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August 2024

Marion Edition - Monthly

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The Truth About
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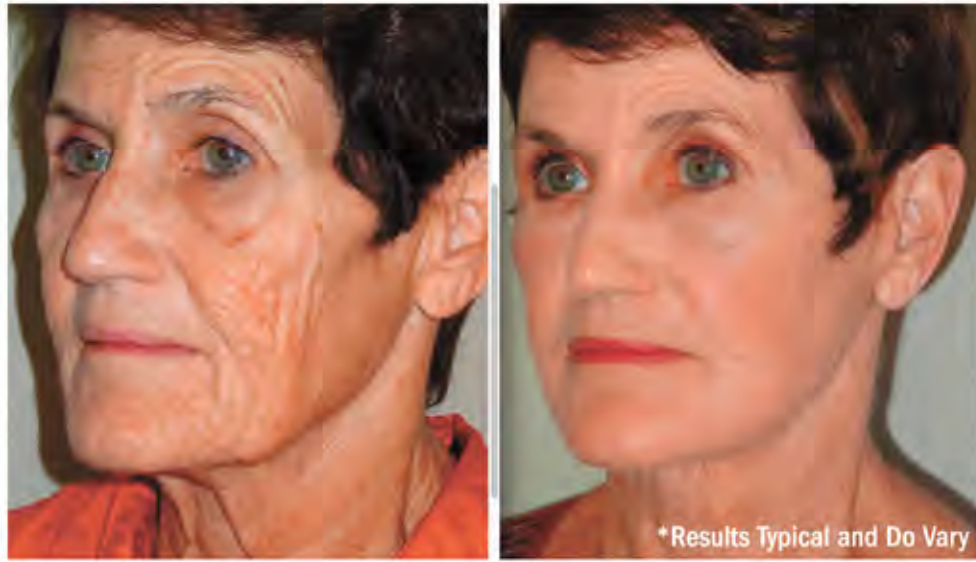
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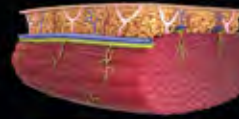
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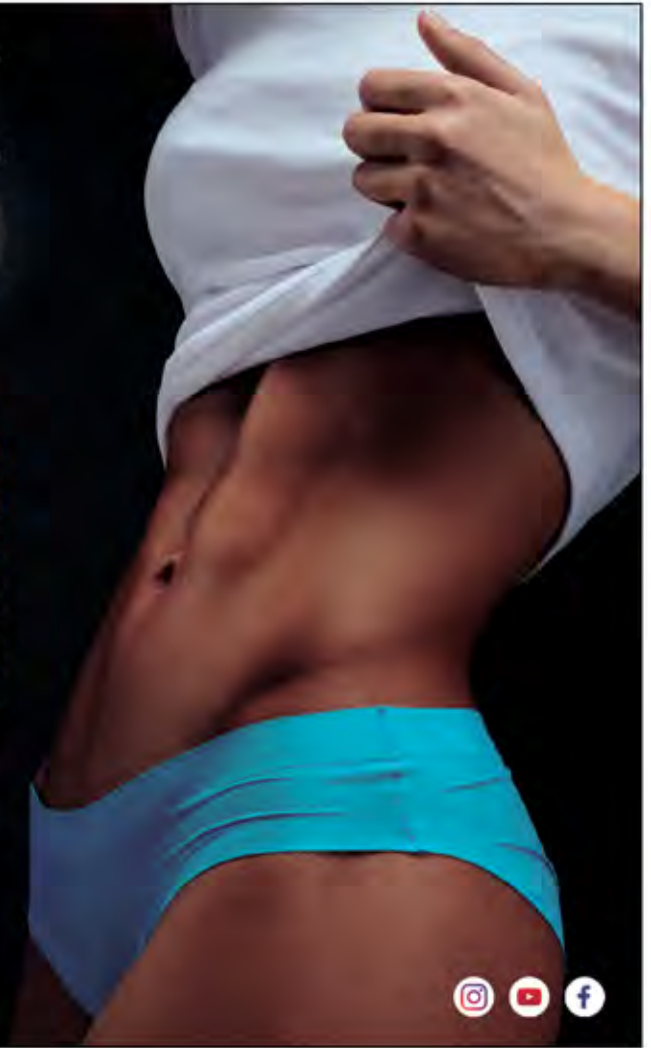
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HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RELIEVE SEASONAL ALLERGIES AFFECTING YOUR EYES

Ah, warmer weather is here, bringing blossoms, lush greenery, and seasonal eye allergies. Pollen from flowers, trees, grasses and weeds can irritate and inflame your eyes, often so severely that your comfort, and even activities like driving and playing sports, may be significantly impaired.

Let's talk about how to recognize the symptoms of seasonal eye allergies, and review ways to alleviate these symptoms so you can get back to enjoying life.

SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL EYE ALLERGIES

- 1. Redness.** When allergens inflame the blood vessels of the eyes, they can become red and bloodshot.
- 2. Itching.** Allergies cause histamines to be released, creating itching. Scratching this maddening itch can worsen the problem, and invite further eye irritation, even infection.
- 3. Weepy, Watery Eyes.** As the eyes try to flush out allergens, they may water excessively, which can impact vision.
- 4. Gritty Sensation.** Allergens can cause eyes to feel dry, gritty or like foreign bodies are present.
- 5. Swollen Eyelids.** Irritation of the eyelids may cause them to swell, get puffy or bag, or become red.

RELIEVING SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL EYE ALLERGIES

So, what can we do to help our eyes deal with Nature's abundance of pollen? Here are some reliable ways to help soothe red, weepy, irritated eyes.

- 1. Avoid Allergen Exposure.** Whenever possible, try to avoid the sources of allergic responses, especially activities like mowing the lawn (yay!) or golfing (boo). Keep home, office and car windows closed, especially on days with high pollen counts. Wearing sunglasses, particularly those that wrap around the face, can help limit pollen exposure. At-home air purifiers may help remove allergens from your living areas.
- 2. Practice Good Eye Hygiene.** Always wash your hands thoroughly before touching your eyes, and avoid rubbing them. When needed, gently rinse out eyes with a sterile rinsing solution or distilled water. After going outside, wash your face and eyelids with a gentle cleanser. If possible, remove contact lenses, as they can trap allergens, and wear glasses until the pollen count is low. It's also smart to wash bedding, vacuum and dust regularly.
- 3. Cold Compresses.** Applying a clean cloth dampened with cold water for 10-15 minutes can help soothe irritated eyes and reduce eyelid swelling. Or, make a cold compress by wrapping a thin, clean towel around a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice.

4. Over-the-counter Medications. OTC eye drops come in a variety of forms, including antihistamine eye drops, which address redness and itching, lubricant eye drops, which provide moisture and help flush out irritants, and decongestant eye drops, which constrict blood vessels to address redness. Decongestant eye drops should be used only for short periods of time and are not suitable for everyone. If you have any eye conditions, it is wise to talk to your eye doctor before using this type.

5. Oral Antihistamines. OTC medicines like cetirizine (Zyrtec) or loratadine (Claritin) not only address nasal symptoms, but can also provide relief from eye allergy symptoms.

6. Prescription Medications. If the above suggestions don't provide sufficient relief, talk to your eye doctor about prescription medications, including antihistamines and corticosteroid eye drops, to help cease eye allergy symptoms.

ARE EYE ALLERGIES EVER A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

While most allergic reactions of the eye are temporary and merely irritating, they can sometimes be a cause for concern, particularly if symptoms are severe, persistent or unusual. See your eye doctor as soon as possible if you experience the following:

- 1. Severe Symptoms.** Severe redness, itching, swelling and/or pain may indicate a more serious allergic reaction or infection.
- 2. Persistent Symptoms.** If symptoms persist for several weeks despite using over-the-counter remedies, it's important to get a thorough evaluation to rule out other conditions, such as dry eye syndrome, blepharitis, or conjunctivitis.
- 3. Changes in Vision.** Changes such as blurriness or double vision should be promptly evaluated to rule out a more serious problem.
- 4. Discharge.** Thick, yellow or green discharge may be a sign of infection.
- 5. Light Sensitivity.** Unusual sensitivity to light (photophobia) may be a symptom of a more severe eye condition and should be addressed by your doctor.
- 6. Headaches/Facial Pain.** These symptoms can indicate a condition such as sinusitis, which requires medical treatment.
- 7. Systemic Allergic Reactions.** If eye allergy symptoms are just part of a more extensive allergic reaction, such as hives, swelling of the face and throat, or difficulty breathing, seek emergency medical care immediately.

