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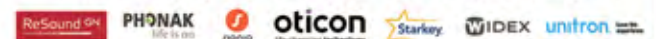
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UNDERSTANDING VENOUS LEG ULCERS: CAUSES, SYMPTOMS, AND TREATMENTS

We've all experienced minor cuts, scrapes, or bruises on our legs. In most cases, these injuries begin to heal within two weeks. However, if a wound on your leg seems to be worsening, increasing in size, or producing drainage, it could be a venous leg ulcer (VLU)—a condition requiring medical attention.

What Are Venous Leg Ulcers?

Venous leg ulcers are shallow wounds with uneven edges, often accompanied by swelling, redness, or itching in the surrounding skin. You may also feel heaviness, aching, or throbbing in your legs. Discolored patches around the wound are another common symptom. Left untreated, VLUs can become chronic, significantly impacting your mobility and overall quality of life.

What Causes Venous Leg Ulcers?

The primary cause of VLUs is venous disease, a condition that hinders proper blood circulation. In healthy veins, blood flows back to the heart with the help of one-way valves. When veins become weak or damaged, blood can pool in the legs, creating pressure that damages the surrounding skin and tissue. This process disrupts the body's natural ability to heal wounds.

Other Types of Leg Ulcers

While VLUs are the most common, other types of leg ulcers may occur due to different underlying causes:

- **Malignant leg ulcers:** Caused by skin tumors on the leg.
- **Traumatic leg ulcers:** Resulting from injury.
- **Vasculitic leg ulcers:** Triggered by autoimmune diseases like lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Diabetic leg ulcers:** High blood sugar levels and poor circulation in individuals with diabetes often lead to these ulcers.
- **Arterial leg ulcers:** Poor circulation in the arteries is the culprit for this type.

Treatment Options for Venous Leg Ulcers

Treatment for VLUs depends on the severity of the ulcer, your age, and overall health. Commonly recommended approaches include:

- **Compression Therapy:** A conservative approach often used as a first-line treatment, compression therapy can reduce swelling and improve blood flow, helping to manage symptoms.



- **Sclerotherapy:** A minimally invasive procedure where a solution is injected into the varicose veins, causing them to collapse and fade over time.
- **Endovenous Laser Treatment (EVLT):** Using laser energy, this procedure targets the damaged veins, causing them to close and reroute blood flow to healthier veins.
- **Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA):** Similar to EVLT, this method uses radiofrequency energy to seal off problematic veins.
- **Varithena:** Varithena is minimally invasive and doesn't involve surgical vein stripping, removing the associated risks. You avoid general anesthesia, sedation and incisions. Varithena does not require multiple injections to numb the treatment site, unlike most thermal procedures, and doesn't leave permanent foreign bodies behind after treatment.
- **Microphelebectomy:** The procedure is performed by making a tiny 1-2mm micro-incision and the vein is teased out with a small hook. It is then divided and removed. The incisions are so small that stitches are not needed to close them. They heal with excellent cosmetic results with only a butterfly closure.
- **Ultra Sound Guided Foam Sclerotherapy:** is unique because it removes unsightly or unhealthy veins without stripping them. First, an ultrasound will be used to find the affected vein, and then a needle is inserted to inject a sclerosing agent into the vein being treated. This agent causes a chemical reaction, which causes the vein to collapse leaving the body to then absorb that vein. This removes the varicose vein without creating any scarring or skin conditions. Veins generally need two to three treatments, and patients enjoy long-lasting cosmetic results afterward.

The Importance of Timely Treatment

Chronic VLUs can lead to severe complications, including cellulitis (a bacterial skin infection), deep tissue infections, or even amputation in extreme cases. Early intervention significantly improves healing outcomes.

Statistics Highlight the Scope of the Issue

- VLUs affect approximately 1-3% of adults in industrialized countries, with a higher prevalence among older individuals.
- Up to 50-70% of chronic leg ulcers are attributed to venous disease.
- Compression therapy, when used consistently, can reduce the recurrence of VLUs by as much as 50%.

Seeking Professional Care

If you notice a wound on your leg that isn't healing after two weeks, don't ignore it. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications and improve your quality of life. A vascular specialist can help identify the underlying cause and recommend the most effective treatment plan. For more information about venous leg ulcers and advanced treatment options, visit the Center for Vein Excellence at cfvein.com/blog/leg-ulcer-appearance.

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Vaccines, the Next Level of Cancer Treatment

While not every person in the world will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, nearly everyone has or will be impacted by the disease. Given its far-reaching impacts, many have wished for the discovery of a game-changing vaccine that would eradicate cancer once and for all.

While the likelihood of a single miracle shot is not on the near-term horizon, vaccines have enormous potential to transform cancer treatment and improve patient outcomes.

According to Manish Patel, MD, director of drug development at Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute LLC (FCS), advancements in cancer vaccine research are trending upward. "It's an exciting, fast-paced field," he said.

Therapeutic vaccines are a form of immunotherapy that help the body recognize, destroy and prevent the spread or return of cancer cells. Dr. Patel describes them as "next level" and especially promising for the treatment of melanoma and cancers of the breast, lung, stomach and bladder.

"Vaccines can be used by themselves or in combination with other therapies for patients with certain types of immunosensitive cancers whose treatment involves regulating the immune system in various ways," he said.

For example, a newly diagnosed patient with early-stage cancer may receive standard therapy, such as chemotherapy, along with a tumor vaccine, followed by surgery and possibly more tumor vaccines. Vaccines can be given again after the initial treatment to boost the immune system in particular ways and reduce the risk of spread or recurrence.

Dr. Patel, who oversees the three FCS drug development units that conduct research on new cancer treatments when they are first developed — prior to FDA approval — can attest to the impressive results in therapeutic vaccine development.

Dr. Patel served as principal investigator in a Phase 1 clinical trial (mRNA-4157) to assess the safety and responsiveness of an investigational mRNA cancer treatment used in combination with pembrolizumab (Keytruda®) in patients with locally advanced or metastatic



cancers. That study became the first of its kind to demonstrate notable effectiveness. Subsequently, a Phase 2b clinical trial was opened to include patients with high-risk melanoma and was shown to reduce the risk of disease recurrence or death by 49%. Currently, there are openings in the trial for patients with early-stage non-small cell lung cancer and gastric cancer.

Cancer vaccines are considered a type of precision medicine, an approach that tailors cancer care to an individual's unique genetic profile and tumor type. Vaccines are created in a lab where a patient's tumor is analyzed using sophisticated next-generation sequencing. Producing an effective vaccine treatment is a complex process that takes time, often six to eight weeks.

