

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

June 2024

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## SUFFERING FROM MEMORY LOSS?

Could it be Alzheimer's Disease?

## MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

Tackling Low Testosterone and Erectile Dysfunction

## STAYING STEADY

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# CONTACT LENS CARE 101: A GUIDE TO HEALTHY AND COMFORTABLE EYES

If you're a contact lens wearer, understanding the proper way to use, store and maintain your lenses is the key to ensuring their continued comfort and safety. Improper use and care of contact lenses is a common cause of eye irritation, inflammation, infections like conjunctivitis (pink eye), and, most concerning, corneal inflammation and ulcers. At their worst, these complications can lead to vision loss, even blindness, so make sure to preserve the integrity of your lenses and healthy vision by adhering to commonsense contact lens care and maintenance.

## THE SAFE USE OF CONTACT LENSES

First and foremost, follow any instructions provided by your ophthalmologist or optometrist for your specific type of contact lens, as different types may require unique care. From there, good hygiene practices are crucial in the fight against harmful bacteria, viruses and fungi. An estimated 40%-90% of contact lens users don't follow adequate care instructions for their contact lenses, frequently resulting in keratitis, a painful and sometimes-dangerous eye infection that sends many people to the ER.

Therefore, when using contact lenses, always make sure to:

- 1. Start with clean hands.** Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your contact lenses, whether they're in a case or in your eye. Use a clean, lint-free towel to dry your hands to avoid getting lint or residue on or under your lenses.
- 2. Use sterile solution.** Before and after you use your contact lenses, clean them by gently rubbing them between your fingers using sterile contact lens solution, then rinse them with more solution to remove any debris or buildup. Always store your lenses in fresh solution and discard the solution from the previous day.
- 3. Remove your lenses** before you shower, wash your face, or swim to prevent contamination with waterborne pathogens. If water comes into contact with your lenses, wash them thoroughly with sterile solution before wearing them again.
- 4. Give your eyes breathing room.** Sleep is the perfect time to let your eyes rest and oxygenate. Never wear your lenses to bed unless they're approved for overnight wear. If your lenses are designed for overnight use, you may leave them in

as directed, but understand that even this type of specialty lens can reduce the oxygen supply to your corneas, and increase the chance of eye dryness, eye infection and corneal abrasion. It is always safest to remove your lenses before sleep.

**5. Safely store your lenses.** Use a clean lens case designed for your type of contact lens. Place your clean lenses in their respective compartments and fill with fresh sterile solution, ensuring full submersion to keep your lenses from drying out. Screw the lids on tightly to prevent evaporation and maintain cleanliness. Replace your storage case every three months to help prevent the growth of pathogens.

**6. Replace your lenses as directed.** Different lenses have different life cycles, so follow the instructions on your contact lens box, or the individualized instructions provided by your eye doctor. Trying to save money by extending contact lens wear beyond its recommended life span is a common cause of eye infection, corneal abrasion, and sometimes-serious vision problems, so don't risk it.

## INSERTING AND REMOVING CONTACT LENSES

Again, always ensure your hands are clean and dry and that contact lenses are clean before you insert them into your eyes. Use sterile cleaning solution, as water or saliva can be breeding grounds for bacteria and viruses.

To insert the lens, check to make sure it isn't inside-out, and then place it on the tip of the index finger of your dominant hand. Use your other hand to gently hold your upper eyelid open as you pull down the lower lid with the middle or ring finger of your dominant hand. Look up toward the ceiling, and then gently place the lens over the center part of your eye. In the beginning, this may take some practice. If you're unsuccessful and the lens falls off your finger, clean the lens and start again. With practice, most people find lens insertion becomes second-nature to them.

To remove your lens, make sure your hands are clean and dry. Look upwards toward the ceiling and gently pull down your lower eyelid. With your index finger, touch the lower edge of the lens and slide it downwards. Gently pinch the lens between your thumb and index finger and pull it outward. It is helpful to make sure the lens is right-side out before storing.

## GET REGULAR EYE CHECK-UPS

Visit your ophthalmologist or optometrist regularly to make sure your lenses fit properly, your eyes are

happy and healthy, and your vision remains clear and crisp. Remove your contact lenses and call your eye doctor immediately if you experience eye discomfort, irritation, undue redness or dryness, signs of infection, sensitivity to light, or changes in vision.

Applying these guidelines can help ensure the safe and comfortable use of your contact lenses, optimal eye health, and brilliant vision for everything you do.

## AM I A CANDIDATE FOR CONTACT LENSES?

To enjoy the clarity, convenience and range of vision delivered by contact lenses, your eye doctor will first examine your eyes for conditions such as chronic dry eye, frequent eye infection, and persistent allergic reactions. Your doctor will also ask about your living and working environments to assess the amount of dust, sand and other airborne elements that may impact contact lens use. If you're a candidate for contact lenses, your eye doctor will measure your tear film quality, as well as the size and shape of your corneas and pupils to determine the best contact lens for you. This customization helps deliver the best comfort, vision and safety for your unique eyes and lifestyle.

## CONTACT OUR CONTACT LENS CARE SPECIALISTS

If you're new to contact lenses, in need of an updated prescription, or interested in trying an advanced new contact lens technology, contact or drop by your local Lake Eye (a US Eye company). We offer contact lens exams and customized contact lens fittings, plus a complete array of leading-edge contact lenses, including rigid gas-permeable lenses, super-comfortable hybrid lenses, and scleral and Rose-K lenses for people with corneal issues like keratoconus. From disposable to daily wear to extended wear, you'll find the right lenses for your lifestyle, and a team of dedicated eye care professionals ready to assist you every step of the way.



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# ESSENTIAL OILS TO IMPROVE SYMPTOMS OF VARICOSE VEINS

**V**aricose veins can be more than just a cosmetic concern; they can cause discomfort, including itchiness and leg pain. While seeking treatment from vascular physicians like those at Central Florida Vein & Vascular Center in Orlando is essential for effectively addressing varicose veins, many individuals also explore natural remedies like essential oils for symptom relief.

Essential oils have gained popularity for their therapeutic properties and offer promising benefits for those dealing with varicose veins. These veins develop when the valves in the legs fail to function correctly, leading to poor circulation and blood pooling in the veins. Fortunately, certain essential oils can help alleviate the discomfort associated with varicose veins and support healthy circulation.

Here are some of the top essential oils known for their potential to relieve varicose vein symptoms:

- 1. Lemongrass Oil:** Lemongrass essential oil promotes blood circulation, benefiting individuals with varicose veins. By improving circulation, lemongrass oil helps prevent blood from stagnating in the veins, reducing the risk of complications like blood clots and venous ulcers.
- 2. Chamomile Oil:** Chamomile oil is renowned for its soothing properties, which can provide relief from the heaviness and pain associated with varicose veins. Massaging chamomile oil into the legs before bedtime can help alleviate discomfort, particularly for individuals who spend prolonged periods standing during the day.
- 3. Helichrysum Oil:** Helichrysum essential oil offers dual benefits for varicose veins. Not only does it possess anti-inflammatory properties that reduce inflammation in the veins, but it also supports healthy circulation and helps prevent the formation of new varicose veins. Regular use of helichrysum oil can help manage existing symptoms while protecting against further vein damage.

Using essential oils for varicose veins requires proper application to ensure safety and effectiveness. Essential oils are highly concentrated and



should always be diluted before use. One common method is to create a compress by adding five drops of essential oil to a liter of warm or cold water and soaking a cloth in the solution. Alternatively, you can mix 30 drops of essential oil with a carrier oil like sweet almond, coconut, or olive oil and massage it into the affected area.

While essential oils can provide temporary relief from varicose vein symptoms, they are not a substitute for professional treatment. For lasting relief and comprehensive vein care, it's essential to consult with vascular physicians who specialize in varicose vein treatment. The experts at Central Florida Vein & Vascular Center are dedicated to helping patients achieve optimal vein health and regain comfort in their legs. Contact us today to schedule a consultation and take the first step towards a life free from varicose vein discomfort.

## 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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# EMPOWERING MEN'S HEALTH: UNVEILING THE POTENTIAL OF EMSCULPT NEO AND CORE TO FLOOR

By Dr. Tina Chandra

**M**en's Health Month is an opportune time to address the unique challenges that men face regarding their well-being. This article focuses on two innovative technologies, Emsculpt Neo and Core to Floor, which offer promising solutions for improving men's health. By combining cutting-edge advancements in body contouring and pelvic floor strengthening, these revolutionary treatments aim to enhance men's physical fitness, boost confidence, and promote overall wellness. Join us as we explore the transformative potential of Emsculpt Neo and Core to Floor in empowering men to take charge of their health and enjoy a better quality of life.

## Emsculpt Neo: Sculpting a Stronger Physique

In recent years, Emsculpt Neo has revolutionized the field of body contouring by utilizing high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology combined with radiofrequency (RF) energy. This non-invasive procedure stimulates muscle contractions, leading to muscle building and fat reduction simultaneously. Emsculpt Neo is particularly beneficial for men who struggle with stubborn fat deposits or desire a more toned and sculpted physique.

