


CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

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

February 2026

Marion Edition - Monthly

**FREE** 

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# I KNOW PAIN!

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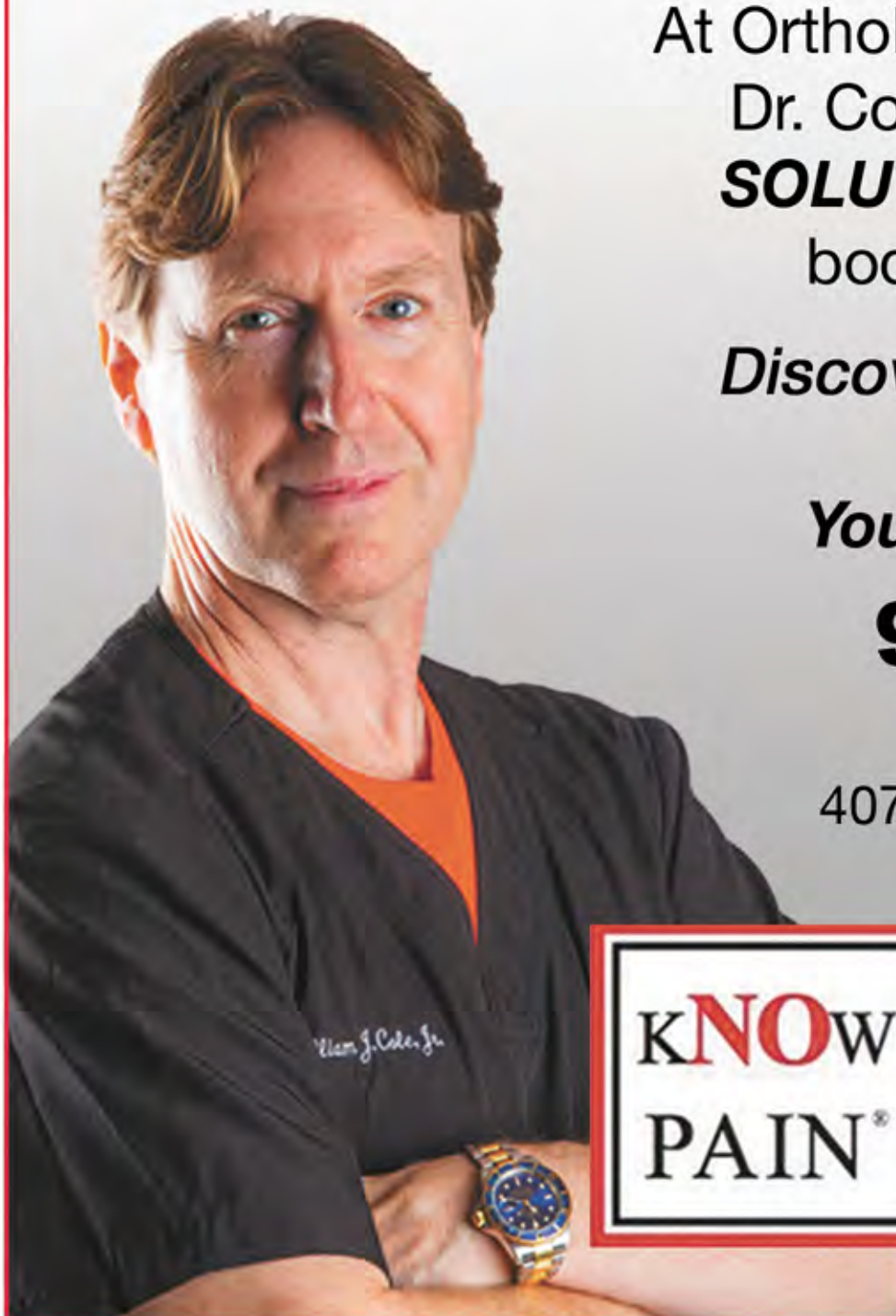
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## A NEW CHAPTER IN DERMATOLOGY EXCELLENCE

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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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# 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

## EMSELLA®

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.



# COULD YOU BE AT RISK FOR BLADDER CANCER? HERE'S WHAT TO KNOW.

**B**ladder cancer is one of the most frequently diagnosed cancers in the U.S. It occurs more often in men than in women, and the risk increases with age. Most cases—about nine out of 10—occur in people over age 55, with the average age at diagnosis being 73. Throughout their lives, roughly one in 28 men and one in 91 women will develop bladder cancer. It rarely occurs in children.

## The Basics of Bladder Cancer

The bladder is a hollow organ in the lower pelvis that stores urine until it leaves the body through the urethra. Sometimes the cells in the lining of the bladder can change and grow out of control, forming tumors that can spread.

Most bladder cancers begin in the cells lining the inside of the bladder. The most common type is called urothelial carcinoma. Many stay in the inner lining at first, but some can grow deeper and spread to nearby lymph nodes or other parts of the body, like the bones, lungs, or liver.

## Warning Signs and Symptoms

One common early symptom is blood in the urine, which may appear pink, brown, or bright red. This bleeding usually does not cause pain, and sometimes it is only visible through a lab test. While blood in the urine can be caused by other conditions, it should always be reported to your doctor.

Other possible early symptoms include frequent or painful urination, difficulty urinating, or a weak urine stream. As bladder cancer progresses, symptoms can become more severe, such as inability to urinate, lower back pain on one side, swelling in the feet, bone pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, or weight loss.

Currently, there is no standard screening test for bladder cancer. If your healthcare provider suspects cancer, a range of tests can help confirm the diagnosis.

## Bladder Cancer Treatment

When found in early stages, bladder cancer is highly treatable.

Treatment depends on the type, stage, and your overall health, and may involve more than one approach. Small, early tumors are often removed through a procedure called TURBT, which uses a scope inserted into the bladder. For cancers that have grown deeper, surgery to remove the bladder and nearby lymph nodes may be needed.



Even after successful treatment, bladder cancers can come back. Follow-up tests may continue for years after treatment to detect any recurrence.