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS FROM UNTREATED ALLERGIES

While some try to "gut it out" instead of treating eye allergies, ignoring symptoms may lead to eye health complications, such as:

- **Risk of Infection:** Persistent eye rubbing can introduce bacteria into the eye, increasing the risk of infections like conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- **Chronic Inflammation:** Stubborn inflammation can cause damage to the eye's surface and lead to conditions like keratitis (a corneal ulcer), the most common cause of infection-related corneal blindness.
- **Corneal Damage:** Rubbing and scratching eyes can damage the cornea, potentially leading to scarring and vision impairment.

If you're having symptoms of eye allergies, don't ignore them. Eyes are strong but delicate, and need tender loving care to function at their best.

WHEN TO SEE AN EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL

If your symptoms continue despite trying over-the-counter treatments, or if you experience chronic or severe redness or discomfort, it's important to see your ophthalmologist or optometrist, who will perform a comprehensive evaluation of your condition, and recommend the appropriate treatments and interventions tailored to suit your eyes, medical profile and lifestyle.

By knowing the signs of seasonal eye allergies and taking practical steps to alleviate them, you can enjoy clearer, more comfortable vision, even during allergy season.

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OBSERVING WORLD LUNG CANCER DAY: The Truth About Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, claiming more lives each year than colon, breast and prostate cancer combined.

World Lung Cancer Day, observed on August 1, aims to educate the public about the disease, share strategies to reduce risk and provide support to those impacted.

Lung cancer basics

Lung cancer forms in the tissues of the lungs, most often in the cells that line air passages. When abnormal cells grow and multiply, they form tumors that can interfere with lung function and make breathing difficult.

There are two main types of lung cancer. Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is the most common type, accounting for about 85% of cases. Small cell lung cancer (SCLC) is less common but more aggressive. It tends to grow and spread more quickly than NSCLC.

The importance of early detection

In many cases, especially with early-stage lung cancer, a tumor may not be detected until it becomes large. Symptoms to be alert for include:

- Coughing up blood or a cough that doesn't go away
- Recurrent episodes of pneumonia or bronchitis
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- A high-pitched whistling-type sound when breathing in or out, or a hoarseness to your voice.

Because symptoms can be so vague, it's essential to pay close attention to any warning signs and contact your health care provider right away if you experience any. The chances of surviving lung cancer with a high quality of life are three times greater when it is detected early.

If you are a current smoker, if you have ever been a heavy smoker (for longer than 15 to 20 years) or if you have a family history of the disease, regular screenings are critical. Through the use of low-dose spiral computed tomography (CT) scans of the chest, which are quick and painless, lung cancer can often be detected in earlier stages. Check with your primary care provider to see if you could benefit from a CT lung scan or similar screening test.

Quitting smoking at any age reduces the risk of developing lung cancer and other chronic diseases. It also improves overall health and quality of life. On a positive note, effective public health campaigns and smoking cessation programs are resulting in dramatic decreases in smoking and reducing the incidence of lung cancer.

Myths and facts about lung cancer

While smoking and other inhaled tobacco usage are major risk factors, many people think that only people who smoke can get lung cancer. This is one of several common misconceptions that deserve a closer look.



Myth: Only smokers get lung cancer.

Fact: Non-smokers can and do develop lung cancer.

Approximately 85% of all lung cancers occur in people who smoke or are exposed to second-hand smoke. The carcinogens in tobacco and tobacco products can potentially damage nearly every organ in the body, increasing the risk of many types of cancer.

Other risk factors include exposure to asbestos, nickel, arsenic, chromium or other similar chemicals, some petroleum products or living in an area with high levels of air pollution. While not hereditary, lung cancer can run in families. Researchers have found that non-smokers who develop lung cancer experience different and unique genetic changes than smokers do.

Myth: Only older people are diagnosed with lung cancer.

Fact: Lung cancer can occur when you are younger.

Most people diagnosed with lung cancer are older adults, with the average age at diagnosis typically around 70. While the risk increases with age, a small percentage of cases are diagnosed in people under 45 due to smoking and other lifestyle choices, environmental exposures or genetics.

Myth: Only men get lung cancer.

Fact: Lung cancer affects men and women.

While lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer deaths in men since the early 1950s, it has been the leading cause for women since 1987, surpassing deaths from breast cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, the chance that a man will develop lung cancer in his lifetime is about 1 in 16; for a woman, the risk is about 1 in 17.

Myth: Lung cancer is a death sentence.

Fact: More people are surviving the disease than ever before.

Many treatment advances for lung cancer have occurred in the past decade. The development of targeted therapies and immunotherapies, which boost the body's own immune system to fight cancer, are giving oncologists many more treatment options that are safer and more effective for patients.

Collectively, on this World Lung Cancer Day, it's clear that significant strides continue to offer more hope and better outcomes for those affected by the disease.

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5 Vaccines Recommended for Adults Age 65 and Older

Cobra Chamblee, D.O.

As we begin to wind down on summer, it's the perfect time to schedule your seasonal flu vaccine and make sure you're up to date on other vaccines that help to protect you against respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19 or pneumonia. These conditions tend to be more common during the fall and winter months, so you want to be sure you take the necessary preventative measures ahead of time.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM), an annual observance that highlights the importance of vaccination for people of all ages, especially those 65 and older. During NIAM, take a moment to ensure you're current on all recommended vaccines for your age group.

Recommended Vaccines for Older Adults

Vaccines are an important preventative measure that helps to protect yourself and those around you. As we get older, our immune system undergoes dramatic age-related changes. It becomes slower to respond and is much more easily compromised if and when exposed to disease, resulting in slower recovery from injuries, infection, and illness. This is because your body produces fewer immune cells, including white blood cells, with age.

For this very reason, it is vital that you are current on all recommended vaccines. There are five vaccines adults age 65 and older should consider to prevent certain diseases:

Influenza (Flu)

The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months or older. They usually become available in September, so you're protected during the critical months, typically fall and winter, when influenza is usually common and highly contagious. Influenza is a respiratory virus. For adults over the age of 65, a high-dose flu vaccine is available, which helps create a strong immune response.

Pneumonia

The CDC recommends pneumococcal vaccination for all adults 65 years or older. The pneumonia vaccine is considered a one-time vaccine that offers protection against over 15 types of pneumococcal



bacteria that commonly cause severe infections in adults. The vaccine is 60 to 70 percent effective in preventing serious disease complications and is expected to last throughout your lifetime.

Shingles

Older adults should receive two doses of the shingles vaccine, two to six months apart, to help protect against the viral infection. Shingles is a reactivation of chickenpox that develops on the body as a painful rash with blisters. The shingles vaccine is the only way to protect yourself against shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), the most common complication of shingles.

Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis

The Tdap vaccine can prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus enters the body through cuts and wounds, and diphtheria and pertussis spread from person to person. These three diseases can lead to very serious health problems and can even become life-threatening.

Tetanus causes stiffening in the muscles and can result in difficulty swallowing or breathing. Diphtheria can also cause trouble breathing, in addition to heart failure and paralysis. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing that makes it hard to breathe, eat, or drink. Adults should receive a booster Tdap vaccine every 10 years.

COVID-19

The older population remains more vulnerable to severe symptoms from COVID-19. There are currently several vaccines available to protect yourself from the virus, including updated booster shots to address new variants. Some vaccines require two doses, while others are single-dose options. You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after completing the required doses.

Maintain Your Health With Vaccines

Take a proactive role in your health and get the necessary vaccines to ensure your safety. Vaccines are a small price to pay for Better Health. It's important to discuss your vaccine options with your healthcare provider. At VIPcare, we offer all recommended vaccines for adults 65 and older. Your health and safety are important to us. Learn more about vaccines and what preventative measures you can take by scheduling an appointment with a VIPcare provider today! Call 352-558-6759



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EMSCULPTNEO® for Back Pain

By Dr. Tina Chandra

Emsculpt NEO is a nonsurgical body contouring device that combines high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology with radiofrequency (RF) energy. It strengthens and builds muscles while burning fat at the same time. It can be used to treat the abdomen, buttocks, biceps, triceps, calves the muscles in the back.

EMSCULPTNEO®

How does Emsculpt NEO work?

As mentioned above, Emsculpt NEO uses a combination of RF and HIFEM. The radio frequency is used to heat the muscles and the electromagnetic energy then builds muscles. The heating of the muscles is what causes the reduction of fat in the area being treated. While the HIFEM simultaneously causes thousands of muscle contractions in order to improve strength and muscle tone. Combining these two treatments offers optimal results.