One of the primary advantages of Emsculpt Neo is its ability to target multiple muscle groups, including the abdomen, buttocks, arms, and legs. By undergoing a series of Emsculpt Neo sessions, men can strengthen their core, develop defined abdominal muscles, and enhance overall muscle tone. Additionally, Emsculpt Neo's unique ability to stimulate deep muscle contractions surpasses what can typically be achieved through regular exercise alone, making it an appealing option for those seeking efficient and noticeable results.

Furthermore, Emsculpt Neo's fat reduction capabilities contribute to overall body contouring, helping men achieve a more chiseled appearance. By reducing fat deposits, this technology allows the underlying muscles to become more visible, providing men with a leaner and more sculpted physique. With minimal discomfort and no downtime, Emsculpt Neo provides a convenient and effective solution for enhancing men's physical fitness and body confidence.

## Core to Floor: Strengthening Men's Pelvic Health

While pelvic floor health is often associated with women, men can also benefit greatly from maintaining strong pelvic muscles. Core to Floor is an innovative treatment designed to target the male pelvic



floor muscles, promoting urinary and sexual health while addressing common issues such as erectile dysfunction, incontinence, and pelvic pain.

The Core to Floor procedure utilizes advanced electromagnetic technology to stimulate and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. By strengthening these muscles, men can experience improved bladder control, enhanced sexual performance, and reduced discomfort in the pelvic area. This treatment is particularly beneficial for men recovering from prostate surgery or those seeking to prevent or manage pelvic floor-related conditions.

The advantages of Core to Floor extend beyond the treatment itself. With a targeted approach and customizable treatment plans, Core to Floor provides men with the opportunity to reclaim control over their pelvic health, boosting their self-confidence and overall well-being. Moreover, the non-invasive nature of the procedure ensures minimal discomfort and downtime, allowing men to seamlessly incorporate it into their busy lifestyles.

As we celebrate Men's Health Month, it is crucial to highlight groundbreaking advancements in men's wellness. Emsculpt Neo and Core to Floor have emerged as remarkable technologies that cater to the unique health needs of men. By harnessing the power of Emsculpt Neo for body sculpting and utilizing Core to Floor to strengthen pelvic health, men can redefine their physical fitness, improve self-confidence, and enjoy a more fulfilling and active life.

Embracing these innovative treatments, men can prioritize their health and well-being, empowering themselves to thrive in all aspects of life.

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.



DR. TINA CHANDRA



DR. RAVI CHANDRA



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# MEN'S HEALTH MONTH: TACKLING LOW TESTOSTERONE & ED

**A**s Men's Health Month kicks off, it's a great time to shine a light on two increasingly common issues affecting men - low testosterone and erectile dysfunction (ED). While these conditions can have a major impact on male sexual health and overall well-being, there are effective treatment options available.

## The Lowdown on Low Testosterone

Testosterone is the primary male sex hormone responsible for male sexual development and functions like sexual desire, erections, and sperm production. Low testosterone levels, also called hypogonadism or "low-T", can occur due to issues with the testicles or pituitary gland.

Symptoms of low testosterone include decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, depressed mood, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, and loss of muscle mass/strength. Risk factors include obesity, diabetes, injury or infection to the testicles, hormone disorders, and certain medications.

If you experience potential symptoms of low testosterone, your doctor can check your levels with a blood test. For those diagnosed with low-T, testosterone replacement therapy may be recommended to raise testosterone back to normal levels. This can be done through injections, gels, patches or pellets placed under the skin.

## The Truth About Erectile Dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction, or the inability to get and keep an erection firm enough for sex, can stem from both physical and psychological causes. While ED is more common with age, it shouldn't be considered a normal part of aging.

Physical factors like diabetes, obesity, heart disease, low testosterone, and side effects from medications can all contribute to ED. Psychological factors include depression, anxiety, and stress. Unhealthy habits like smoking, excessive alcohol use, and lack of exercise can also increase ED risk.

The good news is that ED is highly treatable for most men. First-line treatments often include oral medications like sildenafil, tadalafil, vardenafil, and avanafil which improve blood flow to the penis. Other options are injectable medications directly into the penis, vacuum erection devices, penile implants, and vascular surgery in some cases.



According to the National Institute of Health, as many as 30 million men suffer from erectile dysfunction. It is estimated erectile dysfunction affects:

- 12 percent of men younger than 60
- 22 percent of men between ages 60 and 69
- 30 percent of men older than 70

## Healthy Lifestyle Habits Count

For both low testosterone and ED, maintaining a healthy lifestyle through exercise, healthy diet, not smoking, and limiting alcohol can go a long way. Exercising regularly improves cardiovascular health, burns body fat, reduces stress, and boosts testosterone levels.

Obesity increases the risk of low testosterone levels, and losing weight can help raise testosterone back to normal levels. Getting enough vitamins and minerals like zinc, vitamin D, and magnesium from a nutritious diet is also important for testosterone production.

## Breaking the Stigma

Unfortunately, there is still a significant stigma around male sexual health issues that prevents many men from getting help. Low testosterone and ED are not something to be ashamed about or ignore. These are legitimate medical conditions that can be treated.

## Some Questions You Might Ask Your Health Care Provider about Low Testosterone

When you go to see your doctor, you may be a bit nervous. It will help if you make a list of the most important things on your mind. Here are some ideas:

- What tests will I need to find out if I need Testosterone Therapy (TT)?
- Will I have to repeat these tests? If so, how often?
- Does a Low-T level make it hard for me to make sperm?
- Will TT help me to be more fertile?
- What methods of TT are there? Which one would you suggest for me? Why?
- I have diabetes. Does this mean I will need TT?
- I have trouble getting an erection. Will TT help with sexual function?
- During or after treatment, are there any changes I can make to my life and routine to help keep my testosterone level normal?
- My son was born with low testosterone. Will he need TT all his life?
- Are there support groups to help my son cope with his TD?
- Heart disease is in my family. Is it safe for me to have TT?

This Men's Health Month, make an effort to be more open about your sexual health with your doctor. Getting your testosterone levels checked or speaking up about any erectile issues could be the first step to resolving the problem and improving your overall quality of life.

There are countless reasons to make your sexual health a priority, from boosting your self-confidence and relationships to reducing disease risks associated with low-T like osteoporosis, diabetes, and heart disease. Don't let stigma or embarrassment prevent you from getting the care you need.

By proactively monitoring testosterone levels, adopting healthy habits, and seeking treatment for erectile dysfunction, men can take control of their sexual health at any age. This Men's Health Month, start the conversation and take action by calling Lake Sumter Urology today.



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# Alzheimer's Awareness Month: The Link between dementia and UTIs

## UTIs and Dementia: An Overlooked Connection

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are a common yet often overlooked issue among individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. While UTIs can affect anyone, the risk is heightened in those with dementia due to various factors, including decreased personal hygiene and challenges in communicating symptoms.

At the root of this problem lies the reduced ability of people with dementia to maintain proper hygiene and personal care. As cognitive function declines, tasks such as regular cleaning and staying hydrated become increasingly difficult, creating an environment conducive to the growth of harmful bacteria that can lead to UTIs.

Compounding the issue is the challenge in detecting UTIs in individuals with dementia. Many individuals with dementia experience communication difficulties, making it challenging for them to express discomfort or symptoms clearly. Additionally, the symptoms of UTIs can overlap with those of dementia, further complicating the diagnosis.

The signs of a UTI in someone with dementia can be diverse and may include sleeping issues, anxiety, depression, confusion, aggression, delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia. Physical symptoms such as pain or a burning sensation when urinating, frequent urination, cloudy or bloody urine, lower abdominal pain, urinary incontinence, and mild fever may also be present.

The connection between UTIs and dementia is multifaceted, with symptoms from both conditions often intertwining. This overlap can lead to misdiagnosis or a delayed response, exacerbating the situation and potentially causing further complications.

Early detection and prompt treatment of UTIs are crucial for individuals with dementia, as untreated infections can worsen cognitive function and contribute to an overall decline in health. Caregivers and healthcare professionals play a vital role in recognizing the signs and advocating for appropriate medical attention.

## IS IT A UTI OR IS IT ALZHEIMERS? WHY IT CAN BE HARD TO TELL

### Common Symptoms Shared by UTIs and Dementia

Confusion Agitation  
Hallucinations  
Unusual behavior changes  
Dizziness Falling  
Frequent need to pee

#### Getting Help

When UTIs wreak havoc, we sometimes see message threads in which caregivers are in a state of panic about the symptoms. And for good reason — the symptoms are powerful and can actually mimic the end of life for some people. Getting a urine test may not be the first thing you think of when your loved one starts behaving so differently, but these changes often occur with a UTI due to fever and increased pain. When you see sudden behavioral changes, it is important to rule a UTI out and consult with a doctor.

#### How can people with dementia prevent UTIs?

Preventing UTIs in people with dementia is crucial for their overall well-being. Here are some tips to help reduce the risk:

- **Stay Hydrated:** Encourage regular fluid intake to promote proper urinary function.
- **Frequent Bathroom Breaks:** Prompt people with dementia to use the bathroom regularly to prevent urinary retention.
- **Proper Hygiene:** Do your best to help with maintaining personal hygiene, including wiping techniques. Women especially need to wipe front to back after using the bathroom to avoid bacteria spread.
- **Cranberry Pills:** Take a daily cranberry pill to prevent bacteria from sticking to the urinary tract lining.
- **UTI Test Strips:** Keep Utiva UTI Test Strips on hand to diagnose UTIs early and start treatment right away.