## What's Your Risk?

Smoking is the main risk factor for bladder cancer, causing about half of all cases. Smokers are at least three times more likely than non-smokers to develop the disease. Certain chemicals can also increase risk, including those found in industries such as dye, rubber, leather, and textile manufacturing; painting and printing; photography; hairdressing; and exposure to diesel fumes.

Previous cancer treatment can increase the risk as well. Patients who received radiation treatment aimed at the pelvis, or treatment with certain anti-cancer drugs, have a higher risk of developing bladder cancer.

Chronic inflammation of the urinary tract or repeated urinary infections may also increase risk. As with many forms of cancer, family history can play a role.

While we can't change certain risk factors for bladder cancer, like age or gender, there are steps you can take to lower your risk:

- Don't smoke.
- Be careful around chemicals, and follow all safety instructions if you work with them.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

## New Options Through Clinical Trials

Advancements in the diagnosis and treatment of all forms of cancer continue at a rapid pace, thanks to ongoing clinical research. Clinical trials have played a significant role in these advancements that are now saving more lives. Patients who participate in these safe and carefully supervised groundbreaking research studies are receiving the latest treatments available, which can have positive impacts on their outcomes.

## WORLD-CLASS CANCER TREATMENT, CLOSE TO HOME

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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For more information,  
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# Heart Health Awareness Month:

## The Link Between Cardiovascular Health and Hearing Loss

by AudioNova

February is Heart Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to highlighting the importance of cardiovascular health. While many focus on diet, exercise, and blood pressure management, recent research suggests that heart health also plays a crucial role in hearing. The connection between cardiovascular conditions and hearing loss is becoming clearer, and understanding this relationship is vital for overall well-being.

### The Cardiovascular-Hearing Connection

The cardiovascular system, including the heart and blood vessels, is responsible for delivering oxygen and nutrients throughout the body, including to the inner ear. The cochlea, the part of the ear that processes sound, relies on a consistent blood supply to function. When cardiovascular health deteriorates, the blood flow to the inner ear can be compromised, leading to hearing loss.

Several cardiovascular conditions, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, are linked to an increased risk of hearing loss. A study published in *The Journal of the American College of Cardiology* found that people with heart disease, particularly those with high blood pressure, are more likely to experience hearing loss. This is thought to be due to the damage hypertension causes to blood vessels, including those that supply the cochlea.

### How High Blood Pressure Affects Hearing

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is one of the most common cardiovascular conditions worldwide. It occurs when blood pressure is consistently high, putting strain on the heart and blood vessels. Over time, hypertension can damage the blood vessels, including those that supply the inner ear, which may lead to hearing loss.

The cochlea is highly sensitive to changes in blood flow. When blood vessels narrow due to hypertension, the cochlea can be deprived of essential oxygen and nutrients, resulting in damage to the hair cells responsible for detecting sound. This leads to sensorineural hearing loss, which is typically permanent.

### Cholesterol and Hearing Loss

Cholesterol, particularly high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol, is another key factor in cardiovascular health that can affect hearing.



High cholesterol levels contribute to plaque buildup in the arteries, which restricts blood flow throughout the body, including the ears.

A study by the *American Heart Association* found that individuals with high cholesterol levels were more likely to develop hearing loss. Researchers suggest that poor circulation, due to plaque buildup, may affect the cochlea's ability to function properly. Additionally, high cholesterol can reduce the elasticity of blood vessels, further hindering circulation to the inner ear.

### Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects both cardiovascular health and hearing. People with diabetes are more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases, such as high blood pressure and heart disease, which can, in turn, damage the blood vessels in the inner ear.

High blood sugar levels associated with diabetes can damage the blood vessels, including those supplying the cochlea, leading to hearing impairment. Studies show that people with diabetes are twice as likely to experience hearing loss compared to those without the condition. Managing blood sugar levels effectively is crucial in preventing damage to the inner ear and preserving hearing.

### Protecting Your Heart and Ears

Given the link between cardiovascular health and hearing loss, protecting both your heart and hearing is essential. Here are some strategies to maintain optimal health:

- 1. Maintain a Heart-Healthy Diet:** Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can help manage cholesterol and blood pressure. Avoiding excessive salt and processed foods can also reduce cardiovascular risk.
- 2. Exercise Regularly:** Regular physical activity improves circulation, lowers blood pressure, and supports heart health. Exercise also helps manage weight, which can reduce the risk of developing diabetes and other cardiovascular conditions.

**3. Control Blood Pressure and Cholesterol:** If you have high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol, work with your healthcare provider to manage these conditions. Medications, along with lifestyle changes, can help protect both your heart and ears.

**4. Monitor Blood Sugar Levels:** If you have diabetes, keeping your blood sugar levels in check is crucial. Proper diabetes management can help prevent damage to the blood vessels in the inner ear.

**5. Get Regular Hearing Checkups:** Regular hearing screenings are essential, especially for those with cardiovascular risk factors. Early detection of hearing loss can help ensure timely intervention and prevent further deterioration.

### Conclusion

Heart Health Awareness Month is a reminder of the importance of cardiovascular health in overall well-being. The connection between heart health and hearing loss is strong, and maintaining a healthy heart is crucial for protecting your hearing. By managing blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, and getting regular hearing checkups, you can safeguard both your heart and ears, ensuring better health for years to come.

Visit AudioNova for a complimentary hearing test and evaluation in a comfortable environment that values hearing health education. Our offices are staffed with Doctors of Audiology and are clean and run on time.

#### Sources:

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# I KNOW PAIN!

**I wish I didn't. But life does not always give you a choice.**

By Prof. William J. Cole, Jr., DO - Double Board-Certified in PM&R Interventions & Regenerative Medicine

**T**here are moments when your life divides into two parts: before... and after. Mine happened when I woke up from surgery.

When I woke up from the cervical spinal decompression surgery for the large bone spurs that were crushing my right C-7 nerve root, rendering my right arm useless, and robbing me of any sleep for the last 30-days and 30-nights....

I leaned forward and felt this ripping sensation, deep in my neck, and then the shooting electrical cattle prod type pain went down to all my arms and legs with searing nerve pain.