As Dr. Patel explains, "Once samples of a patient's cancer tissues, blood or other specimens are collected and sent to the laboratory, scientists are tasked with finding the specific antigen panel and then creating a custom vaccine that will trigger the immune system to target that patient's specific gene panel."

In addition to manufacturing obstacles, other logistics must be precise and planned with the treatment team and the patient's schedule. "During that time, standard treatment can be started, with the knowledge that we'll be able to add to it once the vaccine is manufactured," said Dr. Patel.

Another possible roadblock is the cancer's microenvironment — the complex ecosystem of cells, molecules and structures that surround a tumor cell and influence its behavior. "Tumors are smart and can find ways to evade the immune system," notes Dr. Patel.

Despite the challenges and roadblocks, clinical researchers are increasingly optimistic and committed to the discovery of breakthroughs that enhance medical knowledge and contribute to positive patient outcomes. Dr. Patel reports that the pace of vaccine research has accelerated in the past 10 years and that the data is becoming more mature.

Therapeutic vaccines are being looked at for all cancers, with new platforms and technologies in constant development to help speed up development.

"Immunotherapy clinical trials continue to uncover critical new information about the body's response to immunotherapy," said Dr. Patel. "While cancer vaccine research worldwide is at an early stage, each discovery achieved is bringing us closer to improving treatment effectiveness and extending lives for people with cancer."

FCS operates one of the largest clinical research programs in the country, providing access to more than 300 early- and late-phase clinical trials at any given time at clinic locations throughout Florida.

To learn more about clinical trial research at FCS, visit:
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DRY JANUARY:

REFRESH YOUR BODY & MIND WITH THE POWER OF EXFOLIATION

As we transition into a new season, it's the ideal time to delve into the art of exfoliation—a transformative skincare ritual that symbolizes renewal, rejuvenation, and a fresh start. Exfoliation transcends beyond achieving a radiant complexion; it's a holistic experience that physically, mentally, and emotionally promotes personal growth and self-care. Dry January is the perfect time to start afresh - and start your year aglow!

1. The Physical Gratification:

By gently removing dead skin cells, unclogging pores, and promoting circulation, exfoliation reveals a fresh, vibrant complexion beneath. Incorporating exfoliating products into your skincare routine enhances the skin's natural renewal process, helping to prevent breakouts and improving the absorption of other skincare products. Beyond its physical benefits, the act of exfoliating provides a refreshing boost to confidence and self-esteem, as glowing skin is truly a source of pride.

To maximize the benefits of a body apply it liberally in the shower or bath on wet skin using gentle, circular motions. Pay special attention to dry areas like feet, legs, arms, and hands, where exfoliation can be particularly effective. After scrubbing, rinse thoroughly with water and pat your skin dry with a soft towel. For more intense hydration, allow the scrub's moisturizing ingredients to soak in for 1-2 minutes before rinsing.

Moreover, the rhythmic motion of scrubbing the skin can be a therapeutic experience. This mindful practice encourages relaxation and serves as a moment to reconnect with oneself amidst a busy day. By intentionally caring for your skin, you not only improve its health but also nurture your overall well-being, making exfoliation a cherished self-care ritual that revitalizes both body and mind.



2. An Emotional Transformation:

The art of exfoliation transcends mere skin care; it emerges as a therapeutic practice that fosters mindfulness and promotes self-connection. By dedicating time to this ritual, you can release not only physical impurities but also emotional burdens. Opt for products crafted with care, as their soothing scents and natural ingredients come together to create a serene pause in your hectic day, uplifting your mood and enhancing your overall sense of well-being.

Naples Soap Company's Vitamin C Orange Blossom & Vanilla Sugar Scrub offers a refreshingly light scent of orange blossoms, oranges and sweet vanilla. The fresh aroma of orange blossoms and oranges provides uplifting citrus aromatherapy, reducing stress and anxiety while boosting energy and motivation. Meanwhile, the sweet, warm scent of vanilla evokes comfort and tranquility, creating a calming atmosphere that fosters well-being.

3. The Mental Reset:

The act of exfoliation brings with it a mental reset. In a world filled with chaos and constant change, incorporating this simple yet effective practice can serve as a grounding routine. As individuals scrub away the old layers of skin, they can metaphorically release negative thoughts, stressors, and worries that weigh them down.

A-scented face scrub, such as Naples Soap Company's Coffee Face Scrub, is a fantastic addition to your morning routine, providing a refreshing start and serving as a mental reset. The invigorating aroma stimulates the senses, awakening your mind and boosting your energy for the day ahead. Gently massaging our Coffee Face Scrub polishes the skin and enhances circulation, giving your complexion a radiant glow. Formulated with finely ground coffee beans, cocoa butter, and fractionated coconut oil, it cleanses away dullness and rehydrates for a fresh look.



We invite you to explore the therapeutic benefits of exfoliation can facilitate this holistic journey of self-renewal. By integrating these practices into daily routines, individuals can refresh not only their skincare regimen but also their overall mindset and emotional well-being.



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BREAKTHROUGH IN NEUROPATHY TREATMENT: HOW SUMMUS LASER THERAPY OFFERS HOPE FOR NERVE PAIN SUFFERERS

Neuropathy is a debilitating condition that affects millions of people worldwide, causing chronic pain, numbness, and significant disruption to daily life. Traditional treatments have often fallen short of providing comprehensive relief, leaving patients searching for innovative solutions. Enter the Summus Laser, a cutting-edge therapeutic approach that is revolutionizing neuropathy treatment and offering new hope to those struggling with nerve-related pain.

Understanding Neuropathy: A Complex Challenge

Neuropathy is a condition characterized by damage or dysfunction of peripheral nerves, typically causing symptoms like burning pain, tingling sensations, muscle weakness, and sensitivity to touch. Common causes include diabetes, chemotherapy, autoimmune disorders, and physical injuries. The complex nature of nerve damage has historically made treatment challenging, with many patients experiencing limited success from conventional medical interventions.

The Summus Laser: A Technological Marvel in Pain Management

The Summus Laser represents a significant advancement in medical technology, utilizing high-powered laser therapy to address nerve pain at its source. Unlike traditional treatments that merely mask symptoms, this innovative approach focuses on cellular regeneration and healing. The laser delivers concentrated light energy deep into affected tissues, stimulating natural healing processes and promoting nerve repair.

Key Mechanisms of Summus Laser Therapy

1. Cellular Stimulation: The laser's precise wavelengths penetrate damaged nerve tissues, encouraging mitochondrial activity and accelerating cellular metabolism. This process helps restore normal cellular function and reduces inflammation.

2. Improved Circulation: By enhancing blood flow to damaged nerve areas, the Summus Laser helps deliver essential nutrients and oxygen, supporting the body's natural healing mechanisms.