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

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

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

#### Sources:

- [https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/october\\_2011/sudden\\_change\\_in\\_behavior\\_urinary\\_tract\\_infection](https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/october_2011/sudden_change_in_behavior_urinary_tract_infection)
- <https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/the-link-between-dementia-and-utis-spotting-the-signs-and-preventing-infection#:~:text=People%20with%20dementia%20are%20twice,keep%20infections%20away%E2%80%94for%20good>

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# IGNORING COMMON CARDIAC SYMPTOMS LEADS TO CRITICAL ISSUES

T.E. Vallabhan, MD, FACC

**J**ohn F. Kennedy once said, “The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.” This statement holds true when we focus on many of the issues in life, especially our health. Some of the most common cardiac risk symptoms are often overlooked. Ideally, individuals should start to be mindful of their heart health from a younger age, but it’s never too late to improve your cardiac function or to get the treatment you need to enhance your lifestyle and overall health.

People are living longer, and staying healthy is at the forefront of most our minds. The aging population is primarily concerned about keeping up with their grandchildren and having the capability to freely live an active lifestyle well into their eighties and nineties, but without being proactive about our cardiac health, we set ourselves up for critical heart disorders and issues.

Some of the things we can do are to follow a heart-healthy nutrition plan like the Mediterranean diet. We should also incorporate regular exercise and keep our stress levels down. If you smoke, you **MUST** quit now to help your body heal from the damage to the blood vessels and arteries that have already taken place. It’s never too late to stop smoking.

### Cardiac Risk Factors & Indicators

- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Tightness in Chest
- Shortness of Breath
- Jaw pain
- Arm Pain
- Back Pain
- Fatigue

These symptoms are significant indicators of heart disease, but the most common warning sign that people have is —Ignoring their symptoms!

It’s the familiar adage of denial—If we ignore or avoid the symptoms, then we don’t have to deal with any of the accountability. However, just like most things, if you ignore them, they’ll go away, but not in a right way.



If left untreated, they will go away through deterioration and damage, and eventually death. Being proactive about your heart’s health is imperative.

Unfortunately, many people are more sedentary than they’d like to believe. A limited or lack of physical activity is not going to do your body or your heart much good. In our modernized world, we have grown complacent. We don’t walk as much to get from A to B; instead, we drive a car to work, sit at a desk all day, drive home, sit down to eat dinner and then sit in front of the television until we go to bed. If this sounds even remotely familiar, you need to have a consultation with a cardiologist to test your cardiac condition.

Coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, the prevalence of individuals being diagnosed with diabetes is astronomical. Diabetes is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Very often obesity and diabetes work in conjunction to damage your heart and arteries, deplete your nutrient, oxygen-rich blood, and can cause venous insufficiency and blood clotting issues. If you have diabetes or suspect that you may, it’s critical to seek medical attention to get your blood sugar levels to a manageable state and to assist you with an overall healthy lifestyle plan.

### Risk Factors For Heart Disease

- Age
- Family history
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Overweight
- Chronic stress

### What You Can Do

- See a cardiologist for important diagnostic testing
- Don’t ignore symptoms
- Eat a heart-healthy diet
- Avoid sugar and salt in excess
- Stop smoking
- Exercise daily (at least a 30-minute walk)

*This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or health care provider. We encourage you to discuss with your doctor any questions or concerns you may have.*

# Dr. V

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

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# Staying Steady:

## Home Safety Tips and Exercises for Preventing Falls

Samuel Alfano, D.O.

**F**alling isn't just a stumble; it can have serious consequences, especially for older adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among older adults and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. However, the good news is that many falls are preventable with some simple adjustments to your home environment and incorporating regular exercises to improve strength and balance. Here are some effective strategies for preventing falls in older adults and keeping you steady on your feet.

### Understanding the Risks

As we age, our bodies undergo changes that can increase the risk of falling. Factors such as decreased muscle strength, changes in balance and gait, vision problems, medication side effects, and environmental hazards all contribute to the likelihood of falling. Acknowledging these risks is the first step in preventing falls in older adults and maintaining independence.

### Creating a Safe Environment

Your home should be a sanctuary, not a hazard zone. To create a safe environment, start by conducting a thorough assessment of your living space to identify potential dangers:

- 1. Lighting:** Ensure that all areas of your home are well-lit, especially staircases, hallways, and entryways. Install night lights to illuminate pathways during the night. When you enter a room, turn the light on. Don't try to navigate in the dark.
- 2. Flooring:** Remove loose rugs or secure them with non-slip backing. Also, try to avoid rugs with tassels or strings that could easily catch your foot, causing you to trip and fall. Repair any uneven floor surfaces or loose floorboards to prevent tripping hazards.
- 3. Bathroom Safety:** Install grab bars near toilets and in showers or tubs to provide stability. For added safety, consider using a shower chair or bench.

**4. Stair Safety:** Install handrails on both sides of staircases and ensure they are securely anchored. Keep stairways clutter-free, and avoid wearing loose clothing or shoes with slippery soles when using stairs.

### Exercise for Strength and Balance

In addition to making modifications in your home, regular exercise is crucial for maintaining strength, flexibility, and balance – all helping to prevent falls. Here are some exercises specifically designed to improve balance and reduce the risk of falling in older adults:

- 1. Tai Chi:** This ancient Chinese martial art emphasizes slow, controlled movements and shifting weight from one leg to the other. Tai Chi has been shown to improve balance, strength, and flexibility, making it an excellent choice for fall prevention.
- 2. Yoga:** Yoga combines gentle stretching, balance poses, and controlled breathing, all of which can help improve stability and reduce the risk of falls. Look for classes tailored to older adults, or try beginner-friendly poses at home. Need even more assistance? Try chair yoga!
- 3. Strength Training:** Incorporate exercises that target major muscle groups, such as squats, lunges, and leg lifts. Using resistance bands or light weights can further challenge your muscles and improve overall strength.
- 4. Balance Exercises:** Practice standing on one leg while holding onto a sturdy surface for support, then gradually try to increase the duration. Other balance exercises include heel-to-toe walking, standing on tiptoes, and side leg lifts.

Consistency is key when it comes to reaping the benefits of exercise. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity most days of the week, but remember to consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions or mobility limitations and concerns.



### Take a Proactive Approach to Preventing Falls

Preventing falls in older adults requires a multifaceted approach that includes both environmental modifications and regular exercise. By creating a safe home environment and incorporating exercises to improve strength and balance, you can reduce the risk of falls and maintain your independence as you age. Don't wait until a fall occurs to take action—start implementing these strategies today to stay steady on your feet and out of the hospital.

*Ready to step up your home safety game and prevent falls? Take the first proactive step by scheduling an appointment with your local VIPcare provider by calling 352-268-9841. Let's ensure you're steady on your feet and equipped with the knowledge and tools to keep your home safe and secure. Don't wait for an accident to happen—prioritize your safety now!*



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# ACHIEVING A FULL ACTIVE LIFESTYLE:

## Key Steps to Recovery After Knee Replacement Surgery

By Sergio Martinez, DO, AOA, AOA

**U**ndergoing knee replacement surgery is a significant step towards improving mobility and reducing pain for individuals suffering from severe knee conditions. However, the success of the surgery relies heavily on the postoperative recovery process. In this article, we will explore five essential aspects of recovery after knee replacement surgery: the importance of pain control, immediate ambulation, physical therapy, the use of a walker for safety and stability, and ultimately, the return to a full, active lifestyle.

### 1. The Importance of Pain Control

Pain management is crucial after knee replacement surgery. Effective pain control not only ensures patient comfort but also promotes a faster recovery. Patients are typically prescribed pain medications to alleviate postoperative pain. It is essential to adhere to the prescribed dosage and timing while being mindful of potential side effects. Open communication with healthcare professionals about pain levels and medication effectiveness is crucial to optimize pain control during the recovery period.

### 2. The Importance of Immediate Ambulation after Surgery

Early ambulation, or getting up and walking as soon as possible after surgery, is a vital component of the recovery process. While it may seem challenging at first, immediate ambulation offers numerous benefits. It helps prevent blood clots, improves circulation, reduces swelling, and enhances joint flexibility. Healthcare professionals will guide patients through specific exercises and provide assistive devices like crutches or walkers to ensure safe ambulation during the initial stages of recovery.

### 3. The Importance of Physical Therapy

Physical therapy plays a significant role in the rehabilitation process following knee replacement surgery. It focuses on restoring strength, range of motion, and overall function of the knee joint. Physical therapists design personalized exercise programs tailored to each patient's specific needs and goals. These programs typically include a combination of stretching, strengthening, and balance exercises. Attending regular physical therapy sessions and diligently following the recommended home exercises are vital for optimal recovery outcomes.