This is NOT like any other type of pain, and those who have experienced **True Neurologic Pain** know how intense and unrelenting nerve pain can be.

I then reached up to touch my "Standard Operating Procedure Neck Safety Collar, WHICH WAS NOT THERE!"

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE?

I didn't freak out like most people... I GOT MAD AS HELL... I WAS FURIOUS!

How could this happen? Who was responsible? Why me? Am I going to be able to walk? Will I be able to work as a Doctor? Will I recover? How will I provide for my Lovely New Wife? What can I do to reverse the damage? And what the F\_\_\_ Were They Thinking When They Are Operating on Another Doctor..?

That moment—right there—was the moment I realized I was potentially going to be a quadriplegic.

The difficulty became evident years before after a young girl fell asleep while driving and I was a passenger and she ran into the guardrail at 80 miles an hour where I went headfirst into the corner post with no airbag.

Of course, this was a devastating injury, which forced me to have **Multiple Surgeries** to "Decompress my bilateral Ulnar nerves" as my arms became useless, "Reattach my Bicep Tendon 3 times" within 5 weeks, "inject my Collar Bone" on Both Sides as it had been displaced one inch medial and shoved on top of my chest wall, and had "Countless Cervical Injection" due to the worsening neck pain and Endless PT that Just Did Not Work.

I survived these challenges, as "I am a Hardhead", which anyone who knows me can confirm, but then the "Real Pain" started.

## I STOPPED SLEEPING ALL TOGETHER

Read that again: I stopped sleeping altogether. Not "I had trouble sleeping." Not "I was uncomfortable." I stopped sleeping.

It took a few years for this massive bone spur to develop, but after it started crushing my C7 spinal nerve and I had no choice but to have it removed.

And if you've ever been there—where your body won't let you rest—then you already know what happens next: you stop thinking clearly, you stop healing, you stop functioning, you stop being You!

Losing the use of your arms twice is devastating enough, let alone realizing that you may not be able to use your arms or legs in the future. That's why I was so upset and furious post-surgery when I realized that this was a Real Possibility.

It's one thing to be hurt. It's another thing to look into the future and realize you may never walk again or hold your loved ones. And if you've ever had that moment, then you know exactly what I mean, as "I Have Been Exactly Where You Are Now!"

I then told my partner at the time that we had this Amazing Ultra PRP treatment that he was going to perform in my epidural space and rebuild my spinal cord. He looked at me and said, "Never heard of it!" I said, "I Don't Care! That's What We're Going to do..."

## The "Future Me"

So, I had a series of **Ultra PRP epidural procedures** performed in my cervical spinal canal, which **Rebuilt My Spinal Cord** and changed the course of my life forever.

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But the real breakthrough wasn't the procedure... it was what it forced me to understand about what all patients go through and the pain that they suffer due to the limitations of traditional medicine.

You're getting PAIN Signals. Signals are your body's warning signs. And when you decode them, you stop guessing and start making decisions that actually make sense, and this is **How I Became the Future Me.**

## The "Future You"

Are You Ready to Meet the "Future You"?

Is it someone in crippling pain and dysfunction so bad that they just Gave Up? Will you stop participating in life? Will you just take another pill or schedule yet ANOTHER surgery, when the first ones didn't work?

What do you do with the frustration, anger, shame, guilt, insomnia, anxiety, depression, embarrassment, and inadequacy that comes from "Unfulfilled Dreams?"

## YOUR LIFE WITHOUT PAIN

Now, instead, I want you to take a minute... Close Your Eyes, and IMAGINE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT PAIN.

Without any of the negative feedback from your body, brain, friends, or family. What would your life be like to live life to the fullest, free from endless drugs and surgeries? You are happy, healthy, pain free, and living the best life you can imagine.

Who would you be if you had no pain? What would you do? Where would you go? What would you accomplish? What does YOUR LIFE look like? Do you want to know how to get to the "Future You"?

## Where is YOUR Pain...?

The body, back, brain, bones, or BioMet...? Well, THAT is what we can figure out together, along with how these problems affect every aspect of your life, now and in the future, and how to properly identify the real pain and problem generators.

Then, how to work toward resolution to live your best life—the Future You.

Pain is your body telling you that something is wrong, so LISTEN TO YOUR BODY as you know it better than any doctor.

Let's Decode Your Pain Signals.

Then Let's **"Have the Body Heal the Body"**®, as There is Nothing on God's Green Earth That Can Heal the Body Better Than the Body... Nothing!

We All Know This, Right?

Do you want to know how...?

## "The Future You" is Waiting!

"If this excites you and would like to see more from the upcoming **"kNow PAIN" Trilogy**, please Join the "kNowPAIN" Book Club waitlist today at [Info@kNowPAIN.com](mailto:Info@kNowPAIN.com). You can reserve your spot and receive the exclusive First Editions, in addition to Special Offers and Discounts on these and other upcoming "kNow" Books, Regenerative Webinars, IntelHealth AI Programs, and Stem Cell Specials."



# 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?

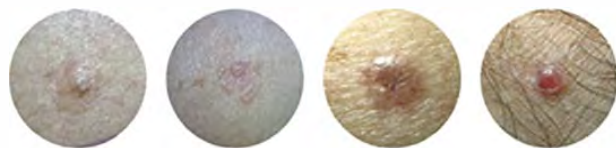
Basal cell carcinoma develops in the basal cells, which are found in the deepest layer of the epidermis. These cancers typically grow slowly and rarely spread to other parts of the body, making them highly treatable when caught early. However, if left untreated, BCCs can become locally invasive, causing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

## Recognizing the Signs

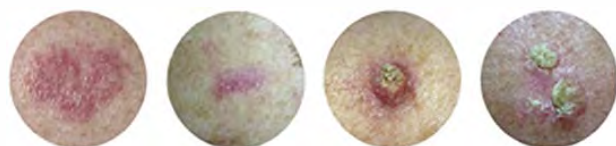
The Lumen Dermatology team emphasizes the importance of knowing what to look for when examining your skin. Basal cell carcinomas can appear in various forms:

- **Nodular BCC** presents as a pearly, domeshaped 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

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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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# 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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# EFFECTIVE TOENAIL FUNGUS TREATMENT EXPERT SOLUTIONS

By Dr. Andrew Franklin, DPM, PH.D

**T**oenail fungus, medically known as onychomycosis, affects millions of people each year, causing discolored, thickened, and sometimes painful nails. At Ocala Podiatry, Dr. Andrew Franklin understands how this common condition can impact your confidence and quality of life. The good news is that with proper treatment, you can restore your nails to health and prevent the infection from spreading.