3. Pain Reduction: The therapy triggers the release of endorphins and reduces pain-causing inflammatory markers, providing immediate and long-term relief for patients.

Clinical Evidence and Patient Outcomes

Numerous clinical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Summus Laser therapy in treating neuropathy. Patients report significant improvements



in pain levels, sensation restoration, and overall quality of life. Many individuals who previously struggled with chronic nerve pain have experienced remarkable recoveries, regaining mobility and reducing their dependence on pain medications.

Treatment Process and Expectations

A typical Summus Laser treatment protocol involves:

- Comprehensive initial assessment
- Customized treatment plan
- Multiple targeted laser sessions
- Gradual progression of healing and pain reduction

Most patients experience noticeable improvements within 4-6 treatment sessions, with continued benefits developing over subsequent weeks and months.

Advantages Over Traditional Neuropathy Treatments

The Summus Laser offers several distinct advantages:

- Non-invasive approach
- No significant side effects
- No pharmaceutical dependencies
- Targets root causes of nerve damage
- Supports long-term healing
- Relatively quick treatment sessions

Who Can Benefit?

Summus Laser therapy is particularly beneficial for patients with:

- Diabetic neuropathy
- Chemotherapy-induced nerve damage
- Peripheral nerve injuries
- Chronic pain conditions
- Reduced sensation in extremities

Future of Neuropathy Treatment

As medical technology continues to advance, the Summus Laser represents a promising frontier in nerve pain management. Its ability to stimulate natural healing processes offers hope to countless individuals who have struggled with traditional treatment methods.

Conclusion

For those battling neuropathy, the Summus Laser provides a beacon of hope. By combining advanced technological innovation with a deep understanding of cellular healing, this treatment approach is transforming how we conceptualize and address nerve pain.

Patients interested in exploring this revolutionary treatment should consult with qualified healthcare professionals specializing in laser therapy and neuropathic conditions to determine their individual suitability and potential treatment outcomes.

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Shining a Light on Thyroid Health:

Thyroid Awareness Month

As January unfolds, so does Thyroid Awareness Month—a dedicated time to illuminate the often overlooked but crucial aspect of our well-being, the thyroid gland. Nestled discreetly in the neck, this butterfly-shaped organ plays a pivotal role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, and overall health. Despite its importance, thyroid disorders often fly under the radar, affecting millions worldwide. This article aims to shed light on the significance of Thyroid Awareness Month, encouraging readers to take charge of their thyroid health.

The Silent Orchestrator:

The thyroid gland may be small, but its impact is monumental. Responsible for producing hormones that influence metabolism, growth, and development, the thyroid acts as the silent orchestrator of various bodily functions. When this delicate balance is disrupted, it can lead to a range of thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and autoimmune conditions like Hashimoto's and Graves' disease.

Understanding the Warning Signs:

One of the challenges with thyroid disorders is that symptoms can be subtle and easily mistaken for other health issues. Fatigue, weight changes, mood swings, and changes in skin and hair quality are common signs that may point to thyroid dysfunction. By recognizing these red flags, individuals can take proactive steps to seek medical attention and address potential thyroid issues before they escalate.

Empowering Through Education:

Thyroid Awareness Month serves as a crucial platform for education and awareness. Understanding the risk factors, such as family history, age, and gender, empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health. Regular check-ups, including thyroid function tests, can aid in early detection and management of thyroid disorders. This month encourages people to engage in open conversations about thyroid health, fostering a supportive community that breaks the silence surrounding these often-misunderstood conditions.

Lifestyle and Thyroid Health:

While genetics play a role in thyroid disorders, lifestyle factors also significantly influence thyroid health. Nutrition, stress management, and regular



exercise contribute to overall well-being and can positively impact thyroid function. This month provides an opportunity for individuals to reassess their lifestyle choices, ensuring they prioritize habits that support thyroid health and overall vitality.

Raising the Flag:

Thyroid Awareness Month encourages the community to rally together and raise the flag for thyroid health. From organizing awareness events to sharing information on social media, individuals, healthcare professionals, and organizations alike can play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and dispelling myths surrounding thyroid disorders. By fostering a supportive and informed environment, we can collectively work towards early detection, effective management, and improved quality of life for those affected by thyroid conditions.

Conclusion:

As we navigate the complexities of our health please let Thyroid Awareness Month serve as a beacon, guiding us towards a deeper understanding of the thyroid's role in our well-being. By fostering awareness, education, and community engagement, we can empower individuals to take control of their thyroid health and inspire a broader conversation about the importance of this often-overlooked organ. Together, let's illuminate the path towards a healthier, more thyroid-aware future.



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2025: A NEW CHAPTER IN CARE

DR. ASHLEY CAUTHEN

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2025, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've had together and the exciting path ahead.

Twelve years ago, Thomas and I took the leap into opening this practice with a vision: to provide high-quality dermatologic care in a compassionate, patient-focused environment where every patient would be treated with kindness and dignity. Little did I know just how deeply this work would resonate with me or how many amazing relationships I would build along the way.

The new year always brings a sense of renewal and optimism, and as a practice, we're embracing this fresh start with exciting changes that will allow us to serve you better. I want to take a moment to share some of these new developments.

New Beginnings at Our Aesthetic Office

One of the most exciting developments this year is the opening of our brand-new aesthetic office. Over the years, I've seen firsthand the positive impact that high-quality aesthetic treatments can have on a person's confidence and self-esteem. That's why I am thrilled to offer this new space, where we can help you enhance not only the health of your skin but also your overall sense of well-being.

This new office isn't just another expansion—it's a commitment to your care. We've designed the space with your comfort in mind, filled it with the latest in aesthetic technology, and staffed it with highly trained professionals who have a passion for helping you look and feel your best. Whether you're interested in facial rejuvenation, laser treatments, skin care regimens or just need some good relaxation and pampering, our team is dedicated to helping you achieve results that will leave you feeling confident, refreshed, and renewed.

I believe that every person deserves to feel beautiful in their skin, and this aesthetic office allows us to provide the tools and expertise to help make that happen. I'm truly excited to guide you through these services and celebrate your skin's transformation in this new space.

Expanding to Tampa

In addition to our new aesthetic office, I'm thrilled to announce the opening of our new Tampa location. This expansion is driven by our desire to make our services more accessible to our patients in the Tampa



area and beyond. It's always been our goal to provide exceptional care, and with this new office, we're able to offer that same level of excellence while making it more convenient for many of you to see us.

This new location is more than just a physical space—it's an extension of the care and service you've come to expect from our practice. Whether you're visiting us for dermatologic care or exploring aesthetic services, our Tampa team is ready to support you with the same dedication and commitment that has been the foundation of our practice for the past 12 years.