### 4. The Use of a Walker for Safety and Stability

During the early stages of recovery, many patients rely on a walker for added safety and stability. Using a walker helps reduce the risk of falls, supports weight-bearing, and provides a sense of security. Healthcare professionals will assist patients in selecting and adjusting the appropriate walker. Proper usage and technique are taught to ensure patients are comfortable and confident while mobilizing with the aid of a walker.

### 5. Return to a Full Active Lifestyle after Knee Replacement

The ultimate goal of knee replacement surgery is to enable individuals to regain an active and fulfilling life. As the recovery progresses, patients gradually regain strength, flexibility, and mobility. Engaging in regular physical therapy exercises, following the recommended postoperative guidelines, and maintaining a positive mindset are crucial for a successful recovery. With time and patience, many individuals are able to return to activities they once enjoyed, such as walking, swimming, cycling, and even low-impact sports, allowing them to lead a full, active lifestyle once again.

Recovering after knee replacement surgery requires dedication, commitment, and patience. By prioritizing pain control, embracing early ambulation, engaging in physical therapy, utilizing a walker for safety, and

maintaining a positive outlook, individuals can maximize their chances of achieving a successful recovery. Remember to consult with healthcare professionals for personalized advice and guidance throughout the recovery journey. With determination and the right approach, individuals can regain their mobility, reduce pain, and reclaim an active lifestyle after knee replacement surgery.

### SERGIO MARTINEZ, DO, AOA, AOA

Sergio Martinez, D.O. is a board certified orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Martinez earned his bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Chemistry from the University of Miami, Coral Gables. He received a certificate in Biomedical Sciences from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and then received his Doctorate of Osteopathy from the same.



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

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

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

### What is Sleep Apnea?

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

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

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

### What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

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

### Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances:

#### Have you tried CPAP therapy?

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



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

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

*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!



# Shedding Light on Cataracts: Understanding and Addressing the Impact

By Dan P. Montzka, M.D.

## Cataract Awareness Month: A Call to Action

Every June, a spotlight shines on one of the most prevalent yet often misunderstood eye conditions: cataracts. Cataract Awareness Month serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for proactive measures to address this common ailment. With an aging population and increasing prevalence worldwide, understanding cataracts and promoting awareness about prevention and treatment options are more critical than ever.

## Understanding Cataracts: Unveiling the Cloudiness

Cataracts occur when the clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to blurred vision, sensitivity to light, and difficulty seeing at night. While age-related changes are the primary cause of cataracts, other factors such as genetics, injury, and certain medications can also contribute to their development. Over time, untreated cataracts can significantly impair vision, impacting daily activities and diminishing quality of life.

## The Global Impact: A Growing Concern

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide, responsible for approximately 51% of all cases. With the global population aging rapidly, the prevalence of cataracts is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. This increase underscores the urgent need for awareness campaigns, early detection, and access to affordable treatment options.

## Prevention Is Key: Nurturing Vision Health

While cataracts cannot always be prevented, several lifestyle choices can help reduce the risk of developing them. Protecting the eyes from excessive sunlight by wearing sunglasses and hats, maintaining a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, and avoiding smoking are all beneficial practices for preserving vision health. Regular eye examinations, especially for individuals over the age of 40, can also aid in early detection and timely intervention.

## Empowering Communities: Promoting Awareness and Education

Cataract Awareness Month provides an invaluable opportunity to engage communities, healthcare professionals, and policymakers in dialogue about vision health. Educational initiatives, outreach programs,

and media campaigns play a vital role in dispelling myths, raising awareness about risk factors, and promoting the importance of regular eye exams. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can encourage proactive steps towards preserving vision and preventing avoidable blindness.

## Breaking Barriers: Access to Care

Despite significant advancements in cataract treatment, access to care remains a challenge for many communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers can hinder individuals from seeking timely diagnosis and treatment. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in healthcare infrastructure, training of local healthcare providers, and greater collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

## Innovations in Treatment: Restoring Clarity

Fortunately, cataract surgery remains one of the most successful and cost-effective medical procedures, with a high rate of success in restoring vision. Technological advancements, such as phacoemulsification and intraocular lens implants, have revolutionized cataract surgery, making it safer, more efficient, and more accessible to a broader population. Moreover, initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of surgery and improving post-operative care are instrumental in ensuring equitable access to treatment for all individuals affected by cataracts.

## Looking Ahead: A Vision for Change

As we observe Cataract Awareness Month, let us recommit ourselves to the fight against preventable blindness and vision impairment. By raising awareness, advocating for equitable access to care, and embracing innovation in treatment, we can make significant strides towards eliminating the burden of cataracts on individuals and communities worldwide. Together, let us work towards a future where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy clear vision and a brighter tomorrow.



## Conclusion

Cataract Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for concerted efforts to address cataracts. By understanding the impact of this common eye condition, promoting prevention strategies, and advocating for improved access to care, we can make meaningful progress towards eliminating preventable blindness and preserving vision for generations to come. Let us join hands in spreading awareness, fostering education, and championing innovation to ensure a world where clarity of vision is within reach for all.

## Retina Group of Florida

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

Please call (352) 419-8928 today to schedule your eye exam. When necessary same day appointments can often be accommodated.



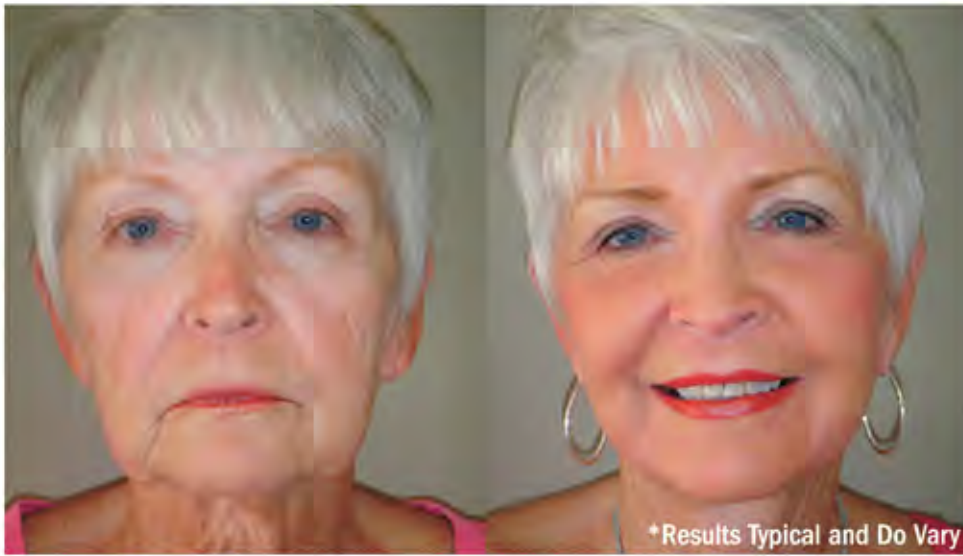
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# SUFFERING FROM MEMORY LOSS?

## Could it be Alzheimer's Disease?

By Craig Curtis, M.D.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

#### DIAGNOSIS

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

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

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

#### CAN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BE PREVENTED?

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

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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



**CRAIG CURTIS, M.D.**  
**US NAVY VETERAN** 

#### DR. CRAIG CURTIS

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

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

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## SUMTER SENIOR LIVING

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### The Longest Day: Fight to End Alzheimer's

It's nearly time to visit the beach, eat ice cream every week, and soak up the sunshine. Summer is right around the corner with the kickoff of the longest day of the year—the solstice on June 21st. This year, consider spending the longest day fundraising, educating your loved ones and community, and bringing the struggles of Alzheimer's disease to light.

If you or someone you love is facing the impact of Alzheimer's, know you are not alone. The Village Program® at Sumter Senior Living not only offers personalized programming to engage residents in activities that may reflect their former schedules, lifestyles, and interests—it also offers enriching experiences that establish caring personal relationships between our residents and team members.

While the challenges presented by memory loss can be difficult to navigate, our innovative approach to memory care can help you or your loved one find great sources of enjoyment and comfort.

#### KNOW THE FACTS

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease of the brain that often starts with a deterioration in memory and language, eventually impacting all brain functions, including thinking, walking, and swallowing. Recent statistics from the Alzheimer's Association describe the widespread occurrence of the disease, estimating 6.7 million Americans age 65 and older live with Alzheimer's dementia in 2023—with 73% percent of those individuals being age 75 and older. To bring this into perspective, that means roughly 1 in 9 people age 65 and older have Alzheimer's dementia.

Although this disease can feel isolating, you're certainly not alone. Sumter Senior Living proudly partners with the Alzheimer's Association nationwide and offers best-in-class memory care programs.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE VS. DEMENTIA

Often, dementia and Alzheimer's are used interchangeably. However, they are not the same. Dementia is not an illness by itself but a series of specific symptoms, such as memory loss and difficulties with language or problem-solving—all of which can be caused by several different conditions.

Alzheimer's, on the other hand, is a disease that may cause an individual to experience dementia symptoms, and it is by far the most common reason for dementia—resulting in 60-80% of cases. Alzheimer's disease ultimately damages neurons in the parts of the brain that control memory, language, and thinking.

The symptoms of memory loss can be frightening for the individual experiencing them, as well as for their family. It's important to know the early signs, which is why Sumter hosts a number of Alzheimer's awareness activities on The Longest Day every year, and we encourage our community's involvement.

