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Dr. Furqan Muhammad



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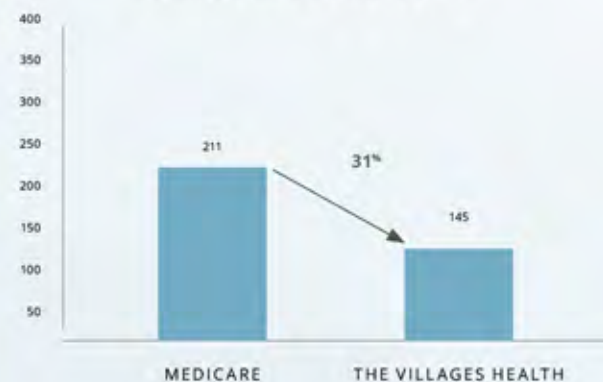
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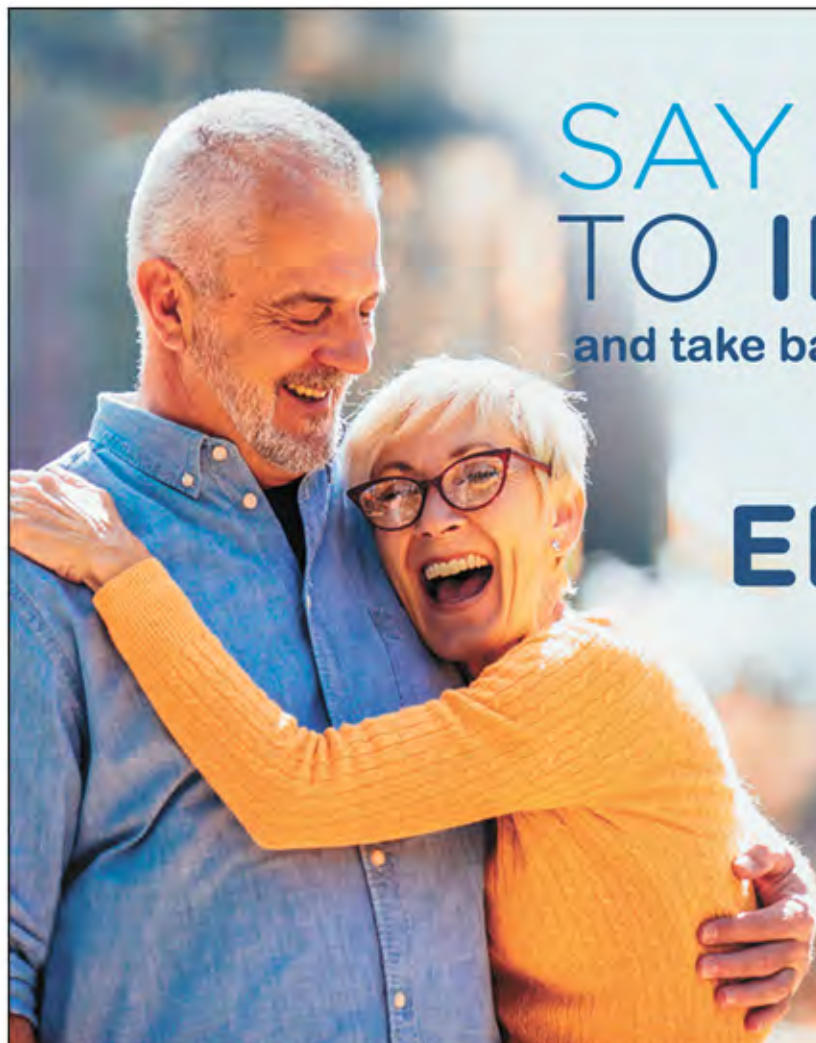


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AT THE ONSET OF A STROKE:

Prompt Treatment Can Save Lives and Lessen Long-Term Side Effects

T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

When oxygen and blood can't reach the brain, the brain cells begin to die very rapidly. When you are experiencing symptoms of stroke, minutes matter! There is a medication called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) that can break through a blood clot, but not everyone with stroke can receive the clot-busting drug tPA. If the medical team deems it fit for you, the medication must be given within 3 to 4 ½ hours of the onset of symptoms.

Every year in the United States nearly 800,000 people will suffer from a stroke. If it's not caught early enough, it can lead to death, paralysis, cognitive impairment, aphasia and many more complications.

Hemorrhagic strokes are when a damaged blood vessel begins to bleed then ruptures. Ischemic strokes are formed by blood clots that obstruct a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain. TIA (Transient Ischemic Attack), also known as a mini-stroke, is caused by a temporary clot that blocks blood flow

Signs and Symptoms

Adding to the original FAST acronym, BE FAST adds two additional stroke symptoms, which help individuals recognize and prevent 95 percent of acute strokes.