Gratitude for Our Team: The Heartbeat of Our Practice

One of the most rewarding aspects of what I do is working alongside a team of dedicated, compassionate, and highly skilled professionals. I can truly say that our growth would not be possible without the amazing people who make up our team. Each one of whom brings something unique to the table and contributes to making our practice what it is today. From our providers to our support staff, every person plays a vital role in creating the welcoming, caring environment that you experience every time you walk through our doors. Their hard work allows us to continually evolve, and it's their commitment that has played a crucial role in our success.

A Heartfelt Thank You

While growth and expansion are exciting, it's important to me to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for you, our patients. I'm filled with deep gratitude for the trust you have placed in us. It is because of your loyalty, your confidence in our care, and your ongoing support that we've been able to grow, evolve, and become the practice we are today. You've allowed us to be a part of your health journey, and it's a privilege we don't take lightly.

Every day, I am reminded of how rewarding it is to know that the work we do has a real and lasting impact on your lives. Whether we're helping you manage a skin condition, providing a rejuvenating aesthetic treatment, or simply offering a listening ear, it's the relationships we build with our patients that make what we do so meaningful.

Looking Ahead

As we embark on this new year, I am filled with excitement for all the opportunities ahead. In 2025, we will continue to focus on providing exceptional care, expanding our services, and building even stronger relationships with each of you. We are here to support you!

Wishing you a year filled with health, happiness, and glowing skin!

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

WHY HEARING BETTER SHOULD BE A PRIORITY IN THE NEW YEAR

By Dr. Evans Pemba

Did you struggle to hear your friends and family over the holidays? Approximately 38 million Americans suffer from some form of hearing loss. And since hearing loss is expected as we age, many decide to let it go unchecked. However, ignoring hearing loss can have serious negative side effects on a one's overall health.

According to an AARP study, more than 33% of senior citizens consider hearing loss to be a minor issue. 50% of the respondents to this study went on to cite the cost of hearing aids as a primary reason for why they didn't seek auditory intervention. However, those costs can rise astronomically when you factor in the serious side effects of ignoring hearing loss. Below are some examples.

FALLING

According to the CDC more than 25% of Americans aged 65+ fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults. People with mild hearing loss are nearly three times as likely to fall, with each 10 decibels of hearing loss increasing fall risk. Here are some reasons for the correlation between hearing loss and falling:

Exhaustion: Your brain is working extra hard and you're always straining when you have neglected hearing loss. Your brain will be constantly exhausted as a result. An exhausted brain is less likely to detect that obstacle in your path, and, as a result, you might wind up tripping and falling.

Loss of balance: Your inner ear is incredibly important to your total equilibrium. So, when hearing loss affects your inner ear, you might find yourself a little more likely to grow dizzy, experience vertigo, or have difficulty maintaining your balance. Thus, you're at a greater risk of falling.

Inability to hear high-frequency sounds: Your ears utilize high-frequency sounds to help you "echolocate". When you have high pitch hearing loss (which is the most common type of loss), you lose the ability to echolocate. Disorientation can result which in turn makes you more susceptible to falling.

Less situational awareness: You may not be able to hear the sound of your neighbor's footsteps, or an approaching vehicle when you have neglected hearing loss. As a result, daily activities can become more hazardous if your situational awareness is jeopardized. Thus, your chances of stumbling into something and falling will be a little higher.



FATIGUE

Most people don't associate fatigue with hearing loss. The reality is that the less you hear, the more your body has to work to make up for the deficit, which in turn leaves you feeling tired. This is because when you have a hearing deficit, your brain has to work harder to fill in the blanks you're missing in conversations – which is often made even more difficult when there is background noise. The chronic fatigue that results can impact your health by leaving you too tired to take care of yourself, which may in turn cause you to skip things like going to the gym and cooking healthy meals.

COGNITIVE DECLINE

Several studies by Johns Hopkins University linked hearing loss to decreased brain functions, accelerated brain tissue loss, and dementia. While these links are correlations instead of causations, researchers believe that, again, the more cognitive resources that are spent trying to fill in the blanks of a conversation, the less resources there are to focus on things like memorization and comprehension. And as people age, the increased draw on cognitive resources can speed up the decline of other brain functions and contribute to gray matter loss. In addition, having a regular exchange of ideas and information, often through conversation, is believed to help seniors stay mentally fit and can help slow the process of cognitive decline.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

The National Council on the Aging conducted a study of 2,300 seniors who had some form of hearing loss and discovered that those who left their condition untreated were more likely to also suffer from mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and paranoia, which negatively affected their social and emotional well-being. The link between hearing loss and mental health issues makes sense because people with hearing loss often have difficulty communicating with

others in social or family situations. This can lead to feelings of isolation, which can eventually lead to depression. If left untreated, anxiety and even paranoia can result due to these feelings of isolation and exclusion. Hearing aids have been shown to help in the recovery from depression, though anyone suffering from depression, anxiety, or paranoia should consult a mental health professional.

If you suffer from hearing loss or are experiencing any of the negative effects listed above, please reach out to Ocala Hears Audiology at The Villages to help you live a healthier life.

Happy Hearing!



DR. EVANS PEMBA

Dr. Evans Pemba is the Audiologist and owner of Ocala Hears Audiology. A graduate of the University of Florida (UF), Dr. Pemba is a rabid fan of all things Gators and bleeds orange and blue through and through.

After graduating from UF, Evans served in the Army and has a special place for the Veterans that gave us all the freedoms we enjoy. When he is not seeing patients, Evans likes to enjoy the Florida outdoors with his wife and two daughters.

Born in Zimbabwe, he comes from a culture where oral tradition is the primary method via which knowledge is handed down from generation to generation. Therefore, he knows how important it is to be a good listener. As such, he promises to always listen more than he talks. That way you and he will chart the best path towards helping you hear better.



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An Easy New Year's Resolution: CREATE YOUR ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

Each year, many people make New Year's resolutions; some include making healthier decisions about their diet, while others are about exercising, traveling and more. Some are kept and some not so much. There's one resolution that's easy to keep – deciding to have a talk with your loved ones about your healthcare decisions and wishes at end of life.

Making your healthcare decisions and relationships a priority is wise any time of the year. It's never too early to have those conversations with your loved ones – better to have the discussion sooner than later when it may be too late.

However, many find procrastination is all too easy, especially when it comes to talking about something unpleasant as the end of life. It's one of those topics most people would rather not discuss, but there's no guarantee on how long we'll live. Just as preparing a will is optimal when we are of sound mind and body, so is preparing for future healthcare needs. Having to make decisions for others is complicated, especially when that person – someone beloved – can no longer speak for themselves.