#### NOTICE THE SIGNS

Alzheimer's disease begins neurologically twenty years or more before the onset of symptoms. The Alzheimer's Association lists some of the tell-tale signs to look out for, including memory loss which disrupts daily life, challenges in planning or solving problems, difficulty completing familiar tasks, confusion with time or place, trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships, poor judgment, lack of engagement in social activities, new problems with words in speaking or writing, and changes in mood, personality, and behavior. These symptoms may be mild at first, but Alzheimer's is a progressive disease. Given time, symptoms will increase in severity as more parts of the brain are affected.



There are three phases of the disease, including preclinical Alzheimer's disease, mild cognitive impairment, and dementia. Getting a PET scan can reveal abnormalities in the brain and act as a great starting point to identify the disease. If you suspect that you or a loved one may be experiencing early-onset Alzheimer's, it's important to be proactive and speak with your health care provider to get the best treatment as soon as possible.

#### SUMTER SENIOR LIVING

If your loved one is facing the difficulties of Alzheimer's disease or a similar dementia, Sumter Senior Living is here to help. The Village Program® ensures residents dealing with memory loss feel safe and appreciated. Our health care professionals create an environment without excess stimulation and use personal items, landmarks, and sensory cues to ground residents. Our staff also assist with daily tasks, medication management, and getting residents involved in group and one-on-one activities.

At Sumter Senior Living, residents are provided the care and support needed to manage their Alzheimer's disease, including the use of It's Never 2 Late (iN2L™) technology. This innovative tech involves using a touchscreen computer that has over 4,000 programs—accounting for cognitive and therapy activities, games, the ability to do Skype calls with family, and even spiritual content. Our use of iN2L helps keep residents involved and engaged.

The Village Program gives families the peace of mind that their loved one is getting the necessary care and support, while also allowing family members to step down from the primary caregiver role. At Sumter, we value providing residents with a safe and secure lifestyle, allowing them to live an enriching life full of meaningful connections.

#### A PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG

Sumter Senior Living is proud to offer a continuum of living options to suit all needs and preferences, including Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care—all on one beautifully landscaped campus.

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

For more information, or to schedule a personalized visit, please call (352) 674-3600 or visit [www.SumterSeniorLiving.com](http://www.SumterSeniorLiving.com)

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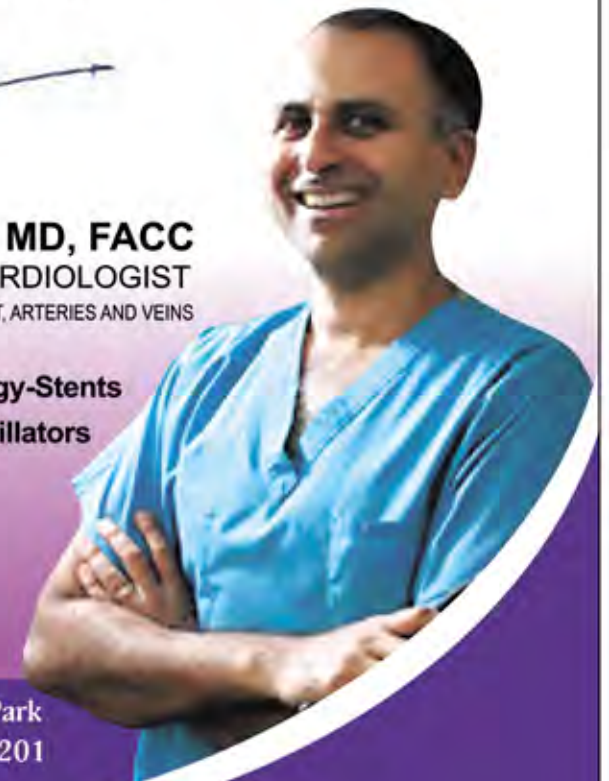
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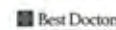
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# Shedding Light on Migraine Awareness: Triggers and Treatments Options

**M**igraine headaches affect millions of individuals worldwide, causing debilitating pain and disrupting daily life. As we strive to raise awareness about migraines, it's essential to understand the various factors that can trigger these headaches, including weather changes and certain foods. Additionally, treatment options including infusion therapy can offer relief and improve the quality of life for migraine sufferers.

Recognizing migraine triggers is crucial for managing migraine symptoms and preventing future attacks. Common triggers include stress, hormonal changes, lack of sleep, certain foods, and beverages (e.g., aged cheeses, alcohol, caffeine), strong odors, bright lights, and environmental factors like weather changes. Keeping a migraine diary to track symptoms and potential triggers can help identify patterns and establish personalized migraine management strategies.

Weather fluctuations have long been implicated as potential triggers for migraines. Studies have shown that changes in temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, and even stormy weather can precipitate migraine attacks in susceptible individuals. For example, a study published in the journal *Neurology* found that each 5-degree Celsius increase in temperature was associated with a 7.5% increase in the risk of migraine onset within 24 hours in migraine sufferers (Martin et al., 2014). Similarly, changes in barometric pressure have been linked to an increased risk of migraine attacks, with some individuals reporting heightened sensitivity to weather changes.

What you eat can also trigger migraines. Certain types of food that contain chemicals or additives that cause the blood vessels to dilate (expand) can lead to and make individuals more susceptible to migraine attacks. For example: Tyramine, which is found in red wine and soft cheeses like camembert and brie contains amino acids that affect blood vessels. Studies have shown there is no direct correlation that a single food is a trigger for all headache sufferers. It is important for each individual to monitor their diet and other factors to try to limit their consumption and know their triggers.

In addition to lifestyle modifications and preventive measures, infusion therapy has emerged as a valuable treatment option for individuals with debilitating migraines. VYEPTI (eptinezumab-jjmr) is a monoclonal antibody therapy specifically designed



for the preventive treatment of migraine in adults was approved in 2020. It works by targeting and blocking calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP), a molecule involved in transmitting migraine pain signals.

Clinical trials have demonstrated the efficacy of VYEPTI in reducing migraine frequency and severity. In the PROMISE-1 and PROMISE-2 trials, VYEPTI significantly reduced the number of migraine days per month compared to placebo in patients with episodic and chronic migraine (Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, VYEPTI was well-tolerated, with a favorable safety profile observed across clinical studies.

Infusion therapy with VYEPTI offers a convenient and effective option for migraine prevention, with treatment administered by healthcare professionals in an outpatient setting. Patients typically receive infusions once every 3 months, providing sustained relief from migraine symptoms and improving overall quality of life.

#### **Sage Infusion Patient Testimonial:**

*Sage Infusion patient Shannon\* has been receiving VYEPTI infusions since 2020 and doesn't stress anymore about when her next headache will happen. Shannon stated, "I'm not just trudging through life anymore!"*

*After 20+ years of suffering from ten to fifteen migraines per month, her migraines pounded away at her quality of life. She would lose hours, and at times, entire days to a fog of depression and fatigue.*

#### **References:**

Martin, V. T., Behbehani, M. M., & Shareef, F. (2014). Weather and headache: are they related? *Journal of Headache and Pain*, 15(1), 1-6. doi:10.1186/1129-23771-559

Smith, T. R., Janelidze, M., & Hakhava, G. (2020). Efficacy and safety of eptinezumab in patients with chronic migraine. *AHS Virtual Meeting*.

Diamond, Merle L. & Marcus, Dawn A. (2016). DIET AND HEADACHE CONTROL. *Headache, the Newsletter of ACHE*, Summer 2000, vol. 11, no. 2.

*The medications she would take for her headaches would also leave her nearly as groggy as the headache would.*

*Within 3 months of treatment, Shannon was amazed to see her migraines reduced to only 1 or 2 per month. Plus, headaches that used to last 2 to 3 days were now over within 1. Apart from daily magnesium and vitamin B complex supplements, she no longer needed additional medication.*

*In addition to her promising results, she finds her short, quarterly visits to Sage Infusion for her VYEPTI treatment to be "a really easy experience".*

By recognizing migraine triggers and treatment options, individuals can take proactive steps to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life. And with ongoing research and advancements in migraine treatment, there is hope for a brighter future for migraine sufferers.

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# Understanding Interventional Pain Management: A Comprehensive Approach to Pain Relief

By Brent Compton, MD

**C**hronic pain is a debilitating condition that affects millions of people worldwide, significantly impacting their quality of life. While traditional pain management strategies, such as medication and physical therapy, can provide relief, interventional pain management offers a more targeted and minimally invasive approach to addressing the root causes of pain. In this article, we'll delve into the world of interventional pain management and explore its role in the comprehensive treatment of chronic pain.

