition. By implementing preventive measures such as maintaining a healthy weight, elevating legs, staying hydrated, avoiding tight clothing, and undergoing regular medical check-ups, individuals can mitigate the risk of bruising and promote optimal vascular health. Empowering individuals with knowledge and proactive strategies is paramount in effectively managing varicose veins and enhancing overall well-being.

While these lifestyle adjustments can help manage symptoms, seeking professional treatment is essential for long-term vein health. At Central Florida Vein & Vascular Center, our experts specialize in minimally invasive procedures tailored to your unique

needs. Say goodbye to discomfort and hello to healthy, beautiful legs. Contact us today to schedule your consultation and take the first step toward vein wellness.

Get support for your veins and circulation problems today.

You may need medical treatment for your veins, and the Central Florida Vein and Vascular Center wants to help. Contact us today to learn more about our services and how we can help you live better. Our board-certified Vascular Surgeons and Phlebologists specialize in minimally invasive vein therapy.

For more information regarding the prevention of varicose veins, please see our blog at: <https://cfvein.com/spider-veins-bruise-prevention/>

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A NEW STANDARD OF CARE FOR PROSTATE CANCER:

Better Outcomes, Decreased Cost and Optimal Patient Convenience

One in eight American males can expect to be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Fortunately, with a growing number of treatment options, more men are living their best lives with their disease cured or under control.

Evolution of radiation therapy

Treatment success rates and survival rates for prostate cancer are incredibly high, especially when the cancer is found early and confined to the prostate or surrounding region. In fact, in the United States, the five-year survival rate for men diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer is more than 99 percent.

Radiation therapy, or radiotherapy, the use of high energy x-ray beams directed to destroy tumor cells, is extremely effective at treating and curing early-stage prostate cancer. Radiation can be delivered from a machine outside of the body (external beam radiation) or through radioactive materials placed into or near cancer cells (brachytherapy) on a temporary or permanent basis.

Advancements in treatment

Typically performed in an outpatient setting, treatments are precise, safe and tailored to each patient's unique needs. Side effects are usually minimal and temporary.

One significant drawback to radiation therapy has been the length of time required for treatment. For many years, external beam radiotherapy for prostate cancer consisted of once-daily treatment for approximately nine weeks, which can be quite disruptive and inconvenient for patients.

Thanks to ongoing advances in science and technology, shorter treatment schedules are becoming the new standard of care for prostate cancer.

Radiation is usually delivered in one or more "fractions" or treatments. Hypofractionation is the use of radiotherapy through a smaller number of fractions but at a higher dose, made possible by modern equipment with advanced imaging capabilities.

Recent clinical trials have demonstrated that moderate hypofractionation (the use of shorter treatment schedules) once daily for four to six weeks results in similar positive outcomes with no additional side effects. An added benefit? It also reduces costs for the patient.

Precision and safety in treatment delivery

Today, specialized computer software provides precise targeting of radiation on the tumor, sparing the delivery of radiation to surrounding healthy tissues and organs. More sophisticated imaging in the form of CT (computed tomography) scans and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) has also been added to newer radiation machines (linear accelerators), helping to minimize side effects and long-term complications.



Surface guided radiotherapy/radiation therapy (SGRT), introduced in the early 2000s, uses three-dimensional camera technology to monitor thousands of points on the skin with immense accuracy and without contact to ensure that a patient is correctly positioned at all times. If a patient moves out of the ideal position, the radiation beam will pause automatically, protecting healthy tissues. SGRT also allows clinicians to deliver treatment without the need for any permanent marks or skin tattoos, which are often unwelcome reminders of cancer treatment.

Radiopharmaceuticals are becoming increasingly effective for treating certain prostate cancers that are more advanced or may have spread.

These targeted drug therapies are in a liquid form that combines a chemical compound with a radioactive component. When infused into the bloodstream intravenously (into a vein), they locate the cancer in the body and deliver a microscopic amount of radiation directly to the tumor cells. The goal is to prevent cancer cells from growing or spreading while protecting surrounding healthy tissue.

PLUVICTO® is a treatment option for men with hormone-resistant metastatic prostate cancer. Given via six separate infusions, six weeks apart, PLUVICTO has been shown to significantly improve clinical outcomes and survival rates for patients who have had limited success with other therapies.

Xofigo™ (pronounced zoh-fee-go) is used to treat symptomatic late-stage (metastatic) castration-resistant prostate cancer that has spread to the bones. It is administered once every four weeks, for a maximum of six doses. Xofigo has been shown to help extend life by more than 30% in men who were treated with the drug, compared to men who were not treated.

Future directions in radiation oncology

Radiation oncologists continue to apply these and many other enormous ongoing advancements in science and technology to improve the way they plan and deliver radiation therapy.

Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) clinic locations throughout Marion County are equipped to administer sophisticated types of radiation treatment for all forms of cancer and blood disorders.

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The Healing Power of Journaling: A Journey to Mental and Emotional Wellness

Cobra Chamblee, D.O.

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it's easy to feel overwhelmed, stressed, and disconnected from our inner selves. Amidst this chaos, finding a sanctuary for our thoughts and emotions becomes crucial for maintaining overall well-being. Enter journaling – a simple yet profoundly effective tool that offers many health benefits for the mind, body, and soul.

Mental Clarity and Emotional Release - Journaling serves as a safe space where you can pour out your thoughts, fears, dreams, and frustrations without fear of judgment or repercussion. Putting pen to paper allows you to untangle the web of thoughts swirling in your mind, bringing clarity to your emotions and experiences. By externalizing your internal dialogue, you gain perspective and insight into your own thought patterns and behaviors, empowering you to make positive changes in your life.

Journaling also acts as a form of emotional release, providing an outlet for pent-up feelings and stress. Research has shown that expressing emotions through writing can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), promoting emotional healing and resilience.

Stress Reduction and Improved Mental Health - In today's fast-paced world, chronic stress has become a pervasive problem that can wreak havoc on our mental and physical health. However, studies have demonstrated that regular journaling can significantly reduce stress levels by lowering cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone.

Furthermore, journaling has been linked to improved mood, self-esteem, and overall mental well-being. By acknowledging and processing your thoughts and feelings on paper, you cultivate greater self-awareness and self-compassion, fostering a sense of acceptance and inner peace.