Advance directives are legal documents that include a living will or a durable power of attorney for healthcare, also known as a healthcare proxy. Either document allows you to give directions about your future medical care. It's your right to accept or refuse medical care. Advance directives can protect this right if you ever become mentally or physically unable to choose or communicate your wishes due to an injury or illness. By law, the decision belongs to the patient, so make your wishes known to your family, providers and caregivers.

An advance directive can be as simple as a two-page *Living Will* or as lengthy as the *Five Wishes*, a detailed-yet-user-friendly booklet. In Florida, an advance directive requires neither an attorney nor a notary—just the writer's signature and that of two witnesses. Despite the simplicity of these documents, only about a third of all Americans have completed one according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Advance Directives can:

- Protect your rights to make medical choices that can affect your life



- Let families avoid the responsibility and stress of making difficult decisions
- Assist physicians by providing guidelines for your care
- Protect people who may be unable to communicate
- Limit life-prolonging measures when there's little or no chance of recovery

Enable patients to make their wishes known about:

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Intravenous (IV) therapy
- Feeding tubes
- Ventilators (respirators)
- Dialysis

Regardless of age or health status, we owe it to those we love to discuss our wishes and follow through with a written advance directive, which is revocable at any time.

Advance directives are available to download at no charge on our website at HospiceofMarion.org all year long. Visit our website to learn more and check this New Year's resolution off your list.



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TOP TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME CONTACT LENS WEARERS: WHAT TO EXPECT AND HOW TO ADJUST

If you're new to contact lenses, get ready for an exciting journey to clearer vision and newfound freedom. Whether you're looking to enhance your style, enjoy the convenience of lens wear, or simply experience life without glasses, you're in for a treat. As you embark on this adventure, remember that it's perfectly normal to have questions and need a little time to adjust. With a bit of practice and the right tips, you'll soon be navigating your daily routine with confidence. Let's get started on making your contact lens experience as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

FIRST-TIME CONTACT LENS TIPS

Here are some common sense, practical contact lens tips to help you transition into the world of contact lenses:

- **Practice Good Hygiene** – Always wash your hands thoroughly with mild, fragrance-free soap and dry them using a lint-free towel before handling your contact lenses. Good hygiene can help prevent eye infection and irritation from germs, bacteria and debris.

- **Create the Right Environment** – Practice in a well-lit space in front of a mirror until you develop muscle memory for the procedure. If needed, use a magnifying mirror so you can see what you're doing. Make sure to avoid air conditioning vents, fans, or open windows, as the moving air could dry out your lenses.

- **Master the Insertion and Removal Technique** – The art of inserting and removing contact lenses takes practice, so be patient with yourself. For many, the process is frustrating at first, so take breaks when you need them. Once you get into the groove, it will get quicker and easier. Here are some tips for success:

1. Start with the same eye each time to avoid mix-ups.
2. Place the lens on the tip of your index fingertip and make sure it's not inside-out.
3. Add a drop of saline solution to the lens before insertion to help it adhere more easily.
4. Use what's called the "monkey grip" technique: Reach over your head with the opposite hand and lift your upper eyelid as high as it will comfortably go, and use your other hand to pull down your lower lid.
5. Look up or to the side as you insert the lens, rather than staring directly at the lens. This can help reduce the reflex to blink. Some people are "clenchers," meaning they have a predisposition to

react to things touching their eyes. With practice, this tendency will lessen over time.

6. Place the lens on the white part of your eye first, then let it slide into place over your iris. Blink gently to center the lens.

7. To remove the lens, look upward and use your clean fingertip to slide the lens down toward the white of your eye before carefully pinching it out.

- **Allow an Adjustment Period** – In the beginning, it's normal to experience some mild discomfort or awareness of your lenses. Your eyes may water, look red or feel slightly irritated. You may find your eyes feel a little dry, or you blink more often than normal. Your vision may blur occasionally. This typically improves within 1-2 weeks of consistent wear. To help you adjust, take a gradual approach:

1. Start by wearing your lenses for 2-4 hours on the first day.
2. Gradually increase wear time by 1-2 hours each day.
3. Most people can comfortably wear lenses for a full day (8-12 hours) within 1-2 weeks, though if it takes you longer, that's perfectly okay. Go at your own pace.
4. Soft lenses are usually quicker to adapt to than rigid gas permeable lenses.

Remember, it's normal for inserting contact lenses to feel challenging at first. If you talk to others who wear contact lenses, most will tell you it took them some adjustment. But, with consistent practice and patience, most people find it becomes much easier over time. Longtime users will likely tell you that it's second nature to them now.

ADJUSTING TO THE FEELING OF CONTACT LENSES

For some, having a foreign object in the eye can create some discomfort. If this applies to you, these tips may help:

- **Stay Hydrated** - Drinking plenty of water may help ease eye dryness and irritation.
- **Use Lubricating Eye Drops** – Not all eye drops are compatible with all contact lenses or eye conditions. Ask your eye doctor about which lubricating drops are best for your eye health and lenses.
- **Blink More Often** – It may be surprising to know that people often forget to blink enough, especially if they're staring at phone, computer or tablet screens. Make it a habit to blink often, especially while using digital devices, watching TV, reading, etc.
- **Take Breaks** – If your eyes feel tired or strained, remove your lenses and wear glasses for a while to give your eyes a breather.

SOME FINAL CONTACT LENS TIPS

- **Don't Overdo Wear Times** – Always follow the contact lens wearing schedule recommended by your eye doctor. Don't be tempted to sleep in your lenses or keep using them past their life cycle, as this can be a recipe for eye infection, abrasion or ulceration.

- **Never Use Water on Your Lenses** – Tap water is full of contaminants and should never be used to clean, moisturize or store lenses. Always use the contact lens solution recommended by your eye care professional.

- **Store Your Lenses in Their Case** – Always store your clean lenses inside a clean lens case. Rinse the case with sterile contact solution every night, and fill it with enough fresh solution to submerge your lenses. Gently secure the lids. Replace your lens case every three months or sooner if it becomes dirty or damaged.

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR EYE DOCTOR

The eye doctors of Lake Eye (a US Eye company) are here to help you make a safe, smooth transition into the wonderful world of contact lens clarity and convenience. If, after two weeks, you continue to experience discomfort, irritation or vision issues, your lenses may need to be adjusted for fit or changed to a different type of lens. Any signs of eye infection, such as discharge, undue redness, or swelling, require immediate attention. We are here to help throughout your adjustment.

Count on the vision care specialists of Lake Eye to help you decide which type of contact lens will best suit your unique eyes and lifestyle needs – from soft, rigid gas-permeable and hybrid, to Rose-K and scleral for people with keratoconus and other corneal issues. We provide comprehensive eye exams, vision exams, contact lens fittings, and a full range of contact lenses, for complete, one-stop service.