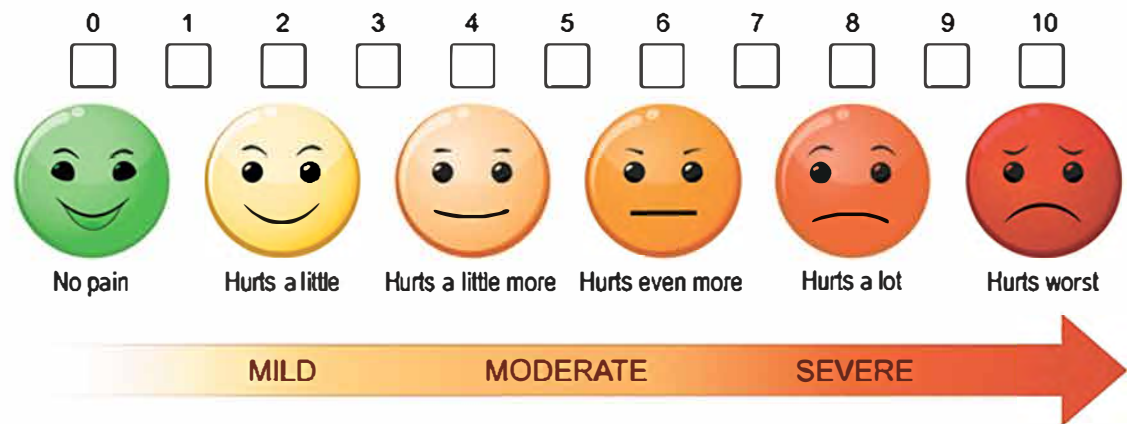
Interventional pain management is a specialized field of medicine that focuses on diagnosing and treating various types of chronic pain through minimally invasive techniques. These procedures are performed by highly trained physicians, often pain management specialists or anesthesiologists, who use advanced imaging techniques and specialized equipment to target specific areas of the body responsible for pain.

One of the primary goals of interventional pain management is to reduce or eliminate pain while minimizing the need for oral medications, particularly opioids, which can have significant side effects and carry the risk of addiction. By targeting the source of pain directly, interventional techniques can provide long-lasting relief and improve overall functionality.

The decision to pursue interventional pain management typically follows a structured pathway, beginning with conservative treatments and progressing to more advanced interventions as necessary. This pathway can be visualized as a decision tree, guiding patients through the various options available to them.

At the most basic level, patients may begin with non-invasive treatments such as chiropractic care, physical therapy, massage, and home exercises. These approaches aim to alleviate pain through manual manipulation, stretching, and strengthening exercises, often addressing musculoskeletal issues or improving overall mobility.

If these initial treatments prove insufficient, the next level may involve medications and imaging tests. Pain medications, including over-the-counter and prescription options, can provide temporary relief, while imaging techniques like X-rays, MRI, or CT scans can help identify the underlying cause of pain and guide further treatment decisions.



When conservative methods and medications fail to provide adequate relief, interventional pain management techniques become a viable option. These minimally invasive procedures include:

- 1. Epidural steroid injections:** These injections deliver corticosteroids directly into the epidural space of the spine, reducing inflammation and providing pain relief for conditions such as herniated discs, spinal stenosis, or radiculopathy.
- 2. Facet joint injections:** Targeted injections into the facet joints of the spine can alleviate pain caused by arthritis or injury in these joints.
- 3. Radiofrequency ablation:** This procedure uses heat generated by radio waves to disrupt the transmission of pain signals from specific nerves, providing long-term relief for conditions like chronic back or neck pain.
- 4. Spinal cord stimulation:** Implanted devices deliver electrical impulses to the spinal cord, modulating pain signals and providing relief for various chronic pain conditions.
- 5. Nerve blocks:** These injections involve the administration of medication, such as anesthetics or steroids, near specific nerves to block the transmission of pain signals.

If all other interventions fail to provide adequate relief, surgery may be considered as a last resort. However, interventional pain management techniques often allow patients to avoid or delay the need for surgical intervention, reducing the risks and recovery time associated with major procedures.

It's important to note that interventional pain management is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Each patient's condition is unique, and treatment plans are tailored to address their specific needs. Pain management specialists

work closely with patients to develop comprehensive treatment strategies, combining interventional techniques with other modalities, such as physical therapy, medication management, and lifestyle modifications.

In conclusion, interventional pain management offers a promising solution for individuals suffering from chronic pain. By targeting the source of pain directly through minimally invasive techniques, these procedures can provide significant relief and improve overall quality of life. As awareness of these techniques continues to grow, more patients can benefit from this comprehensive approach to pain management.

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

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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# The Paralyzing Fears When Facing Important Decisions for Care - Part One

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

**W**hen the need for assisted living becomes a crisis, the situation can become overwhelming and affect the ability to do anything. I refer to it as paralysis and I've identified four types that will hinder progress at the expense of your loved one. This month, I'll address two types and two family's experiences.

## FINANCIAL PARALYSIS

Assisted living is very expensive. Although the care fees can be covered through the Medicaid Waiver for those who qualify, many communities do not accept it and it does not pay for the room cost. A private studio apartment can cost around \$4,000 which must be paid for by the family. This is simply not possible for many people.

A family needing help for their wife/mother reached out to me. She has advanced dementia, frequently wanders, and it's difficult for her husband to convince her to return. She no longer recognizes him and becomes angry when he tries to provide care. He is not able to leave her alone and relies on his family to bring him groceries and other necessities. I reached out to a memory care community where he'd visited several times. They told me he is in denial of how advanced his wife is. I disagree. This family has no money, no savings, and no way to pay for even a fraction of what the community charges. They fully recognize the extent of her diagnosis, but they are paralyzed to do anything because of their financial situation. They were so overwhelmed that they didn't know where to begin, what is available, or where to turn. So, they did nothing.

Another roadblock is her husband is not her power of attorney and without it he couldn't apply for Medicaid. As a result of her dementia, she is unable to understand what she would be signing and she doesn't recognize her family, so power of attorney is no longer possible. Again, they avoided this critical issue due to cost. The only option is guardianship – which is more expensive than obtaining power of attorney.

Her care needs are such that a nursing home is appropriate, and Medicaid can cover the cost. The challenge is that she requires a locked area where she can't leave on her own, a long-term bed, and the facility to accept her as Medicaid pending. Trying to find a place that fit all three criteria was exceedingly difficult – but not impossible nor readily available. Until then, they must continue to live in crisis.



The immediate solution was to enlist the help of Hospice, for which she is qualified. In addition to care at home and later the nursing home, they provide emotional support and social services at no cost through Medicare. Hospice recognizes that her husband is able to make decisions for her as next of kin and will help him to apply for Medicaid. By requesting "spousal diversion as an impoverished spouse," some of his wife's social security could be diverted for his own living expenses.

## ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

Families often try to determine every possible scenario that could happen and overlook the immediate need. The What-ifs take over. What if she has to go to a nursing home? What if she runs out of money? Should they move her to where they are, or move in with her to provide care?

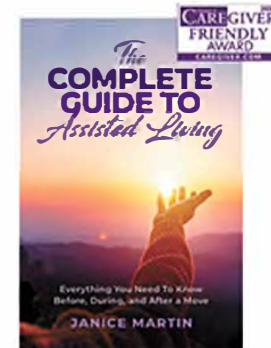
I was contacted by a family who live out of state. Their mother and father lived in an assisted living here in Florida and the father recently had a debilitating stroke. Mom and dad have long term care insurance to pay for the community, but their daughters felt dad needed more care. They were rotating travel so one of them was with them constantly. They were exhausted and consumed with questions and over-analyzing every scenario. Should they move them to another assisted living? Should they pay for additional outside help? Should they wait until dad passes and then move mom closer to them? Should they move them both now? How do they arrange medical transportation to another state?

I located a smaller assisted living to provide a higher level of care and increased attention. However, the long term care policy would only pay for a community with more than 10 people and this one had six.

More analysis ensued... Were they willing to pay from mom and dad's savings to get him the level of care he needed? What if they moved them both to stay together, or should they move dad and keep mom where she is?

They were paralyzed because there were too many unknowns and unable to focus on the immediate need. They were also overwhelmed with grief knowing that dad would pass soon and felt the need to simply DO something – anything – so they could feel they were in control of the situation. But they weren't, and sadly creating more chaos. When I was able to help them focus on the most important issues, they were able to make decisions. Sometimes, when you take a breath to think clearly, the answer will present itself.

When any situation becomes overwhelming, I encourage you to reach out to someone who can provide practical information. Professionals such as Senior Liaison of Central Florida have many resources to connect you to the help you need. Next month, I will present two additional situations – Information Paralysis and Guilt Paralysis. Stay tuned!



Janice Martin is an author, educator, 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 email SeniorLiaisonCFL@gmail.com



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# Financial Wellness; Retirement Planning

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

**P**lanning for retirement is not merely a task for the elderly; it's a crucial aspect of financial wellness that individuals should engage in at any age. In today's dynamic economic landscape, where uncertainties abound, having a concrete retirement plan is indispensable. This article delves into the significance of retirement planning in fostering financial stability and security, emphasizing its relevance irrespective of one's age.

## The Need for Retirement Planning:

Retirement marks a significant transition in life, where the regular inflow of income ceases, and individuals rely on their savings and investments to sustain their lifestyle. Without adequate planning, this transition can be daunting, leading to financial stress and uncertainty. Retirement planning provides a roadmap for accumulating savings over the years, ensuring a comfortable and secure retirement.

