

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

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Lake/Sumter Edition - Monthly

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# BLUE LIGHT AND YOUR EYES: SEPARATING FACTS FROM MYTHS

**W**ith computers, cell phones, tablets and other digital screens becoming a routine part of our daily lives, digital eye strain is on the rise. A recent survey revealed that 65% of Americans experience symptoms of eye strain, and the more digital devices they use, the greater the severity and frequency of symptoms.

Naturally, there are some who are quick to blame this on the blue light emitted by digital devices. But is digital blue light really worse for your eyes than the blue light from sunlight? And how much of the bias against blue light is related to its actual effects, and how much is based on rumor and myth? First, let's look at how digital blue light differs from natural sunlight.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BLUE LIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

**1. Spectral composition.** Sunlight contains a full spectrum of color wavelengths, including blue light, which is balanced by complementary wavelengths like red and infrared. Digital devices, however, emit predominantly blue wavelengths without the warm, balancing colors. Adding to it, our devices' LED backlighting concentrates this blue light directly at our eyes.

**2. Timing of blue light exposure.** The sun's full spectrum of light is a key part of circadian rhythm regulation, which affects our sleep quality and overall health. The sun delivers more blue light in the morning and daytime, promoting alertness. The blue light gradually wanes as night approaches, enabling our brains to wind down in preparation for sleep. Digital devices emit blue light continuously, disrupting this natural cycle and diminishing sleep quality, which can further burden eyes.

**3. Distance and length of exposure.** Even though the blue light from the sun is much stronger than what is emitted by digital screens, its power is suffused by mitigating colors and the great distance it travels. The closeness of digital screens, and the often-long hours spent staring at them, can lead to significant cumulative, concentrated blue light exposure.

## BLUE LIGHT AND YOUR EYE HEALTH: SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION

Now that we understand how sunlight and the blue light from digital screens differ, let's compare the myths and facts about blue light and its effects on the eyes using a little quiz.

### 1. True or false: Blue light is always harmful to the eyes.

**False.** As stated previously, blue light is a natural part of the sun's light spectrum and plays an important role in regulating our circadian rhythms and daytime alertness. Obviously, staring directly at the sun can be hazardous to your eyes, but diffuse sunlight is part of everyday life. It is the excessive exposure to blue light from digital devices, particularly close to bedtime, that is generally responsible for eye strain.

### 2. True or false: Blue light from digital devices causes permanent eye damage.

**False.** While you may have heard that a few studies on lab animals suggest excessive blue light exposure could potentially damage the cells of the retina, there is no current scientific evidence that blue light from digital devices is powerful enough to cause serious or permanent eye damage. However, eye strain is a real problem, so using these devices mindfully is always a good idea.

### 3. True or false: Digital eye strain relates more to how we use our devices than to the blue light they emit.

**True.** Using our devices for prolonged periods, often without blinking enough or taking regular breaks, and using them too close to bedtime, is what causes the majority of eye strain conditions. You can ease your exposure to blue light by adjusting your device's settings, including enabling "night mode" warmer color tones, and reducing screen brightness to match room lighting to cut down on glare.

### 4. True or false: Specialized glasses can protect against blue light-related eye strain.

**Maybe.** However, the science on this is mixed. Most blue light filtering glasses block about 10-25% of blue light wavelengths, which is relatively low. While some people report some relief with prolonged use of high-quality blue light filtering glasses, the overall evidence of eye strain reduction, melatonin protection, and sleep improvement is narrow and inconsistent.

Before you go out and buy blue light filtering glasses to help ease eye strain, talk to your eye doctor about what type of lens technology they recommend. Specialty computer glasses designed to reduce glare actually do help ease eye strain, so they may be a better investment for your overall eye comfort.

And remember, protection from the powerful and potentially harmful rays of the sun is crucially important. So, invest in high-quality sunglasses providing 100% UV protection, and wear them whenever you're outside during daylight hours.

### 5. True or false: Blue light from digital devices can suppress melatonin production.

**True.** Melatonin is the hormone that regulates the normal sleep-wake cycle. Blue light exposure from staring at digital screens can reduce melatonin production, adversely impacting healthy sleep patterns. In fact, multiple studies have shown that exposure to blue light before bedtime makes it harder to become drowsy and fall asleep, limits important REM cycles, and causes more incidents of waking up throughout the night.

So, once the sun sets, switch to night settings (or set them to auto), reduce your screen's brightness, and, if you can manage it, stop using your screens 2-3 hours before you plan to hit the hay. Of course this can be difficult, but try it out. You might be surprised by how much better your sleep quality is, and how soothed your eyes feel as a result.

## GIVE YOUR EYES REGULAR BREAKS FROM SCREENS

To help prevent and reduce eye strain, follow the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes of screen time, stare 20 feet into the distance for at least 20 seconds. In addition, be sure to deliberately blink 10-20 times every minute to spread your tear film across your eyes. It might seem odd to have to remind yourself to blink, but staring at close-up devices often disrupts normal blinking, leading to dryness, irritation and eye strain.

By adopting healthy screen habits, you can do a lot of help reduce or even eliminate related eye strain. However, if excessive dryness, redness or irritation persist, contact your local Lake Eye for common sense ways to keep your eyes and vision clear, healthy and oh-so comfortable.



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# The Benefits of Elevating Your Legs: A MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE

**E**levating your legs for at least 20 minutes daily can offer significant health benefits, particularly in circulation, vein pressure, and swelling. Below is an overview of these benefits and practical advice on elevating your legs effectively and safely.

## Improved Circulation

When you elevate your legs above the level of your heart, gravity assists in directing blood flow back toward the heart. This helps facilitate the return of oxygen-depleted blood from the lower extremities, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals with venous insufficiency or those who spend extended periods standing or sitting. Enhanced circulation can reduce the risk of blood clots, alleviate symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency, and contribute to overall cardiovascular health.

## Reduced Vein Pressure

Prolonged sitting or standing can cause blood to pool in the lower extremities, leading to increased venous pressure. Over time, this can develop or worsen varicose veins, a condition where veins become enlarged and twisted due to improper valve function. Elevating the legs reduces the gravitational pressure on the veins, helping to prevent blood pooling and alleviating the symptoms associated with varicose veins, such as swelling, aching, and heaviness.

## Decreased Swelling

Edema, or swelling caused by fluid accumulation, often occurs in the legs due to various factors, including prolonged standing, sitting, or underlying health conditions such as heart or kidney disease. Elevating the legs promotes the reabsorption of excess fluids into the bloodstream, which the kidneys can then excrete. This can significantly reduce swelling and provide relief from associated discomfort or pain.

## How to Properly Elevate Your Legs

To maximize the benefits of leg elevation, it's important to follow these guidelines:

- 1. Use a Pillow:** Place a pillow or a leg wedge under your legs to achieve the correct elevation. The pillow should be firm enough to maintain leg elevation but soft enough to ensure comfort.
- 2. Elevate Above the Heart:** Position your legs so they are elevated above the level of your heart. This optimizes blood flow back to the heart and enhances the benefits of leg elevation.



- 3. Support Both Thighs and Calves:** Make sure both your thighs and calves are supported during elevation to prevent downward bending of the legs, which could reduce the effectiveness of the elevation and cause discomfort.

- 4. Gently Bend Your Knees:** Slightly bending your knees can help reduce strain on your joints and tendons, making the position more comfortable for more extended periods.

- 5. Maintain Comfort:** Ensure that your neck and back are comfortable. Avoid awkward angles that may cause strain or discomfort, particularly if you plan to elevate your legs for an extended time.

- 6. Use Specialized Pillows:** Consider using pillows designed explicitly for leg elevation. These can help achieve the proper height and angle, particularly useful for individuals with chronic venous conditions.

- 7. Consistency is Key:** Elevate your legs daily for optimal results. Aim for at least 15-20 minutes each session, preferably in the evening when your legs are most likely swollen.

- 8. Wear Loose Clothing:** Choose loose, comfortable clothing that doesn't restrict blood flow or applies pressure to your legs during elevation.

## Recommended Duration and Frequency

To effectively reduce swelling and improve circulation, it's advisable to elevate your legs for 15-20 minutes at a time, 2-3 times per day. This regular practice can help maintain healthy circulation and prevent fluid buildup in the legs. Incorporating this routine into your daily activities, such as watching TV or reading, can make it easier to sustain over time.

## Safety Considerations

While leg elevation is generally safe and beneficial, certain medical conditions may require caution. Individuals with Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) or Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) should consult their healthcare provider before regularly elevating their legs. Elevation might exacerbate symptoms like foot pain or difficulty breathing when lying flat in these conditions. A medical professional can provide personalized advice on whether leg elevation is appropriate and how to modify it.

## Why Elevate Above the Heart?

Elevating your feet above your heart is particularly beneficial because it reduces the heart's effort to circulate blood. By alleviating the burden of gravity, this position helps improve venous return, reduces swelling, and can alleviate symptoms associated with venous disorders.