The heating of the muscles from the RF raises the temperature of the muscles by several degrees. It is similar to what one would do in a warm-up activity before exercising, but much faster. This part of the procedure lasts less than 4 minutes. When the temperature of the fat is increased, apoptosis occurs. This means that fat cells are permanently damaged and are removed from the body.

The HIFEM energy contracts the muscle fibers in the area being treated at intensities that are not possible in regular exercise. This stress forces the muscles to adapt and results in increased growth of muscle fibers and cells.

How can Emsculpt NEO help my back?

If you've ever had to visit a chiropractor, physical therapist, or orthopedic surgeon for problems with your back, it is likely that somewhere in the conversation your doctor told you that strengthening your core would help with your current back pain as well as help you to avoid future problems. While Emsculpt NEO won't cure your back problems, it can help to build and strengthen your muscles.

Your core is essentially made of your abdominal muscles. There are four groups of muscles that make up the abdomen: the transversus abdominis, the rectus abdominis, the external obliques, and the internal obliques. The importance of a strong core cannot be overstated when it comes to reducing the risk of injury during any number of activities that call for the use of both the upper and lower body.



Many people have such weak abdominal muscles that strengthening the core can feel almost impossible. Exercise in this zone can lead to pain and sore muscles that can be quite uncomfortable for days. For this reason, many people give up and live with recurring back pain.

This is where EMSculpt can help. This groundbreaking technology uses high intensity, focused electromagnetic waves to create supramaximal muscle contractions. The best part is that you can expect no lingering pain after the session. You can strengthen your core without risking further injury and help your spine along the way. EMSculpt will also burn fat while building muscle, so not only will you benefit from the stronger core, but you can also benefit from body contouring and toning as well.¹

What can I expect during an Emsculpt NEO session?

During a 30-minute session, an applicator is strapped to the area being treated, in this case, the patient's back. The sessions do not require the use of anesthetic or sedatives and the patient will typically be lying on their side or back. The technician then slowly increases the RF heat and the HIFEM pulsing depending on the client's comfort level. Throughout each session and in future sessions, the applicator will get warmer and the pulses will increase in intensity.

These pulses (or waves) cause contractions on the target site which may feel mildly discomforting and strange to the patient but will cause no actual pain.

During treatment, the muscles in the target area will have contracted around 200,000 times; a feat that would take thousands of hours in the gym to replicate. This not only strengthens the muscles in the area but also destroys neighboring fat cells as well. The intensity of these contractions can also be fine-tuned to fit the specific needs of each patient.²

Clients will normally have one session a week for four consecutive weeks. Each session lasts 30 minutes and there is no down-time afterwards. The client can return to work or go to dinner immediately following a session.

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

References:

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2. Dr. Nash – EMSculpt for back pain (2022) drnashcares. Available at: <https://drnashcares.com/emsculpt/>



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When You Have to Pee All the Time: Overactive Bladder and Its Impact on Quality of Life

Overactive bladder (OAB) is a common condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It's characterized by frequent and urgent urges to urinate, often accompanied by involuntary urine leakage. While OAB is not life-threatening, it can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, causing discomfort, embarrassment, and disruption to daily activities.

Understanding Overactive Bladder

Overactive bladder occurs when the bladder muscle contracts involuntarily, even when the bladder isn't full. This results in sudden, intense urges to urinate that can be difficult to control. OAB is not a normal part of aging, although it becomes more common as people get older. It's important to distinguish OAB from other urinary conditions, such as urinary tract infections or prostate problems in men.

Prevalence of Overactive Bladder

OAB is more common than many people realize. It's estimated that about 16% of the adult population experiences symptoms of OAB. The prevalence increases with age, affecting up to 30% of older adults. Despite its prevalence, many individuals with OAB do not seek medical help due to embarrassment or the misconception that it's a normal part of aging.

Impact on Quality of Life

The effects of OAB on an individual's quality of life can be profound and far-reaching. People with OAB often experience:

- 1. Sleep disruption:** Frequent nighttime urination (nocturia) can lead to poor sleep quality and daytime fatigue.
- 2. Social isolation:** Fear of accidents or being far from a bathroom can cause individuals to avoid social situations.
- 3. Emotional distress:** Anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are common among those with OAB.
- 4. Reduced productivity:** Frequent bathroom breaks can interfere with work and daily activities.
- 5. Relationship strain:** OAB can impact intimate relationships and cause embarrassment with partners.
- 6. Physical discomfort:** The constant urge to urinate can be physically uncomfortable and distracting.



Coping and Support

Living with OAB can be challenging, but there are ways to cope and find support:

- 1. Join support groups:** Connecting with others who have OAB can provide emotional support and practical tips.
- 2. Communicate openly:** Discuss your condition with family, friends, and colleagues to help them understand your needs.
- 3. Plan ahead:** Know the location of bathrooms when going out and consider using absorbent products for peace of mind.
- 4. Seek professional help:** Consult with a healthcare provider or urologist for proper diagnosis and treatment options.

Lifestyle Changes to Manage OAB Symptoms

While medical treatments are available, many people find relief through lifestyle modifications:

- 1. Bladder training:** Gradually increasing the time between bathroom visits can help improve bladder control.
- 2. Pelvic floor exercises:** Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles (Kegel exercises) can improve bladder control.
- 3. Dietary changes:** Avoiding bladder irritants such as caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods can reduce symptoms.
- 4. Fluid management:** Maintaining proper hydration while avoiding excessive fluid intake, especially before bedtime.
- 5. Weight management:** Maintaining a healthy weight can reduce pressure on the bladder and improve symptoms.
- 6. Scheduled voiding:** Using the bathroom at regular intervals rather than waiting for the urge to urinate.

Educational Resources

Education is key to managing OAB effectively. Patients can benefit from:

- 1. Online resources:** Reputable websites offer information on OAB, its causes, and management strategies.
- 2. Healthcare provider education:** Urologists and continence specialists can provide personalized advice and treatment plans.
- 3. Workshops and seminars:** Many healthcare facilities offer educational sessions on bladder health and OAB management.
- 4. Self-help books:** There are numerous books available that provide in-depth information and coping strategies for OAB.

Solutions, Including Utiva Bladder Health Product

While lifestyle changes are often the first line of defense against OAB, some individuals may benefit from additional support. One such option is the Utiva Bladder Health Product. This natural supplement is designed to support bladder health and may help alleviate some symptoms of OAB.

Utiva Bladder Health Product contains ingredients that have been traditionally used to support urinary tract health. While it's not a cure for OAB, some users report improved bladder control and reduced urinary urgency with regular use. As with any supplement, it's important to consult with a healthcare provider before starting use, especially if you're taking other medications.

It's worth noting that while natural products like Utiva may offer benefits, they should be used as part of a comprehensive approach to managing OAB. This approach may include lifestyle changes, pelvic floor exercises, and medical treatments as recommended by a healthcare provider.

In conclusion, overactive bladder is a common condition that can significantly impact quality of life. However, with proper understanding, support, and management strategies, individuals with OAB can lead fulfilling lives. By combining lifestyle changes, education, and potentially beneficial products like Utiva Bladder Health, many people find relief from their OAB symptoms. Remember, if you're experiencing symptoms of OAB, it's important to seek professional medical advice for proper diagnosis and personalized treatment options.

Sources:

- <https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/can-you-treat-overactive-bladder-naturally>
- <https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/the-side-effects-of-oab-medication-and-how-they-impact-patient-compliance>

For more information, visit Utiva's webpage.

<https://www.utivahealth.com> or call:

1-888-622-3613

CARE WHILE TRAVELING

After Total Knee and Hip Replacements

By Sergio Martinez, DO, AOA, AOA

Traveling can be an exciting and enriching experience, but it requires careful planning and consideration, especially for individuals who have undergone total knee and hip replacements. While traveling can be beneficial for post-operative recovery and mental well-being, it is essential to prioritize safety, comfort, and proper care to ensure a smooth journey. In this article, we will explore important tips and considerations for those traveling after total knee and hip replacements.

1. Consult Your Healthcare Professional

Before embarking on any travel plans, it is crucial to consult your healthcare professional, particularly the surgeon or orthopedic specialist who performed your knee or hip replacement. They can assess your current health status and determine if you are fit for travel. They may also offer valuable advice and precautions to take during your journey.

2. Choose the Right Destination

When planning a trip after joint replacement surgery, consider the destination carefully. Opt for locations with easy accessibility, good infrastructure, and adequate medical facilities nearby. Smooth and even terrains, mild climates, and moderate physical activities should be prioritized to reduce strain on your replaced joints.