## Understanding Toenail Fungus

Toenail fungus occurs when microscopic fungi infiltrate the nail bed through tiny cuts or separations between the nail and nail bed. These organisms thrive in warm, moist environments, making your feet particularly vulnerable, especially if you frequently wear closed-toe shoes, visit public pools or gyms, or have minor skin injuries around your toenails.

The infection typically begins as a white or yellow spot under the tip of your toenail. As it progresses, the fungus can cause your nail to discolor, thicken, and develop crumbling edges. Without treatment, the condition can spread to other toenails and even your fingernails, making early intervention crucial.

## Professional Treatment Options at Ocala Podiatry

Dr. Franklin offers comprehensive treatment approaches tailored to the severity of your infection and your overall health. During your consultation, he will examine your nails and may take a small sample to confirm the diagnosis and identify the specific type of fungus involved.

## Topical Antifungal Medications

For mild to moderate infections, Dr. Franklin may prescribe topical antifungal medications. These prescription-strength treatments are applied directly to the affected nail and surrounding skin. While topical solutions can be effective, they require consistent application over several months and work best when the infection hasn't penetrated deeply into the nail bed.

## Oral Antifungal Medications

Oral antifungal medications represent one of the most effective treatment options for toenail fungus. These prescription medications work from the inside out, helping your body grow a new, healthy nail free of infection. Dr. Franklin carefully evaluates each patient's medical history before prescribing oral antifungals, as they may interact with certain medications and require periodic blood tests to monitor liver function.



Treatment typically lasts three to four months, though you'll need to wait for the infected portion of the nail to grow out completely, which can take up to a year. The success rate for oral antifungals is significantly higher than topical treatments alone.

## Laser Therapy

Ocala Podiatry may offer advanced laser treatment for toenail fungus, a cutting-edge option that uses focused light energy to penetrate the nail and destroy the fungus without damaging surrounding tissue. This painless procedure typically requires multiple sessions and can be an excellent choice for patients who cannot take oral medications due to other health conditions.

## Nail Removal

In severe cases where the infection causes significant pain or hasn't responded to other treatments, Dr. Franklin may recommend temporary or permanent nail removal. This procedure allows direct application of antifungal medication to the nail bed and gives a healthy nail the opportunity to grow back.

## Prevention Strategies

Dr. Franklin emphasizes that preventing recurrence is just as important as treating the initial infection. He recommends several practical strategies to keep your feet fungus-free:

Keep your feet clean and thoroughly dry, especially between the toes. Wear moisture-wicking socks and change them daily or whenever they become damp.

Choose breathable shoes and alternate pairs to allow them to dry completely between uses. Trim your toenails straight across and keep them at a moderate length. Wear protective footwear in public showers, pools, and locker rooms. Avoid sharing nail clippers, shoes, or towels with others.

If you have diabetes, circulatory problems, or a weakened immune system, regular foot inspections and prompt treatment of any nail changes become even more critical.

## Schedule Your Consultation

Don't let toenail fungus diminish your quality of life or prevent you from enjoying activities you love. Dr. Andrew Franklin and the team at Ocala Podiatry are committed to providing personalized, effective treatment solutions that address both the infection and the underlying factors that contributed to it.

With the right treatment plan and preventive care, you can achieve clear, healthy nails and reduce your risk of future infections. Contact Ocala Podiatry today to schedule a comprehensive evaluation with Dr. Franklin and take the first step toward healthier feet and nails. Your journey to confident, fungus-free feet starts with a simple phone call.

## 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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# TAKING HEART HEALTH TO HEART:

## A Cardiothoracic Surgeon's Perspective on American Heart Month

By Hiep Nguyen, MD, FACS

**F**ebruary marks American Heart Month, a time when we turn our attention to the organ that beats approximately 100,000 times each day, pumping life-sustaining blood throughout our bodies. As a cardiovascular surgeon, I've witnessed both the remarkable resilience of the human heart and the devastating consequences when we neglect its care. This month serves as a crucial reminder that heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, but it's also an opportunity to emphasize that many heart conditions are preventable.

Nearly half of American adults have some form of cardiovascular disease, and someone in the United States has a heart attack every 40 seconds. Yet, what many people don't realize is that up to 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable through lifestyle modifications. This is where knowledge becomes power, and action becomes lifesaving.

### Understanding Your Risk

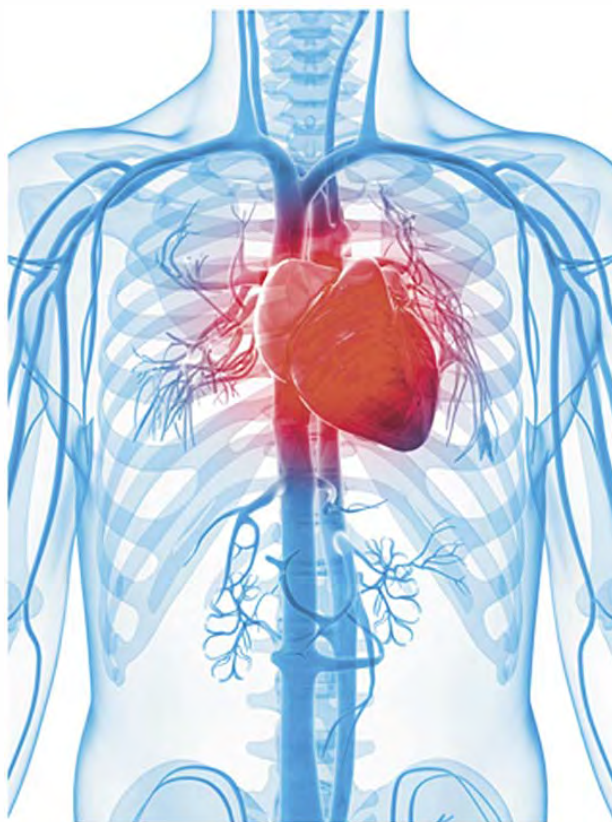
Heart disease doesn't develop overnight. It's typically the result of years of cumulative damage to your cardiovascular system. The traditional risk factors remain the primary culprits: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, obesity and physical inactivity. Family history also plays a significant role, which is why knowing your family's cardiac health history is essential.