Regular leg elevation is a simple yet effective practice providing numerous health benefits, particularly for those prone to circulation issues, varicose veins, or leg swelling. Incorporating this practice into your daily routine and following the proper techniques can help maintain optimal leg health and overall well-being. Always consult a healthcare provider if you have underlying health conditions that may affect the safety of leg elevation.

For more information or to book an appointment, contact Central Florida Vein & Vascular Center today. Your journey to healthier veins and improved well-being starts here.

## Get support for your veins and circulation problems today.

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

For more information regarding the prevention of varicose veins, please see our blog at: <https://cfvein.com/blog/leg-elevation-tips-and-guide/>

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# High Cholesterol = High Risk for Debilitating Diseases

**C**holesterol is a natural substance that the body produces through the liver. It's waxy and circulates through the blood stream, feeding the heart and brain. But when cholesterol is derived from foods like saturated fats and trans fats, the body over produces LDL, which is the "bad" cholesterol.

HDL is the "good" cholesterol. If we did not have HDL, our brains would not work properly, and we would suffer from other bodily disorders. The same holds true for too much bad, LDL cholesterol. If we have too much LDL, then it adversely affects our overall health.

### What numbers are healthy?

Your total Cholesterol is made up of LDL and HDL. There are blood tests that your physician will order to check your cholesterol level. The best combination of both types of cholesterol is HDL (good) around 40 and LDL (bad) around 100.

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL	
NORMAL	<150
BORDERLINE	150-200
HIGH	200 or higher

### What are the Risk Factors?

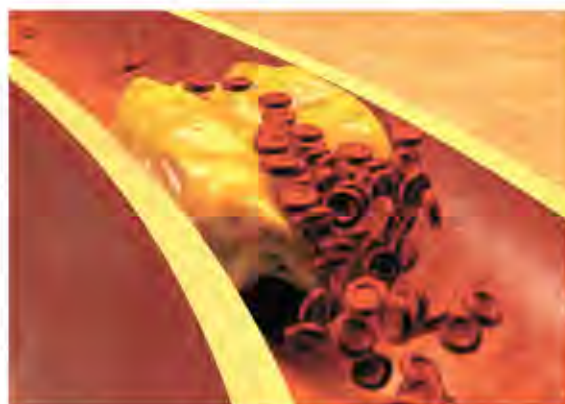
Cholesterol along with another substance in the blood can form atherosclerosis, which is the plaque that builds up in the arteries. If you have excessive plaque, then you are at high risk of having a coronary heart attack, heart disease, stroke and other disease related issues. Triglycerides are the fat that is stored in the bloodstream from the excess fat in our diets. Triglycerides are what combine with the high LDL level and create harmful plaque build up.

### What you can do

Because much of the high degree of cholesterol is associated with our food intake and our body's inability to burn fat, you can do many things to help lower your cholesterol naturally.

- Eating healthy diet
- Stop smoking (contributes to atherosclerosis)
- Start an exercise program
- Cut back on alcohol and processed foods

You should have an annual exam with your physician to check your cholesterol levels on a regular basis. If you have a high lipid count, your doctor will prescribe medication (statins) for you to help lower the total level. In addition to statins, you can change your diet to get your levels to drop more rapidly.



### Foods to incorporate

A big part of lowering your LDL or low-density lipoprotein is through adding soluble fiber, omega 3 fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids or MUFAs, powerful antioxidants and lutein to your diet. Some of the following foods listed below can literally lower your "bad" cholesterol levels by 5-10% within just a few weeks. But in order for these nutrients to make the most efficient decrease in your cholesterol, you must adhere to an overall healthy diet. You can't eat fried chicken and then eat an apple and think you'll get the benefit. You'll need to make a plan to eliminate the processed foods in your diet.

### Cholesterol Lowering Foods

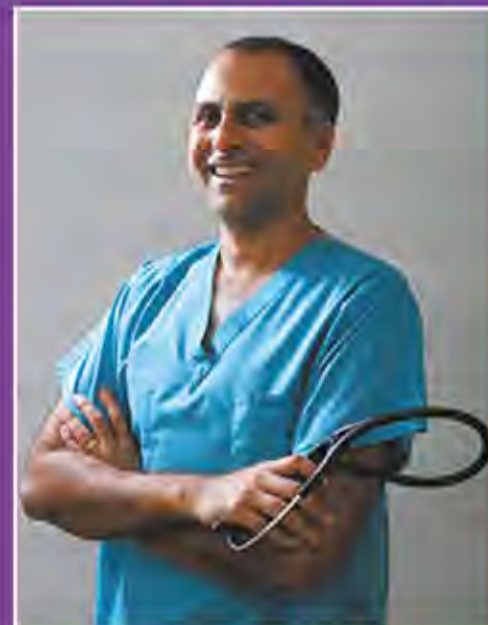
- Garlic
- Oatmeal and Oat bran
- Pears
- Apples
- Prunes
- Beans
- Red wine
- Fatty fish (salmon and sardines)
- Nuts
- Black tea
- Spinach
- Olive Oil

It's always best to speak directly with your physician before completely changing your diet or exercise program. Your doctor will construct a precise plan to suit your specific needs and incorporate some of the foods mentioned above along with a coordinated lifestyle strategy.

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# Work(out) Smarter, Not Harder with Emsculpt NEO

By Dr. Tina Chandra

If you could lose fat and gain muscle without working out and see results in around 2 months, would you do it? Is it possible? Is there technology that can sculpt the body and make us look better? It's not a dream. The day has finally arrived!

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

## How does Emsculpt NEO work?

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

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

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

## What can I expect in an Emsculpt NEO session?

During a 30-minute session, an applicator is strapped to the area being treated, the abdomen, for example. The technician then slowly increases the RF heat and the HIFEM pulsing depending on the client's comfort level. Throughout each session and in future sessions, the applicator will get warmer and the pulses will increase in intensity.

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

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**+25%** MORE Muscle on average

Try new **Edge Treatment** today to treat four fat spots and all oblique muscles in just 30 minutes.

## What areas can be treated?

According to the brand website, Emsculpt NEO is intended to be used on the "abdomen. It is cleared for improvement of abdominal tone, strengthening of the abdominal muscles and development of firmer abdomen, along with the strengthening, toning and firming of buttocks, thighs and calves, and improvement of muscle tone and firmness for strengthening muscles in the arms."

## What results can be expected?

Studies of the product have shown that clients see an average of 30% fat loss and an increase of 25% in muscle mass leaving a smaller waistline. The brand boasts a satisfaction rate of 88-100%.

## Is Emsculpt NEO too good to be true?

EMSCULPT NEO and the embedded high intensity magnetic field (HIFEM) technology have been clinically tested for safety and efficacy through seven clinical studies. Moreover, 30 scientific publications make HIFEM the most intensively researched body contouring technology since its introduction in 2018.

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



DR. TINA CHANDRA



DR. RAVI CHANDRA

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# NATIONAL ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH: Understanding and Managing Arthritis for a Healthier Future

By Dr. Nam Dinh, MD, FAAOS

**N**ational Arthritis Awareness Month is an important time to shed light on the various forms of arthritis that affect millions of people worldwide. From osteoarthritis to psoriatic arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, understanding these conditions is crucial for maintaining an active role in one's treatment journey. Let's delve into the details of these arthritis types and explore the importance of informed decision-making.

## 1. Exploring Arthritis Diversity: Types and Treatments

Arthritis is not a one-size-fits-all condition. There are different types, each with distinct causes, development patterns, and treatment strategies. Osteoarthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis are among the most well-known types. Learning about their unique characteristics can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their health.

## 2. The Burden of Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis stands as a widespread and debilitating condition, often striking individuals over the age of 65. This form of arthritis is characterized by the gradual breakdown of cartilage, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced joint mobility. While it is often linked to aging, it's important to recognize that it can impact anyone, regardless of age.

## 3. Unraveling Osteoarthritis

The wear and tear on our joints that occurs naturally over time is known as osteoarthritis. This irreversible condition is often a result of a combination of factors, including genetics, joint injuries, and lifestyle. Understanding the underlying mechanisms can help individuals take proactive steps to manage and mitigate its effects.

## 4. Risk Factors: Age, Activity, and Weight

Certain factors increase the risk of developing advanced osteoarthritis. Older individuals are more susceptible due to the cumulative effects of joint wear over time. Highly active individuals might experience accelerated joint deterioration, especially if their activities involve repetitive stress on specific joints. Additionally, excess weight places added strain on joints, contributing to the development of osteoarthritis.



## 5. Surgical Interventions for Osteoarthritis

In severe cases of osteoarthritis where conservative treatments are insufficient, surgical interventions become necessary. Total hip and knee replacements are common procedures that involve removing damaged joint components and replacing them with prosthetics designed to restore function and alleviate pain. These surgeries have the potential to significantly enhance an individual's quality of life.