Enhanced Creativity and Problem-Solving Skills - Journaling isn't just about introspection and self-reflection – it's also a powerful tool for stimulating creativity and innovation. Through free-flowing writing, you unleash your imagination



and tap into your subconscious mind, unlocking new ideas, insights, and perspectives. Whether you're grappling with a creative block or seeking solutions to life's challenges, journaling can serve as a gateway to inspiration and breakthroughs.

Cultivation of Mindfulness and Gratitude - In a world inundated with distractions and obligations, practicing mindfulness and gratitude has become essential for nurturing a sense of inner peace and contentment. Journaling offers a sacred space to cultivate mindfulness by anchoring your awareness in the present moment. Whether you're jotting down sensory observations, recording gratitude lists, or practicing mindful breathing exercises, journaling can deepen your connection to the here and now, fostering a greater sense of serenity and gratitude.

The health benefits of journaling extend far beyond mere pen and paper – it's a transformative journey of self-discovery, healing, and growth.

Feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope? You don't have to face it alone. Take the first step towards better mental health by scheduling an appointment with a VIPcare primary care provider today. Call 352-558-6759.

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SOLUTIONS FOR FEMALE OVERACTIVE BLADDER AND INCONTINENCE

FROM MEDICATION TO ADVANCED THERAPIES

Maintaining optimal bladder health is crucial for women, yet issues like overactive bladder (OAB) and urinary incontinence can significantly impact daily life. While medications are often the first line of treatment, some women may find them ineffective or intolerable due to side effects. In such cases, exploring alternative therapies becomes imperative. From PTNS stimulation to Botox injections and InterStim therapy, a range of advanced options offers hope and relief for those seeking to regain control over their bladder function.

Medication: The Initial Approach

For many women, the journey towards managing bladder issues begins with medication. Anticholinergic drugs, such as oxybutynin and tolterodine, are commonly prescribed to alleviate symptoms of OAB by relaxing bladder muscles and reducing urgency. However, while effective for some, others may experience side effects like dry mouth, constipation, or blurred vision. Additionally, these medications may not provide adequate relief for everyone, prompting the need for alternative strategies.

PTNS Stimulation: A Non-Invasive Solution

Percutaneous tibial nerve stimulation (PTNS) offers a non-invasive approach to treating OAB and urinary incontinence. During PTNS therapy, a healthcare provider inserts a thin needle near the ankle, through which electrical impulses are delivered to the tibial nerve. These impulses travel to the sacral nerves, which control bladder function, helping to regulate its activity.

The procedure is typically performed in-office and requires minimal discomfort. Patients may undergo multiple sessions over several weeks to achieve optimal results. PTNS is well-tolerated and has shown promising outcomes in reducing urinary frequency, urgency, and leakage in women who have not responded to or cannot tolerate medication.

Botox: Targeted Relief

Botulinum toxin injections, commonly known as Botox, have revolutionized the treatment of overactive bladder in women. When medications and conservative measures fail to provide relief, Botox



offers a targeted solution by inhibiting the release of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter involved in muscle contractions.

During the procedure, Botox is injected directly into the bladder muscle using a cystoscope. This temporarily relaxes the bladder, reducing urgency and incontinence episodes. While the treatment is effective, its effects are not permanent and may last for several months before requiring repeat injections.

Botox injections are generally well-tolerated, though some women may experience temporary urinary retention or urinary tract infections. Nonetheless, for those seeking long-lasting relief from OAB symptoms, Botox represents a valuable therapeutic option.

InterStim Therapy: Precision Neuromodulation

For women with severe OAB or urinary incontinence resistant to other treatments, sacral neuromodulation with InterStim therapy provides a highly effective solution. This minimally invasive procedure involves implanting a small device, similar to a pacemaker, near the sacral nerves, which regulate bladder function.

InterStim therapy works by delivering mild electrical pulses to the sacral nerves, modulating their activity and restoring normal bladder function. The device can be adjusted externally to optimize symptom control without the need for additional surgery.

While InterStim therapy offers significant benefits, including improved quality of life and reduced reliance on medications, it is not suitable for everyone. Candidates must undergo thorough evaluation to determine their eligibility for the procedure.

Female bladder health is a multifaceted issue that demands personalized treatment approaches. While medications serve as the first line of defense, alternative therapies like PTNS stimulation, Botox injections, and InterStim therapy offer hope for those who do not respond to or cannot tolerate conventional treatments.

By embracing a comprehensive approach to bladder management, women can regain control over their urinary function and enjoy a better quality of life. Consulting with a healthcare provider experienced in female urology can help individuals navigate the array of treatment options and find the solution that best suits their needs. With advancements in technology and a growing understanding of bladder physiology, the future of female bladder health is brighter than ever before.



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MELANOMA MAY!

By Sierra Mahoney, PA-C

April showers bring May flowers, and the flowers certainly are in full bloom this season! It's warm, the sun is shining, and the sweet smell of melanoma is in the air.

"Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer, characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing cells. Sadly, melanoma rates in the United States doubled from 1988 to 2019, and worldwide, the number of melanoma diagnoses are expected to increase by more than 50% by 2040", according to the American Academy of Dermatology Association. The good news is that melanoma is treatable when caught early. Here at Midstate Skin Institute, we recommend that everyone over the age of thirty get at least one annual skin exam to help detect and treat melanoma- as well as other forms of skin cancer.

Living in Florida has many wonderful benefits, one of which being the warm, sunny climate. However, more sun means more UV ray exposure which means more skin cancer. One of my favorite lines to tell patients is that everyone will develop a skin cancer at some point if they live long enough. This is because our skin can only handle so much UV radiation before cells start to misbehave, which is why establishing care with a dermatology practice is so important. So, what are some things you can do as a patient to help ensure your skin stays as healthy as possible?

1. Wear Sunscreen

We all know that "back in the day," baby oil and iodine was the perfect way to develop the nice, crisp, golden-brown tan...and to increase your risk of developing melanoma. Interestingly enough, there is a genetic component to melanoma, which can sometimes explain why we see melanoma in young kids, or in places where the sun does not shine, like in between the toes (RIP Bob Marley) or in the genital region, which leads me to my next point...