What concerns me most as a surgeon is seeing patients in their 40s and 50s with advanced heart disease that could have been prevented or managed with earlier intervention. Many people assume they are "too young" for heart problems, but cardiovascular disease is increasingly affecting younger populations due to rising obesity rates and sedentary lifestyles.

Stress and sleep deprivation are often overlooked contributors. Chronic stress elevates blood pressure, while inadequate sleep disrupts metabolic processes. Managing stress through mindfulness, adequate rest and healthy coping mechanisms should be part of everyone's heart health strategy.

### The Power of Prevention

The good news is that your daily choices have a profound impact on your heart health. Regular physical activity stands as one of the most powerful preventive measures. I recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise



weekly. This doesn't mean you need to run marathons — brisk walking, swimming or cycling can significantly reduce your risk. Strength training twice weekly also benefits cardiovascular health.

Nutrition is equally critical. A heart-healthy diet emphasizes whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables and healthy fats while limiting sodium, saturated fats and added sugars. Small changes make a difference: Choosing water over sugary drinks and incorporating more plant-based meals can gradually transform your heart health.

Smoking cessation cannot be overstated. If you smoke, quitting is the single most important step you can take for your heart. Within just one year of quitting, your risk of heart disease drops by half. Resources like nicotine replacement therapy and support can help.

### Know the Warning Signs

Recognizing the signs of a heart attack can save your life or another's. Classic symptoms include chest pain or discomfort, shortness of breath, pain radiating to the arm or jaw, cold sweats, nausea and light

headedness. However, women and people with diabetes may experience atypical symptoms like unusual fatigue, indigestion or back pain. When in doubt, call 911.

### Take Action This Month

This American Heart Month, I encourage you to take concrete steps toward better heart health. Schedule a checkup with your primary care physician to assess your cardiovascular risk factors. Know your numbers: blood pressure, cholesterol levels, blood sugar and body mass index. If you have risk factors, work with your health care team to develop a management plan.

Your heart has been beating for you since before you were born, working tirelessly without rest. This February, and every month thereafter, show it the care it deserves. The heart you save may be your own.

### About Hiep Nguyen, MD, FACS Cardiothoracic Surgeon



Renowned cardiothoracic surgeon, Hiep Nguyen, MD, FACS, specializes in complex cardiac and thoracic surgeries. Emphasizing minimally invasive techniques, Dr. Nguyen is the first and only heart surgeon to offer several leading-edge procedures in Lake and Sumter counties, including robotic-assisted

heart surgery and aortic grafting. Dr. Nguyen is recognized for his compassionate patient care and takes pride in aiding patients through surgery recovery to resume their daily lives. Beyond his clinical practice, he volunteers his surgical expertise in regions with limited access to cardiac care, particularly in Vietnam.

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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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# 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.

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# SUPPORTIVE CARE IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

All of us deserve to live as comfortably as possible; however, when an accident, sudden illness or chronic condition takes hold of our lives, comfort may seem impossible or out of reach. In the past decade, hope for relief from acute pain and distressing symptoms has become a reality and within reach, thanks to a growing trend in supportive care.

Supportive Care is comforting, soothing, calming and reassuring. It should not be confused with quick fixes offered in so-called "pain clinic" settings. Supportive Care is specialized medical care for people with serious conditions. Its focus is to provide relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress that entails—whatever the cause or diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

This type of care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses and other specialists, who work together with a patient's primary doctor and/or specialist to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and can be offered along with curative treatment. Examples of those who have benefited include someone with pancreatitis and a diabetic with neuropathy (nerve pain). Both conditions are chronic but not life-threatening.

**Supportive Care improves healthcare quality in three significant ways. It:**

1. effectively relieves physical symptoms and emotional suffering,
2. strengthens patient-family-physician communication and decision-making, and
3. ensures well-coordinated care across healthcare settings.

As a holistic approach to care, it's about a person's whole being, including family and loved ones. It is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurances. Those with advancing illness can deal with their situation without the added burden of debilitating pain or life-altering symptoms that prevent them from enjoying daily life.



The steady growth in this type of care is primarily in response to the increasing number of people with serious and chronic illness. People are living longer, but not necessarily better. Their needs are many, placing overwhelming caregiving demands on families. We recognize their needs and are addressing these challenges through a strong partnership between patient, family and the Carewell Supportive Care team. A consult is available through one's own physician or by calling (352) 291-5881 for information about receiving services. They can request treatment if the outcome from surgery, accident or disease has left them in physical or mental distress.

Because patients are carefully regulated by their physicians in collaboration with experts on Carewell Supportive Care team, they can rest assured that

symptoms can be managed (most within 24-48 hours) and their condition monitored on an ongoing basis. Many go on to fully regain their lives.

The Carewell Supportive Care team has two medical directors and six advanced practitioner registered nurses. Together they conduct more than 1,000 consults a year, in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and even private homes. Learn how Carewell Supportive Care can help: (352) 291-5881 or visit [www.carewellsupportivecare.com](http://www.carewellsupportivecare.com).

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR CONTACT LENS CHECK-UPS: ENSURING LONG-TERM EYE HEALTH

Contact lenses allow people to see with incredible clarity without the limitations of glasses. However, ongoing contact lens use can lead to minor complications like dry eye and eyelid inflammation to more serious ones, such as keratitis (infection) and corneal abrasion. That's why regular contact lens check-ups are essential for maintaining optimal eye health and vision. These routine examinations play a vital role in ensuring your lenses are functioning effectively, fitting comfortably, and not posing any risks to your eye health and vision.