B	Balance: Does the person have a sudden loss of balance or coordination?	
E	Eyes: Is your loved one experiencing double vision or are they unable to see out of one eye?	
F	Face: Is one side of the face drooping? Ask the person to smile.	
A	Arms: Does one arm drift downward? Have the person raise both arms in the air.	
S	Speech: Is he or she slurring their speech or having difficulty getting the words out right? Have the person repeat a simple phrase.	
T	Time: Time to act! Call 9-1-1 and get the person to a certified stroke center immediately, such as Adventist Medical Center.	

STROKE? DON'T WAIT! B.E. F.A.S.T.



What You Can Do

- Keep weight down
- Workout (30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise daily)
- Eating a Healthy diet of vegetables, fruit and lean protein
- Maintain normal blood pressure
- Regulate Lipid levels and any cholesterol issues
- Manage stress
- Get regular physicals and check-ups
- Know the Signs of stroke
- Don't delay, if you or someone you know has stroke symptoms

Getting regular check-ups and screenings are critical to staying on top of your vascular health. If you think you or someone you know is having a stroke or cardiac infarction, do NOT hesitate! Call 911 immediately.

Dr. V

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

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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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HEALTHY HABITS FOR MAINTAINING GOOD VISION AT EVERY AGE

Like every part of the body, eyes need routine maintenance to perform their very best. Healthy vision can be supported by a combination of healthy lifestyle choices, proper hygiene, and regular check-ups with your eye doctor. Whatever your age, smart choices promote optimal eye health, vision and comfort.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING GOOD VISION

Make sure to follow these 15 common sense practices:

1. Get Regular Eye Exams

Comprehensive eye exams are an important part of caring for yourself, as well as those who depend on you. Taking time out for routine eye exams allows your eye doctor to discover treatable issues like glaucoma, cataracts and other problems before they have a chance to severely damage vision. Regular eye exams are a crucial step in preventing serious vision loss.

Eye exams for children: Newborns should have an eye assessment to discover any abnormalities early on, so they may be monitored and corrected, and then throughout childhood as often as recommended by your eye doctor.

Eye exams for adults:

- a. Get a baseline comprehensive eye exam by age 40, or earlier if you are at increased risk of an eye disease like glaucoma. People who have ocular symptoms, a family history of certain eye diseases or diabetes, and African-Americans, who run an increased risk of glaucoma, may consider getting a baseline exam even earlier. A baseline eye health exam establishes your eye health before presbyopia (age-related near vision loss) and other eye conditions begin to affect vision, so changes can be easily monitored.
- b. Ages 40-54, get a comprehensive eye exam every 1-4 years, depending on your baseline exam and recommendations from your eye doctor.
- c. Ages 55-64, get an exam every 1-3 years, even if your vision seems fine. Discovering eye diseases, conditions and changes early promotes the best chance of managing and correcting problems before they can damage vision.
- d. Ages 65 and older, get an exam every 1-2 years.

Getting your baseline eye exam will allow your doctor to notice any changes early, when they are most easily treated, and provide a customized care plan specifically for you.

If you have an ocular disease, more frequent exams may be warranted to ensure vision protection. People with conditions like diabetes may require comprehensive eye exams at least once a year. If you notice sudden changes in vision, new floaters or other symptoms, see your eye doctor immediately.

2. Eat a Balanced Diet

Like your heart, your eyes benefit from robust arterial health. Help support the tiny arteries delivering nutrients and oxygen to your eyes by consuming a diet rich in vegetables, fruits (especially berries), whole grains and omega-3 fatty acids (like flaxseeds, walnuts, salmon and sardines). If you're in charge of young ones, encourage them to eat a diet rich in vitamins and minerals.

3. Get Regular Exercise

Again, cardiovascular health directly affects your eyes, so try to get plenty of movement in your day at least 4-5 days a week. Going for a daily walk can improve circulation throughout your body and help your vision remain healthy.

Encourage young ones to play outdoors regularly, which research suggests may reduce the risk of myopia (nearsightedness).

4. Stay Hydrated

Adequate hydration helps maintain the moisture level in your eyes, reducing the risk of dryness and discomfort. Although the ideal amount of water varies depending on things like health, activity level and climate, a general daily guideline is 13-16 cups of fluids for men and 9-12 for women. Food accounts for about 20% of fluid intake.

Ensure children are well-hydrated. General recommendations are: ages 1-8: 4 cups of water a day; ages 9-14: 7-8 cups a day; 14-18: 8-11 cups a day, adjusted for the child's gender, activity level, climate, etc. For specific guidance, talk to your child's eye doctor or pediatrician.

5. Get Enough Sleep

You may be noticing a pattern: good healthcare practices support healthy vision. Sufficient sleep reduces the chance of eye fatigue, redness, dryness and discomfort, so try to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night.



Children ages 6-12 should get 9-12 hours, and teens 8-10 hours of sleep per 24 hours.

6. Quit Smoking

Of course, we all know the dangers of smoking, but did you know that smoking is linked to an increased risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataracts, glaucoma, dry eye syndrome and diabetic retinopathy? Simply put, smoking can lead to severe vision loss, even blindness. No matter how long you have smoked, quitting now may significantly reduce your risk of serious eye diseases and vision loss.