## 6. Muscle-Sparing Techniques: Enhancing Recovery

Modern medical advancements have led to muscle-sparing surgical techniques that benefit patients undergoing joint replacement. By preserving major muscle groups during surgery, patients experience quicker recovery times and improved independence. These techniques contribute to faster post-surgery mobility, facilitating rehabilitation and a smoother transition to an active lifestyle.

As National Arthritis Awareness Month approaches, take the opportunity to educate yourself and others about the importance of understanding and managing arthritis. By distinguishing between different types of arthritis and recognizing the factors that contribute to their development, individuals can make informed choices to optimize their well-being.

Whether you're dealing with the challenges of osteoarthritis, psoriatic arthritis, or rheumatoid arthritis,

remember that knowledge is your greatest ally. Participate actively in discussions with healthcare providers to create tailored treatment plans that consider your unique health status, diagnosis, and support system. By being proactive and well-informed, you can embark on a journey towards better joint health and an improved quality of life.

### About Dr. Nam Dinh

Dr. Nam Dinh is a board-certified, fellowship trained orthopedic surgeon at Optimotion Orthopaedics with special training in minimally invasive LATERAL total knee replacement ANTERIOR hip replacement surgery. To learn more information about Dr. Dinh visit [optimotion.com](http://optimotion.com).



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# What is Cholesterol:

## Its Role, Health Risks, and Management

Samuel Alfano, D.O.

**C**holesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in every cell of the body. It plays a crucial role in building cell membranes, producing hormones like estrogen and testosterone, and synthesizing Vitamin D. While cholesterol is essential for various bodily functions, high levels of certain types of cholesterol can pose significant health risks, including heart disease and stroke. It's important to understand the intricacies of cholesterol, including the different types. By understanding cholesterol and what it is, you can determine its potential health risks and ways to maintain safe and healthy levels.

### What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is carried through the bloodstream by lipoproteins, which are essentially a combination of fats (lipids) and proteins. There are two primary types of lipoproteins that carry cholesterol:

**1. Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL):** Often referred to as "bad" cholesterol, LDL cholesterol is considered harmful because it can lead to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, causing atherosclerosis—a condition characterized by narrowed and hardened arteries. You want your LDL cholesterol to be low.

**2. High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL):** Known as "good" cholesterol, HDL cholesterol helps remove LDL cholesterol from the arteries and transport it to the liver for disposal. High levels of HDL are associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

**Tip:** Remember that LDL cholesterol is bad by thinking of the "L" for low, while HDL is good with the "H" for high.

### Health Risks Associated with High Cholesterol Levels

Elevated levels of LDL cholesterol are a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. When LDL cholesterol builds up in the walls of arteries, it can form plaque, which narrows the arteries and restricts blood flow. This increases the risk of blood clots, heart attacks, and strokes. Additionally, high levels of triglycerides, another type of fat found in the blood, can also contribute to cardiovascular disease.



Here are some of the primary health risks associated with high cholesterol levels:

**1. Atherosclerosis:** The buildup of plaque in the arteries can lead to atherosclerosis, a condition that restricts blood flow and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

**2. Heart Disease:** High cholesterol levels are a significant risk factor for coronary artery disease, which occurs when plaque builds up in the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle.

**3. Stroke:** Blocked or narrowed arteries due to plaque buildup can impede blood flow to the brain, increasing the risk of stroke.

**4. Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD):** Atherosclerosis can also affect arteries outside of the heart and brain, leading to PAD, which causes reduced blood flow to the limbs, particularly the legs. This is a common risk factor for people who also suffer from diabetes.

### Maintaining Healthy Cholesterol Levels

Managing cholesterol levels is crucial for reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Here are some strategies to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels:

**1. Healthy Diet:** Adopting a diet low in saturated and trans fats can help lower LDL cholesterol levels. Instead, focus on consuming foods rich in unsaturated fats, such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil. Increasing dietary fiber intake from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can also help lower cholesterol levels.

**2. Regular Exercise:** Engaging in regular physical activity can help raise HDL cholesterol levels and lower LDL cholesterol levels. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or cycling, each week.

**3. Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Being overweight can contribute to elevated cholesterol levels. Losing excess weight through a combination of diet and exercise can help improve cholesterol levels.

**4. Quit Smoking:** Smoking can lower HDL cholesterol levels and damage the walls of blood vessels. Quitting smoking can help improve cholesterol levels and overall cardiovascular health.

**5. Limit Alcohol Consumption:** Excessive alcohol intake can raise triglyceride levels and contribute to weight gain. Limit alcohol consumption to moderate levels, which is defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.

**6. Medication:** In some cases, lifestyle changes alone may not be sufficient to lower cholesterol levels adequately. In such instances, healthcare providers may prescribe cholesterol-lowering medications.

### Manage Cholesterol Levels for Better Health

Cholesterol plays a vital role in various bodily functions, but elevated levels of LDL cholesterol can significantly increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Managing cholesterol levels through lifestyle modifications, including diet and exercise, is essential for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Additionally, it's important to work with a primary care provider to establish a wellness plan to monitor and manage your cholesterol. Contact a VIPcare provider today and start your journey to lower cholesterol and *Better Health!* Call 352-268-9841 to schedule your appointment.

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# The Importance of Bladder Wellness as We Age

**A**s we celebrate Healthy Aging Month, it's crucial to focus on the key aspects of aging well. While many of us pay attention to heart health, brain function, and joint mobility, one often overlooked yet essential component of overall health is bladder wellness. As we age, maintaining bladder health becomes increasingly important for preserving our quality of life and independence.

## Understanding the Aging Bladder

The bladder, like other organs in our body, undergoes natural changes as we age. These changes can include decreased bladder capacity, weakened bladder muscles, and alterations in bladder lining and nerve function. While these changes are a normal part of aging, they can lead to various bladder-related issues that become more common in older adults.

Some of the most prevalent bladder-related problems in seniors include urinary tract infections (UTIs), overactive bladder (OAB), and, in men, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Understanding these conditions and taking proactive steps to maintain bladder health can significantly impact overall well-being and quality of life.

## Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

UTIs become more common as we age due to several factors. A weakened immune system, incomplete bladder emptying, and post-menopausal changes in women all contribute to an increased risk of UTIs in older adults. These infections can cause discomfort, pain, and if left untreated, can lead to more serious complications.

Fortunately, there are several preventative measures that can help reduce the risk of UTIs. Staying well-hydrated and maintaining proper hygiene are essential first steps. Additionally, natural supplements like Utiva Cranberry PACs can provide extra support in maintaining urinary tract health. Regular check-ups with healthcare providers and early treatment of any symptoms are also crucial in managing UTIs effectively.

## Overactive Bladder (OAB)

Overactive bladder is another common issue that affects many older adults. Symptoms of OAB include a frequent and sudden urge to urinate, often accompanied by involuntary urine leakage. This condition can significantly impact daily life, causing sleep disturbances due to nocturia (night-time urination) and leading to social embarrassment and isolation.



Managing OAB often involves a combination of lifestyle changes and medical interventions. Bladder training exercises and pelvic floor strengthening can help improve bladder control. Adjusting fluid intake, particularly reducing caffeine and alcohol consumption, can also alleviate symptoms. For some individuals, medications may be necessary. Natural supplements like Utiva Bladder Health can also provide support in managing OAB symptoms.

## Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)

For aging men, benign prostatic hyperplasia is a common concern. This condition involves the enlargement of the prostate gland, which can lead to various bladder issues. Symptoms of BPH include a weak urine stream, increased urgency to urinate, and incomplete bladder emptying.

Addressing BPH starts with regular screenings and tests to monitor prostate health. Lifestyle changes, including a healthy diet, regular exercise, and stress management, can help manage symptoms. Treatment options range from medications to minimally invasive procedures, depending on the severity of the condition. Natural supplements like Utiva Prostate Health can also play a role in supporting prostate function and overall urinary health in men.

## The Importance of Proactive Bladder Care

Taking a proactive approach to bladder health is essential as we age. Early detection and intervention can prevent complications and help preserve quality of life. By incorporating bladder wellness into our daily routines, we can make a significant difference in our overall health and well-being.

Simple steps like staying hydrated, practicing good hygiene, and maintaining a healthy diet can go a long way in supporting bladder health. Regular exercise, including pelvic floor strengthening exercises, can also help maintain bladder function.

Natural supplements can play a valuable role in supporting bladder health. Products like those offered by Utiva provide safe and effective options for both prevention and management of common bladder issues. These supplements can complement other healthy lifestyle choices and medical treatments when necessary.

It's important to emphasize the connection between bladder health and overall well-being. Bladder issues can impact sleep, social interactions, physical activity, and mental health. By prioritizing bladder wellness, we're not just addressing a single aspect of health – we're contributing to our overall quality of life.

As we observe Healthy Aging Month, let's remember to include bladder health in our conversations about aging well. By understanding the changes our bodies undergo, recognizing common bladder-related issues, and taking proactive steps to maintain bladder wellness, we can enjoy a higher quality of life as we age. Remember, it's never too late to start prioritizing your bladder health – small changes today can lead to significant benefits in the years to come.