### BENEFITS OF REGULAR CONTACT LENS EXAMS

Routine contact lens exams provide and are designed to:

#### 1. Preserve Eye Health

Regular check-ups greatly reduce the risk of various eye complications through:

- **Early Detection of Problems** – Your eye doctor can identify early signs of potential disease processes, well before symptoms become noticeable. Early detection allows for timely intervention and prevention of more severe conditions, such as corneal neovascularization, corneal abrasion, hypoxia, and other problems that, left undiagnosed and untreated, can seriously damage vision.
- **Prevention of Infection** – Even with diligent cleaning and care, contact lenses can harbor harmful bacteria and microorganisms. Regular check-ups help minimize the risk of eye infections like infectious keratitis, bacterial keratitis and fungal keratitis and other hazards.
- **Detection of Systemic Issues** – Believe it or not, your eyes can reveal other problems throughout the body. Regular contact lens exams can uncover signs of systemic diseases that also affect eye health, such as diabetes, hypertension, and autoimmune disorders.

#### 2. Promote Clear, Comfortable Vision

Routine contact lens exams ensure that your contact lenses continue to provide you with total comfort. Your exam will include:

- **Fit Assessment** – Your eye doctor will evaluate the fit of your lenses to confirm they're not causing any discomfort or damage to your eyes.
- **Prescription Updates** – Eyes and vision change over time, making regular exams the key to ensuring your prescription remains up-to-date. Updated vision correction helps prevent problems like eye strain, headaches, blurred vision, even accidents.
- **Lens Material Evaluation** – New technologies mean there are more contact lens types than ever before. From rigid gas permeable and soft lenses to hybrid, scleral and silicone hydrogel, there's a contact lens for almost everyone. Your eye doctor can assess whether your current lens material is still suitable for your eyes or if a switch to a different type might provide enhancements to your comfort and lifestyle.

### HOW OFTEN DO I NEED A REGULAR CONTACT LENS EXAM?

Your eye doctor will take into account your age, health profile and other factors to customize your exam schedule. In general, the recommended frequency of contact lens exams depends on the following:

- **Age** – Teenagers and young adults, who often experience more rapid changes in their eyes, should have annual exams. As we move deeper into our 20s and 30s, exams every two years may be sufficient, assuming no complications arise. For people ages 40 and up, annual or twice-yearly exams are typically recommended due to the increased risk of age-related eye conditions.
- **Eye Health** – Individuals with a history of eye infections, corneal ulcers, or chronic dry eye, or conditions like diabetes, may require exams every six months or more. By keeping a close watch on eye health and any changes that may be developing, your eye doctor can take steps to halt problems before they become serious.

- **Lens Type** – The type of contact lenses you wear can influence exam frequency. Daily disposable lenses may require less frequent check-ups compared to extended wear or specialty lenses. It is particularly important to receive regular check-ups if you wear extended-wear lenses, which can leave you more prone to infection and other problems.

### SIGNS YOU NEED A CONTACT LENS CHECK-UP IMMEDIATELY

See your eye doctor immediately if you experience any of the following:

- **Eye Pain or Discomfort** – Serious, persistent or worsening eye pain or irritation could indicate ill-fitting lenses, which should not be ignored. These symptoms could also indicate corneal abrasion, or another problem requiring prompt attention.
- **Signs of Infection** – Symptoms may include swollen, itchy, or red eyelids; discoloration of the whites of the eyes (particularly if they appear pink); or milky or yellowish discharge from the eyes.
- **Vision Changes** – Sudden blurry vision, double vision, halos, flashes of light, difficulty focusing or a curtain-like effect over part of your vision necessitate immediate attention. If your eye doctor isn't able to see you immediately, have someone take you to the ER.
- **Persistent Dryness or Excessive Tearing** – Persistent dryness or excessive tearing that doesn't improve with artificial tears or your usual care routine means it's time for an immediate check-up.
- **Extreme Light Sensitivity** – Sudden, severe sensitivity to light may indicate a serious eye condition demanding prompt evaluation.
- **Foreign Objects in Eyes** – If you get anything in your eyes such as debris, chemicals, or a larger object, seek immediate medical attention.

### WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A CHECK-UP

Your eye doctor may recommend that you wear your lenses as normal throughout the day and keep them in for your appointment. This allows your doctor to assess how your lenses are performing and how your eyes are reacting to them.

During a contact lens check-up, your eye doctor will:

1. **Evaluate your eye health** – This includes an eye health assessment, tear film evaluation, and standard eye and vision tests.
2. **Assess the comfort and fit of your lenses** – A slit lamp microscope evaluation allows your doctor to check lens alignment and movement.
3. **Check for signs of lens wear and tear** – Cracked or torn contact lenses should be disposed of and replaced.
4. **Make any necessary adjustments** to how your lenses fit, how you care for them, and how long you wear them.
5. **Discuss any issues or discomfort** you may be experiencing, and, if needed, make recommendations for different lens types you may want to try.
6. **Provide education you may need** about using, cleaning and storing your contacts.

### CONTACT LAKE EYE FOR ALL YOUR CONTACT LENS NEEDS

Regular contact lens check-ups are more than just a suggestion; they are an essential part of maintaining your eye health and safeguarding comfortable, clear vision. The caring professionals of Lake Eye (a US Eye company) are here to help you enjoy all the benefits of contact lenses while minimizing any related risks to your eye health and vision.

Our experienced ophthalmologists and optometrists conduct comprehensive, state-of-the-art eye exams specifically designed for contact lens wearers. We also provide customized fitting services to ensure your lenses are the right fit and type to deliver maximum comfort and wearability.

Every Lake Eye location also includes a full-service optical department featuring the latest in contact lenses, including specialty lenses for people living with chronic dry eye and corneal conditions like keratoconus, so nearly everyone can enjoy the clarity and convenience of contact lenses!

If you're ready to begin your next chapter with contact lenses, or you haven't had a contact lens check-up in a while, contact your local Lake Eye. We're here to help keep you looking great and seeing brilliantly.