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Emsella is a non-invasive treatment option for urinary incontinence, offering a groundbreaking solution for individuals seeking relief without surgery or medication. Using high-intensity focused



electromagnetic (HIFEM) technology, Emsella stimulates deep pelvic floor muscles, helping to strengthen and restore muscle tone. This treatment is ideal for patients suffering from stress incontinence, urge

incontinence, or mixed incontinence, and can be particularly beneficial for women post-childbirth or during menopause.

Clinical studies have demonstrated that Emsella can significantly reduce symptoms of urinary incontinence, improving quality of life for patients who

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have struggled with this common condition. Many patients experience noticeable results after just a few sessions, with a significant reduction in accidents, urgency, and the need to frequently visit the bathroom. For those looking for a non-surgical solution to regain control over their bladder, Emsella offers a promising alternative to traditional treatments.

Emsella is quick, non-invasive, and painless. It is a revolutionary treatment for both men and women experiencing incontinence and/or wanting to improve sexual wellness.



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REVOLUTIONIZING WELLNESS: INFINITY MEDICAL INSTITUTE'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ANTI-AGING AND LONGEVITY

In the heart of The Villages, Florida, a beacon of medical innovation is transforming how we approach aging and personal health. Infinity Medical Institute has been at the forefront of regenerative medicine since its establishment in 2009, offering a holistic and personalized approach to wellness that goes far beyond traditional medical treatments.

Founded in Tampa and now bringing its cutting-edge services to The Villages, Infinity Medical Institute represents a paradigm shift in healthcare. The institute's philosophy is simple yet profound: it's not just about adding years to life, but adding life to years. This approach recognizes that aging is not something to be feared, but a process that can be optimized and embraced with the right medical support.

A Comprehensive Suite of Innovative Treatments

What sets Infinity Medical Institute apart is its comprehensive range of advanced therapies designed to address the multifaceted challenges of aging. The clinic offers a diverse array of treatments that target various aspects of health and wellness:

- **Bioidentical Hormone Therapy:** provides a natural approach to hormone balance, addressing common age-related symptoms like fatigue, mood fluctuations, and decreased libido.
- **Testosterone Replacement Therapy:** helps men restore vitality by supporting healthy testosterone levels, enhancing energy, muscle mass, and overall well-being.
- **Sexual Wellness Treatments:** offer targeted therapies to improve intimate health and quality of life.
- **Aesthetic Services:** including PDO Threads, provide non-surgical solutions for skin rejuvenation and tightening.
- **Pulse Wave Therapy:** improves circulation and addresses conditions like erectile dysfunction.
- **Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy:** harnesses the body's own growth factors to accelerate healing and tissue repair.
- **Stem Cell Therapy:** represents a groundbreaking regenerative approach to treating injuries and revitalizing aging tissues.

- **Peptide Therapy:** uses specialized treatments to stimulate natural bodily processes, including metabolism and immune function.

- **Weight Loss Programs:** offer comprehensive, sustainable solutions supported by medical expertise.

Patient-Centered Care: Beyond Treatment

Infinity Medical Institute stands out not just for its advanced treatments, but for its commitment to patient care. The clinic offers free consultations, allowing individuals to explore their health options without financial pressure. This approach reflects their belief in transparency and patient empowerment.

Located at 322 Heald Way in The Villages, the clinic operates Monday through Thursday from 8 AM to 4 PM, and Fridays from 8 AM to 1 PM. Each patient receives a customized treatment plan that recognizes their unique health needs and personal wellness goals.

The Science of Regenerative Medicine

The institute's approach is grounded in regenerative medicine – a field that focuses on natural, integrative therapies working in harmony with the body's inherent healing processes. Their experienced medical team is dedicated to delivering evidence-based care that optimizes health and longevity.

A Vision for Transformative Healthcare

Infinity Medical Institute represents more than just a medical clinic; it's a vision of healthcare that sees aging as an opportunity for growth, renewal, and continued vitality. By combining advanced medical technologies with a compassionate, individualized approach, they are redefining what it means to age gracefully and healthily.

For those seeking to take control of their health, optimize their wellness, and embrace a more vibrant future, Infinity Medical Institute in The Villages offers a beacon of hope and innovative medical care.

About Infinity Medical Institute

Pioneers in Integrative Medicine, Infinity Medical Institute is a company dedicated to benchmarking health in concert with breakthroughs in education through



science. Understanding where individuals are in their "Life Cycle" as opposed to treating symptoms that are often an expression of a greater challenge they are experiencing with their bodies at the cellular level. A new approach in health and wellness based on recently made available research, allowing us to understand the differences in Biological Age as compared to Chronological Age.

Most of us fail to realize that our personal health is the result of the "aging process" complimented and/or penalized by the manner in which we take care of and/or misuse ourselves. Our consumption patterns combined with normal aging and physical activities directly affect our quality of life.

Our approach to wellness is based on meeting people where they are in their personal life and developing an individualized plan of action in and around nutrition, supplementation, and lifestyle.



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A NEW YEAR, A NEW YOU! BE PAIN FREE IN 2025!

By Dr. Chad Rose, DC

Are you one of the millions of Americans suffering from the burning, tingling, and debilitating pain of neuropathy? As we step into 2025, Rose Wellness Clinic is revolutionizing neuropathy treatment with cutting-edge technologies that offer hope and healing to those struggling with this challenging condition.

Understanding Neuropathy's Impact

Peripheral neuropathy affects more than 20 million Americans, impacting every aspect of daily life. From difficulty sleeping to challenges with basic mobility, neuropathy's effects can be devastating. Traditional treatments often fall short, leaving many patients frustrated and seeking better solutions.

Breakthrough Technologies at Rose Wellness Clinic

At Rose Wellness Clinic, we're proud to introduce a comprehensive suite of innovative therapies that are changing lives. Our multi-faceted approach combines the latest medical advancements with personalized care plans designed for optimal results.

Advanced Nerve Stimulation Therapy

Our state-of-the-art Electronic Neural Stimulation (ENS) technology delivers precise, targeted electrical impulses to affected nerve pathways. This groundbreaking treatment helps reduce pain signals while promoting natural healing processes. Patients report significant improvement in symptoms after just a few sessions, with many experiencing up to 80% reduction in discomfort.

Laser Light Therapy

Our advanced Class IV laser therapy penetrates deep into affected tissues, stimulating cellular repair and reducing inflammation. This non-invasive treatment accelerates healing at the molecular level, providing lasting relief without medication or surgery.

Regenerative Medicine

Rose Wellness Clinic leads the field in regenerative medicine applications for neuropathy. Our cutting-edge treatments help restore damaged nerve tissue, offering hope for long-term recovery rather than just symptom management.



Personalized Treatment Plans

Every patient's neuropathy journey is unique. Our expert medical team develops customized treatment plans that may include:

- Targeted nutritional therapy
- Advanced diagnostic testing
- Specialized physical therapy protocols
- Breakthrough medication management
- Lifestyle modification coaching

Real Results, Real People

"After years of suffering, I had almost given up hope," shares María Rodriguez, a patient at Rose Wellness Clinic. "The innovative treatments here have given me my life back. I'm now able to sleep through the night and enjoy activities with my grandchildren again."

Why Choose Rose Wellness Clinic?

Our commitment to excellence shows in every aspect of patient care:

- Board-certified specialists in neuropathy treatment
- State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment
- Comprehensive treatment approaches
- Proven success rates
- Convenient scheduling options
- Insurance-friendly policies

Make 2025 Your Year of Recovery

Don't let another year pass while living with neuropathy pain. Rose Wellness Clinic's innovative treatments offer real hope for recovery and renewed quality of life. Our expert team is ready to help you start your journey to becoming pain-free.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A PAIN-FREE 2025

Contact Rose Wellness Clinic today to schedule your comprehensive evaluation. Our caring staff will guide you through your options and help develop a personalized treatment plan that works for you.

Call (352) 775-2180 or visit us online to learn more about our revolutionary neuropathy treatments. Make this new year truly transformative – because you deserve to live pain-free.

YOUR JOURNEY TO HEALING STARTS HERE

**Rose Wellness Clinic: Where Innovation Meets
Compassionate Care.**

Dr. Chad Rose, DC is the lead chiropractor at Rose Wellness Clinic who serves The Villages and the surrounding communities in FL.

Dr. Chad Rose, DC uses chiropractic care to improve the health and wellness in all areas of patient's lives, whether they are having problems with back pain or neck pain, or just want to start feeling better when they wake up in the morning. Dr. Rose takes a "whole person" approach in chiropractic care, which means looking for the underlying causes of disease, discomfort, and pain, as opposed to just treating the symptoms. Many seemingly unrelated symptoms often arise from imbalances in the spinal column, and Dr. Rose will be able to determine the root of the pain and create a personalized chiropractic and wellness plan to suit each patient's individual needs. Under the supervision and care of our caring and skilled chiropractor, patients report higher functioning in all areas of their lives.

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MAKING WEIGHT LOSS RESOLUTIONS STICK: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN 2025

As another New Year approaches, millions of people will list weight loss among their resolutions. Yet, studies show that approximately 80% of these resolutions fail by February. The key to bucking this trend lies not in extreme diets or intensive workout regimens, but in adopting a holistic, sustainable approach to health and wellness.

Setting realistic goals is the foundation of lasting change. Instead of aiming to lose 30 pounds in two months, consider targeting a more sustainable rate of 1-2 pounds per week. This moderate approach allows your body to adjust gradually while developing habits that stick. Break down your ultimate goal into smaller, monthly milestones that feel achievable and measurable.

The holistic journey to weight loss extends far beyond counting calories. Sleep quality plays a crucial role in weight management, affecting hormones that regulate hunger and metabolism. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep by establishing a consistent bedtime routine and creating a peaceful sleep environment. This simple change can reduce late-night snacking and provide the energy needed for daytime activity.

Stress management is another vital component often overlooked in weight loss journeys. Chronic stress triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that can increase appetite and promote fat storage, particularly around the midsection. Incorporate stress-reducing activities like meditation, yoga, or daily walks in nature. Even five minutes of deep breathing exercises can help regulate stress responses and reduce emotional eating.

Nutrition should focus on nourishment rather than restriction. Instead of eliminating food groups, gradually add more whole, nutrient-dense foods to your diet. Start by ensuring each meal includes a variety of colors from fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. This abundance mindset helps avoid the deprivation that often leads to binge eating and yo-yo dieting.

Movement should be enjoyable rather than punishing. Find activities that bring you joy, whether it's dancing, hiking, swimming, or gardening. Begin with 10-15 minutes daily and gradually increase duration and intensity as your fitness improves. Remember that consistency trumps intensity when building lasting habits.



Social support plays a crucial role in maintaining momentum. Share your goals with friends or family who can offer encouragement and accountability. Consider joining a wellness community or working with a health coach who can provide guidance and support throughout your journey.

Mindfulness practices can transform your relationship with food and body image. Practice eating without distractions, savoring each bite, and listening to your body's hunger and fullness cues. This awareness helps prevent mindless eating and promotes a healthier relationship with food.

Track progress beyond the scale by noting improvements in energy levels, sleep quality, mood, and clothing fit. Celebrate non-scale victories like being able to take the stairs without getting winded or having more stamina to play with your children.

Remember that sustainable weight loss is a journey, not a race. There will be setbacks and challenges along the way. Instead of viewing these as failures, treat them as learning opportunities that inform your path forward. By adopting this holistic approach and focusing on attainable goals, you're more likely to create lasting changes that extend well beyond the New Year.

The most successful resolutions are those that evolve into lifestyle changes. By addressing weight loss through the lens of overall wellness – encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health – you create a foundation for lasting transformation that enhances every aspect of your life.

MEET THE TEAM

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



Christopher Bagley, APRN

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

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



Eldon Waters, MSN, APRN

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

South University.

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

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



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The Power of Physical Therapy: Maximizing Recovery Through Proactive Care

Undergoing orthopedic surgery involves more than just the procedure itself. A crucial aspect that often goes unrecognized is the role of physical therapy both before and after surgery. Did you know that engaging in physical therapy sessions prior to your surgery can significantly impact your recovery?

It's a common misconception that physical therapy starts after surgery. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Pre-operative physical therapy plays a pivotal role in enhancing your overall fitness and readiness for the impending procedure. The key lies in proactive preparation, aiming to strengthen your body and address any existing weaknesses or limitations.

One of the primary benefits of pre-operative physical therapy is its ability to address issues that might exacerbate during the lead-up to surgery. Loss of joint motion, weakened muscles, and poor movement patterns tend to worsen before a surgical intervention. Engaging in a pre-operative strengthening regimen helps counter these issues by reinforcing soft tissue mobility, reducing inflammation, and enhancing muscle balance and coordination.

For instance, individuals preparing for a total knee replacement require specific strengthening of the muscles supporting and stabilizing the knee joint. A tailored pre-operative strengthening protocol, curated by a skilled therapist, can make a significant difference in the outcome of the surgery.