## Starting Early: A Strategic Advantage:

One of the key tenets of retirement planning is starting early. Fortunately, modern planning tools and investment opportunities make the planning process easier and more enjoyable. The power of compounding works wonders over time, allowing even modest contributions to grow substantially. By initiating retirement planning at a young age, individuals can harness this power, enabling their savings to grow exponentially. Moreover, starting early provides a longer time horizon to weather market fluctuations and adjust investment strategies accordingly.

## Adapting to Life's Changes:

A well-crafted retirement plan isn't static; it evolves with changing life circumstances. Whether it's starting a family, advancing in one's career, or facing

unexpected challenges, a robust retirement plan accommodates these changes. Regular reassessment of financial goals, risk tolerance, and investment strategies ensures that the plan remains aligned with one's evolving needs and aspirations.

## Mitigating Risks and Uncertainties:

Life is replete with uncertainties, ranging from health issues to economic downturns. Retirement planning acts as a shield against these risks, providing a buffer to withstand unforeseen challenges. Through diversification of investments, allocation to different asset classes, and insurance coverage, individuals can mitigate potential risks and safeguard their retirement nest egg.

## Securing Financial Independence:

Retirement planning isn't just about accumulating savings; it's about achieving financial independence. By envisioning the desired lifestyle in retirement and setting concrete financial goals, individuals can work towards realizing their aspirations. Whether it's traveling the world, pursuing hobbies, or supporting loved ones, a well-executed retirement plan empowers individuals to live life on their own terms.

## Seeking Professional Guidance:

While self-directed retirement planning is commendable, seeking professional guidance can provide invaluable insights and expertise. Financial advisors possess the knowledge and experience to tailor retirement plans to individual circumstances, optimize investment strategies, and navigate complex financial landscapes. By leveraging their expertise, individuals can enhance the effectiveness of their retirement planning efforts and make informed decisions.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, retirement planning is an essential component of financial wellness, irrespective of one's age. By initiating planning early, adapting to life's changes, mitigating risks, and seeking professional guidance, individuals can secure a comfortable and fulfilling retirement. Embracing retirement planning as a lifelong endeavor empowers individuals to take control of their financial future, ensuring peace of mind and prosperity in the golden years. Start planning today; your future self will thank you for it.

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# Keeping Your Home Safe: A REALTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By David Culbreth, Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

**A**s a professional realtor, I am in and out of homes on a daily basis, one of my primary concerns is ensuring the safety and security of the homes I help clients buy or sell. A home is not just an investment; it is a place where families create cherished memories, a home should be a sanctuary – a place where you and your loved ones feel protected and at ease. Unfortunately, burglaries, fires, and other hazards are all too common, which is why taking proactive measures to safeguard your property is crucial. As a trusted advisor, it is crucial for me to provide homebuyers and sellers with valuable insights into home safety measures that can protect their property and loved ones. I'll share some valuable insights and tips from a realtor's perspective on how to enhance the safety of your home.

**1. Secure Entry Points:** In addition to researching the neighborhoods safety/crime records, one of the first things I assess when listing or showing a property is the security of its entry points. Burglars often look for easy targets, such as unlocked doors or windows, or those with flimsy locks. Invest in a high-quality deadbolt lock for your front door. Don't use the screws that come with it, buy 2" screws to put into the door jam.

**2. Lighting and Visibility:** Adequate outdoor lighting not only enhances curb appeal but also serves as a deterrent to criminal activity. We encourage clients to install motion-sensor lights around the perimeter of their property and ensure that entrances, walkways, and driveways are well lit. Good visibility can discourage trespassers and make it easier to monitor the property.

**3. Landscape and Maintenance for Safety:** Believe it or not, the way you landscape your property can play a significant role in home safety. Overgrown bushes or trees near doors and windows can provide cover for burglars. Maintain your trees and shrubs, trim these back to eliminate hiding spots. Additionally, proper maintenance of the home's exterior, such as repairing broken windows can deter potential breakins.

**4. Create a Fire Escape Plan:** Fires can spread rapidly, and having a well-practiced escape plan can mean the difference between life and death. Sit down with your family and map out at least two exit routes from each room and establish a safe meeting spot outside. Additionally, ensure that smoke detectors are installed on every level of your home and that they are tested regularly.

**5. Protect Against Carbon Monoxide:** Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly if inhaled in high concentrations. It's crucial to have working carbon monoxide detectors installed near sleeping areas and any fuel-burning appliances, such as furnaces or water heaters. Regularly have these appliances serviced to ensure they are functioning properly and not emitting dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

**6. Childproof Your Home:** If you have young children, taking steps to childproof your home is essential. Install safety gates at the top and bottom of staircases, secure any furniture or appliances that could tip over, and keep medications, cleaning products, and other hazardous materials locked away and out of reach.

**7. Consider a Security System:** While not an absolute necessity, a professionally installed security system can provide an added layer of protection and peace of mind. These systems typically include door and window sensors, motion detectors, and the ability to remotely monitor and control the system from your smartphone. Many also offer fire and carbon monoxide monitoring, as well as emergency dispatch services.

**8. Keep Valuables Safe:** Burglars are often after valuable items such as jewelry, cash, and electronics. Consider keeping these items in a safe or safety deposit box and avoid leaving them in plain sight or easily accessible areas of your home. Additionally, keep an up-to-date inventory of your valuable possessions, including serial numbers and photographs, to aid in their recovery in the event of a burglary.

**9. Be Cautious:** Be careful with social media in today's digital age, it's important to be mindful of the information you share on social media platforms. Avoid posting details about your vacation plans, photos of your vacation while you are on it or sharing photos that reveal your home's layout or expensive possessions. These types of posts can make your home a target for burglars.

I understand the importance of not only finding the perfect home for my clients but also ensuring that they feel safe and secure within its walls. By implementing these home safety measures, you can significantly reduce the risk of burglaries, fires, and other hazards, and enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing your family and property are well-protected.



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# Can CBD Help with PTSD?

**P**ost-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can develop after a person experiences or witnesses a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts about the traumatic event. PTSD can be debilitating, significantly impacting a person's ability to function in daily life.

The most common treatments for PTSD are psychotherapy and medication. However, many individuals struggle to find relief with these conventional methods. This has led researchers to explore alternative treatments, including the use of cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive compound found in the cannabis plant.

## What is PTSD?

PTSD is a disorder that can occur after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, serious accident, combat, sexual assault, or other forms of violence and abuse. Symptoms of PTSD can include:

- Re-experiencing the traumatic event through flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive thoughts
- Avoidance of people, places, or things that remind the person of the traumatic event
- Negative changes in thoughts and mood, including feelings of guilt, detachment, or loss of interest
- Hyperarousal, which can manifest as irritability, aggression, difficulty sleeping, or being easily startled

PTSD can be incredibly distressing and disruptive to daily life. If left untreated, it can lead to other mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, and even suicidal ideation.

## CBD and PTSD

CBD has gained attention in recent years for its potential therapeutic benefits in various areas, including anxiety, pain management, and sleep disorders – all of which are common symptoms associated with PTSD.

While research on the use of CBD for PTSD is still in its early stages, some studies have shown promising results. One study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* in 2019 found that CBD was associated with a significant reduction in PTSD symptom severity among a group of adults with PTSD.



Another study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience Research* in 2021 examined the use of CBD in treating PTSD-related nightmares and found that CBD was effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of nightmares.

It's important to note that these studies were relatively small, and more research is needed to fully understand the potential benefits and optimal dosages of CBD for PTSD treatment.

## How CBD May Help with PTSD Symptoms

CBD is believed to interact with the body's endocannabinoid system, which plays a role in regulating various physiological processes, including mood, sleep, and stress response. By modulating the endocannabinoid system, CBD may help alleviate PTSD symptoms in the following ways:

- 1. Reducing anxiety and stress:** CBD has been shown to have anxiolytic (anti-anxiety) properties, which could help alleviate the heightened anxiety and stress levels associated with PTSD.
- 2. Improving sleep:** Many individuals with PTSD struggle with sleep disturbances, such as insomnia and nightmares. CBD may help improve sleep quality by reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation.
- 3. Modulating fear and trauma responses:** CBD may help modulate the fear and trauma responses associated with PTSD by interacting with the brain regions involved in memory processing and emotional regulation.

While CBD shows promise as a potential treatment for PTSD, it's important to note that it should not be considered a cure-all solution. It's best to use CBD in conjunction with therapy, counseling and other natural treatments. Patients should never stop medications without talking to your doctor first.

References:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6482919/>  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7758737/>

If you or someone you know is struggling with PTSD, it's essential to seek professional help. With the right combination of treatments, including the potential use of CBD, it is possible to manage PTSD symptoms and improve overall quality of life.



Scan this QR code to download our free CBD guide which can also help answer many questions you may have about this amazing plant medicine and if it may be an optional therapy for you.



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a risk factor for suicide, especially in women. Some studies have found that:

- **Women with PTSD:** Are almost seven times more likely to die by suicide than other women
- **Men with PTSD:** Are four times more likely to die by suicide than men without PTSD
- **Suicide rates:** Increase to 53.9 per 100,000 person years for people with PTSD, compared to 12.9 for the entire study sample
- **Average time between diagnosis and suicide:** Is less than two and a half years



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# Vestibular Balance Issues Should Not be Ignored:

## A Physical Therapy Method has Helped Countless Individuals Find Restoration

**A**t least 50 percent of the U.S. population will develop a balance issue, at some point in their lives. Balance disorders typically happen to the aging population, between the ages of 50 to 75, and most of these are related to vestibular disruptions.