3. Plan Your Journey Ahead

Careful planning is essential to ensure a comfortable and stress-free trip. Book direct flights whenever possible to minimize the time spent walking or navigating airports. Request wheelchair assistance if needed and pre-arrange ground transportation at your destination to avoid unnecessary strain on your knees and hips.

4. Pack Wisely

Pack light to avoid overburdening yourself. Use luggage with wheels and ergonomic features for ease of handling. Remember to include any necessary medications, assistive devices, and medical documentation such as your surgery records, doctor's letters, and prescriptions.

5. On-Board Comfort

During flights or long journeys, prioritize comfort to prevent unnecessary discomfort and joint strain. Choose an aisle seat to have easier access to walking and stretching opportunities. Bring a neck pillow and lumbar support cushion to maintain proper posture and reduce pressure on your replaced joints.



6. Practice Safe Movement

While traveling, be mindful of your movements and avoid overexertion. Take breaks regularly to stretch and rest your legs. If you must stand in lines, engage in gentle movements to promote blood circulation and reduce stiffness.

7. Choose Accommodations Wisely

Select accommodations that are accessible and offer amenities such as elevators and handrails. Request for rooms on lower floors to minimize the use of stairs, and choose showers with grab bars for added safety during bathing.

8. Utilize Assistive Devices

If you were given assistive devices during your rehabilitation, such as canes or walkers, continue using them while traveling. These aids provide stability and support, reducing the risk of falls and minimizing stress on your replaced joints.

9. Plan Physical Activities Mindfully

Engaging in physical activities while traveling can be enjoyable, but it is crucial to choose activities that are suitable for your current condition. Avoid high-impact activities and opt for low-impact exercises like swimming or gentle walking, which can be beneficial for your joints.

10. Stay Hydrated and Mind Your Diet

Proper hydration and a balanced diet are essential for overall health and well-being during your trip. Staying hydrated helps with joint lubrication, while a nutritious diet supports your body's healing and recovery processes.

Traveling after total knee and hip replacements can be a rewarding experience with proper care and consideration. Prioritize your safety, comfort, and well-being by planning ahead, consulting your healthcare professional, and making mindful choices throughout your

journey. By following these tips, you can enjoy a fulfilling travel experience while ensuring the longevity and health of your replaced joints. Remember to embrace the adventure while staying attentive to your unique needs for a memorable and successful trip.

Total knee and hip replacement are treatments designed to get you up and back out there!

As a result, you may have plans to travel quickly after your surgery, but before you throw caution to the wind, consider these tips.

1. Total hip and knee surgery, while very effective at restoring joint mobility and reducing pain, do require some time to recover and some effort on the patient's behalf to engage in physical therapy.

2. Give yourself six weeks time to recover and put in the work for your exercises to ensure you have outstanding results long-term.

3. If you do have to travel far, try to give yourself a minimum of two weeks after surgery. While it is a rare condition, blood clots in the leg can develop after surgery, so it is important you don't sit for long periods of time.

4. When you travel, make sure you have plenty of legroom, time and space to move around, and drink plenty of fluids. Surgery and some of the medications prescribed after can make it hard to use the restroom. These tips will keep you comfortable and healthy while your body recovers.

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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ASSISTED LIVING FOR MEMORY CARE: UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS

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

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

A Safe and Secure Environment

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

Specialized Care

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

Structured Activities

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

Nutritious Meals

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

Socialization Opportunities

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

24/7 Monitoring

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

Peace of Mind for Family Members

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

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

Memory Care Services Include:

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



Choosing a Memory Care Community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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PREVENTING FALLS IN OLDER ADULTS SAVES LIVES

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

According to the CDC, falls are the leading cause of injury for adults ages 65 and older. In Florida, 24.4% of older adults fell per its latest 2021 data, with the number of older adults in Florida who fell at 1,028,468. Across the U.S. over 14 million or 1 in 4 adults report falling every year and the adjusted death rate across the U.S. is rising. Each year millions of people aged 65 or older fall, but most do not tell their doctor. Here are more statistics:

- 3 million older adults are treated in emergency rooms for falls each year.
- Over 800 million are hospitalized due to a fall that caused head injuries and/or hip fractures.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.
- Each year approximately \$50 billion is spent on medical costs for falls that are non-fatal and \$754 million is spent on fatal falls.

According to the National Council on Aging, one-fourth of Americans aged 65+ falls each year and falls are the leading cause of non-fatal emergency room visits and hospital admissions among older adults. Plus, statistics reveal that one fall usually leads to another in the future among this age group.

Preventing falls in the home helps curb hospital stays and emergency room visits. Falls at any age take away what matters most, our quality of life and independence. This is especially true for older age groups. Taking extra care when walking and taking precautions goes a long way in maintaining better health as you age.

Tips to help prevent falls:

- Increase strength and balance through walking, swimming or other types of exercise such as yoga or tai chi.
- Get rid of trip hazards in your home such as clutter and extension cords in walkways.
- Removing rugs that slip or that are worn and curled up around the edges.
- Add grab bars in bathrooms and at outside doors of the house.
- Install handrails and better lighting where needed inside your home.



There are currently over 40 million people in the U.S. aged 65+ and this number is anticipated to double by 2050. As a result, demand for durable medical equipment (DME) is in higher demand for this segment of the population due to normal aging ailments, falls and other illnesses.

Whether in short-term or long-term care, and especially with post-surgery care at home, DME home medical equipment and supplies play an assistive role in faster patient recovery. Luckily, there are many options for consumers of home medical supplies and equipment ranging from personal aids for daily living, mobility aids such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, to monitoring equipment such as oxygen and diabetic supplies to hospital beds.

Accent Medical, a durable medical equipment company and affiliate of Hospice of Marion County, is a not-for-profit organization that offers quality care and products to anyone in Marion County.

Clients can pick up or if home delivery is required, that too can be arranged. Accent Medical technicians will hand-assemble in the home, provide education on safe and easy ways to operate the equipment, making sure clients understand “how to” instructions before leaving their home.

Additionally, if purchasing equipment is not in your budget or required for long-term use, an option to rent is available as well. Accent Medical will provide a free price estimate and recommend only the items that are right for the customer. To learn more about Accent Medical, call (352) 622-7260 or visit: www.accentmedical.org

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Visit HospiceofMarion.org for more info.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS...

By Brooklynn Curley, APRN-C

Wow! Can you believe it is already August? If you are a mamma like me, the anxiety of back to school season might be creeping up on you if it hasn't hit already. It's such a magical time of new backpacks, "first-day" pictures, new milestones, and more, but we sometimes forget the impending overwhelming mental load of keeping up with homework, field trips, last minute need for childcare, sick days, sports, chauffeuring kids in every direction, preparing dinners, bedtime struggle, early morning blues, time constraints, and all the in betweens.

BREATHE. Here you will find tips and tricks to help you gain a grip on this overwhelming but beautiful season of life. The biggest trend and one I think we can all agree we want to get on, is de-stress, de-clutter and self care for ourselves and our family. Let's dive in.

Lets Talk Dermatology: Adolescent Skin Issues

Did you know that there are adolescent skin issues that directly correlate with back to school?

Lets talk about contact dermatitis. This is when the skin becomes irritated or inflamed after it comes into contact with a triggering environment. This can lead to new onset of rashes, itchiness, scaly skin or lesions. Being a kid, this can interfere with their daily life especially concentrating in school. Fungal infections and viral skin infections are among the most common causes of contact dermatitis. Remember good personal hygiene such as proper hand washing starts at home. Be sure to keep antihistamines and corticosteroid creams on hand for instant relief.

Lets talk puberty and Acne Vulgaris

Acne is a normal part of puberty but depending on the severity it can be debilitating and leave permanent scarring. Acne is caused by hair follicles getting clogged with oil, skin cells, and bacteria. It is important to know as a parent, there are safe and effective treatment options. If your child is suffering from mild to moderate acne, we can offer an in-office treatment that is FDA approved. It combines a gentle vacuum with broadband light technology. This is a comfortable treatment and your child will have no downtime with improvement seen as early as 2 treatments. See the results of one of our very own patients!



Additional tip:

Remember to apply sunscreen for the kids whether its school recess, after school sports, or weekend activities.

Lets Talk Healthy Routines and Habits

Good routine and healthy habits will ease the stress of the back to school blues. Here are a few tips to keep in mind to optimize the sleep, health, and productivity of your little ones.

