

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

October 2025

Marion Edition - Monthly

**FREE** 

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## SAY NO TO INCONTINENCE

and Take Back Control of Your Bladder

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Vigilance and Regular Check-Ups Save Lives

## FINDING STRENGTH AGAIN

How Pilates Transforms Breast Cancer Recovery

## BEYOND THE BLOAT,

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# Say NO to Incontinence and Take Back Control of Your Bladder

By Dr. Tina Chandra

Urinary incontinence is a common occurrence in women. It can be caused by vaginal childbirth, changes due to menopause, or even by being overweight. There are two types of urinary incontinence.

Stress urinary incontinence is when urine escapes due to physical activities such as running or jumping, or it can be provoked by a sneeze or a cough. It is caused by weak pelvic muscles that may be a result of obesity, childbirth, or repeated strains such as lifting heavy objects or high-impact exercise. Urge incontinence is different in that it is an unusually frequent urge to urinate. The cause is unknown, but one possible contributor could be diabetes.

When a patient suffers from both of these conditions, it is known as mixed urinary incontinence. All three types are quite common, especially in older women.

No matter which type of urinary incontinence presents itself, it has been shown to increase with any or all of the following factors: age, menopause, a persistent cough, weight gain, and vaginal childbirth, among others. For some women, the increase is gradual while other women might experience a loss of control immediately after childbirth.

## Is there a solution for urinary incontinence or do I just buy stock in pads and diapers?

In the past, the primary method for dealing with urinary incontinence has been surgery or therapies that can be both difficult and embarrassing. Today the solution is primarily physical therapy with a urinary incontinence specialist showing the patient how to do vaginal exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles. This has proved itself to be an effective treatment, however, many women avoid it because of its intimate nature.

There is some great news for those who suffer from urinary incontinence (both women AND MEN) and don't want to go to physical therapy for whatever reason. Emsella is an FDA-approved device that uses high-intensity focused electromagnetic technology (HIFEM) to stimulate the muscles of the pelvic floor. It is non-surgical and is performed while the patient is fully clothed and seated in a specialized chair.

Emsella has been jokingly referred to as the "Kegel throne" because each 30-minute treatment is equivalent to doing more than 10,000 Kegels. It contracts

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the muscles by emitting HIFEM to stimulate the muscles of the pelvic floor that have become too weak to control urination. Even with physical therapy and being very disciplined in doing Kegel exercises, it would be humanly impossible to mimic this type of treatment and its results.

### What type of results can be expected from using Emsella?

According to the company's website, [btlaesthetics.com](http://btlaesthetics.com), Emsella patients report a 95% improvement in their quality of life and a 75% reduction in the use of pads.

Patients often see results after just one 30-minute session. For maximum results, a minimum of 6 sessions are recommended with a minimum of 2 days between each session. Results will, of course, vary by patient and by the severity of muscle weakness.

### What can I expect in an Emsella session?

First of all, it is important to note that patients remain fully clothed during their session. That is usually a relief to most patients. Secondly, there is no work involved on the patient's part, nor on the service provider once the device has started. The patient simply sits on the "throne" for 30 minutes while HIFEM technology contracts her (or his) muscles 10-11,000 times. Most patients report nothing more than a tingling sensation.

### Can MEN benefit from Emsella also?

According to the Massachusetts Male Aging Study, about 40% of men are affected by erectile dysfunction at age 40 and 70% of men are affected at age 70. Enter Emsella for men.

Emsella has been approved for men suffering with incontinence and erectile dysfunction because of weakening pelvic floor muscles. These muscles support all of the pelvic organs and when weakened, they can result in incontinence, premature ejaculation, and erectile dysfunction.

Men will be pleased with the many benefits Emsella affords. The same 30 minute session as the women are sitting through will give them increased bladder control, increased penile rigidity and hardness, increased control over erection, increased time until ejaculation, reduced stress and anxiety and restored confidence.

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



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### DR. TINA CHANDRA

Dr. Tina Chandra is committed to providing her patients with excellence and quality care using the latest technological advances. With her exceptional skill and unique training in cosmetic, neuromuscular (TMJ/TMD), physiologic, and sleep deprivation dentistry, Dr. Chandra is highly qualified. She attended the University of Tennessee College of Dentistry and earned her Graduate Fellowship from the prestigious Las Vegas Dental Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LV Global) and is considered an expert in her field, a distinction achieved by only 2% of dentists in America. She takes pride in staying up to date with cutting-edge procedures in the dental field. Dr Chandra has always had a passion for Wellness and Aesthetics. In Addition to her successful Dental practice she manages her Medical Wellness Spa. She is a currently a national guest speaker for the medical device company, Body by BTL for health, wellness and aesthetics.



### DR. RAVI CHANDRA

Ravi Chandra, MD, Ocala's leading vascular surgeon is the only surgeon in Ocala, Florida with outstanding credentials and is quadruple Board certified by the American Board of Endovascular Medicine, American Board of Vascular Medicine, the American Board of Surgery, and the American Board of Phlebology.

With over 30 years of experience and serving his patients with above standard and excellence in surgical care, Dr. Ravi Chandra is excited to branch out and offer wellness treatments to help his vascular patients with incontinence problems. He and his team are committed to bringing health and wellness back into your life.





# BEYOND THE BLOAT, UNDERSTANDING SIGNS OF OVARIAN CANCER

**W**omen are often told that bloating is just part of life, linked to their cycles, stress or something they ate. But sometimes, persistent bloating is your body's way of signaling something more serious. Ovarian cancer signs and symptoms show up in ways that are easy to overlook or explain away.

Understanding the lesser-known signs of ovarian cancer and being aware of subtle changes in your body could make all the difference.

## Unpacking the Bloat

Bloating can happen for many reasons, especially related to menstrual cycles and hormone shifts. Around ovulation and before your period, changing hormone levels can cause water retention and slowed digestion, leading to that uncomfortable, swollen feeling.

Certain foods like dairy, salty snacks or carbonated drinks can also trigger stomach bloating, especially if you're sensitive to them. Chewing gum can even cause you to feel bloated due to swallowing excess air, triggering gas buildup.

Digestive issues such as constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), gas buildup or eating too quickly can play a role as well. While these causes are usually harmless and short-lived, bloating that lingers or worsens over time may signal something more and should be checked out.

## What Is Ovarian Cancer?

Ovarian cancer starts in the ovaries, the female reproductive organs that produce eggs and hormones like estrogen and progesterone, and develops when abnormal cells grow and multiply uncontrollably.

Epithelial ovarian cancer is the most common type of ovarian cancer. It starts in the thin tissue covering the ovaries and can also begin in the lining of the fallopian tubes or the abdominal cavity. Tumors can grow quietly and go undetected for some time.

A woman's lifetime risk of developing ovarian cancer is approximately 1 in 91. While the exact cause is unknown, age is a factor—as about half of all cases are diagnosed in women age 63 or older. A family history of ovarian, breast, or colorectal cancer can also increase your chances, especially if you carry inherited gene mutations like BRCA1 or BRCA2. Other risk factors include endometriosis, never having been pregnant and going through menopause later in life. That said, ovarian cancer can still happen to younger women and those without any known risk factors.



## Why Symptoms Are Often Missed

Ovarian cancer doesn't always come with loud or obvious symptoms. Instead, it can creep in with subtle changes that are easy to dismiss.

Common warning signs include persistent pelvic or abdominal pain, feeling full quickly after eating, needing to urinate more often or urgently, or experiencing unusual fatigue or changes in bowel habits, like constipation. Unexplained abdominal swelling, especially when paired with weight loss, is another possible red flag.

Because these signs often mimic everyday issues, they're easy to overlook. As a result, most cases are diagnosed at an advanced stage, after the cancer has already spread. Any new symptoms that are persistent or worsening deserve attention.

## Gynecologic Cancers Share Symptoms, So Know Them All

Ovarian cancer is just one of several gynecologic cancers that can affect women, and many of them share overlapping symptoms. Uterine cancer, cervical cancer, vaginal cancer and vulvar cancer can all cause subtle changes like unusual bleeding, pelvic pain or changes in discharge. Because these signs can seem like minor or routine health issues, they're often brushed aside.

However, early detection is key, since many gynecologic cancers have a better prognosis when they are caught early. Paying attention to symptoms and keeping up with regular checkups, including pelvic exams and Pap smears when recommended, can make a critical difference in your health journey.

## Feeling Off? Here's Your Next Move

Listening to your body and knowing what's not normal for you can be your first step toward catching something early. If you're feeling like something isn't right, or you're facing a cancer diagnosis, don't wait to consult with your primary health care provider or Ob/Gyn. Early action can make all the difference.

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# UNDERSTANDING THE HIDDEN RISK FACTOR: HOW LIPOPROTEIN(A) IMPACTS STROKE AND HEART DISEASE

**S**troke remains one of the leading causes of death and disability worldwide, affecting millions of people each year. While most people are familiar with traditional risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking, there's a lesser-known but equally important factor that could be silently increasing your cardiovascular risk: Lipoprotein(a), commonly referred to as Lp(a).

## What is Lipoprotein(a)?

Lipoprotein(a) is a unique type of cholesterol-carrying particle that circulates in your blood. Unlike other cholesterol markers that can be influenced by diet and lifestyle, Lp(a) levels are primarily determined by genetics. This means that if you have elevated Lp(a), you likely inherited this trait from your parents, and traditional approaches like dietary changes or standard cholesterol medications may have limited impact on reducing these levels.

The structure of Lp(a) makes it particularly problematic for cardiovascular health. It combines the cholesterol-carrying properties of LDL (bad cholesterol) with additional inflammatory and clot-promoting characteristics. This dual nature makes Lp(a) a potent contributor to atherosclerosis – the buildup of plaque in arteries that can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

## The Connection Between Lp(a) and Stroke Risk

Research has consistently shown that elevated Lp(a) levels significantly increase the risk of cardiovascular events, including stroke. People with high Lp(a) levels face up to a 70% increased risk of heart disease and stroke compared to those with normal levels. This elevated risk occurs through several mechanisms.

First, Lp(a) promotes the formation of arterial plaque more aggressively than regular LDL cholesterol. The unique protein component of Lp(a) can directly bind to arterial walls, accelerating the atherosclerotic process. Second, Lp(a) interferes with the body's natural clot-dissolving mechanisms, making dangerous blood clots more likely to form and persist.

For stroke prevention, this means that individuals with elevated Lp(a) may remain at high risk even when their other cholesterol levels appear well-controlled through conventional treatments. This hidden risk factor could explain why some people experience cardiovascular events despite seemingly optimal management of traditional risk factors.



## Beyond Stroke: Comprehensive Cardiovascular Impact

While stroke prevention is crucial, elevated Lp(a) also increases the risk of other serious cardiovascular conditions. Peripheral artery disease, which affects blood flow to the legs and arms, is more common in people with high Lp(a) levels. Additionally, heart disease risk remains elevated, with some studies suggesting that Lp(a) contributes to more aggressive forms of coronary artery disease that may be harder to treat with standard interventions.

The implications extend beyond individual health outcomes. Family members of people with elevated Lp(a) should consider testing, as this genetic trait can run in families. Early identification allows for more aggressive management of other modifiable risk factors and closer cardiovascular monitoring.

## Hope on the Horizon: Advancing Treatment Options

The recognition of Lp(a) as a significant cardiovascular risk factor has sparked intensive research into targeted treatments. Currently enrolling clinical trials are evaluating innovative investigational medications specifically designed to lower Lp(a) levels in the blood. These studies represent a promising frontier in cardiovascular medicine, offering hope for millions of people who carry this genetic risk factor.

These clinical trials are investigating whether effectively lowering Lp(a) levels can translate into reduced rates of heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular events. The medications being studied work through novel mechanisms that specifically target Lp(a) production, potentially offering solutions where traditional treatments have fallen short.

Participation in clinical research not only provides access to cutting-edge treatments but also contributes to advancing medical knowledge that could benefit future generations. For individuals with elevated Lp(a) levels, these studies may represent an opportunity to take proactive steps toward reducing their cardiovascular risk.

Understanding and addressing Lp(a) represents a crucial step forward in comprehensive stroke and heart disease prevention, offering new hope for protecting cardiovascular health.

## Leading the Way in Cardiovascular Research

Renstar Medical Research is at the forefront of advancing cardiovascular health through innovative clinical trials, including studies focused on Lipoprotein(a) reduction. Our dedicated research team is committed to bringing cutting-edge treatments to patients while contributing to the global understanding of cardiovascular disease prevention. For those interested in learning more about current clinical trial opportunities or how Lp(a) testing and research might benefit their cardiovascular health, Renstar Medical Research provides expert guidance and access to the latest developments in heart disease and stroke prevention.

## OPEN YOUR HEART TO NEW POSSIBILITIES

*Explore Lp(a) clinical trials for people who are at risk for heart disease, stroke, or peripheral artery disease.*

Lipoprotein(a), or Lp(a), carries cholesterol in the blood. If you have a high level of Lp(a), you may have a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, or peripheral artery disease. Learn more about currently enrolling clinical trials evaluating the ability of investigational study medications to lower the levels of Lp(a) in the blood.

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# ADVANCED VARICOSE VEIN TREATMENT:

## Finding Relief at Ocala's Premier Vein Center

By Christian Oraedu, MD

**V**aricose veins affect millions of Americans, causing not only cosmetic concerns but also significant discomfort and potential health complications. These enlarged, twisted veins commonly appear on the legs and can lead to symptoms ranging from aching and swelling to more serious issues like blood clots and skin ulcers. Fortunately, modern medical advances have revolutionized varicose vein treatment, offering patients minimally invasive solutions with excellent outcomes and minimal downtime.

### Understanding Varicose Veins

Varicose veins develop when the valves within veins become weakened or damaged, causing blood to pool rather than flow efficiently back to the heart. This pooling creates the characteristic bulging, ropelike appearance that many patients find unsightly. Beyond aesthetics, varicose veins can cause significant symptoms including leg pain, heaviness, cramping, restless legs, and swelling that worsens throughout the day.

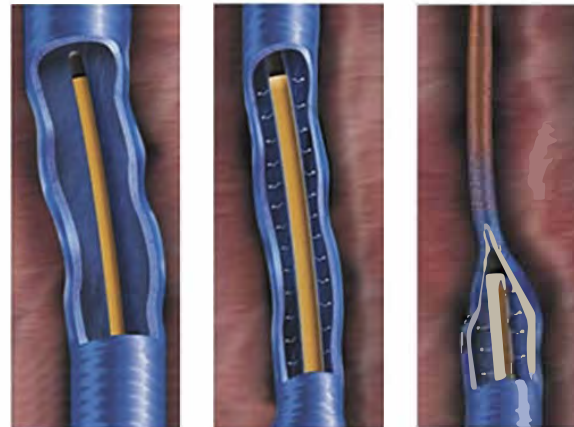
Risk factors for developing varicose veins include genetics, age, pregnancy, prolonged standing or sitting, obesity, and hormonal changes. Women are more likely to develop varicose veins due to hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy and menopause. While some risk factors cannot be controlled, early intervention can prevent progression and alleviate symptoms.

### Modern Treatment Approaches

Today's varicose vein treatments are far removed from the painful vein stripping procedures of the past. Contemporary approaches focus on minimally invasive techniques that can be performed in an office setting with local anesthesia, allowing patients to return to normal activities quickly.

### Endovenous Radiofrequency Ablation: The Gold Standard

Endovenous radiofrequency ablation has emerged as one of the most effective treatments for varicose veins. This innovative procedure uses controlled radiofrequency energy to heat and seal problematic veins from the inside. The treatment works by inserting a thin catheter into the affected vein under ultrasound guidance, then delivering precise radiofrequency energy to close the vein permanently.



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VEIN

CONTROLLED HEAT  
COLLAPSES VEIN

CATHETER  
WITHDRAWN,  
CLOSING VEIN

The advantages of radiofrequency ablation are numerous. The procedure typically takes less than an hour, requires only local anesthesia, and patients can walk immediately afterward. Most people return to work within one to two days and resume full activities within a week. The success rate exceeds 95%, with minimal risk of complications and excellent long-term results.

Unlike traditional surgery, radiofrequency ablation leaves no scars and causes minimal bruising or discomfort. The closed veins are gradually absorbed by the body while healthy veins take over circulation, improving both symptoms and appearance.

### Top Vein Treatment Center in Ocala, FL

When seeking varicose vein treatment, choosing an experienced specialist is crucial for optimal outcomes. The Vein Specialists of Central Florida stands as Ocala's premier destination for comprehensive vein care. This leading center combines cutting-edge technology with extensive expertise to deliver superior results for patients throughout Central Florida.

The center's commitment to excellence is evident in their state-of-the-art facility, advanced diagnostic capabilities, and comprehensive treatment options. Patients benefit from personalized care plans tailored to their specific needs, ensuring the most appropriate treatment approach for optimal results.

### The Path to Healthier Legs

If you're experiencing symptoms of varicose veins or are concerned about their appearance, consultation with a vein specialist is the first step toward relief. Modern treatments offer excellent outcomes with minimal disruption to daily life, making it easier than ever to achieve healthier, more comfortable legs.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Christian Oraedu, MD, FACS**

The Vein Specialists of Central Florida is dedicated to providing high quality comprehensive treatment of varicose veins, spider veins and all venous disorders. Our experienced board-certified surgeon uses the most current state-of-the-art technology to achieve the best results for our patients. We provide highly compassionate care with great attention to details.

The Vein Specialists of Central Florida was established by Dr. Christian Oraedu, an experienced board-certified surgeon and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Dr. Oraedu has been performing minimally invasive treatment of vein disorders for more than 15 years. He is one of the pioneers of endovenous Laser treatment of varicose veins in Marion County, Florida. He often sees patients for second opinion who had less than satisfactory outcome from their treatment at other vein centers.

At our center, we understand that experience and training make a great difference in treatment outcomes. When you come to our vein center, you can be assured that you will be seen and treated by our experienced, board-certified surgeon. From the moment you work through our doors to the moment you leave, you will be treated with great courtesy and compassion by our team of well-trained staff.

We offer a variety of options for the treatment of varicose veins and spider veins. We select what is most suited for each particular patient. Options for varicose veins include endovenous laser treatment (EVLT), radiofrequency ablation, microphlebectomy and sclerotherapy. Prior to selecting the appropriate treatment, we perform detailed lower extremity venous ultrasound in the comfort of our center. Spider veins are treated with laser and/or sclerotherapy.



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# Breaking Through the Pain:

## INNOVATIVE SHOCKWAVE THERAPY TRANSFORMS ARTHRITIS TREATMENT

By Gene Turner, MD, FAARFM

**M**id-Florida Age Management are highlighting breakthrough treatments that are changing lives for the millions of Americans living with this challenging condition. Among these innovations, Omniwave shockwave therapy is emerging as a game-changer for patients seeking relief from arthritis pain and improved mobility without invasive procedures.

### Understanding the Arthritis Epidemic

Arthritis remains America's leading cause of disability, affecting approximately 58.5 million adults nationwide. This family of more than 100 related conditions causes joint inflammation, pain, stiffness, and decreased range of motion that can significantly impact quality of life. While medications and surgery have long been standard treatments, many patients are now turning to advanced non-invasive alternatives like shockwave therapy.

### Shockwave Therapy: A Non-Invasive Revolution

The Omniwave shockwave therapy device represents the cutting edge of musculoskeletal treatment technology. This sophisticated system delivers precisely calibrated acoustic waves that penetrate deep into affected tissues, stimulating the body's natural healing processes without the risks associated with surgery or the side effects of long-term medication use.

"What makes Omniwave particularly effective is its versatility across different joint applications," I explain to my patients. "At Mid-Florida Age Management, we're seeing remarkable improvements, particularly in hand, shoulder, and knee treatments, where precision targeting is crucial. Our patients have responded exceptionally well to this innovative approach."

### Targeted Treatment for Multiple Joint Conditions

The Omniwave system has demonstrated particular success in treating arthritis in small joints of the hands, where traditional therapies often fall short. The device's precision allows practitioners to direct healing energy to the exact location of inflammation, even in these smaller anatomical structures.

For shoulder arthritis—often one of the most mobility-limiting forms of the condition—patients report significant pain reduction and improved range of motion after a series of Omniwave treatments. The therapy's ability to reduce inflammation while simultaneously promoting tissue regeneration makes it uniquely suited for complex shoulder joint issues.

Knee arthritis patients, who often face limited options between pain management and eventual joint replacement, have found Omniwave treatments provide a middle path—reducing pain and improving function without surgical intervention.

Beyond these primary applications, clinical results show promising outcomes for hip arthritis and other joints affected by degenerative conditions or inflammation.

### Patient-Centered Benefits

What sets Omniwave apart is not just its clinical effectiveness but its patient-friendly profile:

- Treatments typically take just 15-20 minutes
- No anesthesia required
- No incisions or scarring
- Minimal to no recovery time
- Cumulative benefits with successive treatments
- Compatible with other therapy modalities

Most patients report feeling only mild discomfort during treatment sessions, describing the sensation as a series of light tapping pulses as the acoustic waves work their healing magic.

### A Timely Focus During Arthritis Awareness Month

As healthcare providers prepare educational initiatives for Arthritis Awareness Month, many are featuring shockwave therapy as an example of how technology is expanding options for arthritis sufferers. The Omniwave system exemplifies the trend toward treatments that work with the body's natural healing capabilities rather than simply masking symptoms.

For millions living with arthritis pain, awareness of these advanced treatment options offers new hope. As one of my Omniwave patients at our Ocala clinic expressed, "After years of limiting my activities because of knee pain, I've returned to gardening, walking with friends, and playing with my grandchildren. The relief I've experienced feels nothing short of miraculous."

The success stories from Omniwave therapy recipients at Mid-Florida Age Management remind us that while arthritis remains a serious health challenge, innovative approaches continue to improve outcomes and quality of life for those affected by this pervasive condition. If you're in the Ocala area and struggling with arthritis pain, I invite you to learn more about how our Omniwave shockwave therapy might help restore your comfort and mobility.

### About the Author

**"Gene" Turner, MD** is a board-certified physician, advanced fellowship-trained in Regenerative and Functional Medicine and a diplomate of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, with over 25 years of clinical experience. Dr. Turner graduated from the University of Arizona College of Medicine and received residency training at Vanderbilt University. He is the medical director of Mid-Florida Age Management.

Your wellness doctor in Ocala is Board Certified by the American Board of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine and is fellowship trained in Metabolic and Nutritional Medicine. He has also received certification as Therapeutic Lifestyle Practitioner through Metagenics FirstLine Lifestyle Medicine Program. The CDC and NIH recommend Lifestyle Treatment Programs for such lifestyle conditions such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, poor glucose control and overweight. Such programs require time and expertise to develop and implement: our programs include addressing diet, exercise, stress management, sleep issues, nutritional supplementation where indicated and correction of metabolic deficits when detected. Evidence-based programs are used to assess, interpret, and recommend proven integrative protocols which dramatically increase patient adherence and engagement level. The effect is a symbiotic relationship between practitioner and patient, resulting in patient centered care and higher levels of wellness.

Dr. Turner uses conventional, nutritional, complementary and alternative modalities. He specializes in hypertension, lipid disorders, prevention of cardiovascular disease, nutritional and weight management, and clinical age management. He has a special interest in anti-aging medicine for which he uses a combination of natural and prescriptive therapies.

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# MANAGING GRIEF AND DEPRESSION

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

**T**he loss of a loved one often brings both grief and depression. What's the difference or are they one and the same emotion?

The Hospice Foundation of America defines grief as a reaction to loss. It is comprised of all the reactions you are experiencing, not just emotionally, but spiritually, physically, cognitively and socially. There is a clear correlation between how much you grieve and how much love you had for the person you lost. In grief, you may have had a particularly bad day remembering your lost special someone, but it may not be as bad the next day. However, depression, or more specifically clinical depression, is not intermittent. It is persistent, ongoing, never changing. Additionally, depression is accompanied by a feeling of hopelessness and apathy with one questioning "Why go on?" Deep sadness is usually more about the feelings of the lost loved one, whereas clinical depression often has a more negative self-focus which can become distorted with feelings of worthlessness and guilt.

During Depression Awareness Month, we recognize that mental health is as important as physical health. While we may not always have control over physical health, we do have options when it comes to staying grounded while grieving. If you find you are having a constant negative outlook on life and can find no meaning or joy in things you have previously cared about, you may be experiencing clinical depression. Know that depression is treatable with counseling and sometimes with medication. You are not alone in this journey.

That is where Hospice of Marion County can help. The center has been offering counseling for individuals, families and groups for more than a decade. Programs are offered for adults, teens and children at no charge to Marion County residents who are experiencing the loss of a loved one. Here are some tips to help you on your grief journey:

- **Grief is a recurring experience.** You will experience grief sometimes well after you thought you had healed. It may be a conversation that triggers a memory of your lost loved one or an event you're



attending with others that triggers a past experience. Being prepared and knowing this will happen in the future is the first step to healing at your own pace.

- **Grief affects everyone differently.** No matter the age, children, teens and adults experience grief in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

- **Don't shut others out.** Talking to someone about your loss and feelings may not be easy, but is necessary. Find a friend or professional you can trust with your thoughts and feelings.

- **Allow yourself to feel your loss.** You can't heal if you don't acknowledge those feelings and let it run its natural path. Keeping emotions bottled up or suppressing them is never good. Facing your loss and expressing those emotions leads to a healthier outcome.

- **Express your grief through writing.** Sometimes writing a letter to your loved one is a helpful exercise that aids in coping.

- **Keep a journal.** Remember the good and the bad memories in a personal journal. Expressing your daily emotions can sometimes bring clarity and hope.

- **Be a good listener to others grieving.** While we all grieve in different ways, listening skills are very important whether you are listening to someone who has lost a loved one or you are sharing your loss in a group counseling session. Be supportive of others' loss.

Hospice of Marion County has trained professionals with the expertise to guide adults, children and teens through a process of understanding the grief they are experiencing towards healthy behaviors. Through its programs of sharing memories, emotions and strategies for coping with others who are also grieving, it can be especially helpful in healing and recovery for those suffering the loss of a loved one. Their message is that loss of control over external events does not mean the loss of one's inner strength.

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# ELEVATING FOOT HEALTH THROUGH PHYSICAL THERAPY

By Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, Ph.D

October is National Physical Therapy Month, a time to recognize the vital role physical therapists play in improving mobility and quality of life. As a podiatrist, I've seen how physical therapy significantly enhances patient outcomes for foot and ankle conditions. The collaboration between podiatrists and physical therapists creates a holistic approach to foot care, benefiting patients through rehabilitation, pain management, and prevention.

## THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN FOOT HEALTH

Physical therapy is crucial in treating many foot and ankle issues. It offers non-invasive relief, improving function and reducing the need for surgery. As a podiatrist, I often see how physical therapy can complement medical and surgical interventions to enhance recovery. Here are some conditions where physical therapy plays a key role:

**1. Plantar Fasciitis:** A common cause of heel pain, it is treated with stretching exercises, manual therapy, and strengthening routines. Physical therapists address the biomechanics, providing relief and restoring function.

**2. Achilles Tendonitis:** Stretching and strengthening exercises for the calf and Achilles tendon are central to physical therapy, reducing pain and promoting long-term healing.

**3. Ankle Sprains:** Repeated sprains can lead to chronic instability. Physical therapy focuses on restoring balance, strength, and range of motion to prevent future injuries.

**4. Post-Surgical Rehabilitation:** After surgeries for bunions, hammertoes, or other foot deformities, physical therapy helps patients regain strength, flexibility, and proper walking patterns.

**5. Painful Flat Feet and Overpronation:** Physical therapy strengthens the arch muscles and corrects gait, preventing complications such as shin splints or knee pain.

## ENHANCING MOBILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

One of the most valuable contributions of physical therapy is improving patient mobility. Many patients struggle with walking or standing due to foot and ankle conditions, and physical therapy offers solutions that help them regain these abilities. Recently, I treated a patient with chronic plantar fasciitis who



had tried rest and over-the-counter remedies without success. After I recommended physical therapy, she followed a program of targeted exercises and manual therapy. Within weeks, her pain diminished, and she was able to return to daily activities, such as walking her dog, with ease.

This case exemplifies how physical therapy, combined with a proper podiatric diagnosis, can address the root causes of pain rather than merely managing symptoms.

## COLLABORATION BETWEEN PODIATRISTS AND PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

A strong partnership between podiatrists and physical therapists is essential for optimal patient care. While podiatrists diagnose and treat conditions, physical therapists implement rehabilitation strategies that ensure long-term success. This collaboration is especially important for non-surgical treatments of chronic conditions, such as arthritis, or for post-surgical recovery.

## PREVENTATIVE CARE THROUGH PHYSICAL THERAPY

Physical therapists focus on proactive strategies to prevent future foot and ankle injuries. They guide patients through targeted exercises designed to improve flexibility, strength, and balance. For instance, patients prone to ankle sprains benefit from balance training, while those with flat feet engage in exercises to strengthen their arch muscles. This preventative approach helps patients avoid many common foot problems before they even begin.

While podiatrists typically see patients once pain or injury has occurred, a collaborative approach with physical therapists empowers patients to take charge of their foot health early on, reducing the likelihood of future issues.

If you're experiencing foot or ankle pain, don't wait for it to worsen. Seek comprehensive care and personalized treatment plans from qualified podiatrists and physical therapists to get you back on your feet. Whether it's an injury, chronic condition, or discomfort affecting your daily life, professional expertise can help. Consider scheduling an appointment with healthcare providers who can take the first step toward pain relief and better foot health!

## 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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# Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

## VIGILANCE AND REGULAR CHECK-UPS SAVE LIVES

By Chand Rohatgi, MD

In the United States, approximately 310,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2025 alone. Even more sobering is the fact that about 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer during their lifetime, making it the most common cancer among women after skin cancer.

"Early detection remains our most powerful weapon against breast cancer," said Dr. Rohatgi, MD, a UF Health breast surgeon specializing in oncology. "When caught in its earliest stages, breast cancer responds better to treatment, leading to significantly improved survival rates."

As we commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Dr. Rohatgi emphasizes the critical importance of knowing what to look for and maintaining regular screening schedules.

"Women should be familiar with the normal look and feel of their breasts," explains Dr. Rohatgi. "Watch for any new lumps, skin changes, including dimpling or puckering, nipple discharge or persistent pain in one area. These warrant immediate medical attention."

While breast self-exams are valuable, they don't replace clinical screenings. Dr. Rohatgi stresses that mammograms can detect cancers up to two years before they become palpable.

Beyond obvious lumps, Dr. Rohatgi recommends being alert to these additional warning signs of breast cancer.

"Pay attention to changes in breast size or shape, skin irritation or redness, nipple retraction, swelling in the armpit area, or any persistent discomfort," he advises. "These symptoms don't automatically mean cancer, but they deserve prompt investigation."

Regular mammograms form the foundation of effective breast cancer detection. Women should begin annual or biennial mammograms at age 40, or earlier if they have risk factors such as family history or genetic mutations.

"Many women skip routine mammograms because they feel fine or find them uncomfortable," notes Dr. Rohatgi. "But breast cancer often develops silently, with symptoms appearing only in advanced stages. By then, treatment options may be more limited and less effective."



Dr. Rohatgi emphasizes that breast cancer survival rates have improved dramatically over recent decades, with death rates falling steadily since the early 1990s. This progress stems largely from better screening protocols leading to earlier detection.

"Today's breast cancer survivors – numbering over 4 million in the United States alone – are a testament to the power of vigilance and medical advancement," Dr. Rohatgi explains. "Breast Cancer Awareness Month celebrates these victories while reminding us all that proactive health monitoring saves lives."

For those with a family history of breast cancer, Dr. Rohatgi recommends discussing personalized screening schedules with healthcare providers, as genetic factors may necessitate earlier or more frequent testing, including breast MRI or genetic counseling.

"Breast cancer screening guidelines continue to evolve as we learn more about risk factors and detection methods," notes Dr. Rohatgi. "What remains constant is that early intervention dramatically improves outcomes. The difference between catching breast cancer at stage one versus stage three or four can literally be lifesaving."

Dr. Rohatgi also emphasizes the importance of lifestyle factors in breast cancer prevention. Maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, staying physically active, breastfeeding if possible, and limiting hormone therapy can all reduce breast cancer risk.

"While we cannot control all breast cancer risk factors, many are within our power to modify," he adds. "These healthy habits complement regular mammograms to create your strongest defense against breast cancer."

Remember: when it comes to breast cancer, knowledge and action are your strongest allies.



**Chand Rohatgi, MD**  
Breast Surgeon

As a board-certified breast surgeon at UF Health, I serve patients across central Florida with specialized care for cancerous and noncancerous breast conditions. "My patients drive my energy," and I remain committed to the latest medical guidelines and technologies to provide optimal care.

Previously, I established a comprehensive breast care center in Easton, Pennsylvania, offering in-house mammography, biopsies, lymphedema therapy, and genetic testing. During my nearly two-decade professorship at Drexel University College of Medicine, I received the Dean's Special Award for Teaching Excellence four times.

I completed my medical education in Varanasi, India, with surgical training in India and New Jersey, before finishing my residency as chief resident at Easton Hospital in Pennsylvania.

Outside medicine, I volunteer with the American Cancer Society—receiving their St. George National Award in 2014—and at my community's historic State Theater. While I enjoy cultural travel, my greatest joy comes from time spent with my wife, three children, and extended family.



**For questions or to learn more, visit our website [UFHealth.org/conditions-and-treatments/breast-cancer/central-florida](https://www.UFHealth.org/conditions-and-treatments/breast-cancer/central-florida) or call 352.323.5665.**



# BREAKTHROUGH IN NEUROPATHY TREATMENT:

## HOW SUMMUS LASER THERAPY OFFERS HOPE FOR NERVE PAIN SUFFERERS

**N**europathy 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.

LaserLab believes there's a better way to manage pain. We've pioneered a paradigm-changing health and wellness program that helps to revitalize the lives of people suffering from pain.



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# FROM MELANOMA SURVIVOR TO PATENT HOLDER: Local Inventor Develops Patented Skincare Applicator

**W**hen Kathe D'Alfonso faced melanoma, the Penfield resident knew her daily routine had to change. Suddenly, applying sunscreen to every inch of her body became not just important—it became life-saving. But like most people, she discovered a frustrating reality: reaching the middle of her back was nearly impossible.

Rather than accept this limitation, the 55-year-old inventor decided to create her own solution. Three years of development later, D'Alfonso holds a patent for Solo Beauty, a flexible wand applicator that's transforming how people approach their skincare routines.

## Innovation Born from Necessity

Solo Beauty features a unique design: a sturdy wand topped with a flexible, mitt-covered head that angles perfectly to reach those troublesome spots between the shoulder blades. The interchangeable mitts come in three varieties—a lotion applicator made from material that resists absorption, a body exfoliator, and a face exfoliator.

"I don't know anyone who can reach the middle of their backs," D'Alfonso said with a laugh, highlighting the universal problem her invention solves.

The path to patent approval wasn't guaranteed. D'Alfonso's attorney cautioned her that patent acquisition is far from automatic. When the U.S. Patent Office approved her application in April 2024, it validated not just her design but her persistence through years of prototype development.

## Engineering for Real-World Use

D'Alfonso's commitment to quality shows in her development process. She created eight different prototypes before settling on the final design, testing each version rigorously. Her current prototype has survived more than 550 machine wash cycles—a testament to the product's durability.

"The biggest thing is it has the right angle," she explained. "Just hold it up and put it over your shoulder. The mitt can be washed and dried. There's no product out there that does that."

This washability factor sets Solo Beauty apart from competitors while offering environmental benefits. Unlike similar products with disposable heads, Solo



Beauty's reusable design reduces waste and saves customers money over time.

## Expanding Beyond the Original Vision

While D'Alfonso initially created Solo Beauty for sunscreen application, customer feedback revealed broader applications. People with arthritis, Parkinson's disease, and mobility limitations have found the tool invaluable for maintaining independence in their skincare routines. Others use it to apply topical medications without exposing their hands to the treatment.

***"Customers absolutely love it,"  
D'Alfonso reported. "It solves a  
lot of problems and has been  
helping people."***

The response from wheelchair users has been particularly meaningful to her. "Some customers use wheelchairs. They go through a lot of struggles and this helps," she noted, emphasizing how the product addresses accessibility challenges she hadn't initially considered.

## Local Manufacturing, Personal Touch

D'Alfonso has built her business around local partnerships. She cuts all materials herself and works with a local seamstress for mitt construction, while sourcing wands from regional suppliers. This approach keeps production close to home and allows for customization—including one memorable request for Holstein cow print mitts.

Her sales channels reflect this personal approach. Starting at the Webster Farm Market, D'Alfonso now operates a physical store in Irondequoit and maintains an online presence at [solobeautyroc.com](http://solobeautyroc.com). The direct customer interaction has been rewarding, she says, with repeat customers and enthusiastic word-of-mouth recommendations driving growth.

## Looking Forward

Solo Beauty retails for \$28.99 online, with replacement mitts available for \$12.99 to \$14.99. For D'Alfonso, the success isn't just measured in sales figures but in the problems solved.

"For the average person, this product solves a problem and makes your life easier," she reflected. "Once you use it, you'll never stop."

What started as one woman's response to a health challenge has evolved into a solution that addresses universal accessibility needs in personal care. D'Alfonso's journey from melanoma patient to patent-holding entrepreneur demonstrates how personal necessity can spark innovations that benefit entire communities.

As Solo Beauty continues to reach new customers, D'Alfonso's story serves as inspiration for other would-be inventors: sometimes the best business ideas come from solving your own problems first.



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# Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT): The Optimize U Ocala Difference

Hormones play a crucial role in regulating nearly every system in the body, from metabolism and mood to sexual health and bone strength. Hormone production naturally declines with age, but rates of decline vary according to genetic factors, environmental influences and comorbid conditions. For women, perimenopause and menopause are typically associated with more rapid declines in estrogen, progesterone and testosterone levels, while men more often gradually experience a decline in testosterone over time. About 25% of men are already experiencing decline in testosterone levels by age 30. Women can begin to experience hormonal shifts in their 30s with menopause onset typically occurring in the late 40s. These hormone declines can lead to significant symptoms. Women often experience hot flashes, fatigue, weight gain, memory lapses, insomnia, mood swings, and decreased libido. Men may experience depression, erectile dysfunction, loss of libido, fatigue, weight gain, brain fog and decreased energy. The lesser discussed, but more important consequence of hormone decline involves a significantly increased risk for heart disease, osteoporosis, dementia, insulin resistance and high cholesterol when hormones are not replaced to optimal levels.

Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) offers a more natural alternative to traditional synthetic hormone treatments, with the potential for better compatibility and fewer side effects. But what exactly is BHRT, how does it work, and who is a candidate?

## What are Bioidentical Hormones?

The term bioidentical refers to hormones that have the same molecular structure as the hormones naturally produced in the human body. They are typically derived from plant sources such as soy or yams and then processed in a lab to become chemically identical to human estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone. Because the structure of these hormones mirrors what the body makes, they bind to hormone receptors in the same way as naturally occurring hormones. In comparison, synthetic hormones are “artificial” and are known to elicit an inflammatory response from the body. Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy mimics the body’s natural response to provide effective symptom relief with a profile that may be better tolerated than some traditional synthetic options.



## Forms of BHRT

Bioidentical hormones are available in a variety of forms, including:

- Creams applied to the skin
- Pills or capsules taken orally
- Injections given subcutaneously (injected into the fat tissue)
- Vaginal preparations

## Why Patients Seek BHRT

Common reasons patients consider BHRT include:

- Menopausal/perimenopausal symptoms (hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes, vaginal dryness)
- Menstrual irregularities
- Andropause or age-related testosterone decline in men
- Low libido and sexual dysfunction
- Chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances, or brain fog
- Inability to lose weight/weight gain
- Concerns about bone density loss and osteoporosis

## Benefits of BHRT

When appropriately prescribed and monitored, BHRT may offer significant improvements for people struggling with hormone-related symptoms. Some benefits may include:

- Reduced hot flashes and night sweats
- Improved mood stability and reduced anxiety
- Better sleep quality
- Improved metabolism
- Enhanced libido and sexual function
- Increased energy and concentration
- Decreased risk of cardiac disease
- Improved lipid profile
- Improved insulin sensitivity
- Protection against bone density loss

## Why Choose Optimize U

Optimize U Ocala is a clinic that specializes in bioidentical hormone replacement therapy in both men and women. It is part of a network of 36 clinics across the United States. The clinic prides itself on a patient-centered approach, evidence-based practice and excellent customer service. Patients benefit from not only the knowledge at the Ocala clinic, but that of the Optimize U provider network, which includes a full-time PhD researcher.

Patients notice a difference from the time they walk into the door at Optimize U Ocala. They are personally greeted by the clinic nurse and enjoy the “no waiting” policy. They may enjoy a free recovery service in lieu of waiting in the lobby. Patients may receive on-site lab draws. Consultations with our provider are always free.

Patients may either have labs drawn and do a consult or come in for a free consult prior to labs. The provider then meets with the patient to review lab findings and discuss symptoms at an in-depth level they have not previously experienced. Thereafter, an individualized plan of care is developed. Patients pay a monthly membership fee to receive their bioidentical hormones, but this also includes all labs, provider visits and a limited number of recovery services. Patients are never charged for routine labs, provider visits, medication dose adjustments or lab supplies. Patients may choose from recovery services such as full-body red light, cold plunge, infrared sauna, mild hyperbaric oxygen therapy, compression and PEMF. The clinic also offers additional services such as weight loss, NAD+, peptides, IVs and vitamin injections.

## Additional Considerations

Prior to starting any BHRT regimen, each patient requires a consult with a licensed provider to ensure there are no contraindications for treatment. Risks, benefits and potential positive outcomes are reviewed on an individualized basis during each consult.



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# FINDING STRENGTH AGAIN:

## HOW PILATES TRANSFORMS BREAST CANCER RECOVERY

Each year, approximately 300,000 American women receive a breast cancer diagnosis that fundamentally alters their lives. While medical advances have dramatically improved survival rates, the journey doesn't end when treatment concludes. Instead, survivors face a complex path of physical and emotional reconstruction that extends far beyond the oncology ward.

The post-treatment landscape presents unique challenges that traditional healthcare often overlooks. Chronic fatigue persists long after chemotherapy ends. Surgical sites develop restrictive scar tissue. Simple activities like reaching overhead or carrying groceries can feel overwhelming or impossible.

While medical teams excel at eliminating cancer, comprehensive recovery support frequently falls short. Physical therapy addresses immediate surgical healing, but what happens when patients are medically cleared yet feel disconnected from their own bodies? This gap leaves many survivors searching for ways to reclaim their physical confidence and emotional well-being.

### The Hidden Struggles of Survivorship

Cancer treatment creates a profound disconnection between mind and body that extends well beyond physical symptoms. Surgical procedures, drain placements, tissue expanders, and radiation therapy can make the body feel foreign and unreliable. Many women describe feeling betrayed by their bodies or fearful of movement that might cause harm.

This psychological impact manifests physically through protective posturing, shallow breathing, and movement avoidance. The nervous system remains in a heightened state of alert, perpetuating tension and limiting natural healing processes.

Unlike conventional fitness approaches, Pilates meets individuals exactly where they are in their healing journey. Every exercise can be modified to accommodate physical limitations, emotional needs, and energy levels. Skilled instructors view each person holistically, understanding that recovery encompasses far more than regaining strength or flexibility.

The foundation of every Pilates session begins with conscious breathing. This simple yet powerful practice activates the parasympathetic nervous system, signaling safety to the body and mind. From this centered place, gentle movements gradually reawaken dormant muscle groups and restore confidence in physical capabilities.

### The Science of Lymphatic Health

One critical yet often overlooked aspect of cancer recovery involves lymphatic system function. Unlike the cardiovascular system, lymphatic circulation lacks a central pump and relies entirely on muscle contractions, breathing patterns, and body movement to maintain proper flow.

Surgical procedures and radiation therapy can significantly compromise lymphatic drainage, increasing the risk of lymphedema and chronic swelling. Pilates excels through its emphasis on rotational movements and three-dimensional exercises. Spinal twists, arm circles, and multi-directional stretches create the precise muscle activation patterns needed to stimulate lymphatic flow.

### Addressing Fascial Restrictions

Every surgical intervention leaves lasting changes in the body's connective tissue network. Fascia can develop adhesions and restrictions that limit movement and create ongoing discomfort. Traditional stretching approaches may prove too aggressive for sensitive post-surgical tissue.

Pilates offers a gentler alternative through small, controlled movements that gradually mobilize fascial layers. Slow, spiraling motions combined with focused breathing help restore tissue hydration and flexibility over time. As fascial restrictions release, pain typically decreases while range of motion improves.

### The Mind-Body Connection

The emotional impact of cancer extends far beyond treatment completion. Anxiety, depression, grief, and post-traumatic stress commonly affect survivors as they navigate their new normal. Pilates addresses these psychological aspects through its meditative qualities and emphasis on present-moment awareness.

In the quiet sanctuary of a Pilates studio, movement becomes a form of moving meditation. Focused breathing serves as an anchor to the present moment, while gentle exercises rebuild trust between mind and body. Many survivors report that Pilates provides their first experience of feeling calm and safe in their physical form since diagnosis.

### Evidence-Based Results

Recent research validates what Pilates practitioners have observed for decades. A comprehensive 2020 analysis published in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* demonstrated significant improvements in upper body function, fatigue levels, and overall quality of life among breast cancer patients participating in regular Pilates sessions.



However, these measurable outcomes only capture part of the transformation that occurs. The true magic lies in moments that resist quantification: the joy when someone lifts their arms overhead without pain for the first time in months, or the relief of taking a full, deep breath.

### Real-World Transformation

Consider Sarah, a marketing executive who underwent bilateral mastectomy followed by reconstruction surgery. Post-treatment, she struggled with chronic shoulder pain, limited arm mobility, and overwhelming fatigue that made her professional and personal life feel impossible to manage.

Through consistent Pilates practice, Sarah gradually rebuilt her relationship with movement. Breathing exercises helped regulate her nervous system while gentle stretches restored shoulder flexibility. Core strengthening exercises improved her posture and reduced back pain.

### The Path Forward

Cancer survivorship deserves more than mere maintenance of basic function. Survivors deserve the opportunity to thrive, to discover new strength, and to reclaim joy in physical movement. Pilates provides this opportunity through its intelligent, adaptable approach to exercise and healing.

Rather than pushing through intensity, Pilates invites exploration through intention. It encourages women to move with curiosity, breathe with awareness, and trust in their body's remarkable capacity for renewal. In this patient, mindful approach to movement, healing becomes possible on multiple levels – physical, emotional, and spiritual.

For the hundreds of thousands of women navigating cancer recovery, Pilates offers hope, healing, and the promise that strength can be rebuilt one mindful movement at a time.



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# PREVENTING TYPE 2 DIABETES: THE POWER OF WEIGHT LOSS

**T**ype 2 diabetes is a chronic condition affecting millions worldwide, but the good news is that it's largely preventable. One of the most effective ways to reduce your risk is through weight loss and maintaining a healthy weight. This article explores the connection between type 2 diabetes and weight, and provides practical strategies for prevention.

## Understanding the Link

Excess weight, particularly around the midsection, is a significant risk factor for type 2 diabetes. Fat cells, especially those in the abdomen, release chemicals that can interfere with the body's ability to use insulin effectively. This condition, known as insulin resistance, is a precursor to type 2 diabetes.

## The Benefits of Weight Loss

Losing even a modest amount of weight can have a substantial impact on your diabetes risk. Studies have shown that reducing body weight by 5-10% can:

1. Improve insulin sensitivity
2. Lower blood sugar levels
3. Reduce the need for diabetes medications in those already diagnosed
4. Decrease the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in high-risk individuals

## Strategies for Effective Weight Loss

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight involves a combination of dietary changes and increased physical activity. Here are some evidence-based strategies:

- 1. Balanced Diet:** Focus on a diet rich in whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats. Limit processed foods, sugary drinks, and excessive carbohydrates.
- 2. Portion Control:** Use smaller plates, measure servings, and be mindful of calorie intake.
- 3. Regular Exercise:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. Include strength training exercises twice a week.
- 4. Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Sometimes thirst can be mistaken for hunger.



**5. Get Adequate Sleep:** Poor sleep can disrupt hormones that regulate hunger and metabolism. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

**6. Manage Stress:** Chronic stress can lead to weight gain and increased diabetes risk. Practice stress-reduction techniques like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises.

**7. Track Progress:** Keep a food and exercise journal to stay accountable and identify areas for improvement.

## Beyond Weight Loss:

### Additional Prevention Strategies

While weight loss is crucial, other lifestyle factors also play a role in diabetes prevention:

- 1. Quit Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of type 2 diabetes and its complications.
- 2. Limit Alcohol:** Excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to weight gain and increase diabetes risk.
- 3. Regular Check-ups:** Visit your healthcare provider regularly for diabetes screenings, especially if you have risk factors such as family history or obesity.
- 4. Medications:** In some cases, your doctor may recommend medications to help prevent diabetes progression.

Remember, preventing type 2 diabetes is not just about losing weight—it's about adopting a healthier lifestyle overall. By making sustainable changes to your diet, increasing physical activity, and addressing other risk factors, you can significantly reduce your risk of developing this chronic condition. Always consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new diet or exercise program, especially if you have existing health concerns.