Beyond physical preparation, pre-operative therapy also involves education and guidance. Therapists provide invaluable insights into the impending procedure, pain management strategies, and establish a supportive environment that diminishes fears or concerns related to the surgery.

Wondering how to kickstart this proactive approach? Simply ask your primary care physician, orthopedic surgeon, or any healthcare professional involved in your care for a physical therapy script aimed at pre-operative strengthening. This step opens the door to an evaluation of your condition and allows the therapist to determine the most beneficial treatment options tailored to your specific needs, ensuring the swiftest recovery possible.

But it doesn't stop there. Post-operative physical therapy is equally crucial. It's the bridge between the surgery and returning to your optimal functionality. Through targeted exercises, pain management techniques, and personalized care, post-operative therapy aims to expedite recovery, rebuild strength, and restore mobility.

The impact of physical therapy both before and after orthopedic surgery cannot be overstated. It's a proactive investment in your well-being, enabling a smoother recovery trajectory, minimizing complications, and ultimately allowing you to regain your active lifestyle sooner.

In conclusion, don't overlook the power of physical therapy in the pre- and post-operative phases of orthopedic surgery. By taking proactive steps to strengthen your body before surgery and engaging in a dedicated rehabilitation program afterward, you pave the way for a swifter, more successful recovery, ensuring you get back on your feet in no time.

Physical & Occupational Therapy Benefits

- Manual stretching
- Hip & Ankle Alignment Strategies
- Decompression
- Massage therapy
- Electrical nerve stimulation
- Help with daily tasks & Living
- Cold laser treatment

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

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

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

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Five Great Reasons to Use a Local Placement Service

By Janice Martin, owner of Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc.
Janice is shown in this picture with one of her wonderful clients

As I enter my 15th year of helping families transition to senior living, I have worked from two perspectives working with a placement service to help families find assisted living. From the beginning of my career, all the communities where I worked have had an agreement with a large national placement service that is often advertised on television and in magazines. Individuals call the service and without realizing what is happening, they provide their contact information with the assumption that the person on the other end of the phone will help them understand what to do. Instead, the representative sends their information to every community within a very large area with no regard to the individual's needs. Subsequently, the family is overwhelmed by unwelcome phone call after phone call from multiple communities trying to "sell" their place. That placement service's goal is to get the caller to move to a community so they can be paid. Period. They have never visited the communities they recommend, rarely have current information, and know nothing about the reputation or the quality of care. The perspective from the community is equally frustrating as many referrals are not financially qualified, their care needs are too great, or they live too far away.

In 2021, I began Senior Liaison of Central Florida Inc. in an effort to personalize this difficult and confusing journey that few people understand. My desire was to help families without any personal influence, to treat them with honesty and integrity, and provide education and resources. Here are my top 5 reasons why this is important.

Reason #1 – Personalized guidance. I will personally meet with you in your home or by phone to learn about your needs. We will discuss what communities will fit those needs and why. We will schedule tours for 2- 3 appropriate communities and we will accompany you on the visit to ensure your questions are answered. We provide community comparison sheets, move in check lists, and education to ensure you understand all aspects of this important decision.

Reason #2 – It saves time and stress. When you spend your precious time calling one community after another or driving all over town to collect brochures, it is exhausting, stressful, and overwhelming.

It is nearly impossible to remember what makes one different from the next and brochures are often of little value. Senior Liaison knows each community including their pricing, floor plans, reputation, care, staff, and what makes each one different.

Reason #3 – Reassurance that a community will fit your individual needs. When a decision is made based on the way a community looks and weak promises about care and services, there is a high risk of disillusionment and disappointment. Only after living there for a few weeks or months, do people realize it was not what they expected and begin to start the frustrating process all over again. This can be expensive, stressful, and very hard on the elderly. The goal is to get it right the first time! Because Senior Liaison knows these communities, we will not waste your time looking at places that are not appropriate and keep your focus on the goal.

Reason #4 – Confidence that you have made a good decision based on good information. At Senior Liaison, we are in communities all the time. We know if there has been frequent management turnover, if there have been multiple complaints made against them. We provide information about the care, the culture, the food, and all the things that are important. We do not rely on Google reviews or Medicare.gov! We have access to a Florida state website that will provide us with up to date accurate information.

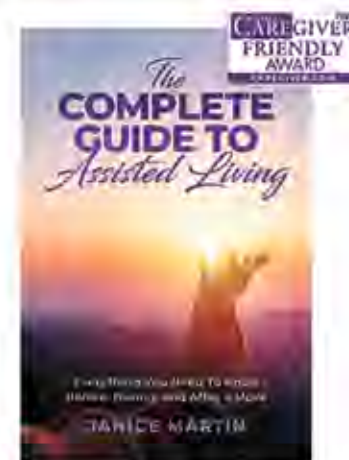
Reason #5 – Receive information on trusted partners to help with all aspects of the move. Senior Liaison of Central Florida is recognized and respected by service providers and communities throughout central Florida. We have strong relationships with trusted partners who can help with selling your home, downsizing, packing, moving, obtaining important legal documents, reviewing long term care insurance and more. You do not need to do this on your own!

So, how do you get started? BEFORE you visit or call a community, call us at 352-477-1866. If we call first and provide your contact information (with your permission), and you do move in, the community will pay us a referral fee. We have no financial interest in any community and believe this is YOUR decision. In most cases, there is no charge to you! There may be a small fee for home consultations to discuss your needs and help you with your search, or to help you feel comfortable about your decision to choose a community

you may have already contacted. Also, no placement service can be compensated for individuals on Medicaid, rehabs, or long term nursing homes. But we will always help by phone with the ultimate goal of your confidence and the safety and care of your loved one.

The best way to know that you will be treated honestly by a placement service is to get a personal recommendation and to meet with them. Never let anyone tell you that you have to do anything, including when or where to move. Meet with them in person, look at their website, look at the testimonials, and on Facebook and see if you feel this is someone you would like to help you. Make certain they tell you up front if there will be any fees. Ask for a written contract. And last, but perhaps most importantly – make sure they are responsive! We answer our phones seven days a week until 8PM, return calls promptly, reply to texts quickly, and follow up on emails the same day.

This journey is about YOU. Be certain that in every step along the way you feel compassion, respect, and have all the information you need to know. We look forward to your call!



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



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Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

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

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

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

Take Time for Yourself

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

Get Moving

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

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

Meditation

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

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

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

Quick Care Med Urgent Care

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

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

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

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

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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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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.*

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:11-13

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

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. **Contentment means this:** I don't need more in order to be happy.

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

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

Jesus said it like this, *¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."* Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:

- **My life is a rat race.**
- **I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.**
- **I am just so exhausted.**
- **I don't know how much more of this I can take.**
- **I just want to escape.**



These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.



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