- Limit screen time before bed and healthy sleep patterns
- The National Sleep Foundation recommends stopping the use of electronic devices which include phones, tv, and game consoles at least 30 minutes before bed time.
- Blue light can cause damage to retinas with extreme exposure
- Blue light increases alertness in the brain which makes it harder to fall asleep
- Blue light decreases total amount of REM sleep which can lead to next day drowsiness and sluggishness
- Maintain a pre sleep routine and a consistent bedtime to assure adequate rest
- Limit caffeine
- The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry suggest a max of 100mg of caffeine daily which is about two 12 oz cans of soda for adolescence 12-18 years old

- Caffeine is found in soda, tea, sports drinks, juices, and chocolate
- Excess caffeine can cause insomnia, hyperactivity, nausea, upset stomach, headache, fatigue, and problems concentrating
- Keep hydrated
- For kids in sports and regular outside activity, hydration helps improve muscle function and circulation. It also helps prevent fatigue and muscle injury.
- Hydration helps replace the water lost through excessive sweating and is key for thermoregulation and prevention of heat exhaustion.

Additional tip:

Get your kids active, outdoors, and moving. This is important for heart and lung health, boosting immune system, strengthening bones and muscles, maintaining a healthy weight, boosting a child's mental health, improving concentration and memory, reduces stress, and improves sleep.

Mamma's Put Yourself First.....

Have you ever heard that saying, "You can't pour from an empty cup"? How is your cup looking? Remember, we can't take care of others until we take care of ourselves. There is so much truth and power in those simple words. How? With the chaos of back to school schedules, how do we find the time to put ourselves first? Read more for some tips and tricks.....



Exercise and Nutrition

- Exercise is a natural stress reducer
- Exercise reduces the levels of the body’s natural stress hormones being adrenaline and cortisol, while at the same time increasing the production of our happy hormone called endorphins
- You don’t need to go to the gym daily, it could be something as simple as walking the dog morning and night, doing family strolls, or 20-30 min of that Instagram or Ticktock video of at home body weight workouts you saw, after all the kids go down for bed.
- Nutrition is key, and this isn’t trying to stick to some FAD diet or trying a new approach every week. This is as simple as eating whole and nutritious dense foods while being mindful. Good nutrition also improves quality of life, sleep, inflammation, health, and stress.
- Simple foods that are packed with omega-3s, antioxidants, fiber, protein, and other nutrients include
- Chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, fresh herbs, cinnamon
- Keep easy to grab no prep snacks like fresh fruit, mixed nuts, crackers and hummus, yogurt

Side note:

I am a certified personal trainer and what I always preach that we are stronger than our excuses.

Self Care Routine

- Let’s destress and make sure we are taken care of first. Make a schedule and plan out your days. Assuring you wake up on time with adequate time to complete morning tasks will help prevent the stress of a rushed morning.
- Give up control over things that don’t provide joy.



This includes endless hours of cleaning, cooking, and house chores. Make a split schedule and complete only certain tasks each day. This will pour time back into you and into your family.

- ASSESS THE MESS
- Categorize tasks by day, week, and month
- Set a timer for 30 minutes a day and accomplish household tasks within that time and then call it quits
- Now you have some extra time back in your day, what does self care look like? You can journal, take a bath, read, find empowering podcasts, meditate, try yoga, massage, facials, etc. Remember you are an individual who deserves a break too.
- Try meal preps, crock pot meals, ready to go dinners, make weeknights easy

Back-to-School Affirmations for Moms

(from *theeverymom.com* which is a great resource for moms in 2023)

- “My children’s successes and failures are not my own.”
- “I deserve help.”
- “I’m doing enough.”
- “I deserve rest.”
- “I’m a good mom.”

Let’s make this the best back to school season yet! Happy August.

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Medical Dermatology

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Surgical Dermatology

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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.

REGAINING CONTROL: THE BENEFITS OF EMSELLA FOR URINARY INCONTINENCE

For millions of people, urinary incontinence is an uncomfortable and embarrassing condition that can significantly impact their quality of life. Whether it's a occasional leak during physical activity or a constant struggle to make it to the restroom in time, urinary incontinence can be a source of frustration, social isolation, and even depression. However, thanks to a revolutionary new treatment called EMSELLA, those suffering from urinary incontinence now have a non-invasive and effective solution to regain control over their bladder.

Understanding Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence is the involuntary leakage of urine, and it can occur for a variety of reasons. In women, it is often caused by weakened pelvic floor muscles, which can result from pregnancy, childbirth, or the natural aging process. Men, on the other hand, may experience incontinence due to prostate problems or as a side effect of certain medical treatments. Regardless of the cause, urinary incontinence can be a source of significant physical and emotional distress.

The EMSELLA Solution

EMSELLA is a revolutionary treatment that uses high-intensity focused electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology to stimulate and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. During a typical EMSELLA session, the patient sits fully clothed on a specialized chair that delivers thousands of supramaximal muscle contractions to the pelvic floor area. These contractions are similar to the muscle contractions that occur during Kegel exercises, but are significantly more intense and efficient.

The Benefits of EMSELLA

One of the primary benefits of EMSELLA is its non-invasive nature. Unlike surgical procedures or medications, EMSELLA does not require any incisions, injections, or oral medications. This means that patients can undergo treatment without the risk of complications or side effects associated with more invasive interventions.

Another significant advantage of EMSELLA is its effectiveness. Clinical studies have shown that EMSELLA can significantly improve urinary incontinence symptoms in both men and women. In one study, 95% of patients reported a significant



improvement in their quality of life after undergoing EMSELLA treatment. Additionally, EMSELLA has been shown to be effective in treating other pelvic floor disorders, such as fecal incontinence and sexual dysfunction.

EMSELLA is also convenient and time-efficient. Each treatment session lasts only 28 minutes, and most patients require a series of six sessions spaced a week apart. This means that patients can receive the full course of treatment in just six weeks, with minimal disruption to their daily routine.

Furthermore, EMSELLA is a comfortable and painless treatment. Patients may feel a slight tingling sensation during the treatment, but the procedure is generally well-tolerated and does not require any anesthesia or recovery time.

Regaining Confidence and Quality of Life

For those struggling with urinary incontinence, the impact on daily life can be significant. Simple activities like exercise, social gatherings, or travel can become sources of anxiety and embarrassment. However, with the help of EMSELLA, many patients are able to regain control over their bladder and reclaim their confidence and quality of life.



One patient, Sarah, a 47-year-old mother of two, had been struggling with urinary incontinence for years after giving birth to her children. "I was always worried about leaking, especially during exercise or when I laughed too hard," she recalls. "It was embarrassing and made me feel self-conscious." After undergoing EMSELLA treatment, Sarah noticed a significant improvement in her symptoms. "It's been life-changing," she says. "I can exercise without worry, and I feel so much more confident in social situations."

Another patient, John, a 62-year-old retiree, had been dealing with urinary incontinence as a result of prostate problems. "It was really limiting my lifestyle," he explains. "I couldn't travel or participate in activities without worrying about finding a restroom." After completing his EMSELLA treatment, John reports a dramatic improvement in his symptoms. "I feel like I have my freedom back," he says. "It's been a game-changer for me."

Conclusion

Urinary incontinence is a common and often debilitating condition, but with the help of EMSELLA, those suffering from this condition now have a safe, effective, and convenient treatment option. By strengthening the pelvic floor muscles, EMSELLA can help patients regain control over their bladder and improve their overall quality of life. Whether you're a new mother, an active adult, or someone dealing with the effects of aging, EMSELLA offers a promising solution for regaining confidence and freedom from the constraints of urinary incontinence.



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Blood pressure ranges are as follows:



Normal blood pressure:
120/80 mm Hg or lower.



Elevated blood pressure:
The top number ranges from 120 to 129 mm Hg, and the bottom number is *below* 80 mm Hg.



Stage 1 hypertension:
The top number ranges from 130 to 139 mm Hg OR the bottom number is between 80 - 89 mm Hg.



Stage 2 hypertension:
The top number is 140 mm Hg or higher OR the bottom number is 90 mm Hg or higher.

What are these studies about?

Researchers want to see what effect investigational medicines will have on blood pressure in qualified study participants.

Why take part in clinical research?

There remains an unmet need for safe and effective therapies. Synexus needs your help to advance world medicine. By volunteering, you may help get us one step closer to developing effective medications.

Together for *the Future* of Health

Understanding hypertension

Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, is a pervasive health condition affecting nearly half of all adults in the United States. Despite the availability of medications, managing this condition remains a significant challenge for many individuals. At Synexus Clinical Research, we understand the critical need for innovative solutions to address this widespread issue. We are excited to announce our complimentary testing services aimed at tackling hypertension through clinical trials. This initiative not only offers participants access to cutting-edge treatments but also contributes to the advancement of medical research.