For more information, visit Utiva's webpage.  
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# PROMOTING MEN'S HEALTH: SEPTEMBER IS PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS AND SEXUAL WELLNESS MONTH

September marks two important health observances: Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and Sexual Health Month. This dual focus provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the interconnected nature of prostate health and sexual well-being, while encouraging men to take proactive steps in managing their overall health.

## Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men worldwide. In the United States alone, it's estimated that about one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. This month-long campaign aims to increase public awareness about the disease, promote early detection, and support those affected by prostate cancer.

The prostate is a small gland located below the bladder that plays a crucial role in male reproductive health. As men age, the risk of developing prostate cancer increases, making regular screenings essential for early detection and successful treatment.

Key aspects of prostate cancer awareness include:

- 1. Risk factors:** Age, family history, and ethnicity can influence a man's likelihood of developing prostate cancer. African American men and those with a family history of the disease are at higher risk.
- 2. Symptoms:** Early-stage prostate cancer often has no symptoms. As the disease progresses, men may experience difficulty urinating, blood in urine or semen, erectile dysfunction, or bone pain.
- 3. Screening:** Regular prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests and digital rectal exams (DRE) can help detect prostate cancer in its early stages when it's most treatable.
- 4. Treatment options:** Depending on the cancer's stage and aggressiveness, treatments may include active surveillance, surgery, radiation therapy, hormone therapy, or chemotherapy.
- 5. Lifestyle factors:** Maintaining a healthy diet, regular exercise, and avoiding smoking may help reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer.

## Sexual Health Month

Sexual Health Month focuses on promoting overall sexual well-being, addressing both physical and emotional aspects of sexuality. This observance encourages open conversations about sexual health, emphasizing the importance of education, prevention, and seeking medical care when needed.

Key areas of focus for Sexual Health Month include:

- 1. Safe sex practices:** Promoting the use of barrier methods like condoms to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies.
- 2. Regular STI testing:** Encouraging routine screening for STIs, especially for sexually active individuals or those with multiple partners.
- 3. Consent and healthy relationships:** Fostering discussions about the importance of mutual consent and respect in sexual relationships.
- 4. Reproductive health:** Addressing issues related to fertility, contraception, and family planning.
- 5. Sexual dysfunction:** Raising awareness about common sexual health issues like erectile dysfunction, low libido, and premature ejaculation, and encouraging men to seek medical advice when needed.

## The Intersection of Prostate Health and Sexual Well-being

Prostate health and sexual function are closely linked, making it crucial to address both aspects simultaneously. Prostate cancer and its treatments can significantly impact a man's sexual health, potentially leading to issues such as erectile dysfunction or reduced libido.

Conversely, maintaining good sexual health can contribute to overall prostate health. Regular ejaculation has been associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer in some studies, although more research is needed to fully understand this relationship.

## Taking Action for Better Health

As we observe both Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and Sexual Health Month, men are encouraged to take the following steps:

- 1. Schedule a check-up:** Book an appointment with a healthcare provider to discuss prostate cancer screening and overall sexual health.
- 2. Stay informed:** Educate yourself about prostate cancer risk factors, symptoms, and prevention strategies.
- 3. Practice safe sex:** Use barrier methods and get regular STI testing to protect your sexual health.
- 4. Communicate openly:** Discuss any concerns about sexual health or prostate issues with your partner and healthcare provider.
- 5. Adopt a healthy lifestyle:** Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and avoid harmful habits like smoking.
- 6. Support others:** Reach out to friends and family members who may be affected by prostate cancer or experiencing sexual health issues.

## Conclusion

September's dual focus on prostate cancer awareness and sexual health serves as a vital reminder of the importance of men's overall well-being. By addressing these interconnected aspects of health, we can work towards reducing the impact of prostate cancer and improving sexual wellness for men of all ages.

As individuals, healthcare providers, and communities, we must continue to promote open dialogue, encourage regular check-ups, and support those affected by prostate cancer or sexual health issues. By doing so, we can create a healthier, more informed society that prioritizes men's health and well-being throughout the year.



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## SUMTER SENIOR LIVING

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### *Aging Actively With Grace*

September is the perfect time to reflect on your health and wellness as we observe asthma, stroke, and arthritis awareness weeks, as well as World Alzheimer's Month. During this month we take the time to educate others not only on awareness, but also on important prevention measures that help guard your physical and mental well-being as you age actively and with grace.

Graceful aging is something Sumter Senior Living knows a thing or two about. Located in The Villages® community, Sumter offers daily wellness, cultural, and educational programs—helping those across the care spectrum age actively with services, amenities, and a community lifestyle catered to your needs.

Take care of your health in our Fitness Center and indoor, heated therapy pool. Explore enriching interests at the Library, Theater, and Arts and Crafts Studio. Enjoy time with friends. You'll feel the joy right away at Sumter Senior Living—with Florida sunshine, caring associates, and friendly neighbors—because our community embodies the mission of aging actively year-round.

#### **GROWING TOGETHER**

While staying active can often seem like an individual activity, the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health has proved otherwise. According to the report, when families strive to be healthy together, the success rate increases. But whether you participate with kin or merely a chosen group of companions doesn't make a difference; the benefit comes from jointly encouraging one another to incorporate exercise and healthy dietary choices into the group's lifestyle. This sense of community creates a celebratory atmosphere that motivates change in a fun, engaging way.

As you age, it becomes increasingly important to prioritize your overall health and well-being, and staying physically active is a key aspect of maintaining a higher quality of life. Engaging in regular exercise and physical activities offers numerous benefits, both physical and mental. According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA), regular physical activity helps seniors maintain and improve their physical health, playing a vital role in:

**Enhancing cardiovascular fitness:** Engaging in activities such as walking, swimming, or cycling helps strengthen the heart, improve blood circulation, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

**Improving flexibility and mobility:** Stretching exercises, yoga, or tai chi help to increase flexibility, maintain joint health, and prevent stiffness or pain.

**Strengthening bones and muscles:** Incorporating resistance training or weightlifting helps improve muscle strength and enhance bone density, thereby reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures.

But the benefits of physical activity go more than "skin deep." The NIA stresses how staying active also plays a significant role in improving mental and emotional well-being, explaining that regular physical activities can:

**Enhance mood and reduce stress:** Exercise releases endorphins—the body's natural feel-good chemicals—which help combat stress, anxiety, and depression.

**Boost cognitive function:** Physical activities stimulate brain activity, improve memory, and enhance cognitive abilities, reducing the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

**Promote social interaction:** Participating in group exercises or community activities provides opportunities for social interaction, preventing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

So, let's prioritize our well-being and embrace an active lifestyle as we age. It's never too late to start reaping the rewards that regular exercise offers.



#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Sometimes, even when we know what we need to do to stay healthy, getting started can be hard—intimidating, even. Which is where senior living comes in. As part of a community, such as Sumter Senior Living, you gain the camaraderie of like-minded individuals who can support you in pursuing your health and wellness goals. According to The American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA), senior living communities play a crucial role in reducing social isolation among older adult residents, thus limiting the risk of negative health effects and promoting critical social connections that contribute to overall quality of life.

From exercise and wellness to adventures in the larger community, Sumter provides great sources for laughter, connection, and friendship—and includes those ideals in everything we do. Because at Sumter Senior Living, we understand the importance of nurturing your physical, emotional, and mental health now and as you age.

#### **A PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG**

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

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



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



## 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.

### Meet Dr. Okolie: A Leader in Hypertension Research

Leading our hypertension research efforts at Synexus is Dr. Okolie, the current Medical Director of Synexus Clinical Research in The Villages. Dr. Okolie graduated from medical school in Ghana in 2005 and initially worked as a general practitioner. In 2009, she moved to the United States to further her specialty training. She became board certified in Internal Medicine and Obesity Medicine, demonstrating her commitment to providing comprehensive care in these areas.

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



## 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. Those who meet these criteria will receive payment for their participation, no-cost study-related care from local doctors, and no-cost study medication. This comprehensive support ensures that participants receive the best possible care throughout the trial period.

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# Protecting Your Vision

## The Surprising Link Between Cholesterol and Eye Health

By Thomas G. Ward, D.O.

**A**s September marks National Cholesterol Education Month, it's crucial to understand that high cholesterol doesn't just affect your heart—it can also significantly impact your vision. While most people associate cholesterol with cardiovascular health, few realize its important role in eye health. This connection underscores the importance of maintaining healthy cholesterol levels for overall well-being, including preserving your eyesight.

Cholesterol, a waxy substance found in your blood, is essential for building cell membranes and producing hormones. However, when levels become too high, it can lead to various health issues, including eye problems. The eyes, like other organs, rely on a network of blood vessels to function properly. When these vessels are compromised by high cholesterol, it can result in serious eye conditions that may threaten your vision.