7. Wear Quality Sunglasses

Outdoors, protect your eyes from harmful UV rays with sunglasses labeled to block 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

Did you know as much as 80% of our lifetime exposure to UV rays occurs before the age of 18? Therefore, children should wear sunglasses whenever outdoors to protect their developing eyes and vision.

8. Limit Screen Time

When using digital devices, follow the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. Making this a habit can help prevent eye strain.

Establish screen time limits for children, especially within the hours before bedtime to reduce the risk of eye strain and sleep disorders.

9. Manage Chronic Conditions

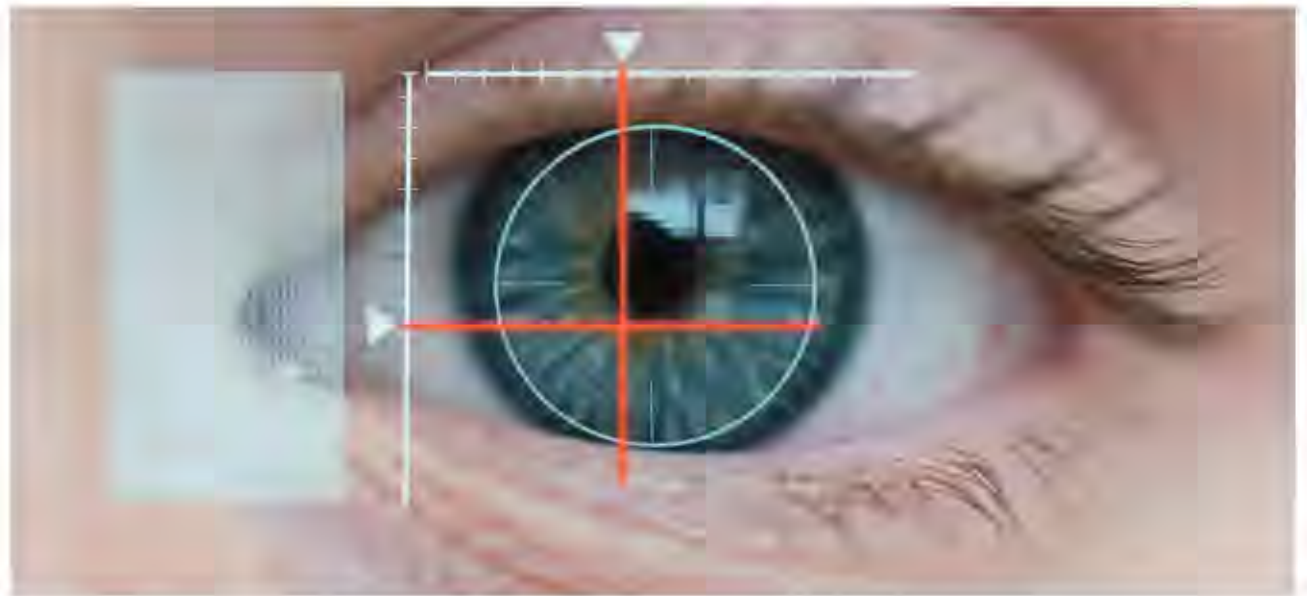
Diseases like diabetes and hypertension can impact eye health. Get regular medical check-ups for you and any children under your care. Take steps to get and keep your numbers (blood pressure, glucose, etc.) in a healthy range.

10. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity is linked to an increased risk of conditions like glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Making lifestyle changes to reduce weight by even a few pounds may result in significant improvements in overall health and reduce the risk of eye and vision damage.

11. Use Adequate Lighting

Working, reading or performing close-up tasks in low-light conditions can cause eye strain. Make sure you have sufficient surrounding lighting and aren't relying solely on screen lighting, which can be glaring and irritating to eyes.



Encourage kids to utilize adequate lighting when reading, scrolling, etc.

12. Keep Eyes Comfortably Moist

Dry eyes are more than uncomfortable – they can be prone to infection and abrasion. When staring at digital screens, make it a habit to blink regularly to keep your eyes bathed in your natural tear film.

For occasional eye dryness due to wind, weather, irritants or allergens, over-the-counter artificial tears can help keep eyes feeling moist and comfortable. Some eye drops, including those promising to “get the red out,” contain ingredients that can actually make redness and irritation worse, especially with frequent use. For this reason, most eye doctors recommend using preservative-free artificial tears. If you find yourself needing eye drops more than 4 times a day, talk to your eye doctor about more lasting solutions.

13. Keep Things Clean

Always wash your hands before touching the area around your eyes, especially before inserting or removing contact lenses. Don't sleep, shower or swim without first removing contact lenses. If you suffer from allergies, wash your face after allergen exposure and again before bed to reduce irritation. Baby shampoo and specialized eyelid washes and wipes can be used to gently cleanse eyelids. Make sure to remove any eye make-up before bedtime to reduce the risk of eye irritation or abrasion, and eyelid infections. Throw away eye make-up after 3 months.

14. Practice Eye Safety

When performing certain sports, jobs, hobbies or home improvement projects, protect your eyes from injury by wearing appropriate glasses or goggles. When warranted, ensure the eyewear is approved for the task, for example, bearing an ANSI Z87 safety rating.

15. Follow Prescription Directions

If you have been prescribed eyeglasses, or wear contact lenses, wear them as directed by your eye care professional. If you use contact lenses, clean, store and dispose of them as directed. Trying to extend the life of contact lenses, or failing to clean and store them correctly, can lead to some-times-dangerous infections. Saving a buck should never come before healthy eyes and vision.

MAINTAIN YOUR VISION AT LAKE EYE

Making these habits a part of your daily life, and encouraging them in children, can promote and maintain healthy vision throughout every stage of life. Remember, regular eye check-ups are crucial for the early detection and treatment of disease to help prevent vision loss. If you haven't had a comprehensive eye exam in a while, now is a great time to show your eyes some love with a call to your local Lake Eye (a US Eye company). With six state-of-the-art locations, there's a Lake Eye office and adjoining optical boutique near you.



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

Samuel Alfano, 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 352-268-9841.

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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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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, outlined letters. Below the title is a white rounded rectangle containing the text 'ALL THINGS VAGINAL HEALTH, SEXUAL HEALTH & BLADDER WELLNESS'. 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'.



Shedding Light on Stroke Awareness Month: Unveiling the Link Between Strokes and Vision

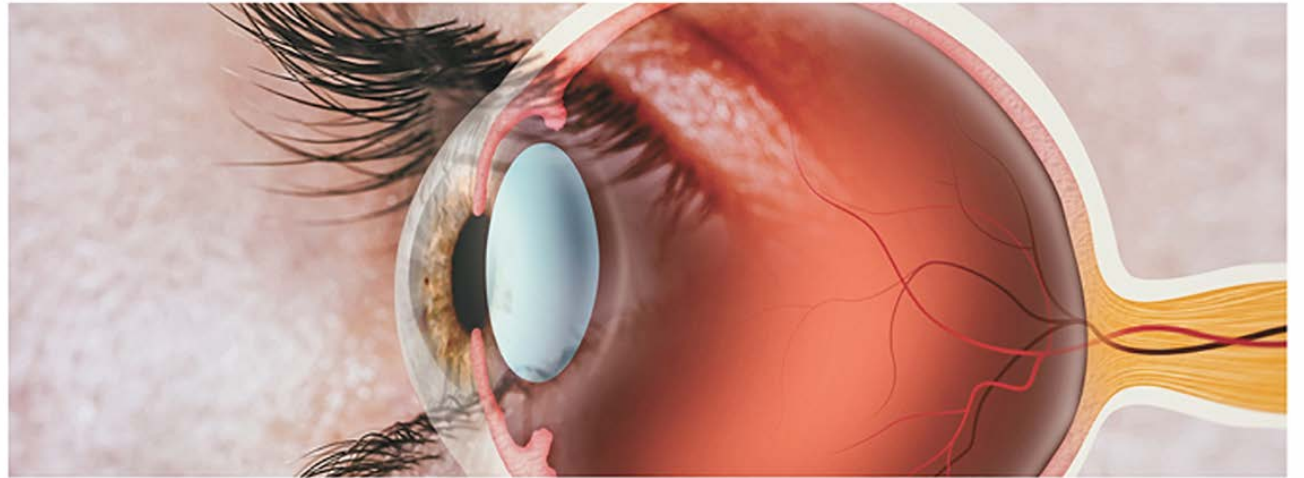
By Dan P. Montzka, M.D.

May marks Stroke Awareness Month, a crucial time to highlight the importance of understanding strokes and their potential impact on various aspects of health, including vision. While strokes primarily affect the brain, their repercussions can extend to the eyes, often serving as early indicators or resulting in lasting visual impairments. As we delve into the connection between strokes and vision, it becomes evident that raising awareness about this correlation is essential for early detection, prevention, and holistic stroke management.

Strokes, often referred to as "brain attacks," occur when blood flow to the brain is interrupted or reduced, leading to the deprivation of oxygen and essential nutrients. This interruption can result from a blockage in the blood vessels (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels (hemorrhagic stroke). While strokes can manifest in various ways, including sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, difficulty speaking, and severe headaches, their impact on vision is less commonly understood.

The eyes serve as windows to the brain, and changes in vision can often indicate underlying neurological issues, including strokes. One of the most common visual symptoms associated with strokes is sudden vision loss or changes, which can range from partial blindness to double vision. These changes may occur abruptly and affect one or both eyes, depending on the location and severity of the stroke. Additionally, individuals may experience visual disturbances such as blurred vision, tunnel vision, or difficulty focusing, all of which warrant immediate medical attention.

The connection between strokes and vision lies in the intricate network of blood vessels that supply oxygen and nutrients to the eyes and the brain. When a stroke occurs, these blood vessels may become compromised, leading to decreased blood flow and potential damage to the optic nerve or retina. The optic nerve, responsible for transmitting visual information from the eyes to the brain, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of strokes, often resulting in vision loss or impairment.