Patients suffering from vestibular related disorders frequently experience vertigo, dizziness, nausea, migraines, gait issues (walking), and imbalance. In addition, many patients complain of mood changes and cognitive impairment. Usually, these symptoms stem from issues in the inner ear. More than 69 million Americans have experienced some form of vestibular problems in their lifetime, and that number is on the rise.

**BPPV:** The most common form of vestibular complications is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo or BPPV.

- Benign - Not life-threatening
- Paroxysmal - Brief spells that come and go
- Positional - Triggered by certain head positions or movements
- Vertigo - A false sense of rotational movement

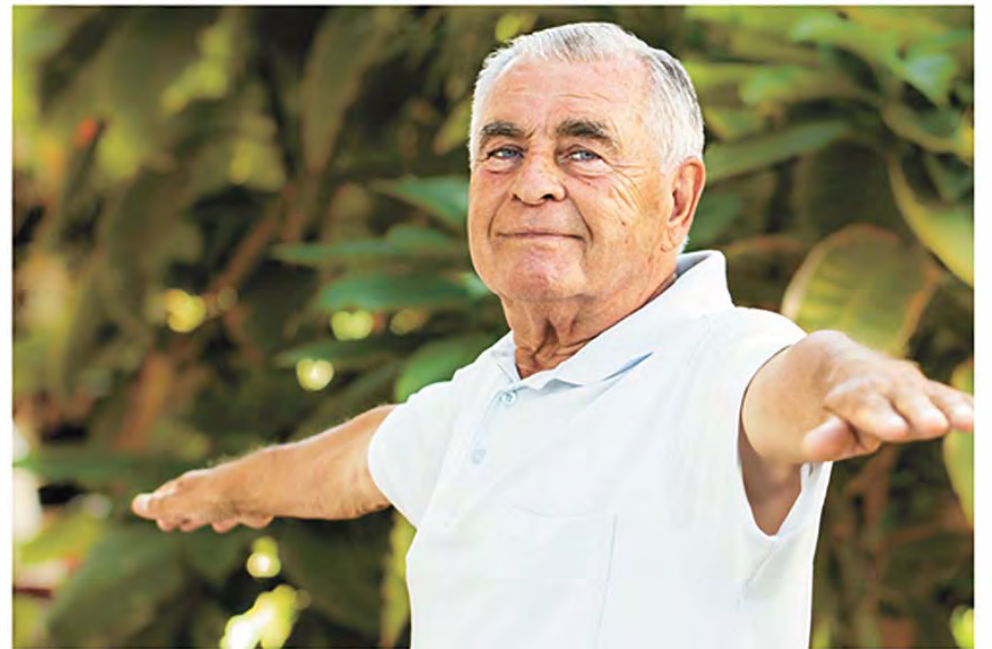
Tiny calcium crystals (otoconia) in the inner ear that slough off and get lodged in the fluid of the ear canals (labyrinth) usually are the cause of BPPV. Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo

can be effectively treated with one of two simple manual therapies that move the crystals through the ear, improving and in many cases alleviating vertigo and the sensations of dizziness. These therapies can be performed in the convenience of Innovative Therapies Group's office.

It's dangerous to leave vestibular disorders untreated. If you have balance issues, your likelihood of suffering a

fall with possible complications like broken bones, or impingements, which cause limited range-of-motion is much higher. Not to mention that the unpleasant side effects of nausea and painful headaches can be alleviated through the proper treatment, which will help you to get back to living a good quality of life.

Patient & Occupational Education is critical to alleviate further injury and to promote the most efficacious healing. Coupled with family participation, self-help management to promote and maintain independent function, and mobility is critical.



Physical therapy is used to help with numerous indications and conditions like retraining the body to improve gait and balance and also after hip, knee or shoulder replacement and so much more. There is no better way to alleviate pain, increase range-of-motion and live a more mobile higher quality of life than through physical & Occupational therapy.

To find out more or to schedule your appointment, please contact Innovative Therapies Group today.

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# MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

By Ashley Cauthen, MD

**W**e all know some men tend to neglect their health. This is so prevalent that the month of June is devoted to Men's Health awareness. Maintaining good overall health involves taking care of every aspect of your body, including your skin. While often overlooked, men's dermatological health is essential for both appearance and overall well-being. In this month's newsletter, we will focus on dermatologic conditions that more commonly afflict men.

Some of the more common skin ailments men deal with include acne, seborrheic dermatitis, fungal infections, razor bumps, male pattern baldness, scrotal dermatitis, and skin cancer.

**1. Acne:** Acne is a common skin condition that can affect men of all ages. It occurs when hair follicles become clogged with oil and dead skin cells, leading to the formation of pimples, blackheads, and whiteheads. This occurs most commonly in teen years when testosterone is surging and good hygiene practices haven't yet been implemented. It has also become more prevalent in middle aged men as testosterone replacement therapy has become popular.

**2. Seborrheic dermatitis:** Seborrheic dermatitis is characterized by red, itchy, and flaky patches on the scalp, face (especially hair bearing areas like eyebrows and beard), ears, and other oily areas of the body. The cause is multifactorial but an overgrowth of a type of yeast called Malassezia is often involved. Men tend to be more prone to this condition due to increased oil production and more facial hair. This condition is also more commonly seen in patients with Parkinson's disease. Over-the-counter or prescription shampoos containing ketoconazole, selenium sulfide, or pyrithione zinc can help relieve symptoms.

**3. Fungal infections:** Men are susceptible to various fungal infections such as athlete's foot (tinea pedis) and jock itch (tinea cruris). These infections thrive in warm and moist environments, making areas like the feet, groin, and armpits prone to infection. Most of the time these can be treated with topical antifungal creams, but more severe cases require oral antifungal treatment. It is important to treat your shoes to prevent reinfection.

**4. Razor bumps:** Men who shave regularly may experience razor bumps, also known as pseudofolliculitis barbae (PFB). Razor bumps occur when shaved hairs



curl back and grow into the skin, leading to inflammation, redness, and small bumps. PFB is more prevalent in men with curly or coarse facial hair. Using a sharp razor, shaving in the direction of hair growth, and applying a soothing aftershave can help prevent this condition.

**5. Male pattern baldness:** Is a common condition causing hair loss. It is also called androgenetic alopecia and typically starts with a receding hairline and thinning on the crown of the head. This type of hair loss is primarily caused by genetic factors and hormonal changes. While there is no cure for this type of hair loss, there are several treatment options to slow the progression and promote hair growth. The most common medications used include minoxidil (topical and oral) and finasteride. In cases where significant hair loss has occurred, hair transplant surgery may be an option.

**6. Scrotal dermatitis:** This refers to inflammation and irritation of the skin on the scrotum. It can be caused by various factors such as allergic reactions, fungal or bacterial infections, excessive sweating, or friction from clothing. Proper hygiene and wearing breathable fabrics can help prevent scrotal dermatitis. Sometimes despite these efforts, a prescription strength cream will need to be prescribed to treat this condition.

**7. Skin cancer/Sun damage:** Overexposure to the sun's UV rays can lead to premature aging, wrinkles, and an increased risk of skin cancer. While both sexes can certainly be at risk for this, occupational exposure and less consistent sunscreen use, put males at higher risk. Studies have shown that men are more neglectful at having non healing lesions evaluated which leads to skin cancer being diagnosed at a later stage and requiring more invasive treatment modalities.

It's important to consult with a dermatologic provider for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment if you suspect you have any of these skin conditions. We can provide personalized advice and recommend suitable skincare routines or medications to alleviate symptoms.

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### Cosmetic Dermatology

The practice of improving the look and health of one's skin through medical or surgical procedures, to help patients look and feel their best.

### Aesthetics

Treatment for the skin, hair or body that is meant to enhance the appearance of patients through minimally invasive techniques & personalized topical skin care recommendations.

## When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Tim Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

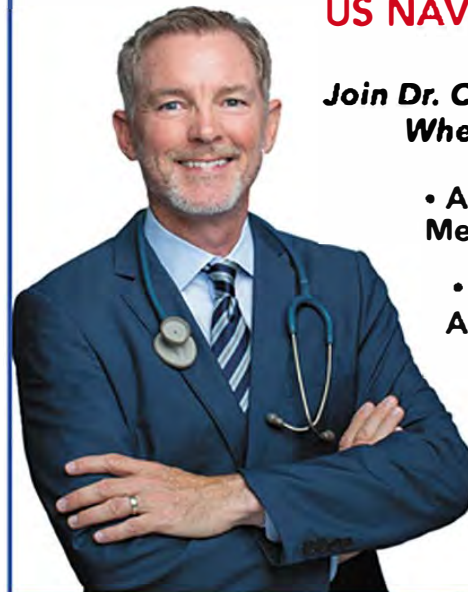
And then, don't forget to thank God when He does bring you through the storm. The story concludes by saying, "Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

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

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