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# DRINKS AND KEY INGREDIENTS FOR ENHANCING BLOOD CIRCULATION

**M**aintaining optimal blood circulation is crucial for overall health and well-being. Proper blood flow ensures that oxygen, nutrients, and immune cells are efficiently delivered throughout the body, while waste products are removed. In recent years, there has been growing interest in blood circulation drinks – beverages formulated with ingredients believed to support and improve blood circulation. This article delves into the science behind blood circulation drinks, their potential benefits, and the key ingredients commonly found in these beverages.

## The Importance of Blood Circulation

Blood circulation plays a pivotal role in maintaining the body's physiological functions. A well-functioning circulatory system ensures that vital organs receive the nutrients and oxygen they need to operate efficiently. Poor blood circulation has been associated with various health issues, including cardiovascular diseases, cold extremities, and cognitive impairment.

## Understanding Blood Circulation Drinks

Blood circulation drinks are beverages designed to promote and enhance blood flow within the body. These drinks often contain a combination of natural ingredients that are believed to have a positive impact on circulation. While research on the specific effects of these drinks is ongoing, many of the ingredients they contain have been studied individually for their potential benefits on blood flow.

## Key Ingredients in Blood Circulation Drinks

- **Nitric Oxide Boosters:** Nitric oxide is a vasodilator that relaxes blood vessels, allowing for improved blood flow. Ingredients like beetroot and pomegranate have been shown to increase nitric oxide production and help widen blood vessels, potentially enhancing circulation.<sup>1</sup>
- **Antioxidants:** Ingredients rich in antioxidants, such as vitamin C and polyphenols found in berries and green tea, help protect blood vessels from oxidative stress and inflammation, supporting healthy blood circulation.<sup>2</sup>
- **Ginger and Turmeric:** These spices have anti-inflammatory properties that may help reduce arterial stiffness and improve blood vessel function, contributing to better circulation.<sup>3</sup>
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Found in sources like fish oil, omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to improved arterial function and reduced blood clot formation, thus aiding in maintaining healthy circulation.<sup>4</sup>
- **Cayenne Pepper:** The compound capsaicin in cayenne pepper has been associated with improved blood flow and enhanced circulation due to its vasodilatory effects.<sup>5</sup>



## Top Drinks for Blood Circulation (quick list)

- **Pomegranate Juice:** Pomegranate juice is rich in polyphenol antioxidants, which research suggests can improve blood circulation. This juice also has nutrients, including vitamin C, which strengthens blood vessels and can improve blood flow in that way. Pomegranate juice also has nitrate, which can widen blood vessels and facilitate blood flow. If you live with varicose veins, you may also appreciate that pomegranate juice has anti-inflammatory properties.
  - **Tea:** Some teas contain antioxidants, which can improve blood circulation by protecting you from the free radicals that can lead to clogged arteries.
- To improve circulation, consider incorporating tea into your daily routine. Green and black teas are packed with antioxidants that help protect the body from free radicals, which can lead to heart disease. Additionally, ginger tea has been found to improve blood flow as a natural vasodilator, widening blood vessels and enhancing blood flow. So, when selecting tea, opt for green and black varieties or try ginger tea for an extra circulation boost.

- **Beetroot Juice:** Beets can dilate the blood vessels, and in doing so increase blood flow throughout your body. Beetroot juice can also help lower your blood pressure, which is often a problem when your arteries are partly blocked. Plus, beets have nitrate, which your body uses to make nitric oxide, a compound that increases blood flow by widening blood vessels.
- **Water:** Blood is mostly water, so it is logical that staying hydrated with water can support healthy blood flow. Interestingly, experts suggest drinking warm water rather than cold, since icy water can cause veins to contract temporarily. You may also want to carry a water container that lets you measure how much you are drinking to keep track of your consumption.

Most adults should drink up to two liters of water daily. This is the equivalent of 67 ounces or a little over 4 16 oz. bottles of water per day.

## Conclusion

Blood circulation drinks have gained popularity as a potential way to enhance overall cardiovascular health and well-being. These beverages often contain a blend of natural ingredients known for their potential benefits on blood flow. While the individual ingredients have shown promise in scientific research, more comprehensive studies are needed to fully validate the efficacy of blood circulation drinks. As with any dietary supplement, it's advisable to consult with a healthcare professional before incorporating these beverages into your routine. Maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and managing stress remain fundamental strategies for promoting optimal blood circulation and overall health. *Read more on this subject from specialty trained, vascular surgeon, Dr. John Horowitz, at Central Florida Vein and Vascular Center: <https://cfvein.com/blood-circulation-drinks/>*

At Central Florida Vein and Vascular Center, our team of board-certified, fellowship-trained vascular surgeons is equipped with the experience and resources necessary to deliver high-level comfort and care. We treat patients of all ages, offering a wide range of minimally invasive treatments. We are dedicated to discussing all treatment options with you and ensuring you understand all aspects of your venous care. Whether you are experiencing tender veins or ulcers, we'll diagnose your condition and come up with an advanced, minimally invasive treatment plan based on your specific needs.

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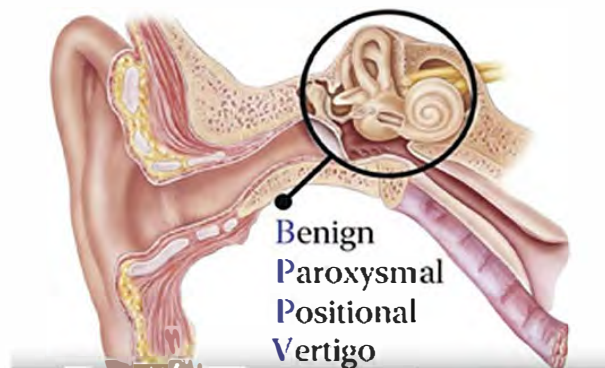
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# Vestibular Balance Issues Should Not be Ignored:

## *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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# JOINTS DESERVE TO BE HAPPY

## A Life with Joint Pain

As the pain pandemic continues more joints everywhere are losing their mojo. Over 500 million people are impacted by osteoarthritis (OA) worldwide. Joint pain changes the way people feel and act. Luckily there is plenty of support outside of medication.