## MEET THE TEAM

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



### Christopher Bagley, APRN

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

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



### Eldon Waters, MSN, APRN

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

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

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



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# Stress Management Tips from Quick Care Urgent Care

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

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

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

## Take Time for Yourself

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

## Get Moving

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

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

## Meditation

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

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

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

## Quick Care Med Urgent Care

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

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

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

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

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

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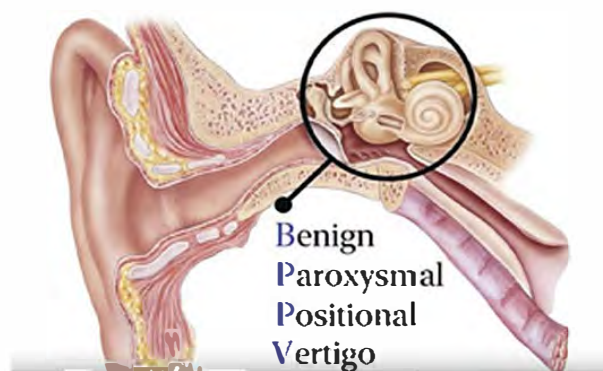


# Vestibular Balance Issues Should Not be Ignored:

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

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

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



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

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

Tiny calcium crystals (otoconia) in the inner ear that slough off and get lodged in the fluid of the ear canals (labyrinth) usually are the cause of BPPV. Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo can be effectively treated with one of two simple manual therapies that move the crystals through the ear, improving and in many cases alleviating vertigo and the sensations of dizziness. These therapies can be performed in the convenience of Innovative Therapies Group's office.



It's dangerous to leave vestibular disorders untreated. If you have balance issues, your likelihood of suffering a fall with possible complications like broken bones, or impingements, which cause limited range-of-motion is much higher. Not to mention that the unpleasant side effects of nausea and painful headaches can be alleviated through the proper treatment, which will help you to get back to living a good quality of life.

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

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

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



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# Understanding Basal Cell Carcinoma: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By David Kosiorek, PA-C

**B**asal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) is one of the most common types of skin cancer, affecting millions of people worldwide each year. At Lumen Dermatology, our experienced team encounters this condition frequently and wants to ensure patients understand the importance of early detection and proper treatment.

## What is Basal Cell Carcinoma?

Basal cell carcinoma develops in the basal cells, which are found in the deepest layer of the epidermis. These cancers typically grow slowly and rarely spread to other parts of the body, making them highly treatable when caught early. However, if left untreated, BCCs can become locally invasive, causing significant tissue damage and disfigurement.

## Recognizing the Signs

The Lumen Dermatology team emphasizes the importance of knowing what to look for when examining your skin. Basal cell carcinomas can appear in various forms:

- **Nodular BCC** presents as a pearly, dome-shaped bump with visible blood vessels. These lesions may develop a central depression or ulceration as they grow.
- **Superficial BCC** appears as a red, scaly patch that may resemble eczema or psoriasis. These are commonly found on the trunk and can be easily overlooked.
- **Morpheaform BCC** looks like a scar-like, firm, pale area with poorly defined borders. This type can be particularly challenging to detect and treat due to its appearance.
- **Pigmented BCC** contains brown, black, or blue pigmentation and may be mistaken for a mole or melanoma.

## BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)



## SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (SCC)



## Risk Factors and Prevention

Several factors increase the likelihood of developing basal cell carcinoma. Prolonged sun exposure and a history of sunburns, particularly during childhood, significantly elevate risk. Fair-skinned individuals, those with light-colored eyes and hair, and people over 50 are at higher risk. Additionally, exposure to radiation, certain chemicals, or having a compromised immune system can increase susceptibility.

Lumen Dermatology strongly advocates for prevention through sun protection. This includes wearing broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30, seeking shade during peak sun hours (10 AM to 4 PM), wearing protective clothing, and avoiding tanning beds entirely.

## Treatment Options

When we diagnose basal cell carcinoma, several effective treatment options are available, including Mohs surgery, surgical excision, and superficial radiation therapy. The choice depends on the size, location, and type of BCC, as well as the patient's overall health.

## The Importance of Professional Care

Regular skin examinations by our qualified team at Lumen Dermatology are crucial for early detection. Our professionals can identify suspicious lesions that patients might miss and provide appropriate treatment recommendations.

If you notice any new, changing, or concerning spots on your skin, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment. Early intervention leads to better outcomes and often simpler treatment procedures. Remember, basal cell carcinoma is highly curable when detected and treated promptly by experienced medical professionals.

## 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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## HUNGRY HEART

By Alex Anderson

**T**he songwriter and performer Bruce Springsteen was right when he wrote,

"Everybody's got a hungry heart..."

Inside of every human is this need or hunger. Sometimes we try to fill it with love for another person, but for some reason...another person is not the answer.

Sometimes the hungry heart destroys the very things we love and want.

Springsteen goes on to sing,

"We fell in love, I knew it had to end...we took what we had and we ripped it apart...everybody's got a hungry heart...don't make no difference what nobody says...ain't nobody like to be alone...everybody's got a hungry heart."

I do believe our hungry heart is about loneliness, not for another human...but for God himself. We were created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26) but when man left God...man missed, and still misses, God. They had a bond that filled man with joy and satisfied his heart like nothing else.

C.S. Lewis calls this the, "Numinous Awe." It seems to be built into mankind, this *ravenous hungry heart to know God*. And it's so strong nothing can fill it but God himself.

Psalms 34:8 says, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

**And the truth is...** If you don't get that deep ravenous hunger in your heart satisfied by Jesus you will starve to death spiritually, while eating everything else.

So how do you do that? How do you find the true satisfaction that calms your hungry heart?

If you are a Christ-follower, then you know how to do this. You...do again...something that you have already experienced when you asked God to be your Lord and Savior. You "make up" with God and you're back to stay.

You are so glad to be back together. Glad that God owns you and your life. So you decide to be happy because God owns you and is your life partner (Philippians 4:4).

Feel the pleasure, the joy and the delight again about Jesus being your master. Let this fact cause you happiness, pleasure and delight.

Be full of joy because Jesus paid a high price for your life. (1Corinthians 6:19-20).

Let the reality of what He has done sink over you.

Not only are you in His family now, but you can live the life of a victorious and joyful person of God; with all the rights and privileges of a child of rich royalty.

*"You are my child says the Lord...my very rich child says the Lord...let the riches of your heart begin to overflow into all of your life."* (3 John 2)

You can, should, and must rejoice always in the Lord...way before anything changes physically in your life.

The seed of hope and joy is there if you have become one with Jesus Christ. His seed is within you. If your hope is nonexistent then find the seed once planted deep in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Like a precious pearl search for it (Matthew 13:45).

When you find it (that small seed), clean it up. Polish it and put it in the center room of your heart, shine the brightest light you can find on it and let its magnificent beauty captivate you. Stare at it with intentional focus as though you are searching and waiting for hope itself.

**Its magnificent light will light up your life.**

For it will change everything about you as you clearly see and feel the love that God has shed in your heart...that is for you (Romans 5:5).

It is so worthy of your time my friend to meditate and think about Jesus, again.

Whether things in your life are going well or not...you have the power of a Christ-follower to focus on Jesus...the author and finisher of your faith and the centerpiece of your heart.



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