Furthermore, strokes can indirectly impact vision through their effects on cognitive function and mobility. Cognitive impairments resulting from strokes, such as memory loss or difficulty processing information, can hinder a person's ability to interpret visual stimuli effectively. Similarly, mobility issues stemming from stroke-related paralysis or weakness can limit a person's field of vision and spatial awareness, increasing the risk of falls or accidents.

Early detection and intervention are crucial in mitigating the visual consequences of strokes. Regular eye exams, including assessments of visual acuity, peripheral vision, and eye movement, can help detect subtle changes indicative of underlying neurological issues. Additionally, imaging tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) scans can provide valuable insights into the extent and location of brain damage caused by strokes.

Preventive measures play a pivotal role in reducing the risk of strokes and preserving vision. Lifestyle modifications, including maintaining a healthy diet, engaging in regular exercise, managing stress, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, can significantly lower the risk of stroke occurrence. Moreover, managing underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol through medication and regular monitoring can further decrease the likelihood of stroke-related complications.

In conclusion, Stroke Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the multifaceted nature of

strokes and their potential impact on vision. By understanding the connection between strokes and the eyes, individuals can take proactive steps to safeguard their visual health and reduce the risk of stroke-related visual impairments. Through increased awareness, early detection, and comprehensive stroke management, we can strive towards a future where strokes no longer cast a shadow on vision and overall well-being.

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

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EMSELLA: A Revolutionary Treatment for Incontinence

Incontinence, the involuntary loss of bladder or bowel control, affects millions of people worldwide, significantly impacting their quality of life. While this condition is common, it can be distressing and embarrassing, leading many sufferers to seek effective treatments. Enter Emsella, a groundbreaking non-invasive solution offering hope and relief to those struggling with incontinence.

Developed as a pioneering technology, Emsella utilizes high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology to target and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which play a crucial role in controlling bladder function. Unlike traditional methods such as medication or surgery, Emsella offers a safe, painless, and non-surgical approach to address incontinence, making it an appealing option for many patients.

The treatment process is straightforward and convenient. Patients simply sit fully clothed on the Emsella chair, which emits electromagnetic energy to stimulate thousands of pelvic floor muscle contractions in a single session. These contractions are similar to those experienced during Kegel exercises but are far more intense and effective. Each session typically lasts around 30 minutes, during which patients can relax and read a book or browse their phone.

One of the key advantages of Emsella is its efficacy. Clinical studies have shown significant improvement in urinary incontinence symptoms after just a few sessions. Patients report fewer leaks, better bladder control, and a notable reduction in the frequency and urgency of urination. These improvements translate to enhanced confidence, freedom, and an improved overall quality of life.

Another benefit of Emsella is its non-invasive nature. Unlike surgical interventions, there is no downtime or recovery period associated with Emsella treatment. Patients can resume their daily activities immediately after each session, without any restrictions or discomfort. This makes it an ideal option for individuals with busy schedules or those seeking a hassle-free solution to their incontinence woes.

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Moreover, Emsella is suitable for a wide range of patients, including men and women of all ages. Whether the cause of incontinence is childbirth, aging, or other factors, Emsella can offer relief to those affected. Additionally, it can complement other treatment modalities, such as pelvic floor exercises or medication, for a comprehensive approach to managing incontinence.

Beyond its effectiveness in treating incontinence, Emsella also holds promise for addressing other pelvic floor disorders, such as pelvic organ prolapse and sexual dysfunction. By strengthening the pelvic floor muscles, Emsella can help alleviate symptoms associated with these conditions, providing further benefits to patients.

As with any medical procedure, safety is paramount, and Emsella delivers on this front as well. The treatment is FDA-approved and has been rigorously tested for both safety and efficacy. Side effects are minimal and typically limited to mild muscle soreness or discomfort during or after the session, which resolves quickly.

In conclusion, Emsella represents a game-changer in the field of incontinence treatment. Its innovative technology, coupled with its non-invasive nature and impressive results, make it a highly attractive option for individuals seeking relief from the burdens of incontinence. With Emsella, sufferers can reclaim control over their bladder function and enjoy a renewed sense of confidence and freedom.

The Sunshine Med Spa Experience: Expertise and Personalized Care

Choosing a reputable med spa is paramount when seeking aesthetic treatments for anti-aging. Qualified professionals with expertise in PRF therapy, microneedling, and laser treatments can guide clients through the process, discussing individual concerns and developing personalized treatment plans. Sunshine Med Spa prioritizes client safety, comfort, and satisfaction, making the experience both rejuvenating and transformative.

In conclusion, the world of aesthetic treatments has evolved to provide effective anti-aging solutions that go beyond surface-level improvements. PRF therapy, microneedling, and laser treatments offer individuals the opportunity to revitalize their skin by addressing collagen loss and promoting natural regeneration. The med spa experience, with its focus on expertise and personalized care, ensures that clients embark on a journey to timeless beauty with confidence and satisfaction.

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Anti-aging treatments provide you with the ability to look and feel younger regardless of your numerical age. Once you begin a treatment plan that includes one or more of these anti-aging treatments, you will realize that age truly is nothing but a number. You can target aging from the inside and the outside by addressing your hormones, improving your skin, and taking steps to look and feel your best.

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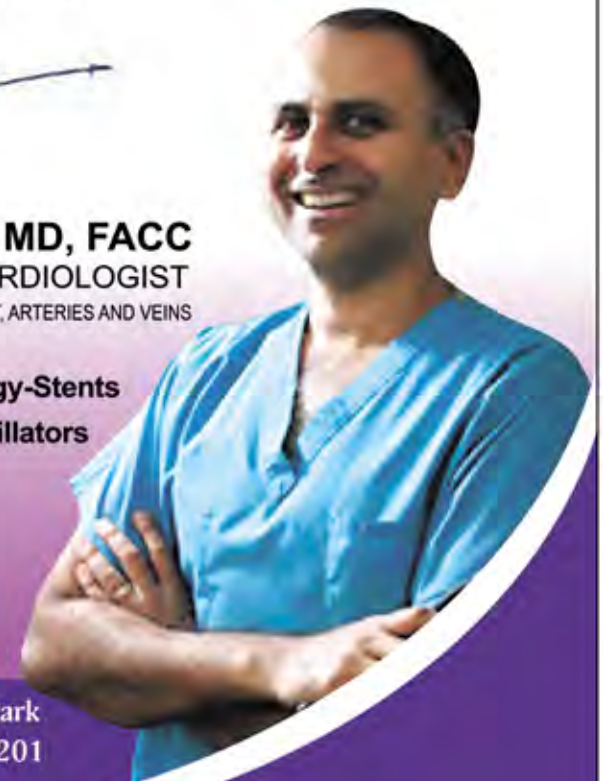
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That's why, at Sumter Senior Living, we celebrate May with an extra spring in our step. Our welcoming community provides the care, programming, and health and wellness resources necessary to thrive. At Sumter, it isn't like home—it is home. So, grab your sneakers and, while you're at it, bring a friend to participate in fulfilling experiences throughout the day—from planned activities to social events—and then rest easy knowing you'll have 24/7 help at your fingertips.

AGE ACTIVELY

According to a study on cardiovascular health in older adults, published by the National Library of Medicine, seniors over age 74 experience the largest relative gains in survival and healthy life from physical activity. Regular physical activity has also been associated with lower rates of functional decline, and epidemiologic studies have demonstrated a lower risk of mortality among older adults who are physically active than in those who are sedentary.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults aged 65 and older engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity—or 75 minutes of vigorous, aerobic—physical activity per week. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) proposes that older adults apply this routine five days a week for 30 minutes—even if only for a regular, brisk walk. Both the U.S. Department of Health and CDC agree that adults should also perform muscle-strengthening activities, involving all major muscle groups, at least twice a week and take part in activities to improve balance, such as standing on one foot, a minimum of three times a week.

Seniors benefit from physical activity in numerous ways, with advantages including an increased ability to live independently, healthier joints and muscles, and the potential to build community and companionship when practiced in groups. Regular exercise helps reduce fall risk, blood pressure, arthritis, joint swelling and pain, as well as the risk of colon cancer and diabetes. For those who worry about their mental health, physical activity can even ease symptoms of anxiety.

But fitness exists on a spectrum, and older adults are a medically and functionally diverse population. While the guidelines urge seniors to be physically active, individuals should be aware of their limitations and only perform the extent of activity permitted by their medical conditions and impairments—even if they are not able to attain the recommended intensity, duration, and frequency of exercise.

A SENSE OF SUMTER

Living well can encompass many aspects. It's seizing opportunities to connect with others, explore interests, grow spiritually, and nurture a healthy lifestyle. It's being part of a community where you feel valued and welcome. Which is why at Sumter Senior Living, we provide all the ingredients our residents need to live up to their full potential and live life to the fullest.

From fitness lessons to therapeutic programs, and a full calendar of life enrichment programs created by listening to and learning from you, everything we do is meant to encourage our residents and teams to lead healthier, more active lifestyles. We help build a culture that celebrates the moments in our journey together—guided by a sense of purpose to provide great sources of joy, excitement, and relaxation each and every day.

We believe creating a community comes from promoting healthy activity and cultivating an environment where you feel like you belong. We're always sure to make time for laughter, connection, and friendship, and we include these ideals in everything we do. Take care of your health in our Fitness Center and indoor, heated therapy pool. Spend time with friends at our Library, Theater, and Arts and Crafts Studio. With Florida sunshine, caring associates, and friendly neighbors, you'll feel the warmth right away.

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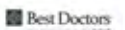
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Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances: A Solution for a Good Night's Sleep

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

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

What is Sleep Apnea?

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

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

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

What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

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

Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances:

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The customary first line of treatment for severe sleep apnea is a PAP device. For Mild and Moderate Sleep Apnea an oral appliance is an effective alternative. Approximately 50 percent of patients are unable to tolerate the use of a PAP, and therefore are not achieving optimum treatment results. In many cases those individuals are going untreated. Those



patients are candidates for Oral Appliance Therapy, or OAT. A custom-fit oral appliance is an effective therapeutic treatment option for Obstructive Sleep Apnea and can also help to eliminate snoring. By opening the airway, you increase your oxygen intake, as well as improve your sleep, and your overall health. The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine all recommend OAT to be prescribed by a Sleep Physician and fabricated by an ABDSM qualified dentist.

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

Laurel Manor Dental/Laurel Manor SleepCare

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Benefits of Oral Appliance Therapy for the treatment on Sleep Apnea:

- Oral appliances can be easily cleaned and disinfected by patients.
- Oral Appliances are silent.
- Oral Appliances are truly portable. They can fit in a pocket or purse. They require no electricity and are easily transported when traveling.
- Best of all, Laurel Manor Dental/SleepCare provides CDC recommended, single use WatchPAT™ ONE contact less, first and only disposable Home Sleep Apnea Test.

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

Meet Dr. Rozensky

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

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

From the moment you step in the door you will feel at ease. You will be welcomed by a warm and inviting atmosphere, combined with a professional and caring team. You will immediately recognize the emphasis on professionalism and quality, from the people who care for you to the technology used-this is the way dental care should be!

Millions of People's Lives are Disrupted by Digestive and Gastrointestinal Problems, But When Do You Know If It's Serious?

People can sometimes be hesitant to talk about their bowel movements with their doctors, but if you start to notice recurring urgency, abdominal pain, or canceling plans to avoid being stuck in an uncomfortable situation, you may want to speak up.

Approximately 1.6 million Americans have Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), which includes Crohn's disease (Crohn's) and ulcerative colitis (UC). Crohn's and UC can significantly impact your quality of life. While they share some symptoms, each condition has distinct characteristics and treatment approaches.

1. Crohn's Disease

Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease characterized by digestive tract inflammation. It can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract, from the mouth to the anus. Common symptoms include abdominal pain, diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss, and rectal bleeding. Crohn's disease is known for its unpredictable flare-ups and periods of remission.

2. Ulcerative Colitis

Ulcerative colitis is another inflammatory bowel disease primarily affecting the colon and rectum. Unlike Crohn's disease, which can involve any part of the digestive tract, ulcerative colitis is limited to the colon. Symptoms of ulcerative colitis include bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain, urgency to have a bowel movement, and fatigue. Like Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis can also have periods of remission and flare-ups.

Treatment Approaches and Infusion Therapies

Treatment for Crohn's and UC varies depending on the severity of symptoms and the individual patient's needs. While lifestyle modifications, dietary changes, and medications are often the first line of treatment, some patients may require infusion therapies to manage their conditions effectively.

Infusion Therapies Have Proven to Help

Infusion therapies have revolutionized the treatment of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) such as Crohn's and UC. These therapies aim to reduce inflammation, control symptoms, and induce remission. Here are some commonly used infusion drugs for IBD:

1. Entyvio (Vedolizumab): Entyvio is a gut-selective biologic therapy that targets the alpha4beta7 integrin, which plays a role in the migration of inflammatory cells to the gut. It is administered intravenously and has been shown to induce and maintain remission in patients with moderate to severe ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease [1]. Entyvio is administered as a 30 minute infusion on Week 0, Week 2, Week 6, then every eight weeks thereafter.

2. Omvoh (mirikizumab-mrkz): Omvoh is a biologic medicine that targets a specific protein called IL-23P19, which is the protein in the body that plays a role in inflammation related to moderate to severe ulcerative colitis. It has shown to reduce inflammation in your gut. Omvoh is administered as an infusion once monthly for the first three doses, followed by home injections every eight weeks.

3. Remicade (Infliximab): Remicade is a TNF inhibitor used to treat Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. Studies have demonstrated its efficacy in reducing inflammation and improving symptoms in patients with IBD [2]. Remicade is generally administered as a 2 hour infusion on Week 0, Week 2 and Week 6, then every eight weeks thereafter.

4. Skyrizi (Risankizumab): Skyrizi is a humanized monoclonal antibody that targets interleukin-23 (IL-23), a cytokine involved in the inflammatory response. Skyrizi is approved for the treatment of moderate to severe Crohn's. Skyrizi is administered as an infusion once monthly for the first three doses, followed by home injections every eight weeks.

5. Stelara (ustekinumab): Stelara is a human interleukin-12 and -23 antagonist indicated for the treatment of moderately to severely active Crohn's and UC. Stelara is administered as an initial intravenous infusion, followed by subcutaneous injections every 8 weeks thereafter.

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Improvements in Symptoms

Infusion therapies such as Entyvio, Omvoh, Remicade, Skyrizi, and Stelara play a crucial role in managing inflammatory bowel diseases and have significantly improved symptoms and quality of life in patients with Crohn's and UC. Studies have reported reductions in abdominal pain, diarrhea, rectal bleeding, and fatigue following treatment with these medications [4,5]. By targeting specific inflammatory pathways, infusion therapies help control inflammation and promote mucosal healing in the digestive tract, leading to symptom relief and disease remission.

Patients should continue to have conversations about their bowel symptoms and any side effects from the infusion treatment with all their healthcare team (general practitioner, gastroenterologist and infusion therapy specialists) to determine the most appropriate treatment plan.

Sage Infusion Can Help

Sage Infusion provides expert patient-centered infusion care in a contemporary boutique environment. We offer infusion treatments to patients and will coordinate care with the referring physician, including insurance authorization and patient progress updates. Our flexible scheduling meets our patient's needs with extended hours. Day, night, and weekend appointments are available. Our Nurse Practitioners follow the National Infusion Center Association guidelines and our proprietary clinical protocols. Sage Infusion offers a variety of comforting amenities, and patients can choose to receive treatment in the open lounge or a private room.

From a quick start to upfront pricing and financial assistance to compassionate care by our clinical experts in a serene environment, you will experience infusion therapy like never before. Sage Infusion offers the best infusion and administration facilities in the Sunshine State with eight locations - Brandon, Clearwater, Fort Myers, Orlando, Sarasota, Tampa, The Villages Lake Sumter and The Villages Spanish Springs.



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SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

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



AGING IN PLACE PROVIDES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

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

IT FIGHTS ISOLATION

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

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

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

HOME HEALTH CARE CAN HELP

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

HERE ARE TEN WAYS HOME HEALTH CARE CAN SUPPORT YOU:

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

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

2. Home care supports activities of daily living (ADLs). In-home services allow adults to receive day-to-day help with the personal care they need, preserving their dignity and maintaining a good quality of life. Assistance with activities of daily living can include bathing, grooming, and medication reminders.
3. Access to skilled nursing care at home. Skilled medical care can be delivered at home by thoroughly supervised nurses, certified, licensed and knowledgeable about high-technology medical equipment. Home health care can ensure that your loved one's complex medical needs are met.
4. Support with diet and nutrition. Adults age 65 and older, people with chronic conditions, and those recently discharged from a hospital or nursing facility are likely to be nutritionally at-risk. Aging, bed rest, illness, and injury can all contribute to the loss of lean body mass. Home care may include nutritional counseling and home-cooked meals to protect against malnutrition.
5. Medication management. Multiple prescriptions it can be confusing to manage. Home health care professionals can ensure the right medications are being taken at the right times to control health conditions and prevent harmful drug interactions.
6. Home health care professionals provide caring companionship. Research shows that aging adults stay healthier with social interaction. Home health aides can become trusted friends for walks, reading, cards, games, movies, meals, and other social activities. Accompaniment on errands such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other activities are also added benefits.
7. Home care helps with light household chores. When aging adults struggle the daily demands of housework, such as laundry, vacuuming, dishes, and simple chores home care helps to consistently maintain a safe and healthy living environment.

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

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

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

OUR PROMISE

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

TRUSTED HOMECARE SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT

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

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



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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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
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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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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.

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

Types of Treatment Available with Physical Therapy

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

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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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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.



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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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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.

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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.

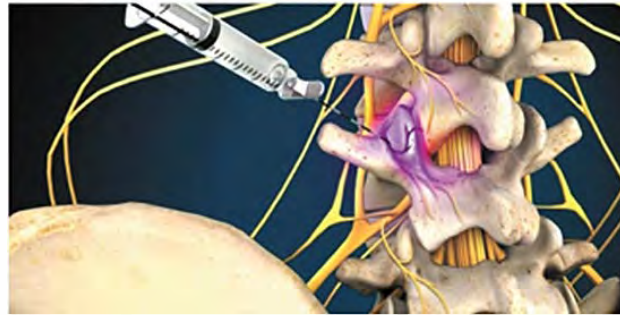
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Dr. Brent Compton was raised locally in Ladylake, FL and after finishing his medical training and work in Texas has relocated his family back home to The Villages where he opened the practice in August of 2023. His vast experience, combined with a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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Interventional Pain Institute also places a strong emphasis on patient education. An informed patient is an empowered patient, and the team strives to provide as much information as possible about each patient's condition and treatment options.

With offices conveniently located in The Villages and Ocala, Florida, The Interventional Pain Institute is an excellent choice for those suffering from chronic or acute pain. Under the care of Dr. Brent Compton, patients can find not just relief, but also a renewed sense of hope for a pain-free future. Experience the difference at The Interventional Pain Institute today.

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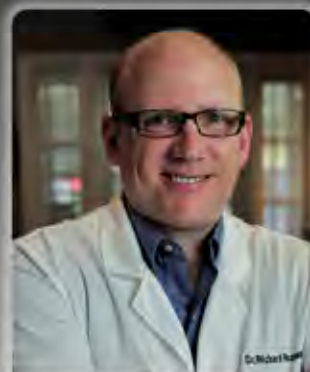
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