Sometimes the thought of exercising while in pain seems counterproductive. However, "exercise plays the most important role as the first line of treatment for OA, (Professor Helen French, *Inflammation Nation*, S3 E2)" The widespread saying, "motion is lotion" is a mantra to be shared amongst everyone, especially those with joint pain. Exercise has proven to be just as effective as over-the-counter pain relievers and has a more positive long-term impact.

Consider the relationship between posture and OA. Both significantly impact the other. "Joint misalignment due to arthritis frequently coincides with muscle imbalance creating additional stress on involved joints," explains occupational therapist Carole Dodge. Luckily with proper movement training programs muscular imbalances are quickly improved.

From the other end, physical therapist Dr. Kelly Ruther states, "Your arthritis isn't what is causing your pain. Your body's misalignment, and muscular imbalance resulting in joint compression is. Just because you have arthritis doesn't mean you have to live with discomfort. If we can reduce compression in your joint by improving your body's alignment and muscular balance we can reduce inflammation, and ultimately reduce pain!"

## Pilates for OA

Enter the power of Pilates. Pilates is more than a method for joint pain, it is a lifestyle capable of reducing chronic pain and inflammation starting with alignment, breathing and core stability. This trio weaves a supportive path for the joints.



## Easy as A, B, C

• **Alignment:** In the Pilates method there is a primary focus to harmonize muscles through postural stretches and resistance training. Every exercise begins, ends, and is performed with corrective alignment to balance the muscles groups. As the muscles begin to balance, joint compression naturally decreases and joints can begin to move more freely.

• **Breathing:** Breathwork not only facilitates better posture and stability but it can also decrease inflammation. Studies have shown that breathwork combined with a deepening of mind-body training will significantly lower inflammation (Dr. Will Cole, *How Breathwork can Help Heal Trauma & Reduce Physical Inflammation*, 2017). The guided breathwork performed in Pilates aims to connect awareness within the body to every movement.

• **Core:** The Pilates method demonstrates how stability begins with a resilient core. Meaning Pilates goes beyond improving core strength to train the core in dynamic and functional movements. Directly this reduces load on the spine and hips. A great Pilates session includes functional core challenges like rotation and lateral training.

## Support that Brings Joy to Joints

Pilates goes a step further than being nurturing joints. Pilates uses equipment to support the body's optimal movement pattern. This allows play back into movement and a chance to move like care-free kids.

**Reformer** - An entire warmup is masterly crafted to the lower body called footwork. Footwork on the reformer focuses on ankle, knee, and hip alignment while using resistance in a reclined position. This gently facilitates movement into the most weathered knees.

**Chair** - The Pilates chair is an ideal apparatus to remove load and play with rotation and side bending. The resistance springs designed within the chair provide feedback to integrate the shoulder girdle to the ribcage and spine. All of this is performed with care to even non-loading joints like the hands.

**BOSU** - This unstable small piece of equipment provides the additional challenge of training balance. Moves like 'cat' and 'bird dog' are amazing on the BOSU because it provides reactive control which subconsciously contracts the core while stretching the spine and gently challenging balance.

## Joints Deserve Happiness, Too

Pilates is thoughtfully crafted to keep joints from aches and inflammation. While exercise is the first line of defense for osteoarthritis, Pilates is the game changer that joints deserve. Joints need the Pilates method to stay happy and healthy while Pilates can shine through thoughtful and fun movement. This harmonious relationship even makes the most successful dating algorithms jealous.



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# Flu Season vs. COVID-19: UNDERSTANDING THE KEY DIFFERENCES

**A**s we navigate another year of respiratory illnesses, understanding the distinctions between seasonal influenza and COVID-19 remains crucial for protecting our health. While both viruses share similar symptoms and transmission methods, they are fundamentally different diseases requiring distinct approaches to prevention and treatment.

## Different Viruses, Different Origins

The seasonal flu is caused by influenza viruses that have circulated for decades, mutating slightly each year. COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, emerged in late 2019 and represents a novel coronavirus. This newness initially meant our immune systems had no prior exposure, making early waves particularly dangerous. While we've built up some population immunity to COVID-19 through vaccination and infection, it remains less predictable than the flu viruses we've coexisted with for generations.

## Symptom Similarities and Differences

Both illnesses present with fever, cough, fatigue, and body aches, making them difficult to distinguish without testing. However, COVID-19 more frequently causes loss of taste or smell, a relatively rare flu symptom. COVID-19 can also lead to more severe breathing difficulties and has a higher risk of causing blood clots, strokes, and multi-organ complications compared to typical flu cases.

The overlap in symptoms means that anyone experiencing respiratory illness should consider testing to determine which virus they have. This identification helps with treatment decisions and informs public health tracking efforts. Many pharmacies and health-care providers now offer combination tests that can detect both influenza and COVID-19 simultaneously.

## Transmission and Incubation

While both spread through respiratory droplets and aerosols, COVID-19 appears more contagious than seasonal flu. The incubation period differs slightly: flu symptoms typically appear within one to four days after infection, while COVID-19 symptoms may take two to fourteen days to develop. This longer incubation period allows COVID-19 to spread more easily through pre-symptomatic transmission, as infected individuals may unknowingly pass the virus to others before feeling sick.



Both viruses can spread through close contact, touching contaminated surfaces, and breathing in airborne particles. Good ventilation, hand hygiene, and mask-wearing in crowded indoor spaces can help reduce transmission of both illnesses.

## Severity and Complications

Seasonal flu kills thousands annually in the United States, primarily affecting young children, elderly individuals, and those with underlying conditions. COVID-19 has proven deadlier overall, with higher hospitalization and death rates across various age groups. Long-term effects, known as "long COVID," can persist for months or years after initial infection, affecting multiple body systems in ways not typically seen with flu.

Long COVID symptoms include persistent fatigue, brain fog, shortness of breath, and cardiovascular problems. While post-viral syndromes can occur after flu infection, they appear less common and less severe than what many COVID-19 patients experience.

## