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August 2025

Lake/Sumter Edition - Monthly

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It's your heart. It should be personal.

And that's how I treat it.

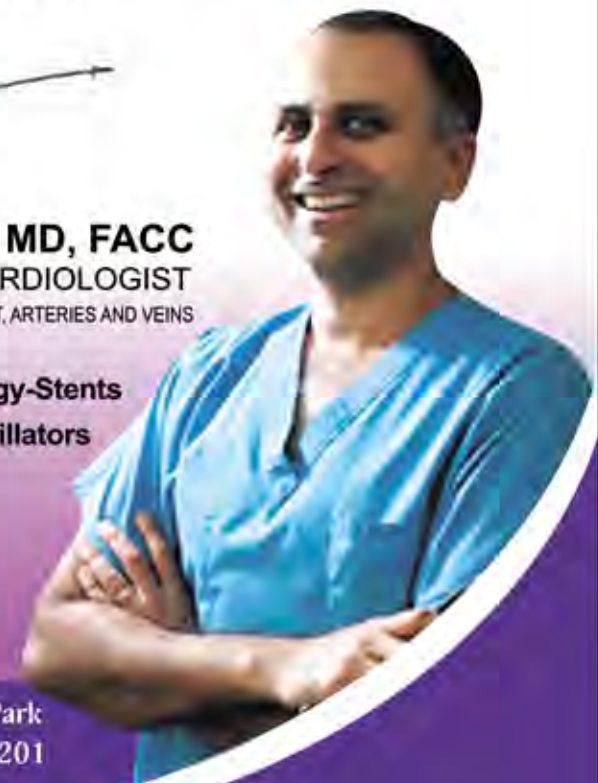
When you come to see me... that's exactly who you will see. I will take your health personally. That is why I am the only doctor you will see when you come to my office. I will take time with you and get to know you personally. No patient of mine will ever have to see an associate or undergo needless testing. I will know which tests are needed and which aren't. I will watch over you and treat you as I want to be treated when, one day, I am the patient and not the doctor. And that is my promise to you.



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CANCER AND HEART DISEASE PREVENTION: Early Detection Can Save Your Life

By Martin Gramatica

Taking control of your health means staying ahead of potential problems before they become life-threatening crises. Cancer and heart disease remain the leading causes of death worldwide, but the good news is that early detection through advanced screening technology can dramatically improve outcomes and save lives. CT early detection body scans represent a revolutionary approach to preventive healthcare, offering a comprehensive view of your body's current state and potential health risks.

The Power of Early Detection

Traditional healthcare often operates on a reactive model—addressing symptoms after they appear. However, many serious conditions, including various cancers and cardiovascular diseases, can develop silently for years without obvious symptoms. By the time warning signs emerge, the disease may have progressed to advanced stages where treatment options become more limited and less effective.

CT early detection body scans flip this approach on its head, providing a proactive window into your health. These sophisticated imaging techniques can identify abnormalities, growths, blockages, and other concerning changes long before they would typically manifest as noticeable symptoms. This early intervention window is often the difference between a manageable health condition and a medical emergency.

Why Consider ClearView CT Scanning?

Unexplained Symptoms: Have you been experiencing persistent discomfort, unusual fatigue, or concerning changes in your body that your regular doctor hasn't been able to explain? For unexplained pains or symptoms that evade diagnosis, ClearView can offer crucial clues or provide additional peace of mind. Sometimes the answers we seek aren't visible through standard examinations, but advanced imaging can reveal what's happening beneath the surface.

Genetic and Family History: Your family's medical history significantly affects your personal health risks. If cancer, heart disease, or other serious conditions run in your family, you're statistically more likely to develop these same issues. A ClearView scan can help you keep a vigilant eye on conditions you may be particularly worried about, allowing you to monitor your body for early signs of inherited health risks.

Proactive Health Mindset: Perhaps most importantly, regular CT scans support a proactive approach to healthcare. With consistent scanning over time, medical professionals can track subtle changes in your body's condition. This longitudinal view means they can detect unusual developments early, significantly increasing the chances of effective treatment and positive outcomes.

Beyond Detection: Peace of Mind

The psychological benefits of early detection screening shouldn't be underestimated. Uncertainty about your health can create ongoing stress and anxiety that affects your quality of life. Whether scans reveal everything is normal or identify areas requiring attention, you'll have concrete information to guide your healthcare decisions and reduce worry about unknown health risks.

Early detection through CT scanning represents an investment in your future health and well-being. By identifying potential problems before they become crises, you're giving yourself the best possible chance for successful treatment and long-term health.

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MARTIN GRAMATICA

Super Bowl Champion

From Super Bowl Champion to Health Advocate, Martin Gramatica traded his NFL cleats for a mission to help others stay healthy and active. The former Tampa Bay Buccaneers kicker, who helped bring home a Super Bowl championship in 2003, spent 10 years in the National Football League with five of those seasons in Tampa Bay.

Now co-founder of ClearView Imaging Center in The Villages, Gramatica applies the same precision and dedication that made him successful on the field to promoting early health detection. His athletic background gives him unique insight into body awareness and proactive health management.

"As an athlete, I would know every little pain in my body when I played because it mattered," Gramatica explains. "This is being proactive to stay healthy for yourself and your family."

His transition from professional sports to healthcare advocacy stems from a desire to make a meaningful impact beyond football. "I never thought I would end up doing anything that could help save somebody's life," he reflects. "I think my kicking career probably hurt some people's hearts - if I made or missed a kick - but now we are helping them all."

Gramatica's passion for The Villages community drives his commitment to bringing advanced imaging technology to residents who want to stay active and enjoy their retirement years to the fullest.

UF Health Brings Life-Saving Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit to Lake and Sumter Counties

UF Health is revolutionizing emergency stroke care in Central Florida by introducing the region's first Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit to Lake and Sumter counties. This groundbreaking ambulance represents a significant advance in stroke response capabilities, bringing hospital-level treatment directly to patients' doorsteps when every minute counts.

Understanding Stroke:

Recognizing the Warning Signs

A stroke occurs when blood flow to part of the brain is interrupted, either by a blocked blood vessel (ischemic stroke) or bleeding in the brain (hemorrhagic stroke). Time is absolutely critical in stroke treatment, as brain cells begin dying within minutes of being deprived of oxygen and nutrients.

The American Stroke Association emphasizes remembering the acronym BE-FAST to identify stroke symptoms:

- B - Balance problems, sudden dizziness or loss of coordination**
- E - Eyesight changes, sudden vision loss or blurriness**
- F - Face drooping, ask the person to smile and check for uneven facial features**
- A - Arm weakness, ask the person to raise both arms and see if one drifts downward**
- S - Speech difficulty, slurred speech or trouble understanding**
- T - Time to call emergency services immediately**

Additional warning signs include sudden severe headache, numbness on one side of the body and confusion or difficulty understanding speech. These symptoms can appear suddenly and may seem to improve, but immediate medical attention is still crucial.

What Makes This Mobile Unit Special

A Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit is a custom-designed ambulance engineered to diagnose stroke in patients in the field. The unit serving The Villages area is equipped with a state-of-the-art 32-slice CT scanner, telemedicine equipment and medications specific to acute stroke treatment, including the "clot-busting" drug TNK and reversal agents for hemorrhagic stroke.



The MSTU is staffed by a highly trained team that includes a CT technologist, an EMT, a paramedic and an RN specially trained in stroke care, with a stroke neurologist available via telemedicine for real-time consultation and treatment decisions.

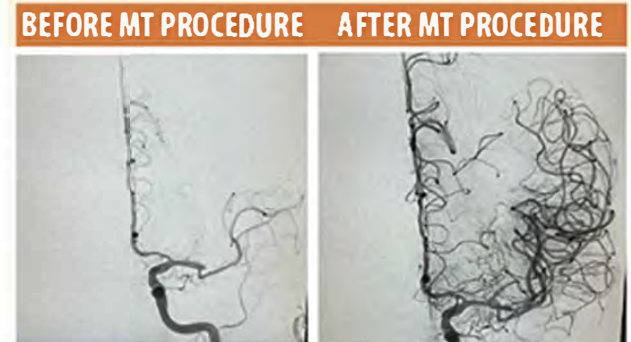
The need for rapid response cannot be overstated. IV thrombolytics are most effective when given within the first 60 minutes from symptom onset, leading to improved functional outcomes and reduced risk of death or disability. This "Golden Hour" concept drives the urgency behind the mobile stroke unit program.

The UF Health Mobile Stroke Treatment Unit facilitates faster stroke diagnosis and treatment because care is started on board the vehicle. For patients experiencing a large-vessel stroke, the MSTU can deliver them directly to the operating room for an emergent, lifesaving procedure called mechanical thrombectomy, bypassing the emergency room.

Proven Results from Gainesville Experience

Since launching in July 2023, UF Health's Gainesville-based MSTU has demonstrated remarkable success, responding to more than 1,850 calls, admitting 900 patients and providing over 220 acute, critical interventions.

**MSTU saves
50 MINUTES =
100 MILLION**
brain cells saved



The statistics speak volumes about the unit's impact. Nationally, only about 10% of stroke patients receive treatment within 90 minutes of when they were last known to be well. But, the Gainesville MSTU achieved treatment for 51% of patients within that crucial timeframe. Even more impressive, while only 1.4% of patients nationally receive treatment within 60 minutes, the MSTU treated 29% of patients within that golden hour window.

Bridging Rural Health Care Gaps

This expedited care extends beyond urban areas to contiguous counties. The Gainesville unit received 237 requests for aid from surrounding rural communities. A recent study published by the University of Florida College of Medicine in the journal *Stroke*, showed that UF Health's approach of sending a specially equipped stroke ambulance to meet paramedics at designated "rendezvous points" to take patients from surrounding rural areas significantly improves timely stroke care — on average, by nearly an hour.

For Lake and Sumter county residents, this mobile unit eliminates geographical barriers that have historically limited access to specialized stroke care. Rural and suburban residents now receive the same level of expert intervention as those living near major medical centers, ensuring that location no longer determines the quality of emergency neurological care available during life's most critical moments.

TIME SAVED IS BRAIN SAVED.

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HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RELIEVE SEASONAL ALLERGIES AFFECTING YOUR EYES

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

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

SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL EYE ALLERGIES

1. Redness. When allergens inflame the blood vessels of the eyes, they can become red and bloodshot.

2. Itching. Allergies cause histamines to be released, creating itching. Scratching this maddening itch can worsen the problem, and invite further eye irritation, even infection.

3. Weepy, Watery Eyes. As the eyes try to flush out allergens, they may water excessively, which can impact vision.

4. Gritty Sensation. Allergens can cause eyes to feel dry, gritty or like foreign bodies are present.

5. Swollen Eyelids. Irritation of the eyelids may cause them to swell, get puffy or bag, or become red.

RELIEVING SYMPTOMS OF SEASONAL EYE ALLERGIES

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

1. Avoid Allergen Exposure. Whenever possible, try to avoid the sources of allergic responses, especially activities like mowing the lawn (yay!) or golfing (boo). Keep home, office and car windows closed, especially on days with high pollen counts. Wearing sunglasses, particularly those that wrap around the face, can help limit pollen exposure. At-home air purifiers may help remove allergens from your living areas.

2. Practice Good Eye Hygiene. Always wash your hands thoroughly before touching your eyes, and avoid rubbing them. When needed, gently rinse out eyes with a sterile rinsing solution or distilled water. After going outside, wash your face and eyelids with a gentle cleanser. If possible, remove contact lenses, as they can trap allergens, and wear glasses until the pollen count is low. It's also smart to wash bedding, vacuum and dust regularly.

3. Cold Compresses. Applying a clean cloth dampened with cold water for 10-15 minutes can help soothe irritated eyes and reduce eyelid swelling. Or, make a cold compress by wrapping a thin, clean towel around a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice.

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

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

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

ARE EYE ALLERGIES EVER A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

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

1. Severe Symptoms. Severe redness, itching, swelling and/or pain may indicate a more serious allergic reaction or infection.

2. Persistent Symptoms. If symptoms persist for several weeks despite using over-the-counter remedies, it's important to get a thorough evaluation to rule out other conditions, such as dry eye syndrome, blepharitis, or conjunctivitis.

3. Changes in Vision. Changes such as blurriness or double vision should be promptly evaluated to rule out a more serious problem.

4. Discharge. Thick, yellow or green discharge may be a sign of infection.

5. Light Sensitivity. Unusual sensitivity to light (photophobia) may be a symptom of a more severe eye condition and should be addressed by your doctor.

6. Headaches/Facial Pain. These symptoms can indicate a condition such as sinusitis, which requires medical treatment.

7. Systemic Allergic Reactions. If eye allergy symptoms are just part of a more extensive allergic reaction, such as hives, swelling of the face and throat, or difficulty breathing, seek emergency medical care immediately.

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS FROM UNTREATED ALLERGIES

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

• **Risk of Infection:** Persistent eye rubbing can introduce bacteria into the eye, increasing the risk of infections like conjunctivitis (pink eye).

• **Chronic Inflammation:** Stubborn inflammation can cause damage to the eye's surface and lead to conditions like keratitis (a corneal ulcer), the most common cause of infection-related corneal blindness.

• **Corneal Damage:** Rubbing and scratching eyes can damage the cornea, potentially leading to scarring and vision impairment.

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

WHEN TO SEE AN EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL

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

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

LAKE EYE FOR EYE ALLERGY RELIEF

If you're experiencing red, itchy, watery eyes, contact your local Lake Eye (a US Eye Company). With the region's latest and most advanced eye care services, we're here to help you make the most of the spring and summer seasons. With six state-of-the-art locations, there's a Lake Eye office near you.



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Stepping Towards Vein Health: THE VITALITY OF FOOTWEAR

When it comes to maintaining our overall health, we often focus on regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep. However, we often overlook the significance of proper footwear in maintaining optimal vein health. The health of our veins plays a crucial role in circulation and overall well-being. In this article, we delve into the importance of footwear in relation to vein health and discover how the right shoes can help us stride towards a healthier future.

The Impact of Footwear on Vein Health

Our feet and legs are home to a vast network of veins that transport blood back to the heart. When we walk or engage in physical activity, our calf muscles help pump blood against gravity, aiding in efficient circulation. However, ill-fitting or inappropriate footwear can hinder this process, leading to various vein-related conditions and discomfort.

Let's explore some key aspects of footwear that significantly impact vein health

1. Proper Arch Support: Wearing shoes with proper arch support is vital for maintaining healthy veins. Arch support helps distribute the weight evenly across the feet, reducing excessive strain on the arches and minimizing the risk of conditions like plantar fasciitis. By providing adequate support, the arches prevent the veins in the legs from becoming overworked, thereby promoting healthy blood flow.

2. Cushioning and Shock Absorption: Footwear with sufficient cushioning and shock absorption properties offer protective benefits to veins. They absorb the impact of each step, reducing stress on the feet and lower legs. This diminishes the risk of developing varicose veins, as well as conditions such as deep vein thrombosis (DVT), which can occur when blood clots form due to extended periods of inactivity.

3. Proper Fit and Toe Space: Wearing shoes that fit correctly and provide ample toe space is crucial for vein health. Tight, constrictive footwear can impede blood circulation, leading to discomfort and swelling. Toes should have enough room to move naturally, as cramped conditions can contribute to the development of bunions and hammer toes, which may impact venous blood flow.



4. Breathability and Moisture Control: Choosing footwear that allows air circulation and moisture control is essential for vein health. When feet are excessively sweaty or moist, it can contribute to the growth of bacteria and fungi, leading to infections. These infections can cause inflammation and compromise vein health, potentially resulting in conditions such as cellulitis or lymphangitis.

Choosing the Right Footwear

Selecting the appropriate footwear to support vein health is a crucial step towards overall well-being.

Here are some tips to consider:

1. Comfort and Fit: Ensure that your shoes provide ample support, cushioning, and a snug yet comfortable fit.

2. Arch Support: Look for shoes with built-in arch support or consider using orthotic inserts to provide adequate support.

3. Breathable Materials: Opt for footwear made from breathable materials like leather or mesh to promote air circulation and prevent excessive moisture buildup.

4. Regular Exercise: Alongside appropriate footwear, engage in regular exercise to strengthen leg muscles and support healthy blood circulation.

In the pursuit of overall health, we must not overlook the significance of proper footwear, particularly in relation to vein health. By selecting shoes that offer arch support, cushioning, proper fit, and breathability, we can minimize the risk of vein-related conditions and enhance overall circulation.

Prioritizing our foot health through mindful footwear choices will allow us to step confidently towards a healthier and more vibrant future.

At Central Florida Vein & Vascular Center, our specialty is the improvement of your venous health. Our experienced team of Board-Certified Fellowship Trained Vascular Surgeons provide patients of all ages with the most advanced, minimally invasive care and treatments for varicose veins, spider veins, leg pain, leg wounds and swelling, as well as many other painful and unsightly conditions caused from the effects of a venous insufficiency.

If you are one of the more than 25 million Americans who suffer from some sort of venous related problem, or know someone who does, you owe it to yourself to learn more about the safe and virtually painless, non-surgical outpatient treatments that are available to you at any one of our three convenient Central Florida locations.

Visit CFVein.com for more detailed information about (Footwear and Vein Health) and other expert advice related to healthy, pain free legs.

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Coronary Artery Disease: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Feeling short of breath, heart palpitations, chest pain and tightness? Do you know the signs of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)? And if you're experiencing them, are you taking steps to see your cardiologist to find out what's the cause?

For many people, that have CAD symptoms, they, unfortunately, ignore their signs. Ignoring heart irregularities can be fatal! And if you are experiencing any, the best time to have diagnostic testing is when these indicators are acting up.

What Diagnostics are available?

In today's modern medical world, we have so many tests that can pinpoint exactly what's wrong with our hearts; if only more patients would take advantage of getting tested to know where their risk factors and cardiac health fall, they would give themselves a jump start on living a much healthier life with greater longevity.

An electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG) measures the electrical activity of the heartbeat. If you are experiencing heart symptoms, this is usually the first test that will be administered in an office setting or in the ER. If symptoms persist, more testing will follow to eliminate issues, or in many cases, put the pieces together to find out what's causing your warning signs.

Stress tests are one of the most common methods to detect heart function during exercise and at rest. If you are unable to exercise, there are nuclear stress test options that utilize an injectable contrast to mimic the heart rate elevation of exercise, while you lie or sit down.

Sometimes stress tests are not enough, and further testing like an angiogram is required to see how the inside (lumen) of the blood vessels, arteries, and heart chambers are working. An angiogram can show blockages and other blood flow abnormalities. Stents can be placed if needed during the procedure.

Many times cardiologists will ask patients to wear a Holter Monitor for anywhere from 24 hours to several days depending on your specific situation and risk factors. The monitor is a portable electrocardiography device that continuously monitors the rhythm and the heart's activity.



An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of the heart that can detect how the blood is pumping and it can also identify the size and thickness of the valves, chambers, and arteries.

There is also another vital test called a calcium score. This test measures the amount of plaque in your arteries. CT coronary angiogram is a technique to evaluate the coronary arteries in select patients.

CAD Symptoms

- Chest Pain and tightness
- Lightheaded
- Dizzy
- Tired/Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Fainting
- Rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Gray color to the skin
- Arm/Shoulder Pain
- Abnormal heart palpitations
- Cardiac arrest

Depending on your diagnosis and indicators, the treatment can vary from merely taking medications to having a non-invasive procedure, or angiography/stents. The best advice any cardiologist will give you is, "Don't ignore your symptoms!" If you have any heart irregularities or discomfort, seeking medical attention fast is imperative.

If you believe you are having a heart attack or stroke, call 911! If you're having initial symptoms that come and go, contact your cardiologist immediately.

Call Office for Consultation
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T.E. VALLABHAN, MD, FACC
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If you believe you are having a heart attack or stroke, call 911! If you're having initial symptoms that come and go, contact your cardiologist immediately.



Understanding Psoriasis:

How Lumen Dermatology Supports Your Journey to Clearer Skin

By David Kosiorek, PA-C

August marks Psoriasis Awareness Month, a crucial time to shed light on a chronic skin condition that affects over 8 million Americans. At Lumen Dermatology, we recognize the profound impact psoriasis can have on patients' physical comfort, emotional wellbeing, and quality of life. This awareness month serves as an important reminder that effective treatment options exist, and no one has to face this condition alone.

What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition that causes skin cells to multiply rapidly, leading to the formation of thick, scaly patches on the skin's surface. These patches, called plaques, typically appear red with silvery-white scales and can develop anywhere on the body, though they commonly affect the elbows, knees, scalp, and lower back. The condition results from an overactive immune system that mistakenly attacks healthy skin cells, accelerating the normal skin cell turnover process from weeks to just days.

While psoriasis primarily affects the skin, it's important to understand that this condition extends beyond surface-level symptoms. Many patients experience itching, burning, and pain in affected areas. The visible nature of psoriasis can also lead to feelings of self-consciousness, anxiety, and depression, making comprehensive care essential for overall wellbeing.

Breaking Down Common Misconceptions

One of the most persistent myths surrounding psoriasis is that it's contagious. This misconception can lead to unnecessary social stigma and isolation for those living with the condition. Psoriasis is entirely non-contagious – it cannot be spread through touch, sharing personal items, or close contact with others.

Another common misunderstanding is that psoriasis is simply a cosmetic concern. In reality, it's a serious medical condition that requires proper diagnosis and treatment. Without appropriate care, psoriasis can worsen over time and may increase the risk of developing other health conditions, including psoriatic arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes.

The Lumen Dermatology Approach

At Lumen Dermatology, we understand that every patient's psoriasis experience is unique. Our comprehensive approach begins with a thorough evaluation to determine the type and severity of your



condition. We offer various forms of psoriasis treatment, including plaque psoriasis, guttate psoriasis, inverse psoriasis, and pustular psoriasis, each requiring tailored treatment strategies.

Our treatment philosophy centers on creating personalized care plans that address both the physical symptoms and the emotional impact of psoriasis. We believe in educating our patients about their condition, empowering them to make informed decisions about their treatment options, and supporting them throughout their journey to clearer, healthier skin.

Advanced Treatment Options

Modern psoriasis treatment has evolved significantly, offering patients more effective options than ever before. At Lumen Dermatology, we provide access to the latest therapeutic approaches, including topical treatments, phototherapy, systemic medications, and innovative biologic therapies. Our dermatologists stay current with emerging treatments and clinical research to ensure our patients receive the most advanced care available.

We also recognize the importance of lifestyle modifications in managing psoriasis. Our team provides guidance on stress management techniques, dietary considerations, and skincare routines that can complement medical treatments and help minimize flare-ups.

Your Partner in Psoriasis Management

Living with psoriasis doesn't mean accepting discomfort or limiting your lifestyle. During Psoriasis Awareness Month and throughout the year, Lumen Dermatology remains committed to helping patients achieve significant improvement in their symptoms and overall quality of life.

If you're experiencing symptoms of psoriasis or have been struggling to find effective treatment, we encourage you to schedule a consultation with our experienced dermatology team. Together, we can develop a comprehensive treatment plan that addresses your specific needs and helps you regain confidence in your skin.

Remember, psoriasis is manageable with the right care and support. At Lumen Dermatology, we're here to guide you every step of the way toward clearer, more comfortable skin.

Expert Dermatology Care for Your Skin

At Lumen Dermatology, we bring over 70 years combined experience in skin health. Our team specializes in diagnosing, treating, and preventing skin conditions, including acne, eczema, psoriasis, and skin cancer. With a patient-centered approach, we provide personalized care to help you achieve and maintain healthy skin for life.

Book Your Appointment

Booking a Dermatology appointment is an essential step for anyone looking to address skin concerns or maintain overall skin health. By scheduling an appointment, patients gain access to professional insights and tailored solutions that can significantly improve their skin health.

Call 352-830-1500 to schedule your appointment today!



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The Benefits of Advanced Anterior Hip Surgery: Faster Recovery, Less Pain

Hip pain and mobility issues affect millions of Americans, significantly impacting their quality of life and daily activities. For patients in Florida seeking leading-edge orthopaedic care, UF Health Medical Group Orthopaedics now offers advanced anterior hip replacement surgery under the expertise of orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Paul Mahle.

Understanding Anterior Hip Health

The hip joint, one of the body's largest ball-and-socket joints, plays a crucial role in supporting body weight and enabling fluid movement. The anterior approach to hip surgery represents a revolutionary advancement in orthopedic care, focusing on preserving muscle tissue and minimizing surgical trauma. Unlike traditional hip replacement methods that require cutting through major muscles, the anterior approach accesses the hip joint through natural tissue planes, resulting in faster recovery times and improved outcomes.

Common conditions affecting anterior hip health include osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, hip fractures and avascular necrosis. These conditions can cause severe pain, stiffness and limited range of motion, making simple activities like walking, climbing stairs or getting out of bed challenging for patients.

The Anterior Hip Replacement Advantage

Dr. Paul Mahle specializes in the anterior hip approach, which offers numerous benefits over traditional surgical methods. This minimally invasive technique preserves the important muscles around the hip joint, particularly the gluteus medius and minimus muscles, which are essential for hip stability and normal walking patterns.

Patients who undergo anterior hip replacement typically experience reduced postoperative pain, shorter hospital stays and a faster return to normal activities. Many patients can bear weight on their new hip immediately after surgery and often go home the same day or after just one night in the hospital. The reduced muscle trauma also means fewer postoperative hip precautions, allowing patients greater freedom of movement during recovery.

Next-Day Surgery Program

UF Health Medical Group Orthopaedics' innovative next-day surgery program represents the latest advancement in outpatient orthopaedic care. This advance program allows carefully selected patients to

undergo anterior hip replacement surgery and bear weight on their leg within 24 hours, significantly reducing recovery time and length of stay in a health care facility while maintaining the highest safety standards.

The success of this program relies on comprehensive preoperative planning, advanced anesthesia techniques and a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. Patients undergo thorough preoperative optimization, including medical clearance, physical therapy consultation and detailed education about the procedure and recovery process.

Dr. Paul Mahle brings extensive experience in anterior hip replacement surgery to UF Health Medical Group Orthopaedics. His commitment to staying at the forefront of orthopaedic innovation ensures patients receive the most advanced care available. Dr. Mahle's surgical philosophy emphasizes patient-centered care, focusing on achieving optimal outcomes while minimizing recovery time.

His expertise extends beyond surgical technique to encompass comprehensive patient education and personalized treatment planning. Each patient receives individualized attention, with Dr. Mahle taking time to explain the procedure, set realistic expectations and develop a customized recovery plan.

Recovery and Long-term Outcomes

Patients undergoing anterior hip replacement with Dr. Mahle can expect a structured recovery process designed to optimize healing and restore function. Physical therapy typically begins within hours of surgery, focusing on gentle mobilization and progressive strengthening exercises.

Most patients return to light activities within two weeks and normal activities within six to eight weeks. The preservation of muscle tissue during the anterior approach often allows for a more natural gait pattern and improved long-term hip function.

Choosing UF Health

UF Health combines state-of-the-art facilities with compassionate care, creating an ideal environment for orthopaedic surgery. The hospital's commitment to patient safety, combined with Dr. Mahle's surgical expertise, ensuring optimal outcomes for hip replacement patients.

For individuals suffering from hip pain and considering surgical options, consultation with Dr. Mahle can provide valuable insights into whether anterior hip replacement is the right solution for restoring mobility and improving quality of life.



**PAUL MAHLE, MD
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON**

Paul Mahle, MD, is an orthopaedic surgeon at UF Health specializing in joint replacement and adult reconstructive surgery. He provides personalized care for bone, muscle and joint conditions, offering nonsurgical and surgical treatments for hip and knee injuries and degenerative conditions.

As part of a skilled health care team, he draws on shared expertise and best practices to diagnose and treat a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions. Outside of his practice, he enjoys traveling and being outdoors and is passionate about physical wellness, encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle.



For questions or to learn more, visit:
<https://UFHealth.org/UF-Health-Orthopaedics-Central-Florida>

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It's Back to School Time! The Human Eye and Retina:

A Window to Vision and Lifelong Learning

By Beth Richter, MD, PhD and George Skopis, MD



The human eye is a magnificent structure of biological engineering, allowing us to perceive the world in vivid color and details. At the crux of this organ lies the retina—a delicate, light-sensitive layer thinner than an index card which lines the back of the eye. The retina plays an essential role in vision by converting light into neural signals, which are then transmitted through the optic nerve to the brain. The retina and eye structures form the first step in the complex process of seeing.

Basic Anatomy of the Eye and Retina

The eye functions much like a camera. Light enters through the clear cornea, passes through the pupil (controlled by the iris, like a camera aperture), and is focused by the internal lens onto the retina. The retina contains two types of photoreceptor cells: rods, which are sensitive to light and allow for movement and night vision, and cones, which detect color and detail in bright light. The central part of the retina, known as the macula, is responsible for sharp central vision. At the very center of the macula is the fovea, where cone density is highest, allowing our most detailed vision. Damage or disease affecting the retina—such as macular degeneration, retinal detachment, or diabetic retinopathy—can severely impair vision. This emphasizes the importance of eye health in maintaining quality of life.

Lifelong Learning Principles and Neural Plasticity

Just as the retina transmits information to the brain, the brain constantly interprets, integrates, and learns from visual input. This capacity for learning and changing—known as neuroadaptation—remains active throughout life. Lifelong learning refers to the ongoing, voluntary pursuit of knowledge and skills. This is rooted in the brain's ability to form new neural connections in response to experiences or other input. Learning can be formal, like taking classes in school, or informal, like reading, observing, or engaging with others. Vision plays a key role in most learning experiences, especially in early development. However, even in adulthood, activities like reading, observing art, completing puzzles, or exploring new environments continue to stimulate cognitive growth.

Connecting Vision and Learning

Healthy vision supports effective learning, and ongoing learning supports brain health. The interaction between the eye and brain is more than mechanical—this is a dynamic system that determines how we navigate and understand the world. By protecting our vision and nurturing our curiosity, we cultivate both our sensory and intellectual well-being for a lifetime.

We at Retina Group of Florida are here to help with any of your retinal or macular care needs. We know the importance of sight and hope to help you achieve the best vision possible for your goal of lifetime learning.

MEET THE PHYSICIANS

George Skopis, M.D.

George Skopis, MD is a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship trained vitreoretinal surgeon. Dr. Skopis specializes in surgical and medical diseases of the retina and vitreous. He strives to utilize the most advanced imaging, medical and surgical techniques to diagnose and treat patients. Dr. Skopis has expertise in age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular occlusions, macular holes, macular pucker/epiretinal membranes, retinal detachments, proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and scleral fixated intra-ocular lenses.

Dr. Skopis grew up in Tarpon Springs, FL and graduated from Tarpon Springs High School. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The University of Florida where he graduated cum laude.

Elizabeth Richter, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Richter joined the Retina Associates of Sarasota after completing her two-year fellowship in vitreoretinal disease and surgery at the renowned Jules Stein Eye Institute at UCLA in Los Angeles, California. As a native of the southeast, she is an engineer-trained retina surgeon originally from Georgia. She earned dual undergraduate degrees in mechanical engineering (summa cum laude) from Georgia Institute of Technology and biology from Emory University, and her M.D. and Ph.D. degrees from the Medical College of Georgia. There, her thesis was in a laboratory that focused on virology and its effects on the retina in diseases such as Acute Retinal Necrosis.



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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 Botox, Derma fillers, laser skin resurfacing, PRP, Body contouring, cellulite reduction.
- **Pulse Wave Therapy:** Improves circulation and activates stem cell regeneration correcting conditions like chronic pain, neuropathy and 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 bench marking 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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How Much Sleep for Brain Health?

There Is No Magic Number. Here's Why.

Do you know if you're getting enough sleep?

Scientists have analyzed the sleeping habits of millions of individuals and found that sleep is important for maintaining brain health and that getting enough healthy sleep can even reduce the risk of developing cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. In several large studies, researchers saw that people who slept seven hours at night had the lowest risk of developing cognitive decline or dementia, compared to people who slept less or slept more.

There is no magic number of hours that everyone your age should be sleeping, but seven hours is a helpful baseline.

But good sleep can be hard to get by. As many as half of adults over 65 report symptoms of insomnia. Perhaps you've experienced the frustration that comes with not being able to fall asleep or stay asleep. It can lead you to wonder if you're getting enough sleep—and that, in turn, can make you even more worried. This condition is sometimes called sleep anxiety. And, unsurprisingly, sleep anxiety makes it even harder to get good sleep.

Let's look at the science surrounding the ideal amount of sleep—and the evidence-based strategies for alleviating your worries. If you're still curious, you should consult with sleep experts or doctors.

How much sleep does your body need?

While large studies found on average that seven hours of sleep was associated with the best cognitive health, everyone's different, and the specific amount of sleep an individual person needs can vary greatly from person to person, depending on factors like age. Another factor that could affect your individual, optimal amount of sleep for brain health is genetics: A small percentage of people have a gene that makes it possible for them to sleep for fewer than six hours each night without any health or cognitive consequences the next day.

So, if the answer could be different for each individual, how much sleep should you try to get? Experts suggest taking cues from your body to figure out how much you should sleep.



“The best indicator of whether you're getting enough sleep is how you feel during the day,” said Gorica Micic, PhD, a sleep expert from Flinders University. “If you feel sleepy, then you may need more sleep.”

If you aren't feeling tired after five hours of sleep, it shouldn't be a source of stress or anxiety that you're not getting seven or eight hours: You're simply paying attention to the sleep rhythms of your body.

Prevent insomnia: Don't lie in bed awake for hours Psychologists have also developed cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques that can help break the cycle of sleep anxiety. This means analyzing your thought patterns and teaching you strategies to counter thoughts that might keep you awake. Perfecting these techniques may take anywhere from two to eight sessions with your doctor or therapist.

Cognitive behavioral therapy teaches you to identify the thoughts and behaviors that are keeping you awake, so you can work to eliminate them. For example, when you can't sleep, you might check your phone. The bright light as well as all the notifications, social media, emails and other content reinforce insomnia. Cognitive restructuring through CBT involves learning to challenge the thoughts, beliefs and behaviors that keep you up at night.

CBT can also help you make sure you don't begin to subconsciously associate your bed with anxiety or sleeplessness. If you aren't feeling sleepy, it doesn't make sense to lay awake in bed. Michael Perlis, PhD director of the behavioral sleep medicine program at the University of Pennsylvania recommends giving yourself 20 minutes in bed to see if you fall asleep.

After that time is up, leave your bed. However, if you have difficulty orienting yourself and navigating in the dark, make sure you have a plan that allows you to reach a light switch to prevent falls and confusion.

“The problem with staying in bed for any appreciable amount of time is that this reinforces sleeplessness, physiologically and psychologically,” Perlis said. Problems can arise when you associate your bed with insomnia rather than where you sleep. Activities like reading or listening to music can help you relax by distracting you from stressful or anxious thoughts. When you feel tired, head to bed and hopefully you'll have an easier time getting to sleep.

Up to four in five individuals who learn and practice these skills show sustained improvements in their sleeping habits.

There's no question, enough high-quality sleep is a key part of good brain health. Science shows it. But when it comes to getting the right amount of sleep for you, at the end of the day, here's the important takeaway: There is no set “ideal” number of hours of sleep per night. There are only guidelines, which you can use as a jumping-off point to determine the amount of sleep that helps you personally feel healthier and more clear-minded.

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UNDERSTANDING ARTHRITIS: Causes, Symptoms, and Management Strategies

By Dr. Chad Rose, DC

Arthritis affects millions of Americans, limiting mobility and diminishing quality of life for many. While often associated with aging, this condition can impact people of all ages and backgrounds. Understanding arthritis is the first step toward effectively managing its symptoms and maintaining an active lifestyle.

What Is Arthritis?

Arthritis isn't a single disease but rather an umbrella term for more than 100 related conditions affecting the joints and surrounding tissues. The word "arthritis" literally means joint inflammation, though many forms involve various other symptoms beyond inflammation.

The two most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis occurs when protective cartilage that cushions the ends of bones wears down over time, while rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own tissues, primarily affecting the joint lining.

Recognizing the Signs

Early recognition of arthritis symptoms can lead to more effective treatment. Common warning signs include:

- Persistent joint pain, especially during or after movement
- Stiffness, particularly in the morning or after periods of inactivity
- Swelling and tenderness around affected joints
- Decreased range of motion
- Joint warmth and redness
- Fatigue and general malaise (especially with rheumatoid arthritis)

These symptoms may come and go, and their severity varies widely among individuals. Some people experience mild discomfort that barely affects daily activities, while others face debilitating pain that significantly impacts mobility and independence.

Risk Factors

Several factors increase the likelihood of developing arthritis:

- **Age:** Joint wear increases naturally over time
- **Family history:** Genetic factors play a role in many arthritis types

- **Previous joint injuries:** Damaged joints are more susceptible to arthritis
- **Excess weight:** Extra pounds place additional stress on weight-bearing joints
- **Gender:** Women are more likely than men to develop rheumatoid arthritis
- **Occupational hazards:** Jobs requiring repetitive movements can stress joints

Comprehensive Management Approaches

While there's no single cure for most forms of arthritis, a multifaceted treatment approach can effectively manage symptoms and slow progression. Successful management often combines:

Medical interventions: Medications can reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and in some cases, slow disease progression. These range from over-the-counter pain relievers to prescription anti-inflammatory drugs and disease-modifying treatments.

Physical therapy: Targeted exercises strengthen supporting muscles, improve flexibility, and reduce joint stress. A qualified physical therapist can develop a customized program addressing specific limitations.

Lifestyle modifications: Managing weight reduces pressure on joints, particularly knees, hips, and spine. Nutritional approaches emphasizing anti-inflammatory foods may also provide benefits.

Complementary approaches: Many find relief through acupuncture, massage therapy, and other complementary treatments that address both physical symptoms and overall wellness.

Chiropractic care: For some patients, particularly those with certain types of arthritis affecting the spine, chiropractic adjustments may help improve function and reduce pain when provided by experienced practitioners familiar with arthritis management.

The Importance of Holistic Care

The most effective arthritis management approaches consider the whole person—not just the affected joints. Mental health support, stress management techniques, and addressing sleep issues are equally important components of a comprehensive treatment plan.

Living with arthritis requires adaptability and persistence. By working with healthcare professionals to develop an individualized treatment approach, most people with arthritis can maintain active, fulfilling lives while effectively managing their symptoms.

At Rose Wellness Clinic, our team understands the complex nature of arthritis and offers integrated care approaches to help our patients navigate this challenging condition with confidence and improved quality of life. Call us today at (352) 775-2180 to schedule your consultation at our The Villages office and take the first step towards pain-free living! At Rose Wellness Clinic, we're ready to help you step confidently into a more active, comfortable lifestyle—because we believe everyone deserves to enjoy the beautiful weather and all the opportunities it brings.

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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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Introducing Lumen Dermatology

We're excited to share that David Kosiorek, PA-C and Michael J. Freeman, MD have started a NEW Dermatology practice! David has 27 years of Dermatology experience and is proudly serving The Villages and Ocala. He is passionate in providing meticulous, personalized care with a focus on early detection and treatment of skin cancer. His new practice, Lumen Dermatology, continues his commitment to excellence, offering comprehensive skin care solutions in a welcoming environment.

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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

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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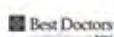


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BREAKTHROUGH IN NEUROPATHY TREATMENT:

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.

LaserLab provides safe, effective, non-surgical pain relief and regenerative healthcare services. Our Pain Therapy Specialists use state-of-the-art Class IV Therapeutic Lasers to treat patients suffering from long-term pain. Our advanced laser technology reduces pain and inflammation, enhances healing, and increases circulation with no surgery, drugs, or side effects.

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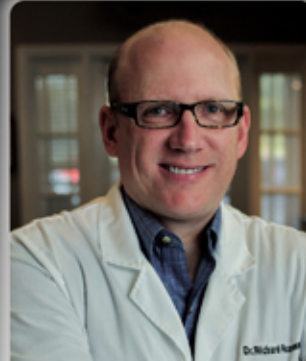
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Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances: A Solution for a Good Night's Sleep

By Richard W. Rozensky, DDS, D.ABDSDM

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

What Is Sleep Apnea?

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

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

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

What are the symptoms of Sleep Apnea?

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

Obstructive Sleep Apnea & Oral Appliances:

Have you tried CPAP therapy?

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



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

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

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

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

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

Meet Dr. Rozensky

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

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

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



HOW YOUR FEET REFLECT YOUR OVERALL HEALTH

By Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D

Your feet do far more than simply carry you through your daily activities. They serve as windows into your overall health, often revealing the first signs of systemic health problems before symptoms appear elsewhere in your body. As podiatrists, we're trained to recognize these subtle warning signs that many people might dismiss as minor inconveniences. Understanding what your feet are telling you could be the key to early detection and treatment of serious health conditions.

The connection between foot health and systemic wellness isn't coincidental. Your feet contain thousands of nerve endings, an extensive network of blood vessels, and are positioned at the furthest point from your heart. This unique anatomy makes them particularly sensitive to changes in circulation, nerve function, and overall body chemistry. When something goes wrong elsewhere in your body, your feet often sound the alarm first.

WARNING SIGNS YOUR FEET ARE SENDING YOU

Numbness or Tingling: If you're experiencing persistent numbness, tingling, or a "pins and needles" sensation in your feet, your body may be signaling several potential health issues. These symptoms commonly indicate diabetes-related nerve damage, also known as peripheral neuropathy. However, they can also suggest vitamin B12 deficiency or other metabolic disorders, or compression of nerves in the lower back. You should seek medical attention if these sensations persist, worsen over time, or begin to interfere with your daily activities or balance.

Consistently Cold Feet: While occasional cold feet are normal, chronically cold feet that feel cold to the touch may indicate poor circulation, hypothyroidism, or Raynaud's disease. Poor circulation can be a sign of cardiovascular problems or peripheral artery disease, conditions that require medical evaluation. If your feet remain cold despite warm environments and appropriate footwear, it's time to discuss this with your healthcare provider.

End-of-Day Swelling: Swelling in your feet and ankles, particularly noticeable at the end of the day, can signal various health concerns ranging from heart failure and kidney problems to vein issues. While pregnancy commonly causes foot swelling, persistent swelling in non-pregnant individuals



warrants attention. You should be especially concerned if swelling is accompanied by shortness of breath, chest pain, or sudden weight gain, as these symptoms could indicate serious cardiovascular or renal issues.

Discolored Toenails: Changes in toenail color, texture, or thickness often reflect more than cosmetic concerns. While fungal infections are common culprits, discolored nails can also indicate psoriasis, trauma, or even melanoma. Black or brown streaks under the nail represent a particular red flag that requires immediate medical evaluation, as they could signal a dangerous form of skin cancer.

Foot Cramping and Muscle Spasms: Frequent cramping or muscle spasms in your feet may indicate dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, or circulation problems. These issues can stem from various conditions, including diabetes, kidney disease, or cardiovascular problems. Prevention often involves maintaining proper hydration and incorporating regular stretching into your routine, but persistent cramping deserves medical attention.

Non-Healing Sores: Perhaps the most serious warning sign is sores or wounds on your feet that don't heal within a reasonable timeframe. This symptom commonly indicates diabetes, a compromised immune system, or vascular disease, and sometimes even malignancies. Non-healing wounds demand immediate attention because they can lead to severe complications, including serious infections and, in worst-case scenarios, amputation.

THE PODIATRIST'S ROLE IN EARLY DETECTION

Podiatrists play a crucial role in identifying systemic illnesses through comprehensive foot examinations.

During routine visits, we employ various diagnostic tools including circulation assessments, nerve function tests, and detailed wound evaluations. We can detect subtle changes in skin temperature, pulse strength, and sensation that might indicate developing health problems.

For individuals with chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or autoimmune disorders, regular podiatric examinations become even more critical. These routine screenings can catch problems in their earliest stages when treatment is most effective.

TAKING ACTION FOR YOUR HEALTH

Your feet are speaking to you every day. The key is learning to listen and respond appropriately. Don't dismiss changes in your feet as inevitable signs of aging or minor annoyances. When you notice persistent symptoms like those described above, schedule a comprehensive foot examination with a qualified podiatrist.

Being proactive about foot health isn't just about preventing foot problems—it's about safeguarding your overall health and potentially catching serious conditions before they become life-threatening. Your feet have important stories to tell about your health. Make sure you're paying attention to what they're saying.

About Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D

Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D., moved from Essex, UK to the US in 2007, completing his post-doctorate in Organic Chemistry at FSU. He studied Podiatric Medicine at Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine and completed surgical residency at Cleveland Clinic. Relocating to Ocala in 2018, he opened Ocala Podiatry in December 2023. This board-certified podiatrist emphasizes patient education and teamwork. Married with two boys, he enjoys pickleball, sports, traveling, and outdoor activities.



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BACK-TO-SCHOOL, NOT BACK TO CHAOS: FAST, EASY PHYSICALS AND MORE AT RECHARGE CLINIC

It's that time again—school bells, supply lists, permission slips, and the rush to get your kids (and yourself) squared away for the year ahead. But if you're like most parents, you've probably waited until the last minute to schedule that required school physical, update vaccines, or submit that health clearance for fall sports. No judgment—we get it. Life is busy, and no one wants to spend hours in a waiting room with a clipboard in hand and a kid melting down over missed screen time.

That's where Recharge Clinic comes in—your one-stop, stress-free zone for school and employment physicals, sick visits, lab testing, and even concierge-level care if you're ready to upgrade how your family does healthcare. We move fast, we don't do red tape, and yes—we make it easy.

✓ School and Sports Physicals— Handled in One Visit

Whether it's for elementary school, high school athletics, or college admission, physical exams are a requirement. But they don't have to be a headache. Recharge Clinic offers comprehensive physicals that cover everything schools need—height, weight, vision, vitals, musculoskeletal checks, and immunization review—and we do it all without the 3-week scheduling delay you'll find at most traditional clinics.

Need paperwork filled out and faxed to the school? We've got it covered. Need multiple kids seen on the same day? No problem. We can even draw blood for TB testing or update missing vaccine records while you're here. Oh, and did we mention the visit is quick and your kid won't dread it?

"We're not your typical doctor's office. We respect your time, we don't overbook, and our staff enjoys working with kids and teens," says the Recharge team.

Whether your child is playing football, joining marching band, or heading off to college, we'll get that physical done and have you back out the door before you even finish scrolling TikTok.

😓 Got a Sick Kid? We've Got Quick Care

Schools are petri dishes of bacteria and viruses. Strep, pink eye, mystery fevers—it's all part of the deal. When your kid wakes up with a sore throat or rash and you need answers now, Recharge Quick Care is the place to go. We offer same-day appointments, rapid testing, and in-house prescriptions to cut the delay between symptoms and treatment.



Our licensed medical providers can assess and treat:

- Upper respiratory infections
- Flu and strep throat
- Ear infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Minor injuries and sprains
- Skin conditions like eczema or ringworm
- **Telehealth Services**

And here's the game-changer: we have on-site labs, so there's no driving across town for bloodwork or waiting days for results. Need a rapid flu, COVID, mono, or strep test? We'll have the results in minutes, not days. We also offer a compounding pharmacy and can ship meds to your door, saving you another trip.

✓ In-House Labs: Less Waiting, More Doing

Recharge Clinic keeps it all under one roof. Our in-house laboratory means we can run many diagnostic tests right on site, including:

- CBC panels
- Urinalysis
- Thyroid testing
- Hormone panels
- Blood sugar and cholesterol levels
- Vitamin and mineral deficiency testing
- Drug screenings
- Compounded medications shipped right to your home.

This makes back-to-school bloodwork, pre-employment screenings, and even yearly wellness checks way less of a hassle. Parents, if your teenager is complaining about fatigue, mood swings, or sleep issues, our providers may recommend checking hormone levels or nutrient deficiencies—something we can explore without sending you to another facility.

👜 Got a New Job or Internship? We Do Employment Physicals, Too

If you or your teen landed a job that requires a pre-employment physical, drug screening, or immunization clearance, we can take care of it—fast.

Recharge offers same-day employment physicals with all the bells and whistles: vitals, medical history, exam, drug testing, and labs if needed.

Whether you're joining the fire academy, getting your CNA, or applying for a teaching position, we'll help you check every medical box so you can start working without delays.

Concierge Medicine: Because Healthcare Should Work For You

If you're done dealing with long wait times, rushed appointments, and voicemail tag, you might want to level up with Recharge Clinic's Concierge Medicine program. It's like having a VIP pass to healthcare. You get:

- Direct access to your provider
- Extended visit times
- Same-day or next-day appointments
- Customized wellness plans
- No copays, no insurance middleman drama

Whether you're managing a chronic condition, want your labs monitored year-round, or just don't like being treated like a number, concierge care is your healthcare, recharged.

Families with multiple kids? Consider it peace of mind. Busy professionals? Consider it a sanity-saver. If you're the type who wants answers fast and personalized support, this is the future of medicine—and it's already here at Recharge.



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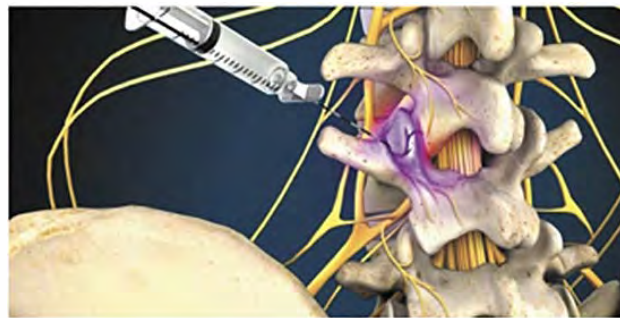
Discover Superior **Pain Management** at The Interventional Pain Institute with Dr. Brent Compton in The Villages and Ocala, Florida

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Medicare and insurance approved Back and knee braces.

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

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

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

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

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Developing Social Communication in Children

Innovative Therapies Group

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

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

Follow the child's lead

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

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

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

Model and Expand the child's language

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Red Flags

18 months:

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

24 months:

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

36 months:

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

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

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

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

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At-Home Cancer Screening. A Reliable Option?

Catching cancer early can greatly improve the chances of successful treatment and survival. Some tests can spot abnormalities even before signs or symptoms appear.

Unfortunately, many people avoid colonoscopies (to detect colon cancer) or Pap smears (to test for cervical cancer) because they find them invasive, uncomfortable, or embarrassing.

At-home cancer screening tests offer new ways for people to screen from the comfort and privacy of home at their convenience. But are these tests as accurate as going to the doctor's office?

New At-Home Cervical Cancer Screening Option Now Available

The first at-home screening device for cervical cancer was approved by the FDA in 2024. It enables women to self-collect vaginal cells to test for human papilloma virus (HPV), the virus that causes nearly all cervical cancers. Now available by mail through an on-line registration process, the collected sample is sent to a certified lab for testing.

"This test is one of the first of its kind and has the potential to broaden HPV testing, especially for patients who may be hesitant to see a doctor," says Heather Miller, MD, gynecologic oncologist with Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute. "The studies show similar accuracy to detect HPV compared to Pap tests conducted during clinic visits."

Dr. Miller stresses, however, that the test should be reserved for patients who are low risk and have no personal or family history of HPV or abnormal pap smears. "Any positive HPV test should prompt a visit to a gynecologist and further examination," she said.

At-Home Options for Colon Cancer Screenings

The two most common ways to screen for colon cancer are colonoscopy (the procedure examines the inside of the colon to look for polyps or abnormal growths) and stool-based tests like the FIT (fecal immunochemical tests) or gFOBT (guaiac-based fecal occult blood tests) that check for traces of blood or abnormal DNA in the stool.

Both types of screening tests are available for at-home use—some require a doctor's order, while others can be bought over the counter.

The first at-home non-invasive test for colon cancer that detects both altered DNA and blood in stool was approved by the FDA in 2014. Once prescribed by a doctor or through telehealth, the kit is mailed with detailed instructions, and results are sent to your provider within one to two weeks.



According to Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute medical oncologist Anjan Patel, MD, the key benefits of at-home screening are their "ease of availability and affordability." That may be a positive advantage given the alarming rise in colon cancer among people in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

There are limitations, however.

"Results can vary depending on where the cancer may be in the colon," said Dr. Patel. "These tests have limited efficacy. A positive test is helpful to identify the need for a colonoscopy, but a negative result does not confidently allow a person to avoid a scope test." Like at-home cervical cancer tests, these tools are intended only for people at average risk.

Dr. Patel stresses that DNA-based testing is indicated for those who have had a negative colonoscopy in the past and not as an initial test. Additionally, he notes, "Colonoscopy also allows for the removal of potentially pre-cancerous polyps and the diagnosis of other conditions like inflammatory bowel disease during the procedure."

It's important to stay on schedule with all recommended cancer screenings. Guidelines may differ based on your age, family history and lifestyle.

A Pap test to screen for cervical cancer is advised for all women beginning at age 21 and continuing until age 65. Women from 21 to 29 should have a Pap test every three years. Beginning at age 30, a Pap test combined with human papillomavirus (HPV) testing is recommended every five years.

Colonoscopy screening should start at age 45 and be done every 10 years, unless recommended more often by your doctor, up until age 75. This screening can detect cancer early and help prevent it by finding and removing polyps—abnormal growths in the colon that can turn into cancer—during the procedure.

Talk to your healthcare provider to find out which screenings are right for you. Most are painless and covered by insurance plans or available through community prevention programs. Reducing cancer risk is definitely worth the effort.

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About Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute, LLC (FLCancer.com)

For more than 40 years, FCS has built a national reputation for excellence that is reflected in exceptional and compassionate patient care, driven by innovative clinical research, cutting-edge technologies and advanced treatments, including targeted therapies genomic-based treatment and immunotherapy. Our highest values are embodied by our outstanding team of highly trained and dedicated physicians, clinicians and staff.

In Marion County, board-certified physicians specializing in hematology, medical oncology, gynecologic oncology and radiation oncology provide personalized care for all forms of cancers and blood disorders. With extraordinary skill and experience, they deliver treatments with maximum effectiveness and safety, combined with compassion and concern for patients and their families. From genetic screening to immunotherapies and access to the latest clinical trials, our top-ranked cancer experts provide the newest and most advanced treatments available – increasing cure rates and extending lives.



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Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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