Complimentary testing services (hypertension and memory)

Synexus is offering complimentary testing services for individuals struggling with high blood pressure and memory loss. Our goal is to provide accessible, no-cost study-related care and medication to eligible participants. By doing so, we aim to alleviate the financial burden often associated with managing chronic conditions. To qualify for our complimentary testing services, participants must be 18 years or older and have difficulty maintaining a healthy blood pressure range or a history of memory loss.

The Role of Synexus in Research

Synexus Clinical Research advances medical knowledge and improves patient outcomes through rigorous clinical trials. Our studies evaluate investigational medications' effectiveness in lowering blood pressure across diverse populations, ensuring broad applicability of our findings.

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The Importance of Clinical Trials

Clinical trials are essential for developing new medications and therapies, determining the safety and efficacy of investigational drugs. Participants access new treatments before they are widely available and help researchers understand their performance in diverse populations.

Meet Dr. Okolie: A Leader in Hypertension Research

Dr. Okolie brings more than 20 years of medical experience to her role at Synexus. Her extensive background as a hospitalist and medical director of a hospital-based home care agency has provided her with a well-rounded understanding of various medical conditions and treatment approaches. She is known for her patient-centered approach and exceptional oversight of multi-phase studies, particularly in therapeutic areas such as vaccines, neuro/Alzheimer's and general medicine.

"Come take advantage of our complimentary testing and explore all of the wonderful studies we have to offer at Synexus Clinical Research."

Angela Okolie, MD
Principal Investigator





Hurricane Season: ARE YOU PREPARED?

By David Culbreth, Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

Not only am I realtor, one that specializes in seniors real estate and senior transitions, I am also a weather geek and the son of an Air Force weatherman. Call me crazy but I love a good storm and find hurricanes fascinating. One thing I have learned over the decades, severe weather, especially hurricanes, is not something to take lightly. Be Prepared!

As hurricane season approaches, experts are urging coastal residents to take proactive steps to protect themselves and their property. With climate change potentially increasing the frequency and intensity of storms, hurricane preparedness is more critical than ever.

"We're seeing a trend towards more powerful hurricanes in recent years," says Dr. Amanda Chen, a meteorologist at the National Hurricane Center. "It's absolutely vital that people in hurricane-prone areas have a plan in place well before a storm threatens."

Understanding Hurricane Risks

Hurricanes pose multiple threats, including destructive winds, storm surge flooding, and inland flooding from heavy rainfall. Storm surge—the abnormal rise in seawater level during a storm—is often the greatest threat to life and property from a hurricane. It can cause catastrophic damage along the coast, with water level rising as much as 20 feet or more.

Inland areas are not immune to hurricane dangers. As Hurricane Harvey demonstrated in 2017, slow-moving storms can dump prodigious amounts of rain, leading to widespread flooding far from the coast. Harvey dropped more than 60 inches of rain in parts of Texas, causing \$125 billion in damage.

"People tend to focus on wind speeds, but water is responsible for nearly 90% of hurricane-related deaths," notes Chen. "It's crucial to understand your local flood risks and evacuation routes."

Creating a Hurricane Plan

Emergency management officials recommend that all residents in hurricane-prone areas develop a comprehensive hurricane plan. This should include:

1. Knowing your evacuation zone and route
2. Preparing an emergency kit with at least 3 days of supplies

3. Reviewing insurance policies and documenting valuables
4. Identifying a safe room or storm shelter location
5. Having a communication plan for family members
6. Preparing for extended power outages

"Don't wait until a hurricane is bearing down to figure out what you're going to do," advises Mark Thompson, director of emergency services for Wilmington, North Carolina. "By that point, supplies may be scarce and roads congested. A little preparation now can make a huge difference later."

Emergency Kit Essentials

A well-stocked emergency kit is crucial for riding out a hurricane or its aftermath. Key items include:

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days
- Non-perishable food and a manual can opener
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Prescription medications
- Cash and important documents in a waterproof container
- Pet supplies if applicable

"Think about what you'd need if you had to evacuate quickly or if you were without power and running water for several days," says Thompson. "Having these supplies ready to go can reduce stress and ensure your basic needs are met."

Protecting Your Property

While personal safety should always be the top priority, there are also steps homeowners can take to minimize property damage:

- Trim trees and shrubs to make them more wind resistant
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts
- Reinforce garage doors
- Bring in outdoor furniture, decorations, and anything else that could become projectiles
- Install storm shutters or prepare plywood to cover windows
- Review insurance policies and consider flood insurance

"Many of these measures are relatively inexpensive but can prevent thousands of dollars in damage," says Chen. "Flood insurance in particular is crucial, as standard homeowners policies don't cover flood damage."

The Importance of Heeding Warnings

Despite improvements in hurricane forecasting and preparedness, some residents still choose to ignore evacuation orders and other warnings. This can put both themselves and first responders at risk.

"We understand the desire to protect property, but no possession is worth risking your life," emphasizes Thompson. "When officials issue an evacuation order, it's because they have strong evidence that staying put could be extremely dangerous."

Chen adds that even if a storm weakens before landfall, the threats can remain severe. "A Category 2 hurricane can still produce life-threatening storm surge and inland flooding. It's important to focus on the specific hazards for your area, not just the category."

Climate Change and Future Hurricane Seasons

While individual storms can't be directly attributed to climate change, there is growing evidence that warming oceans are fueling more intense hurricanes. A 2020 study found that the likelihood of a hurricane developing into a Category 3 or stronger storm has increased about 8% per decade since 1979.

"We're seeing hurricanes intensify more rapidly and maintain their strength for longer periods over land," explains Chen. "This means coastal and inland communities alike need to be increasingly prepared for extreme impacts."

As the climate continues to warm, experts stress the importance of not only preparing for each hurricane season but also taking steps to mitigate long-term risks. This includes supporting resilient infrastructure, preserving natural flood buffers like wetlands, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Hurricane preparedness isn't just about boarding up windows anymore," concludes Thompson. "It's about building communities that can withstand the storms of both today and tomorrow. That requires ongoing effort from individuals, local governments, and society as a whole."

With another active hurricane season predicted, now is the time for coastal residents to review and update their hurricane plans. By taking proactive steps and heeding official warnings, communities can work together to weather whatever storms may come.



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Developing Social Communication in Children

Innovative Therapies Group

A child's expressive vocabulary grows rapidly from the time of his first word at approximately 12 months, through first grade. Did you know that the average 2 year old uses over 200 words growing to 1000 words by age 3 years to over 1600 words by age 4? Your child's words may only be understood 50% of the time by age 2 but should be 90% understandable between 4-5 years.

There are many strategies that parents and caregivers can use to improve a child's communication:

Follow the child's lead

- Let the child choose the activity
- Join in the child's activity
- Comment on the child's play/talk about what he/she is doing
- Be face to face

Make it interactive – Create an opportunity for your child to communicate

- Keep toys/needed items in sight and out of reach to elicit requesting
- Provide inadequate portions so child requests more
- Create silly situations/be animated
- Playfully obstruct activity so child must request you "move", "go", etc.

Model and Expand the child's language

- Model gestures and words
- Simplify your language
- Speak slowly
- Be repetitive
- Provide choices (even when you already know what the child wants)
- Add one more element to your child's language (i.e.: if child uses one word utterances, model two word phrases, "go" becomes "car go")

Try some of these fun outdoor activities to help develop language skills.

Nature Walk: Whether at your local park or in your own backyard, now's the perfect time to get outside. While you are there, take the time to talk about what you are seeing:

- Label items (grass, leaf, flower, tree, dirt, stick). Collect items in a bag and encourage your child to show others what they found. Model language ("Look, I see, I found")



- Talk about the colors and sizes (big/little, short/tall) of the flowers, bugs, rocks and plants
- Discuss what you hear (model silly sounds and animal sounds)
- Talk about what people/animals are doing (who is running, sliding, throwing, swinging or what is crawling, flying, hiding). This is a great activity to practice verbs!

Water/sand play: Enjoy a hot day with water and/or sand play! Fill up a small pool or even a bucket with water/sand. You can use cups, big spoons and strainers while discussing the different steps throughout the activity:

- Talk about actions (splash, pour, fill, dump, scoop, dig)
- Label items (boats, spoons, cups). Children love to find items buried in the sand (hide, find and label them)!
- Talk about body parts (splash/scoop with your hands, splash with/bury your feet, do little splashes/dig with your fingers)

Follow the Leader/Simon Says: Both activities are great for toddlers and school-age children. Use Follow the Leader to work on identifying body parts and actions, as well as following directions. Younger children can participate by following visual instructions.

- Make sure you talk about what you're doing (model words), model actions and assist them with hand over hand assistance if necessary! ("Clap hands, stomp feet, arms up", "touch your eyes/nose/toes" and "Walk, run, jump, hop")
- Work on opposites (up/down, stop/go, loud/soft, high/low)

- Make instructions harder if the children are older (have them follow two "clap your hands then stomp your feet" or "touch your nose then touch your toes")
- Take turns being the leader and being "Simon". Encourage your child to tell you what to do!

Caregiver involvement can have a positive impact on improving a child's language skills. However, there are red flags which may indicate that a child may need professional intervention.

Red Flags

18 months:

- Does not point to objects
- Does not use gestures such as waving or shaking head
- Does not respond to "no" and "bye-bye"
- Does not use at least six to ten words consistently
- Does not hear well or discriminate between sounds

24 months:

- Does not use at least six consonant sounds
- Does not follow simple directions
- Has a vocabulary of less than 50 words
- Has decreased interest in social interactions

36 months:

- Strangers have difficulty understanding what the child is saying
- Does not use simple sentences

Innovative Therapies Group understands that family education is critical to improve a child's development of language skills. Coupled with family participation, direct therapy for a variety of communication disorders and delays can promote independent function and improved communication.

Speech therapy can help with improving a child's ability to understand and use language; and their ability to produce intelligible speech. We have experience treating children with a variety of disorders including Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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

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THE WEIGHTY LEGACY: HOW CHILDHOOD OBESITY SHAPES ADULT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Childhood obesity has become a global epidemic, with rates tripling since the 1970s. This alarming trend not only affects children's immediate health and quality of life but also casts a long shadow into adulthood. The consequences of carrying excess weight during formative years extend far beyond physical appearance, impacting various aspects of adult life, from physical health to emotional well-being and socioeconomic status.

One of the most significant long-term effects of childhood obesity is the increased risk of chronic health conditions in adulthood. Children who are obese are more likely to become obese adults, and this prolonged state of excess weight can lead to a host of health problems. Type 2 diabetes, once considered an adult-onset disease, is now increasingly diagnosed in children and adolescents due to obesity. This early onset of diabetes can result in more severe complications in adulthood, including kidney disease, blindness, and cardiovascular problems.

Cardiovascular health is another major concern for adults who were obese as children. Studies have shown that childhood obesity is associated with a higher risk of hypertension, high cholesterol, and atherosclerosis in adulthood. These conditions significantly increase the likelihood of heart disease and stroke, which remain leading causes of death worldwide. The cumulative effect of carrying excess weight from childhood through adulthood places an enormous strain on the cardiovascular system, potentially leading to premature mortality.

Musculoskeletal issues are also more prevalent among adults who were obese as children. The excess weight puts undue stress on growing bones and joints, leading to problems such as osteoarthritis, chronic pain, and reduced mobility in adulthood. These issues can severely impact quality of life, limiting physical activity and potentially contributing to further weight gain, creating a vicious cycle.

Beyond physical health, the psychological impact of childhood obesity can persist well into adulthood. Children who are obese often face bullying, social isolation, and discrimination, which can lead to low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. These emotional scars can carry over into adulthood, affecting mental health, relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Adults who were obese as children may struggle with body image issues, disordered eating patterns, and difficulty forming intimate relationships.

The socioeconomic consequences of childhood obesity in adulthood are often overlooked but are nonetheless significant. Studies have shown that individuals who were obese as children tend to achieve

lower levels of education and earn less income as adults compared to their normal-weight peers. This disparity may be attributed to various factors, including health-related absenteeism, reduced productivity due to physical limitations, and societal biases against individuals with obesity.

Furthermore, the healthcare costs associated with treating obesity-related conditions can be substantial, placing a significant financial burden on individuals and healthcare systems. Adults who have been obese since childhood may face higher insurance premiums, more frequent medical visits, and greater out-of-pocket expenses for managing chronic conditions.

The reproductive health of adults who were obese as children can also be affected. Women who were obese in childhood are more likely to experience fertility issues, complications during pregnancy, and have a higher risk of gestational diabetes. Men may face reduced fertility and an increased risk of erectile dysfunction.

It's important to note that the long-term effects of childhood obesity are not inevitable. Early intervention and lifestyle changes can significantly reduce the risk of these adverse outcomes. Encouraging healthy eating habits, regular physical activity, and positive body image from a young age can help prevent obesity and its associated complications.

Parents, educators, healthcare providers, and policymakers all have crucial roles to play in addressing childhood obesity. Implementing school-based programs that promote healthy eating and physical activity, improving access to nutritious foods in underserved communities, and educating families about the importance of a balanced diet and active lifestyle are all essential steps in combating this issue.

Additionally, creating supportive environments that reduce stigma and promote inclusivity for children of all body sizes is crucial. This approach can help mitigate the psychological impact of obesity and encourage healthier behaviors without damaging self-esteem.

In conclusion, the long-term effects of childhood obesity on adult health and well-being are far-reaching and complex. From increased risks of chronic diseases to psychological and socioeconomic challenges, the impact can be felt throughout one's lifetime. However, with awareness, early intervention, and comprehensive approaches to prevention and treatment, it is possible to break the cycle of obesity and improve outcomes for future generations. By addressing childhood obesity, we invest not only in the health of our children but also in the well-being of the adults they will become.

MEET THE TEAM

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



Christopher Bagley, APRN

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

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



Eldon Waters, MSN, APRN

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Medicare and insurance approved Back and knee braces.

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

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

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 2AM Plan All Caregivers Must Have

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

Anyone would agree that being the full-time caregiver is stressful and exhausting. However, caregivers will usually ignore the effect on their health. Outward appearances are deceiving but the stress from lack of sleep, poor self-care, and the mental exhaustion from being available 24/7 is damaging to anyone's mental and physical health. You may look fine, but you're not.

Even if you have brought care into the home for a few hours to provide some relief, you are never "off duty." If you leave to do some shopping or run errands, you are always waiting for the phone to ring because something has happened. At night, your sleep is often interrupted because one ear is always listening to see if they have gotten out of bed to walk around the house – or worse, out the front door.

If you are the primary caregiver, it is imperative that you have planned for your loved one's care and safety in case something should happen to you. No one has a crystal ball to know when a crisis will occur. Now is the time to make important decisions for everyone's peace of mind.

This is referred to as the 2AM plan. If your loved one cannot be alone, is there a neighbor or friend to initially step in to assist? What if your adult child needs time to plan to leave their family or job responsibilities before being away for an extended amount of time? An advisor such as Senior Liaison will help you to develop a plan based on your wishes. Together you will discuss in-home care options if supervision is needed for several days. They can also assist in selecting an assisted living community for short term or more lengthy stays. There are some preliminary forms that can be completed well in advance. It will be helpful to have something written to communicate your loved ones likes and dislikes such as food, music, movies, etc. Also, share their routine – what time do they get up and go to bed, what time of day do they prefer showers, have they had any prior trauma or triggers to avoid, do they wake up hungry and have to eat right away, or do they generally skip breakfast? These and other important details will allow for a more successful transition to an assisted living. If the goal is that your loved one will move to be closer to family, respite care will be a good alternative while plans are put into place.



Medical and Financial Power of Attorney papers and Advance Directives are required in the event that your loved one is unable to make decisions for themselves. If you do not have these – it is crucial to make this an immediate priority. If your loved one has dementia and you do not have power of attorney for them, things become difficult. An individual can only sign these documents if they understand what they are agreeing to and indicate that they recognize a person as someone they trust. If not and their dementia is advanced, the only option is the costly process of guardianship. Power of attorney is much easier, less time consuming, and less expensive. It's a good practice to assign an adult child or other trusted person as an alternate Power of Attorney in the event of your death or incapacity.

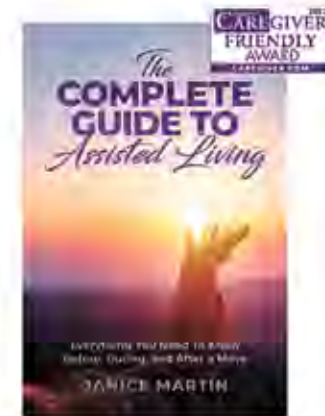
If there is a need to move to memory care in an assisted living community, there must be a power of attorney or guardian. Simply being the spouse or next of kin does not give anyone the authority to sign documents. Someone moving to assisted living may sign their own move in documents, but only the power of attorney or guardian may sign for memory care. Written documentation must be provided – not just someone saying they have it. Make sure these documents are accessible so they may be easily located.

Additionally, you must provide proof of financial power of attorney if access is needed to bank accounts to provide financial resources for payment of any care services, either temporarily or long term. It will also be necessary to obtain access to safety deposit boxes, or to apply for Medicaid or Veteran's benefits.

I have created "In Case of Emergency Documents" to consolidate and communicate important information. It's available as a free download at www.SeniorLiaisonCFL.com. Enter a list of medications, allergies, emergency contact information, and

where to find important documents. It will also indicate if your loved one has dementia or communication deficits so EMTs may recognize any impairment. I suggest you place it in a plastic sleeve and put it on the front of your refrigerator. Also included is a card to put in your wallet indicating that you are the caregiver of someone who may be at home alone and who to contact to provide access to your home.

It has been my experience that far too many people wait for a crisis before making important decisions. If someone else's care is at stake, it is critical that you take some time to work with someone you trust to act on your behalf if and when that crisis occurs. We all hope it never needs to be implemented, but if it does, your loved one will be grateful that you thoughtfully and lovingly took the time to plan for their care and safety.



Janice Martin is an author, educator, and specialist on senior living options and the owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc. She assists families in locating senior options either at home or to a community and has written "The Complete Guide to Assisted Living: Everything You Need to Know Before, During, and After a Move" available on Amazon.com. For more information, call 352-477-1866 or visit www.seniorliaisoncfl.com.



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Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

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

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

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

Take Time for Yourself

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

Get Moving

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

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

Meditation

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

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

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

Quick Care Med Urgent Care

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

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

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

At Quick Care Med, they understand that illness and injuries can happen outside of the normal 9 to 5. That's why they provide Fast, Easy, and Affordable® urgent care with the convenience of extended hours, including weekends and holidays!

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

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Investing in Your Future:

The Power of Basic Financial Techniques for a Better Retirement

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

Retirement is a phase of life that many look forward to—a time to relax, explore new hobbies, travel, and spend quality time with loved ones. However, achieving a comfortable and secure retirement requires more than just wishful thinking. It necessitates careful planning, disciplined saving, and strategic investing. One of the most critical components to ensuring a successful retirement is obtaining a basic financial education. A fundamental understanding of financial principles, paired with the guidance of a reputable financial planner like Securenet Financial, LLC, can significantly enhance the quality of life in retirement.

The Importance of Basic Financial Techniques

Financial education doesn't need to be extensive to be effective. By focusing on a few key techniques, individuals can make substantial progress towards a secure retirement. Here are several simple yet powerful ways in which basic financial education can directly impact the quality of life in retirement:

- **Understanding Investment Options:** A basic grasp of investment options such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds can go a long way. Knowing the basics allows investors to build a diversified portfolio that balances risk and return, ensuring steady growth of their retirement savings.
- **Effective Budgeting and Saving:** Knowing how to budget and save effectively is crucial for accumulating a sufficient retirement fund. Basic financial education teaches individuals how to prioritize expenses, reduce unnecessary spending, and set realistic savings goals. This disciplined approach to saving can lead to a more substantial nest egg upon retirement.
- **Tax Efficiency:** Taxes can significantly erode retirement savings if not managed properly. Basic knowledge of tax-efficient investment strategies, such as utilizing tax-advantaged accounts like IRAs and 401(k)s, can help retirees minimize their tax burden and maximize their income.
- **Risk Management:** All investments come with a degree of risk. Understanding simple concepts such as asset allocation and diversification can help retirees manage these risks effectively and protect their portfolios from significant losses during market downturns.

- **Income Strategies:** Generating a reliable income stream in retirement is essential for maintaining one's lifestyle. Basic financial education covers simple income strategies, including annuities and dividends, helping retirees create a sustainable income plan.

The Role of a Financial Planner

While a basic financial education is crucial, navigating the complexities of retirement planning can still be challenging. This is where the expertise of a professional financial planner becomes invaluable. Securenet Financial, LLC, for instance, provides personalized financial planning services that can make a significant difference in one's retirement journey. Here's how a financial planner can be instrumental in achieving retirement success:

- **Simplified Planning:** A financial planner from Securenet Financial, LLC, takes the time to understand your specific goals, needs, and circumstances. They simplify the planning process by breaking down complex financial concepts into easy-to-understand strategies, ensuring that every aspect of your financial life is addressed without overwhelming you.
- **Expert Guidance:** Financial planners possess extensive knowledge and experience in various areas of finance, including investments, taxes, and estate planning. Their expertise allows them to handle the complexities for you, providing sound advice and recommendations that align with your long-term objectives.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Adjustments:** Retirement planning is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. A financial planner regularly reviews your plan and makes necessary adjustments based on changes in your life, the economy, and financial markets. This proactive approach ensures that your retirement plan remains on track, regardless of external factors.
- **Emotional Support and Confidence:** Investing and financial planning can be emotionally challenging, especially during market volatility. A financial planner

offers emotional support and reassurance, helping you stay focused on your long-term goals. This peace of mind can reduce stress and anxiety, leading to a better overall quality of life in retirement.

- **Maximizing Opportunities:** Financial planners are adept at identifying opportunities that can enhance your retirement plan. Whether it's taking advantage of new investment products, tax-saving strategies, or government incentives, their insights can help you maximize your retirement savings and income.

Conclusion

Achieving a comfortable and fulfilling retirement doesn't require an extensive financial education. By mastering a few basic financial techniques and working with a reputable financial planner like Securenet Financial, LLC, individuals can significantly improve their quality of life in retirement. Basic financial education empowers you to make informed decisions, while a skilled financial planner simplifies the complexities and provides continuous support. Together, they form a powerful partnership that can help you navigate the intricacies of retirement planning and secure a bright and prosperous future. Investing in your financial education today, even at a basic level, can lead to a more secure, enjoyable, and stress-free retirement tomorrow.

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Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

On Father's Day in 2005 my dad came to my office to visit and talk about how things were going. In the course of our discussion he mentioned that he experienced a terrible night's sleep because his back was causing him so much pain. I told him that it was time to go to the ER and get checked out to find out what was causing all of his pain. He did, and that started a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. My dad fought an incredible fight with this terrible cancer but passed away in August of 2007.

Many people have faced the pain of having to bury a loved one. The question is, "How do I deal with the pain?" We may have confidence that our loved one is in a better place, but do we do with the pain that we still feel?

As you read this, maybe your pain is not in the loss associated with death, but rather you have faced the end of a relationship, or perhaps have received bad news regarding your own health. The question still remains, "what are we to do with these painful situations?"

As we turn through the pages of Scripture, we find that the thoughts and writings of the Psalmist David bring comfort and hope to those in pain. David understood painful situations for he faced many of them in his own life. He too, buried many loved ones and faced enormous family problems. How did he get through these challenges? He turned to God for help.

David tells us in the book of Psalms, ¹⁸*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalms 34:18*

You are never closer to God than when you are hurting. David knew that from personal experience. David took his pain and his problems to the Lord and asked for His help. In Psalm 142:1-2 David wrote, *"I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.*

I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble."



Our natural tendency is to suffer in silence. We put on a smile and pretend that everything is fine in our lives. Yet in reality, we know that ignoring our pain does not bring relief. We hope that time will heal all wounds but we know it does not. In fact, time often makes matters even worse.

Pain is our body's way of letting us know that we need to deal with something. Whether it is physical, emotional, or relational, pain should not be ignored. And yet still, we try to run from it.

It is human nature to run from painful situations. By law, all doors in public buildings swing out. When people panic, they run. They try to escape. When we face pain, loss and hurt, we look for ways to escape. We dream of running away from reality in hopes of finding peace and comfort over the next rainbow. Sometimes people try to escape by turning to alcohol, drugs, food, or even inappropriate relationships. Running from your problems never brings resolution.

David went on to say in Psalm 142:3 that ³*"When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who knows my way..."* God knows the pain we feel and He wants us to run to Him with our troubles.

As you read his Psalms, you will quickly notice that David was very open about what he was going through. And yet, through it all, he learned to trust and depend on God.

When dealing with the pressures and strains of life and the emotional challenges we face, we can learn much from David's example. Stop pretending that you can handle everything in your own strength and turn to God who loves you and cares about you. He specializes in mending broken hearts.

Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church Naples, a new church located on the campus of Florida SouthWestern State College in Naples, FL. For more information, visit www.venturenaples.com.



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