One of the most common eye problems associated with high cholesterol is retinal vein occlusion. This condition occurs when cholesterol deposits block the veins that drain blood from the retina, leading to swelling, bleeding, and potential vision loss. The sudden onset of blurry vision in one eye is often the first sign of this condition, which requires immediate medical attention to prevent permanent damage.

Another concern is arcus senilis, a gray or white arc visible around the cornea's outer edge. While this condition is common in older adults and usually harmless, its presence in younger individuals can indicate high cholesterol levels. It serves as a visible reminder of the importance of regular cholesterol checks and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Perhaps most alarmingly, studies have shown a link between high cholesterol and an increased risk of developing age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in older adults, affecting the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision. While the exact mechanism is not fully understood, researchers believe that cholesterol buildup in the eye may contribute to the development and progression of this condition.

Fortunately, many of the steps you can take to lower your cholesterol also benefit your eye health. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help reduce bad cholesterol levels while



providing essential nutrients for eye health. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, sardines, and flaxseeds, are particularly beneficial for both cholesterol management and eye health.

Regular exercise is another crucial factor in maintaining healthy cholesterol levels and supporting eye health. Physical activity helps increase HDL (good) cholesterol while lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol. Moreover, exercise improves blood circulation throughout the body, including the eyes, which can help prevent vision problems.

Quitting smoking is also vital for both cholesterol management and eye health. Smoking not only lowers good cholesterol levels but also increases the risk of various eye diseases, including cataracts and AMD. If you smoke, consider seeking support to quit as part of your overall health improvement plan.

During National Cholesterol Education Month, it's an excellent time to schedule a comprehensive eye exam along with a cholesterol check. Many eye care professionals can detect signs of high cholesterol during a routine eye examination, potentially catching issues before they become more serious. These exams can include dilated eye exams, which allow your doctor to examine the blood vessels in your retina for signs of cholesterol buildup or other issues.

If you're prescribed cholesterol-lowering medications, such as statins, it's important to take them as directed. Some studies have suggested that statins may have additional benefits for eye health, potentially reducing the risk of certain eye conditions. However, always consult with your healthcare provider about the best treatment plan for your individual needs.

In conclusion, the connection between cholesterol and eye health highlights the importance of a holistic approach to health care. By maintaining healthy cholesterol levels through diet, exercise, regular check-ups, and appropriate medical interventions, you're not just protecting your heart—you're also safeguarding your vision. This National Cholesterol Education Month, take proactive steps to lower your cholesterol and keep your eyes healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for the clear vision ahead, allowing you to fully enjoy life's precious moments with sharp, vibrant sight.

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

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# COSMETIC DENTISTRY IS MORE THAN A PRETTY SMILE

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSM

**C**osmetic dentistry, also known as esthetic dentistry, is the method of dentistry that improves a patient's smile and self-image. Having a beautiful smile and strong teeth are essential for aesthetics and overall health. An attractive smile, or lack thereof, affects your oral health. Self-confidence and how the world perceives you on the outside are important to our mental health. This is because a person's smile is usually the first feature anyone notices.

Esthetic procedures include dental veneers and teeth whitening. Dental crowns, dental bonding, dental implants, inlays and onlays, and dentures are all restorative dental treatments. Dental veneers are the most requested treatment because they can correct tooth discoloration, teeth crowding, and teeth gaps.

## DENTAL VENEERS

Dental veneers are a popular method of correcting tooth imperfections such as misalignment, gaps, stains, and minor chipping. Made of a strong porcelain material designed for long-term wear, they can also reshape teeth and create beautifully symmetrical smiles that look and feel natural. Properly cared for, porcelain veneers can last for decades.

## TEETH WHITENING

Professional teeth whitening is a safe, effective, non-invasive, and long-lasting cosmetic option. With laser teeth whitening, you can see results in one treatment here in our Laurel Manor Dental and SleepCare office. Another option is to whiten your teeth at home. Your custom home whitening kit includes specialized trays that will be customized to fit over your teeth. We provide professional-grade whitening gel to insert into your tray before wearing it. Your dentist will tell you how long to wear the tray each day, and you will have a bright white smile within two to four weeks.

## DENTAL CROWNS

Dental crowns are caps placed on top of damaged teeth. Crowns are used to protect, cover, and restore the shape of your teeth when fillings don't solve the problem. Dental crowns can be made from metals, porcelain, resin, and ceramics. They typically don't require special care over time other than regular good oral hygiene. As we age, our teeth can get damaged. This can happen for a variety of reasons, like tooth decay, injuries, or just regular use. Your teeth can lose their shape or size. Think of the cap as a snug hat for your tooth. The crown restores the tooth's shape, size, strength, and appearance. The dental crown is cemented into place on your tooth, and it covers the visible portion of the tooth.

## DENTAL BONDING

Dental bonding, sometimes called composite bonding or teeth bonding, is a procedure where your dentist applies tooth-colored resin material to the affected teeth to change their shape, size, or color. Dental bonding is less

painful than other treatments because your dentist won't be working anywhere close to the pain-sensing nerve inside your tooth. In most cases, anesthesia isn't even necessary during dental bonding. Dental bonding is the most cost-effective and fastest fix of cosmetic imperfections. However, dental bonding isn't as stain resistant as porcelain crowns or veneers and can chip and crack over time with normal wear and tear.

## DENTAL IMPLANTS

Dental implants are artificial tooth roots that provide a permanent base for fixed, replacement teeth. Implants are a long-term solution for people who suffer from missing teeth, failing teeth, or chronic dental problems. Implants can be one tooth or a group of teeth depending on need. Because they fit, function, and feel like natural teeth, dental implants are the gold standard in tooth replacement. Doctors use a titanium anchor screw that over time, fuses to the living bone cells of the jaw. This union forms a strong and durable anchor for your new teeth, meaning there's no slippage movement. This makes implants more secure than dentures. Eating with dental implants is also more secure and sanitary than dentures because they are not removable.

## INLAYS AND ONLAYS

Inlays and onlays are indirect dental restorations. They are made outside of your mouth in a laboratory. An inlay or onlay is typically used when a cavity is too large for a simple filling. Inlays and onlays can be made of gold, composite, or ceramic materials. Inlays and onlays are more resistant to fractures and damage than traditional cavity fillings, stain-resistant and durable.

## DENTURES

Dentures are an affordable tooth replacement option for those who are not a good candidate for implants. Dentures provide facial support, improved nutrition, and improved confidence. Dentures can be a full set or a partial that replaces a group of teeth generally from an injury. Some dentures are designed to improve a person's bite, eliminating headaches, jaw pain, and other TMJ symptoms. The bases of most removable dentures today are made of polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA) and the teeth themselves can be made of PMMA or ceramic material like that used for porcelain veneers.

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In addition to our experienced and caring team, we feel that our advanced technology makes Laurel Manor Dental and SleepCare the top choice for your dental needs. We carefully choose the latest dental tech and tools to increase patient comfort and expand our ability to provide advanced dentistry to our patients.

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

## Meet Dr. Rozensky

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

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

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# Achieving Healthy Aging:

## Balancing Wellness and Financial Security

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

In today's world, aging is not just about reaching a certain age; it's about maintaining vitality, independence, and happiness throughout our later years. A key component of aging well involves not only taking care of our physical and mental health but also ensuring our financial stability. This article explores the essential relationship between healthy aging and sound financial planning, illustrating how they intersect to pave the way for a secure and fulfilling retirement.

### The Pillars of Healthy Aging

Healthy aging encompasses various aspects of life that contribute to overall well-being and longevity:

- **Physical Health:** Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and routine health screenings are crucial for maintaining physical fitness and preventing age-related illnesses.
- **Mental Well-being:** Engaging in cognitive activities, social interactions, and managing stress effectively promote mental acuity and emotional resilience.
- **Social Connections:** Strong relationships with family, friends, and community foster a sense of belonging and support, which are vital for mental and emotional health.
- **Purpose and Engagement:** Pursuing hobbies, volunteer work, or lifelong learning keeps individuals active, engaged, and fulfilled.

### The Importance of Financial Stability

Financial security is fundamental to enjoying a worry-free retirement and supporting a healthy aging process:

- **Peace of Mind:** Having sufficient savings and investments allows retirees to focus on enjoying life without the stress of financial uncertainty.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Adequate funds ensure access to quality healthcare services, essential for managing health conditions and maintaining well-being.
- **Maintaining Independence:** Financial stability enables retirees to make choices that align with their preferences and needs, supporting independence and autonomy.



### Planning for a Secure Retirement

Planning early and wisely for retirement is essential to achieving financial security in later years. Obtaining expert guidance is crucial to navigate the complexities of retirement planning:

- **Financial Assessment:** Evaluate current financial status, including savings, investments, pensions, and potential retirement income sources.
- **Setting Goals:** Define retirement goals, such as desired lifestyle, travel plans, healthcare needs, and legacy considerations.
- **Creating a Strategy:** Develop a personalized retirement plan that includes savings goals, investment strategies, and risk management to achieve long-term financial security.
- **Monitoring and Adjusting:** Regularly review and adjust the retirement plan as circumstances change, ensuring it remains aligned with evolving goals and market conditions.