2. Fully undress for skin exams

As uncomfortable as it may be, removing all undergarments, shoes and socks during skin exams just may save your life. My favorite joke to tell patients when they come in for skin exams and do not wish to fully undress is that my x-ray vision is not working today...however, this is true. I just recently had a patient develop a melanoma between his toes who had been seen for "waist up" skin exams for years. Luckily, the melanoma was discovered in the very beginning stages, but had he not removed his shoes and socks this time, the story may have ended differently.



Please do not let insecurities, being "too cold," or not "feeling" like fully undressing be the thing that prevents catching something potentially life-threatening on your skin. Taking the extra 30 seconds to fully undress just may save your life.

3. Be an advocate for yourself

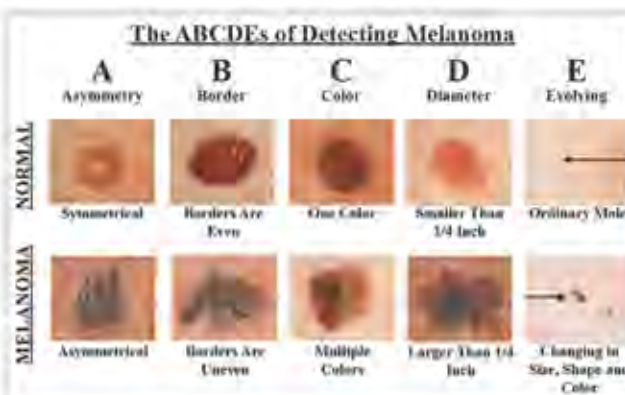
As a dermatology provider I can whole-heartedly say that I do my best to diagnose and treat every possible harm that may come your way...however, you know your body best and we at Midstate Skin Institute will not dismiss or ignore anything that you as a patient have a concern about. Not all melanomas "read the textbook," so it is especially important that you advocate for yourself as patient. See a new mole appear (especially after the age of forty) and want to have it looked at? Notice a change in a pre-existing spot? Have a spot that looks different than your other spots? Develop a spot that is tender to the touch or that bleeds spontaneously? Please call or schedule an appointment online so we can help treat you accordingly.

4. Stay Informed

While (unfortunately) it is true that not all melanomas read the textbook, there is a quite easy and fairly accurate mnemonic that everyone should know when it comes to detecting a melanoma: ABCDE.

A: ASYMMETRY (does one part of the spot look different from the other? Make an appointment in office)

B: BORDERS (does a spot have weird borders surrounding it or an unusual shape? Make an appointment in office)



C: COLORS (pinks, blues, grays, and blacks are not always normal. If you see this in a spot, make an appointment in office)

D: DIAMETER (the larger the spot, the more concerning. If you see a spot growing- make an appointment in office)

E: EVOLUTION (have a spot that started out looking one way, and has morphed/changed over time in size, shape, color, or appearance? Make an appointment in office).

There is far more that could be said on the topic, but the bottom line is that we love and care for our patients here at Midstate Skin Institute and we always want what is best for you. Please come and see our smiling faces so we can continue to work together to provide you with the best care possible and to keep your skin as healthy as possible this blossoming season!

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CORE TO FLOOR - STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE AND PELVIC FLOOR WITHOUT HITTING THE GYM

By Dr. Tina Chandra

The innovative combination of BTL Industries' most sophisticated technologies has given rise to the latest and only non-invasive core conditioning treatment. The "Core to Floor" combination utilizes HIFEM and radiofrequency energy (Emsculpt NEO only) from the Emsella and Emsculpt NEO devices to strengthen primary core musculature.

Emsella targets the pelvic floor muscles, while Emsculpt NEO works to tone and strengthen the abdominal area. When done in conjunction, these two treatments allow people to improve neuromuscular control, muscular strength, sexual pleasure, and vitality.

Emsculpt NEO

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.

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.

Emsella

Emsella is great news for those who suffer from urinary incontinence (both women AND MEN) and don't want to go to physical therapy for whatever reason. Emsella is an FDA-approved device that also uses HIFEM, this time to stimulate the muscles of the pelvic floor. It is non-surgical and is performed while the patient is fully clothed and seated in a specialized chair.

Emsella has been jokingly referred to as the "Kegel throne" because each 30-minute treatment is equivalent to doing more than 10,000 Kegels. It contracts the muscles by emitting HIFEM to stimulate the muscles of the pelvic floor that have become too weak to control urination. Even with physical therapy and being very disciplined in doing Kegel exercises, it would be humanly impossible to mimic this type of treatment and its results.



How does "Core to Floor" work?

Combining Emsculpt NEO and Emsella technologies into a singular form of core therapy has delivered a 95% satisfaction rate among patients.

Emsculpt Neo for the Abdomen

Core to Floor uses Emsculpt NEO to strengthen the abdominal muscles, stimulating an average of 25% muscle development. An additional bonus is Emsculpt NEO's fat reduction capability, allowing patients to reap the benefits of a 30% fat reduction in the abdominal area.

Emsella for the Pelvic Floor

Emsella is utilized in core to the floor for its innate capability to strengthen the foundation of the core faster and more effectively than any alternative treatments or exercises. These two state-of-the-art technologies together provide a painless and non-invasive solution to anyone struggling with or looking to prevent issues related to a weak core.

Why Choose Core to Floor Therapy?

The core is a grouping of the back, pelvic, glute, hip, abdominal, and diaphragm muscles—all of which stabilize the trunk and support the spine. Sufficient core strength is crucial for any physical activity, from running or swinging a golf club to simple everyday tasks such as grabbing something from the top shelf.

A weak core can cause a multitude of physical impairments, from chronic back pain to lack of mobility and balance. Core to Floor therapy helps train the muscles of the pelvis and abdomen to work in harmony, restoring one's quality of life and helping achieve fitness goals.

The combination of two advanced technologies helps to strengthen, tone, and firm the abdominal and pelvic muscles. The primary benefits of this therapy include:

- Increased Muscle Mass
- Enhanced Core Strength
- Restoration of Neuromuscular Control
- Improved Balance, Mobility, and Posture
- Improved Blood Flow
- Correction of Abdominal Separation
- Correction of Incontinence¹

If you are interested in learning more about "CORE TO FLOOR" using Emsella and Emsculpt NEO from trusted professionals with years of experience, contact Chandra Wellness Center today.

1. Soleiman, D. (2022) Core to floor: EMSCULPT Neo & Emsella are an excellent combo, Cosmetic Injectables Center Sherman Oaks, Los Angeles, California. Available at: <https://cosmeticinjectables.com/blog/core-to-floor-emsulpt-neo-and-emsella>.



DR. TINA CHANDRA



DR. RAVI CHANDRA



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Menopause and UTIs: What Every Woman Should Understand

Menopause marks a significant transition in a woman's life, signaling the end of reproductive years. While it's a natural process, menopause comes with its own set of changes and challenges, including the increased risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs). The chance of recurrent UTIs increases as a person progresses through menopause. A 2019 study found that 19–36% of premenopausal females experience recurrent UTIs and that the rate of recurrence increases to 55% after menopause. Understanding the relationship between menopause and UTIs is crucial for women's health and well-being.

1. Overview of Menopause

Menopause typically occurs around age 51, though it can vary widely among individuals. It is defined as the cessation of menstrual periods for 12 consecutive months, marking the end of a woman's reproductive phase. During menopause, hormonal changes, particularly the decline in estrogen levels, lead to various symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and vaginal dryness.

2. Connection between Menopause and UTIs

The drop in estrogen levels during menopause plays a significant role in the increased susceptibility to UTIs. Estrogen helps maintain the health of the urinary tract by supporting the growth of beneficial bacteria and maintaining the integrity of the vaginal and urinary tissues. As estrogen levels decline, the vaginal pH becomes less acidic, creating an environment conducive to the growth of harmful bacteria like *E. coli*, which can ascend the urinary tract and cause infections.

3. Managing and Preventing UTIs during Menopause and Beyond

Managing UTIs during menopause involves a combination of preventive measures and treatment strategies. It's essential for women to:

- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water helps flush out bacteria from the urinary tract.
- **Practice good hygiene:** Wiping from front to back after using the toilet helps prevent the spread of bacteria from the anus to the urinary tract.
- **Urinate frequently:** Emptying the bladder regularly helps prevent bacteria buildup.
- **Avoid irritants:** Certain products such as douches, feminine sprays, and harsh soaps can disrupt the natural balance of vaginal flora and increase the risk of UTIs.

In addition to these measures, incorporating cranberry products into the diet has been shown to help prevent UTIs. Cranberries contain compounds called proanthocyanidins (PACs) that prevent bacteria from

adhering to the urinary tract walls, thus reducing the risk of infection. Utiva Cranberry PACs, with a clinically effective dose of 36mg PACs, offer a convenient and natural way to support urinary tract health during menopause and beyond.

Utiva Webinar: Navigating Menopause

To further explore the topic of menopause and its associated challenges, Utiva is hosting a free live webinar/Q&A session titled "Navigating Menopause." This informative event will feature guest speakers Dr. Susan Oakley, a Urogynecologist, and Shirley Weir, a Menopause Educator.

Event Details:

- **Date:** Tuesday, May 14th
- **Time:** 7:30 pm EST
- **Format:** Live Q&A session on menopause

Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and advice on managing menopause-related issues. Register now to reserve your spot and empower yourself with the knowledge to navigate this transformative phase of life.

For more information and to register for the webinar, visit Utiva's webpage.

<https://www.utivahealth.com/menopause>

Sources:

- Utiva Health. "Everything You Need to Know About UTIs During Menopause." Retrieved from Utiva Health Blog: https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/everything-you-need-to-know-about-utis-during-menopause?_pos=2&_sid=4140b6639&_ss=r
- Utiva Health. "Pelvic Health Issues in Women: Navigating Challenges at Every Age." Retrieved from Utiva Health Blog: https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/pelvic-health-issues-in-women-navigating-challenges-at-every-age?_pos=4&_sid=d5a2c02aa&_ss=r

The graphic is a vertical rectangular banner with a dark red background. At the top left is the 'utiva' logo in white. To its right is a yellow sun icon and the text 'FREE WEBINAR' in white. The main title 'NAVIGATING MENOPAUSE' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title, a white rounded rectangle contains the text 'ALL THINGS VAGINAL HEALTH, SEXUAL HEALTH & BLADDER WELLNESS' in red. In the center, the text 'LIVE Q&A' is written in white. Below this are two circular portraits of women: Dr. Susan Oakley on the left and Shirley Weir on the right. Under each portrait is their name and title in white text. At the bottom, a white rounded rectangle contains the text 'Register at www.utivahealth.com' in red.

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS TO YOUR WELL BEING

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

May is Mental Health Awareness Month which is dedicated to destigmatizing mental health issues, promoting understanding and support. It serves as a platform to raise awareness about the importance of mental well-being, encouraging open conversations and advocating for accessible resources and treatment. It's also a reminder that mental health is an integral part of overall wellness and that everyone deserves compassion and support on their journey towards healing.

You don't have to be diagnosed with a mental disorder to appreciate the importance of keeping mentally healthy. Just the stress of everyday life can cause us to feel like we need a mental health day. It could be from a recent loss of a job. It could be from the loss of someone you loved, whether it was a dear friend, a family member or even a beloved pet (who is just like a member of the family). Loss of any kind can and does affect us emotionally, physically, and mentally.

During Mental Health Awareness month, remember that mental health is as important as physical health. While we may not always have control over our physical health, we do have options when it comes to experiencing grief and loss. Learning how to cope and hold loss and joy side by side is the beginning of hope and healing. The feelings for that lost loved one never goes away, but remembering the joy they brought and the lives they touched can help one experience the loss, remember and celebrate them at the same time.

Here are some poignant quotes to consider:

"Grief is the price we pay for love."
- Queen Elizabeth II

"There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind."
- C.S. Lewis

"When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure."
- Anonymous



If you are experiencing the grief of losing a loved one and the helplessness you feel, you're not alone. Join others who are navigating and adjusting to grief – Finding peace and hope in your grief journey is possible. The Monarch Center for Hope & Healing can help through their expert guidance and trained professionals. Available at no charge to the Marion County community, the center has been offering adult, teen and children's programs, counseling for individuals and in group settings. Programs include providing tips and coping mechanisms to help you express grief through simple art or journaling projects, sharing thoughts with others in a group or in a one-on-one session with a trained counselor. In these sessions you'll learn: 1) What is a normal grief reaction, 2) How can I cope with stress, and 3) What can I use from the past to focus on the future?

The Monarch staff guides people in understanding that grief is natural and necessary to healing. It's essential to feel the pain, not suppress it. Being able to talk about your feelings is the first step to finding peace in your grief journey. Staff are available to work with bereaved families and individuals in person, via phone, email or teleconferencing. The Monarch Center's phone lines are open Monday-Friday, 8:00 am -5:00 pm. Call (352) 873-7456 to speak with a counselor.



Visit [HospiceofMarion.org](https://www.HospiceofMarion.org) for more info.

CBD And Ways to Manage MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a universal concern in today's fast-paced world. The demands of work, family, and daily life often leave us feeling overwhelmed and depleted. Amidst the chaos, it is crucial to prioritize self-care to prevent burnout and maintain overall well-being. As we explore avenues for healing and restoration, let us not overlook the profound connection between nature and mental health. Our ancestors understood this connection intimately, drawing upon the healing properties of the earth to nourish their bodies and souls. The scripture says in: Proverbs 12:25 (NKJV) "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad."

Recognizing the Symptoms of Stress and Anxiety:

- Trouble concentrating or making decisions.
- Feelings of irritability, tension, or restlessness.
- Physical manifestations such as nausea, heart palpitations, sweating, or trouble sleeping.
- Sense of impending danger, panic, or doom.

The Mind-Body Connection:

Emotions play a significant role in our physical health, with each emotion linked to specific organs in the body. Understanding these connections can provide valuable insights into how we care for ourselves and our well-being non-pharmaceutically.

Examples:

- Stress weakens the heart.
- Worry affects digestion and can lead to ulcers.
- Fear impacts the kidneys, often causing urinary urgency.
- Grief is linked to shallow breathing and lung health.
- Anger can overload the liver, leading to toxicity and illness.

Harnessing Nature's Healing Power:

One remarkable example of nature's healing power is found in Hemp and its compounds, such as CBD. At the heart of its efficacy lies the endocannabinoid system (ECS), a complex network of receptors and neurotransmitters found throughout the body. The ECS plays a crucial role in regulating a wide array of physiological processes, including neuroprotection, mood, appetite, pain sensation, and immune response.



When properly stimulated, the ECS helps to maintain balance within the body, promoting overall health and wellness. CBD interacts with the ECS to help alleviate inflammation, anxiety, depression, and much more.

Take proactive steps towards understanding and improving your mental health. We now offer Bio resonance scanning to help you assess your nutritional deficiencies, hormones, emotions and more.

Please call us today to schedule a scan and consultation at 352-350-0200. Understanding what is going on in your body is key to being able to make positive changes. When you know better you can do better. Even small changes can make a huge difference in how you feel physically, mentally and spiritually. We look forward to working with you to become the best version of yourself and who God made you to be.

Seeking Support: If you are struggling with mental health issues, remember that you're not alone. Reach out for support from friends, family, or professional resources.

Call: 988 is confidential, free crisis service that is available to everyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Lifeline connects people to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals.

Source:
<https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/mental-health/links.html>



- 1. Sunlight Therapy:** One of nature's most potent healing agents is sunlight. Exposure to natural sunlight helps regulate our circadian rhythms, boosts mood, and promotes the production of vitamin D, essential for bone health and immune function. Make it a priority to spend time outdoors each day, soaking in the rejuvenating rays of the sun.
- 2. Hydration:** Water is life, and staying adequately hydrated is essential for overall health and vitality. Opt for clean, filtered water whenever possible, and aim to drink at least eight glasses a day. Consider adding lemon and a pinch of salt to your water for added flavor and nutrients.
- 3. Grounding:** Connecting with the Earth's electromagnetic field, known as grounding has been shown to have numerous health benefits, including reduced inflammation, improved sleep, and stress relief. Take time each day to walk barefoot on grass, sand, or soil, allowing your body to absorb the Earth's healing energy and discharge negative energy in your body.
- 4. Mindful Movement:** Incorporating regular exercise into your routine is vital for maintaining physical and mental well-being. Whether it's pickleball, golf, or walking, find activities that bring you joy and make movement a priority in your daily life.
- 5. Diet:** Fuel your body with CLEAN whole foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Incorporate grass-fed and fish proteins, and healthy fats into your diet, and minimize processed foods and sugars.



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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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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:

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Arthritis and the Shift to Single-Story Living

By David Culbreth, Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

Arthritis is a debilitating condition affecting millions of adults worldwide. This chronic inflammatory disease causes swelling, pain, and stiffness in the joints, making even the most basic daily tasks a challenge. For those living with arthritis, such as myself, finding ways to manage the symptoms and maintain a quality of life is of utmost importance. One significant step arthritis sufferers are taking is the decision to downsize to single-story homes. This shift in living situation can provide meaningful relief and improved functionality for those grappling with the physical impacts of their condition.

The Strain of Multi-Level Homes:

Navigating a multi-level home can be an arduous task for someone with arthritis. Going up and down stairs multiple times a day puts significant strain on the joints, often exacerbating pain and inflammation. Something as simple as grabbing an item from the upstairs bedroom or making trips to the laundry room downstairs can become an ordeal. The physical toll of climbing stairs is compounded by the risk of falls. Arthritis can compromise balance and mobility, making staircases a dangerous obstacle. Falling on stairs can lead to serious injuries that may require hospitalization and lengthy recoveries—an outcome arthritis patients understandably aim to avoid. Beyond the safety concerns, the energy required to traverse stairs in a multi-level home leaves many arthritis sufferers feeling fatigued and unable to fully enjoy their living space. This can negatively impact their overall wellness and mental health.

The Benefits of Single-Story Living:

In contrast, single-story homes provide a welcomed respite from the physical challenges of multi-level living. With everything on one floor, arthritic individuals can move about their living space with greater ease and reduced joint strain. Eliminating stairs removes a major barrier to mobility and independence. This accessibility allows arthritis patients to conserve their energy for other daily activities. Rather than devoting significant effort to getting up and down stairs, they can channel that physical capacity into hobbies, errands, and quality time with loved ones. Reduced exertion can translate to less pain, stiffness, and fatigue over the course of the day. Single-story homes also tend to have wider hallways and doorways, providing ample room for mobility aids like walkers and wheelchairs if needed. This enhanced maneuverability makes it simpler for arthritic individuals to navigate their living



environment comfortably and safely. Additionally, downsizing to a single level often means a smaller overall footprint. This can make cleaning and maintaining the home less physically taxing—an important consideration for those dealing with joint inflammation and discomfort.

Making the Transition:

For arthritis patients contemplating a move to a single-story home, there are several factors to weigh. Cost is certainly a key consideration, as smaller homes in desirable locations can come with a premium price tag. However, the potential improvements to quality of life may outweigh the financial trade-offs for many. It's also important to carefully evaluate the home's layout and accessibility features. Wider doors, spacious bathrooms, and open floor plans are all beneficial attributes. Some single-story homes may require renovations to make them truly arthritis-friendly, so budgeting for those updates is crucial. Ultimately, the decision to downsize should be a personalized one based on the individual's specific arthritis symptoms, lifestyle needs, and financial situation. But for those struggling with the physical demands of a multi-level home, the shift to single-story living could be a game-changer in managing their condition and preserving their independence. As the arthritis epidemic continues to grow, more and more patients are likely to recognize the value of downsizing. By prioritizing accessibility and functionality in their living spaces, they can take a meaningful step towards improved comfort, mobility, and overall well-being.



David Culbreth

Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

I am a native Floridian with deep roots in the greater Marion County area. I have a strong passion for helping and serving others that was cultivated during my early years working in the hospitality industry. I have carried that same dedication to superior service with me into the real estate profession.

Over time, through both professional and personal experiences, I've developed a strong desire to assist seniors in any way I can. This desire inspired me to obtain my Seniors Real Estate Specialist designation. I believe seniors have paved the way for us, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their decades of hard work and the ways they have shaped our experiences and country.

In my real estate practice, I'm committed to helping seniors downsize and transition into the next phase of their lives. I also take great pride in assisting families in finding their dream homes, as well as helping individuals expand their real estate portfolios. While I may be self-employed, my clients are my absolute highest priority. I work diligently on their behalf, ensuring their needs and goals are met with the utmost care and professionalism.



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Securing Serenity: How Strategic Retirement Planning Enhances Mental Health

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

The importance of proper retirement financial planning cannot be overstated, especially when considering its profound impact on mental health during the later stages of life. A well-structured retirement plan not only ensures financial security but also contributes significantly to overall well-being and mental peace. This is critical because the retirement phase is often marked by significant lifestyle changes, including shifts in daily routines, social dynamics, and personal identity, all of which are inherently linked to one's financial stability.

Financial insecurity is a significant stressor at any age but becomes particularly impactful during retirement. The absence of a regular income stream can create anxiety, depression, and stress, particularly if unexpected medical expenses or inflation rates rise. Good mental health in retirement hinges on the absence of these financial worries, making a robust retirement plan essential.

Hallmarks of a Good Retirement Financial Plan.

A well-rounded retirement plan is comprehensive and should cover several key areas:

1. Income Planning: This involves understanding various income streams post-retirement, including pensions, Social Security benefits, annuities, and withdrawals from retirement accounts like 401(k)s and IRAs. A good plan strategically sequences these withdrawals to minimize tax liabilities and ensure a steady income flow. Investing with income in mind is very different than investing prior to retirement.

2. Investment Management: Effective management of investments to balance growth with risk and allocating specific assets for income is crucial as one approaches retirement. The focus typically shifts from accumulation to preservation of capital, emphasizing investments that offer stability and consistent yield rather than strictly achieving high growth.

3. Healthcare Planning: Considering the rising cost of healthcare, a retirement plan must address how to handle medical expenses, including Medicare coverage and supplemental insurance. Long-term care insurance is also a critical component, given the potential need for prolonged medical or custodial care.



4. Tax Efficiency: Planning for tax implications in retirement can significantly affect net income. Effective retirement plans incorporate strategies to minimize tax liabilities on withdrawals from retirement savings, optimizing financial resources available in retirement.

5. Estate Planning: Ensuring that assets are protected and passed on according to the retiree's wishes involves legal documentation such as wills, trusts, and power of attorney arrangements. This not only provides financial security but also peace of mind to the retirees and their family.

We at Securenet Financial, LLC. Are accustomed to dealing with the complexity of these areas. We bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise in navigating the nuances of retirement finance. We can tailor a plan that aligns with personal circumstances and goals, adjusting for factors such as life expectancy, health conditions, and family obligations.

Having a comprehensive and flexible retirement plan offers substantial psychological benefits. **Security and Peace of Mind:** Knowing that finances are secure can alleviate stress and anxiety, contributing to a happier and more stable mental state. **Sense of Control:** Effective planning empowers retirees, giving them control over their financial future and reducing feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. **Enhanced Quality of Life:** With financial worries set aside, retirees can focus more on hobbies, socializing, and personal development, which are vital for maintaining mental health and overall happiness. **Preparedness for the Unexpected:** Part of good retirement

planning involves preparing for unforeseen circumstances. Having contingency plans for unexpected expenses or changes in personal circumstances can prevent panic and despair during challenging times.

Conclusion

In essence, the correlation between well-planned retirement finances and good mental health is clear and compelling. The complexities of managing retirement finances necessitate not only careful planning but also the expertise of a professional specializing in retirement planning. By ensuring financial stability, a well-crafted retirement plan not only secures one's financial future but also significantly enhances mental and emotional well-being, thereby making a profound difference in the quality of life during the golden years.

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CORTISOL AND TESTOSTERONE LEVELS: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF STRESS HORMONES

In the complex symphony of hormones orchestrating the human body's functions, cortisol and testosterone play pivotal roles. While cortisol, often dubbed the "stress hormone," prepares the body for fight or flight responses during stressful situations, testosterone, the quintessential male hormone, regulates various physiological processes, including muscle mass, bone density, and mood. However, beneath the surface, these hormones are intricately interconnected, with cortisol exerting a profound influence on testosterone levels. Understanding this interplay sheds light on the physiological consequences of chronic stress and its impact on overall health and well-being.

Cortisol, produced by the adrenal glands in response to stress, helps mobilize energy reserves by increasing blood sugar levels, suppressing non-essential functions such as digestion and immune response, and enhancing cardiovascular activity. While this response is vital for survival in acute stress situations, prolonged elevation of cortisol levels, as seen in chronic stress, can have deleterious effects on the body. One such consequence is the suppression of testosterone production.

Studies have consistently demonstrated a negative correlation between cortisol and testosterone levels. High cortisol levels inhibit the secretion of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) from the hypothalamus, which in turn suppresses the release of luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) from the pituitary gland. LH and FSH are essential for stimulating testosterone production in the testes. Therefore, elevated cortisol levels indirectly lead to decreased testosterone synthesis.

Furthermore, cortisol interferes with the function of testosterone within the body. Cortisol competes with testosterone for binding to corticosteroid-binding globulin (CBG), a carrier protein that transports hormones in the bloodstream. When cortisol occupies more CBG binding sites, it leaves fewer available for testosterone, reducing the amount of free testosterone circulating in the body. Free testosterone is the biologically active form that exerts physiological effects on various tissues and organs.

The consequences of dysregulated cortisol-testosterone balance extend beyond hormonal imbalances. Low testosterone levels are associated with a myriad of health issues, including decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, loss of muscle mass,



increased body fat, and mood disturbances such as depression and anxiety. Moreover, testosterone plays a crucial role in maintaining cognitive function, bone health, and cardiovascular health. Therefore, the suppression of testosterone due to elevated cortisol levels can have profound implications for overall health and quality of life.

Addressing the impact of chronic stress on cortisol-testosterone dynamics necessitates a multifaceted approach. Lifestyle interventions such as regular exercise, adequate sleep, stress management techniques (e.g., meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga), and a balanced diet rich in nutrients and antioxidants can help mitigate the effects of stress on hormone levels. Additionally, pharmacological interventions may be considered in severe cases where hormonal imbalances significantly impair health and well-being.

Furthermore, fostering a supportive social network and seeking professional psychological support can alleviate stressors and improve coping mechanisms, thereby reducing cortisol levels and restoring testosterone balance. Recognizing the interconnectedness of mind and body underscores the importance of holistic approaches to health and wellness.

In conclusion, cortisol and testosterone exhibit a complex interplay that underscores the physiological response to stress. While cortisol serves as a vital mediator of the stress response, chronic elevation of cortisol levels can disrupt testosterone synthesis and function, leading to a myriad of health issues. Understanding and addressing the impact of stress on hormone levels are essential for promoting overall health and well-being in individuals facing chronic stressors.

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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Mirror Therapy - Hope for Pain and Stroke Sufferers

Mirror Therapy (MT) is an occupational therapy technique used to help increase motor function and decrease pain in a limb, such as in your hand or wrist. The principle of MT is the use of a mirror to create a reflective illusion of the affected limb in order to trick the brain into thinking movement has occurred and without pain.

Although initially developed for amputees to control phantom limb pain, it is now commonly used for many different conditions, including stroke rehabilitation, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), arthritis, and other chronic pain conditions in the limbs.

The Brain and Pain: Research tells us there's a complete map of the body's surface in the brain. After a limb injury or in the case of chronic pain in the hand or wrist, the area in the brain mapped to that limb holds on to the memory of the pain. The brain learns to associate movement of the limb to pain, sometimes well after the injury has resolved. This is called, "learned pain". MT uses a reflective illusion of an affected limb in order to trick the brain into thinking movement has occurred without pain and to create positive visual feedback of limb movement.

Mirror Therapy: The device is simply a mirrored box positioned so that your unaffected hand is outside of the box and can be visibly seen as a reflection in the mirror. The affected hand is covered and positioned out of site. The Occupational Therapist will guide you through slow and



repetitive hand and wrist exercises of the unaffected hand, while encouraging you to focus on the reflection in the mirror. The goal is to envision that the hand in the reflection is your affected hand. Exercises may include making and releasing a fist, turning your palm up and down, moving fingers individually, or grasping items like a coin or a water bottle.

Mirror Therapy and the Brain: From the reflective illusion, the brain is tricked into "seeing" the affected limb moving without pain. With continued practice, the brain will "learn" that your limb is healthy and, therefore, will start to move it more easily.

If practiced regularly, MT has helped many people control their pain independently. Occupational Therapists suggest practicing 3-5 sessions a day for up to 30 minutes each. Once learned, the therapy can continue in your home environment.

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.


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KEEPING YOUR INDEPENDENCE IN ASSISTED LIVING WITH TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

Transportation is an important amenity offered in assisted living. Everyone still needs access to get to appointments, shopping for personal items or banking. Maintaining a feeling of independence is vital whether or not someone is still driving.

Assisted living communities may have a wheelchair accessible bus and/or a car. Free transportation is available within a radius of 15-25 miles of a community. It can be for any reason in addition to medical appointments such as going out to lunch with a friend or going to the hairdresser. Often, transportation to church on Sundays may be available.

Scheduling the transportation at least 24 hours in advance is required. A request is generally coordinated with the concierge at the front desk. The destination, appointment time, and return time are entered, and every attempt is made to accommodate your request. Although there may be other residents who have reserved the same time, doctor visits take priority. The driver will create a route to drop off and pick up residents efficiently. The driver will assist the resident into the building but cannot stay with them.

When making a doctor's appointment, it's best to have the community arrange the appointment for you. If you do it yourself, there may be a conflict with the transportation schedule, and they will have to call the doctor to reschedule to another time or day that may not be convenient for you. This is where communication is so important. I know of one resident's daughter who went through the frustration of making an appointment for her father at the VA when his medication was due to run out in a few weeks. She left a transportation request; however, she did not communicate the necessity of the timing. The driver saw there was a scheduling conflict and called the VA and rescheduled the appointment without understanding that there was no longer enough time to get the prescription refilled.

Not all communities have transportation seven days a week and rarely in the evenings. If a resident wishes to go to the town square to enjoy the music or dinner and a movie, the bus may be able to take them, but it will be necessary to find alternative transportation back to the community. Many communities have specific days allocated for doctor's appointments and other days for shopping and outings. If an appointment is not scheduled in advance, some communities



might not allow for last minute requests. This can be discouraging when it appears that the bus is available. Remember that it may be leaving soon for pre-arranged transportation.

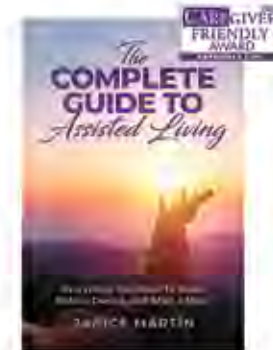
Residents may have their own car or golf cart at assisted living. There is generally no fee to park in the open spaces, but it may not be an assigned spot. Additional spaces may be used if available and many communities have golf cart charging stations. If a resident is living in independent living and has an assigned spot in covered parking, they must relinquish it if they move to assisted living in the same community.

The cost factor of having a car may not be realistic, even though it provides comfort knowing you may come and go at any time. I recently tried to help a woman move to assisted living, but she couldn't afford the community's apartment and care fees after paying a car payment, insurance, and gas and she refused to give up her car. She admitted that the only place she drove was to Russell Stover a few times a year to buy some chocolate, have some ice cream and watch the people. Although she recognized she needed care and a safer living environment, she was unable to be flexible. Activity staff will be more than happy to schedule an outing where other residents can also enjoy a special treat or event! If any resident has a request to go to a particular restaurant, see a movie, or even go to a casino, they simply need to ask to put it on the activity calendar for others to participate.

I have moved people into an assisted living who are no longer driving but refuse to give up their car. The resident kept possession of the keys and the car was parked at the community where it was visible at any time – but was made inoperable. They simply needed to be able to see the one thing that represented their independence.

Even if there is no car payment and little to no usage, the high cost of insurance can make it impractical to keep it. There are alternative transportation options to explore when the expense outweighs the necessity for care or safety. Uber is very popular and although they don't accept cash, anyone can create an account with a credit card. The concierge at the community can help with scheduling. There are also private transportation services if the destination is outside the community's parameters, or a private caregiver can help. No assisted living staff may drive a resident in a private vehicle that is not insured by the community.

Regardless of whether a person lives in their own home or assisted living, when someone must give up their ability to drive, there should always be an alternative plan. It can be difficult to accept a different way of thinking after doing something the same way for most of their lives. I encourage you to explore and discuss other alternatives and create a plan to successfully meet their transportation needs.



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



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Is Arthritis Keeping You from Being Active?

By Dr. Nam Dinh, MD, FAAOS

Arthritis is a common condition that affects millions of people worldwide, causing pain, stiffness, and inflammation in the joints. For those who enjoy an active lifestyle, arthritis can be particularly debilitating. However, it is possible to manage the condition and continue to live an active life. In this article, we will explore how having arthritis can affect an active lifestyle and what you can do about it.

How Arthritis Affects an Active Lifestyle

Arthritis can impact the ability to participate in various activities, including sports, exercise, and outdoor pursuits. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis is often associated with wear and tear on the joints, while rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that causes inflammation in the joints.

Regardless of the type of arthritis, the symptoms can make it difficult to maintain an active lifestyle. Joint pain, stiffness, and swelling can make it uncomfortable or painful to move, and activities that involve repetitive motions, such as running or cycling, can exacerbate symptoms.

Additionally, arthritis can lead to a loss of joint function over time, which can further limit the ability to engage in physical activity. For example, if arthritis affects the knees, it may be challenging to participate in activities that require jumping or running.

What You Can Do About It

If you have arthritis, there are several steps you can take to manage the condition and continue to lead an active lifestyle. Here are some strategies to consider:

Consult with a healthcare provider: If you suspect you have arthritis, it's important to seek medical advice. A healthcare provider can help diagnose the condition and develop a treatment plan that may include medication, physical therapy, and lifestyle modifications.

Choose low-impact activities: Activities that put less strain on the joints can be beneficial for individuals with arthritis. Swimming, cycling, and yoga are all low-impact activities that can be effective in managing arthritis symptoms. Walking is also a great option, as it can be done at any time and doesn't require any special equipment.



Incorporate strength training: Building muscle strength can help support the joints and reduce the risk of injury. However, it's important to work with a physical therapist or personal trainer to develop a strength training program that is safe and effective for individuals with arthritis.

Practice good posture: Maintaining proper alignment can help reduce stress on the joints. When sitting, make sure to sit up straight and avoid slouching. When standing, distribute weight evenly on both feet and engage the core muscles.

Use supportive equipment: Depending on the type and location of the arthritis, using supportive equipment can help reduce pain and improve function. For example, if arthritis affects the knees, using a knee brace or sleeve can provide support and stability during physical activity.

Manage weight: Carrying excess weight can increase the load on the joints, exacerbating arthritis symptoms. Maintaining a healthy weight can help reduce stress on the joints and improve overall health.

Rest and recover: It's important to listen to your body and take breaks when needed. If you experience pain or swelling, take a break from activity and rest the affected joint. Applying ice or heat and taking over-the-counter pain relievers can also help reduce inflammation and pain.

Arthritis can be a challenging condition to manage, but it doesn't have to limit your ability to lead an active lifestyle. By working with a healthcare provider and incorporating strategies such as low-impact activities, strength training, and supportive equipment, it is possible to manage arthritis symptoms and continue to engage in physical activity. Remember to listen to your body, practice good posture, and take breaks when needed. With the right approach, individuals with arthritis can maintain an active, healthy lifestyle for years to come.

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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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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- 8119 SW State Rd 200, Ocala, FL 3448
(Just past Walgreens)
- 6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475
(Across from John Deer)
- 2205 N Young Blvd, Chiefland, FL 32626

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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

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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *11I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:11-13

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

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things.

Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

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

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



Jesus said it like this, 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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