### The Interplay Between Health and Wealth

The correlation between financial stability and healthy aging is profound and interconnected:

- **Reduced Stress:** Financial security alleviates stress and anxiety, contributing to better overall mental and physical health.
- **Quality of Life:** Adequate financial resources enable retirees to engage in activities they enjoy, maintain social connections, and pursue personal interests, enhancing their quality of life.

- **Long-Term Care:** Planning for potential healthcare needs and long-term care costs ensures peace of mind and protects retirement assets from unexpected expenses.

### Conclusion

As individuals live longer and healthier lives, the importance of integrating health and financial planning becomes increasingly evident. Securenet Financial LLC is committed to helping clients achieve a secure and prosperous retirement through comprehensive financial advice and tailored solutions. By prioritizing both health and wealth, individuals can navigate their golden years with confidence, enjoying the rewards of a well-lived life.

Remember, aging is a journey that can be enriched through proactive planning and a commitment to holistic well-being. Start planning today to ensure a future filled with vitality, independence, and financial security.

For more information on how Securenet Financial LLC can assist you in planning for a secure retirement, visit [SecurenetFinancial.com](https://www.securenetfinancial.com).

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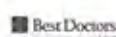
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# Comparing Assisted Living To a Shiny New Car

By Janice Martin, Owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida

I got a call from a daughter who had received a 45 day move out notice from the assisted living community where her father lived because dad needed more care than they could provide. After learning more about the circumstances, I explained that his needs could indeed be met in assisted living. However, he needed a community with a higher level of licensing. There are actually different licenses that dictate how much hands-on nursing care a community can provide.

A Standard License is suitable for those needing minimal assistance with activities of daily living. Most communities have this license. The care is provided by CNAs and caregivers and does not require a nurse in the building. Too often, people realize after moving to a community with a standard license that neither a caregiver nor a nurse may change a bandage regardless of the size of the bandage. The restrictions of the license will not allow them.

A Limited Nursing License (LNS) will have nurses in the community, but not necessarily 24 hours a day. They are permitted to apply and change bandages, assist with oxygen, casts, self-maintained catheters, glucose testing and more. The highest level is an Extended Congregate Care License (ECC). They can do everything a standard license and LNS license allows, plus provide total help with all activities of daily living and any nursing service permitted within the scope of their license that's authorized by a physician. Those who believe their loved one needs a nursing home are surprised to learn that the care can often be met in an LNS or ECC license community. However, although caregivers and CNAs are in the building, none are required to have a nurse 24/7. Often, the nurse is at home on call from 10PM to 7AM.

Let's get back to my earlier example. The community where her father lived has a standard license. I suggested two communities with an LNS license and what made one community different from the other. It was not the quality of care, but the culture of the community. One had more active residents and participation than the other, which I understood was important to her father.

She visited both LNS communities. She also stopped into a standard license community that was close to her home, but she was not familiar with their license nor anything else about them. However, the



community is shiny and newer than the others, with residents who are more active because they don't have as many care needs as residents in an older community. However, the truth is at the end of the day the community is not licensed to provide any more care than where her father currently lived. The daughter was wowed by the way it looked and ignored the limits of the care that could be provided. A few months from now, if her dad declines, she may find herself in the same situation and may need to find a new community because her dad's needs are again not being met.

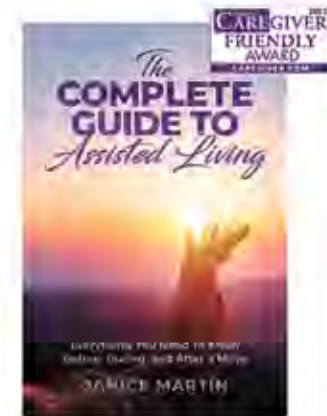
As another example, a husband called because his wife was in rehab and due to be discharged. He is unable to provide the advanced care that she needs at home, and he didn't know where to look. I suggested a short term stay at an LNS community with 24 hour nurses in the building where she could continue to receive therapy with the goal to possibly returning home. Sadly, she was denied after the nurse met with her and observed that she does not meet the assisted living admission criteria, regardless of the license level, of being able to transfer without any devices, or to stand, bear weight, and pivot.

However, another placement company inappropriately referred a community to him that has a standard license. He visited the community and was told that they would accept her despite the fact that they had not met with her to witness her actual care needs. The community made their determination on what they were told, not observed. I tried in vain to help the husband understand that the standard license community could not possibly meet her needs and suggested other options beyond assisted living. Sadly, he listened to their promises and decided to move her there because the community is "so pretty."

It does not matter what the community looks like! Don't look at the shiny features, the fancy lobby, and chandeliers. Consider their license and if they can truly meet your loved one's care needs. Look at the other similarly licensed communities and compare apples to apples.

If you are looking for a new car and one car dealer says their car has all the fancy features you want but lacks in the important safety features, you may not understand that it will not meet your family's needs unless you have someone with qualified knowledge to educate you. If you go to another car dealer and they tell you their car has all the important safety features, but doesn't have all the bells and whistles, which one will be more important to you for the safety of your family? One might be prettier and shinier than the other and the cost may be about the same, but which one will you want for your precious family's protection? Listen to someone with unbiased knowledge of the differences.

Choosing an appropriate assisted living is a very important decision. Please make certain your decision is based on solid facts that truly fit your loved one's care needs and not the pretty features.



*Janice Martin is an author, educator, and an unbiased 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](http://www.seniorliaisoncfl.com).*



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# Sports Injuries: Non-Surgical Treatment with Occupational/Hand Therapy

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**B**ecause we have the most beautiful weather all year long, in our sunshine state, older individuals are golfing, playing tennis, pickleball, kayaking, swimming, and the list goes on and on; but with all of this healthy activity, adults are more susceptible to injury and wear and tear.

## Tennis Elbow: Tendonitis (Tennis, Golf, etc.)

The same sentiment holds true with elbow injuries. Elbow tendonitis results in a ligament laxity component that if unaddressed, causes the issue to become chronic. The tendon will continue to become inflamed during sports and other daily activities because the muscles are overcompensating for ligament laxity. Instead of surgery, there is another treatment option.

## Pickleball Injuries

Many sports-related injuries are putting players in quite the predicament. Oddly enough, most of these injuries are taking place in the wrist and hands. According to the USAPA (USA Pickleball Association), 70% of the participants playing pickleball are over the age of 60. That's a lot of seniors out there enjoying this exciting sport, but that also means that there are more injuries needing medical attention. The same holds true for many other sports and outdoor activities. Ballistic movements or quick side to side, lateral transitioning, are very often what lead to these injuries.



The most common of the two types of injuries are traumatic, so for all the exercise fanatics, weekend warriors or accident-prone individuals, the RICE method, along with NSAID's (aspirin or ibuprofen) should be your first line of defense if you've injured yourself. But along with this standard of care, any time you or a loved one experiences injury; you should consult a physician for a medical examination immediately to evaluate how severe your injury might be. Additionally, Occupational/Hand therapy should also be a first-line treatment.

## Occupational/Hand Therapy for Sports Injuries

With the right method of hand therapy exercises and stretching, you can regain control of your active lifestyle within a short period of time.

Masking your pain with pain medications is not the answer. Getting to the root cause of your condition is the key to healing your body and living the life you deserve.

Occupational/Hand therapy is the leading way to relieve pain and discomfort at its core for many individuals. Therapeutic manual stretching and exercising provide real results in controlling pain for countless patients. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) also launched new guidelines recently, recommending the use of physical therapy for chronic pain.

Patient & Occupational Education is critical to alleviate further injury and to promote the most efficacious healing. Coupled with at-home exercise guidelines and self-help management to promote and maintain independent function and increase mobility, Innovative Therapies Group has got you covered.

Occupational/Hand therapy is used to help with numerous indications and conditions like retraining the body to improve strength and so much more. There is no better way to alleviate pain, increase range-of-motion and live a more mobile higher quality of life than through physical and occupational hand therapy.

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# Pain Awareness Month: Managing Chronic Pain with Qutenza for Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy and Postherpetic Neuralgia

**A**s we observe Pain Awareness Month, it is crucial to highlight the millions of Americans who live with chronic pain and the strides in research and treatment that aim to alleviate their suffering. Chronic pain affects nearly 100 million Americans, with conditions like diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) significantly contributing to this burden. Among the various treatment options, Qutenza® (capsaicin) 8% topical system has emerged as a promising solution for managing neuropathic pain associated with these conditions.

## Understanding Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy and Postherpetic Neuralgia

### Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (DPN):

DPN is a common complication of diabetes, affecting up to 50% of patients throughout their disease. This condition results from prolonged high blood glucose levels that damage the nerves, particularly in the lower extremities. Symptoms often include burning, tingling, numbness, and sharp pains in the feet, which can severely impact a patient's quality of life.

### Postherpetic Neuralgia (PHN):

PHN is a complication of shingles (herpes zoster) that affects approximately 10-18% of individuals who develop shingles. It occurs when nerve fibers are damaged during the shingles outbreak, leading to persistent pain lasting for months or even years after the rash has healed. PHN is characterized by severe, debilitating pain that can be difficult to manage with standard pain medications.

### The Role of Qutenza in Managing Neuropathic Pain

Qutenza is a capsaicin 8% topical system specifically designed to treat neuropathic pain associated with DPN of the feet and PHN. Capsaicin, the active ingredient in Qutenza, is derived from chili peppers and works by desensitizing the pain receptors in the skin. This desensitization can provide significant relief from chronic neuropathic pain.

**Clinical Efficacy of Qutenza:** In clinical studies, Qutenza has demonstrated the ability to provide pain relief for up to three months in patients with diabetic and post-shingles nerve pain. Notably, Qutenza has been effective even in patients already on other pain management regimens, offering an additional layer of relief without the risk of significant drug interactions.

**Application and Effectiveness:** Qutenza is applied directly to the skin in a healthcare setting, where it remains in place for 30 minutes on the feet (for DPN) or 60 minutes on other areas (for PHN). Capsaicin penetrates the skin during this time and works on the pain receptors. The treatment is usually well-tolerated, though some patients may experience a burning sensation at the application site, which typically subsides after removing the patch.

### Benefits of Qutenza:

- **Long-lasting Relief:** Patients may experience pain relief for up to three months following a single application.
- **Non-systemic Treatment:** As a topical treatment, Qutenza does not enter the bloodstream, reducing the risk of systemic side effects and interactions with other medications.
- **Compatibility with Other Treatments:** Qutenza can be used alongside other pain management strategies, providing flexibility in treatment plans.

### Raising Awareness and Access to Treatment

Pain Awareness Month serves as a reminder of the importance of recognizing and addressing chronic pain conditions like DPN and PHN. For patients suffering from these debilitating conditions, Qutenza offers a targeted and effective option for managing pain and enhancing their quality of life.

Healthcare providers should educate patients about available treatments and ensure they have access to the most effective therapies. Raising awareness of Qutenza and its benefits can help more patients find relief from chronic neuropathic pain and improve their overall well-being.

As we continue to advocate for better pain management during Pain Awareness Month, it is vital to emphasize treatments like Qutenza that offer hope to those living with chronic neuropathic pain. With its proven efficacy and safety profile, Qutenza stands out as a valuable tool in the fight against the debilitating pain associated with DPN and PHN. If you or someone you know is struggling with chronic neuropathic pain, consult a healthcare provider to discuss whether Qutenza might be a suitable option.



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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:

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

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**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.

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

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

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## For the Gents: Supercharge with Male Hormone Replacement Therapy

Gentlemen, if you're feeling less like a superhero and more like a sidekick, testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) could be your secret weapon. Testosterone tends to drop around age 30, leading to lost muscle, extra fat, and low energy. But fear not! TRT, delivered via nifty little pellets or quick injections, can revive your mojo. These treatments mimic your body's natural rhythm, boosting muscle, mood, and libido. Regular check-ups ensure we keep you feeling fantastic and avoid any unwanted surprises.

## For the Ladies: Glam Up with Female Hormone Replacement Therapy

Ladies, don't let menopause steal your sparkle! HRT can be your ally in fighting hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and vaginal dryness. We've got estrogen or a mix of estrogen and testosterone pellets to keep you glowing or injections if that's your vibe. Plus, there's exciting news that starting HRT early might even boost your heart! We'll craft a treatment plan just for you, tailored to your unique needs and symptoms.

## Recharge Clinic's All-Inclusive Hormone Optimization

At Recharge Clinic, we believe in getting the full picture before diving into HRT. Here's how we make magic happen:

- **Blood Tests:** We check your testosterone, estrogen, progesterone, and other key players to fine-tune your levels.



- **Thyroid Function Tests:** Your thyroid's health is crucial for energy and metabolism. We ensure it's on point to keep your HRT working its best.
- **Customized Plans:** Based on your lab results and symptoms, we create a personalized HRT strategy, whether it's pellets, injections, or a combo.

## Follow-Up Fun: Why It's Key

HRT isn't a one-size-fits-all gig. Regular follow-ups are like pit stops on your journey to greatness. They help us adjust your treatment as needed, minimize side effects, and keep you thriving. Think of it as ongoing support for your adventure back to feeling fabulous.

## Additional Sexual Wellness Services Available at Recharge:

- Hormone Screenings
- Feminine Laser Rejuvenation
- Honeymoon Injection
- IV Infusion Add-ons
- Labial Puff
- Scream Cream
- Acoustic Wave Therapy for ED
- PRP shots for men and women

At Recharge Clinic, our experienced team will guide you through your therapy, ensuring it's both safe and effective. Ready to recharge your life and get back to feeling your best? Swing by Recharge Clinic and let's get you back on track!

## References:

- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/acoustic-wave-therapy/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/prp-therapy/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/honeymoon-injection/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/mini-and-maxi-labial-puff/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/o-shot-and-dermal-fillers-for-womens-health/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/add-on-boosts-custom-ivs/>
- <https://rechargeocalaclinic.com/services/feminine-rejuvenation/>



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47 SW 17th St, Suite A, Ocala, FL 34471

### Northwest Ocala

Marketplace at Ocala Shopping Center  
4417 NW Blitchton Rd, Ocala, FL 34482

### Lady Lake

Sunset Professional Plaza  
809 Co Rd 466 C 303, Lady Lake, FL 32159

### Southwest Ocala (Opening Fall of 2024)

Timber Ridge Commons  
9121 SW HWY 200, STE 1, Ocala, FL 34481

# CAREGIVING IMPACTS YOUR HEALTH

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

According to the 2023 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, the Alzheimer's Association reported that more than 11 million Americans provided unpaid care for people with Alzheimer's or other dementias. These caregivers provided an estimated 18 billion hours valued at \$340 billion. Additionally, 59% of these caregivers report that their own health has suffered due to care responsibilities with high or very high levels of emotional stress.

## Health of Caregivers Impacted

Most caregivers receive little or no support from their own families or other organizations and are basically on their own. There's been a growing trend over the last few decades of closing mental health facilities, early discharge of hospital patients, and implementation of managed care practices which causes a shift and burden to families and caregivers. This often results in financial loss, strain among families, and caregiver health issues that manifest due to increased stress.

Studies consistently show the following impacts on a caregiver's health:

- Higher levels of depression and depressive symptoms than in non-caregivers
- Depressed caregivers are more likely to have coexisting anxiety disorders, substance abuse or dependence



- Chronic stress in caregivers sometimes is associated with an increase in hypertension, inflammation and decreased immune function
- Caregivers who experience chronic stress may be at a greater risk for cognitive decline
- Caregivers report having a higher incidence of stress, weight gain, headaches, and back strain among other physical ailments and pain associated with caregiving

Women tend to be, more often than not, the primary caregivers. However, being a caregiver whether male or female affects your quality of life and increases the challenge of balancing your personal schedule with that of the intense, demanding focus needed to be a caregiver.

## Resources and Tips Available

Caregivers tend to put others first and themselves last. It's not uncommon to see the impact of ongoing stress from caregiving sometimes results in anger and

resentment. It's vitally important for caregivers to make sure they are taking care of themselves mentally, physically and socially. How can a caregiver take care of a loved one, if they are not being mindful of their own needs and health? Below are some resources and tips:

- Don't be afraid to ask for help from family members or close friends who could run errands
- Practice meditation and exercise to help relieve stress—set aside early morning or evening for yourself
- Do something socially just for you—see a movie, have lunch with friends
- Check into your office policies to see if you have family leave benefits

Call Hospice of Marion County for support from these programs:

**Transitions Program at (352) 854-5200** – This is a community supported volunteer-based resource with caregiver support groups, respite for the caregiver, providing assistance whether in homes or assisted living facilities.

**Nancy Renyhart Dementia Education Program at (352) 291-5138** – This program provides education for those caring for someone with dementia. It is provided at no charge and provides a three-hour workshop with tips and helpful caregiving resources, along with a Virtual Dementia Tour® that lets the caregiver experience dementia through the eyes of their loved one.



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# Arthritis and the Shift to Single-Story Living

By David Culbreth, Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

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

## The Strain of Multi-Level Homes:

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

## The Benefits of Single-Story Living:

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



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

## Making the Transition:

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



## David Culbreth

Senior Transitions Specialist, Realtor, SRES

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

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

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



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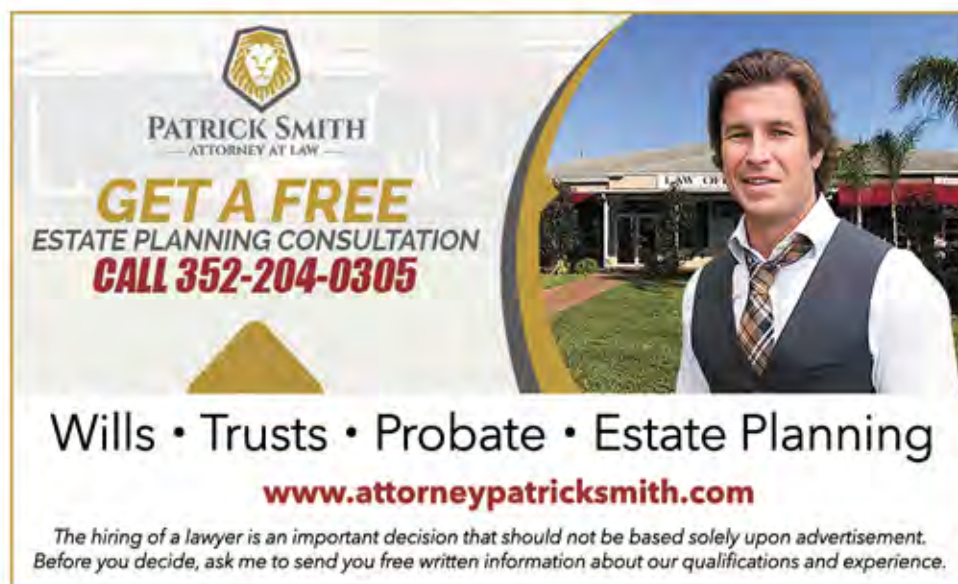


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# A Healthy Body = A Healthy Mind

By Brooklynn Curley, APRN-C

**L**ong ago; Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician, once said, "let thy food be thy medicine". This is a powerful quote that still holds true today. One of the few things in this life that we have control over is what we choose to fuel our bodies with. This decision alone can affect us in so many ways including our health, energy, performance, mind, body, and spirit. So let's dive in on some tips to help you become the best version of yourself.

## Digest This!!

Eating is one of America's favorite social pastimes. However, what we don't think about is what we consume and the digestion process that follows. Did you know the acid in our stomach is powerful enough to dissolve most metals? Our stomach is a chemical and mechanical machine. Its job is to break down the food for absorption of nutrients and storage for fuel. Water helps soften food and assists with easier digestion. Our body has a circadian clock that helps regulate our daily behaviors including but not limited to the sleep/wake cycle, hormone release, and heart function. Our body expects certain fuels like fats and sugars at certain times of the day. Random eating and mindless snacking overwork your stomach and can cause bloating and indigestion. Fiber for the win, as it passes through our body undigested and can help regulate our hunger sensation. This can be found in oats, peas, beans, carrots, etc. **KEY TIPS:** Eat every 3-5 hours smaller meals to process food and fuel the body. Chew your food since the chewing motion mixes with saliva (packed with digestive enzymes) and helps your body absorb the greatest amount of nutrients.

## Drink your Water!

When you want to reach for the diet coke, energy drink, sweet tea, or coffee....think again. Water is vital to the human body. It aids in the livelihood of cellular functions, digestion, and both mental and physical performance. The human body is roughly made up of 60% water. We are constantly losing water through urine, sweat, and even breathing. Assuring we have adequate water intake helps ensure all cells, tissues, and organs are functioning optimally. Adequate water intake energizes you and helps flush toxins out of your body. H<sub>2</sub>O is a lubricant for all joints helping produce synovial fluid



and cartilage which helps maintain healthy joints and smooth movements. The smallest amount of dehydration which amounts to a loss of water at 1-2% of your body weight can affect cognitive function, concentration, alertness, and physical performance and endurance. **KEY TIP:** Within 30 minutes of waking up, drink 12 oz water, which will help kick-start your metabolism for the day. Also, here in the Dermatology world...hydration is key for your immune system, and it can even help prevent acne. Adequate water helps keep your skin's microbiome strong and helps fight off acne-causing bacteria.

## Our health is in our hands. What does this mean?

Don't let 2024 be the year you fall into the fad diets and the crash diets. The theme for this year's national nutrition campaign is "Beyond the Table". I love this idea that addresses the farm-to-fork aspect of nutrition. This campaign helps address food production and distribution, how to navigate grocery stores and farmers markets, and how to implement home food safety and storage practices. Meal prepping, smart snacking, and tips and tricks to choosing foods is a great way to get your nutrition under control for you and your family. Here are some easy-to-follow guidelines. Be sure to choose salt-free seasoning and liquid aminos for flavor. Celery, carrots, and cucumbers are foods that you can eat as much as you want as they are full of fiber and help keep you full. Do not drink your calories, meaning say no to juices, milk, or sodas. With that being said, there is nothing wrong with balancing your nutrition and enjoying life. Alcohol consumption stops your body from burning fat. It decreases the digestive enzymes and inhibits the absorption of nutrients and the breakdown of food. Hence why, it is sometimes

forced to be stored as fat. **KEY TIP:** No sugary drinks and avoid drinking more than 1 night a week. Shop the outside of the grocery store first. Why? The outside perimeter of a grocery store is where you tend to find the freshest foods including produce, meat, and dairy. Your processed foods are typically in the center aisles. By shopping this way, you have better control over your diet's fat and sodium intake. Remember, processed foods contain preservatives or chemicals and additives to maintain shelf life.

## Midstate Skin Institute: Here for you.

What can we offer you to help you meet your 2024 goals? A former trainer of mine once said, "You can't workout a bad diet". That has stuck with me for years. Nutrition is the key to a healthier, longer, and more fulfilling life. I truly believe that having a supportive team behind you, you can achieve anything you want in life. We are happy to offer the latest and greatest lasers, ultrasounds, and medication management to help you get closer to your "health" goals. One of our services includes EMSCULPT NEO. This uses radio frequency and high-intensity electromagnetic energies to help with fat reduction and muscle growth. The main mechanism is heat, think about an intense warm-up before a workout. Clinical studies have shown a 30% reduction in subcutaneous fat. It is non-invasive and is only 30 minutes! Another service offered is Sofwave. This is a skin-tightening ultrasound approach. This can be used on all skin types and is also noninvasive. It is FDA-approved for short-term improvement of cellulite. This machine helps stimulate the production of new collagen and elastin helps reduce fine lines and wrinkles. We would love to consult with you and come up with a plan to help you achieve success.

## To sum it up...

As you can see, I am very passionate about nutrition and taking control of your life. It could be the former personal trainer in me but I LOVE helping others change their lives and feel their best from the inside out. This is why I LOVE Dermatology because our skin's health truly starts on the inside. Knowledge is power. Feed your brain, feed your soul, feed your body and you will be unstoppable. Until next time.... Brooklynn.



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# Hope and Optimism

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

**H**ope is confidence in God...not wishful thinking. To have hope is to trust in God to meet our needs...even in the midst of difficult times. When we do go through tough times our confidence in God can get a little rattled, as the Old Testament figure Job experienced. In the midst of his pain and heartache he cried out, *"Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?"* (Job. 17:15)

Ultimately, hope comes from God. The Scriptures say, *"May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13) Hope is an essential element of the Christian's life. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul included hope as one of the top three qualities of a person's life: *"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."* (1 Cor. 13:13)

As followers of Christ, we are called to be dispensers of hope. We should exude a confidence and trust in God that demonstrates that we have hope. Yet I pose the question, "Can a person be filled with hope without being filled with optimism?" According to the encyclopedia, optimism is "to anticipate the best possible outcome." Can we demonstrate hope in God without anticipating the best possible outcomes of the situations we face?

I believe we can. In fact, I think hope is best exemplified when it is demonstrated in the face of negative circumstances. There are many times when hope and optimism go hand in hand. David had both when he faced Goliath. He had confidence in God and he expected the best possible outcomes...Goliath's defeat and an Israelite victory over the Philistines. And yet, there are many examples of people who had hope in God but did not anticipate the best possible outcomes.

Simon Peter is a good example. He and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They had worked so hard and yet still had nothing to show for their labors. And then Jesus tells them to cast out the net one more time. Simon did not expect to catch any fish. He was pessimistic. But, he had confidence in Jesus, so he cast the net. Though the circumstances did not look promising, his hope in God made up for his lack of optimism.

Esther is another good example. She had confidence that God would ultimately provide deliverance for the Jews but as she prepared to go before the King she said, *"...I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"* (Esther 4:16) She demonstrated hope but not necessarily optimism.

The point is this: hope and optimism are not the same thing. You can still be hopeful even if you are not optimistic. You can still be a dispenser of hope even if you think you are going to face hard times ahead because you know that God will meet your needs.

Jesus didn't sound very optimistic when he said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (a rather pessimistic view); but be of good cheer (maintain your hope), I have overcome the world (which is the basis of our hope)."* (John 16:33)

Hope doesn't mean that the best possible situations will always occur, but it does mean that in some way God will bring something good or useful out of the situation. As we look into the future, we may not always be filled with optimism, but we must always be filled with hope...God is still in control!



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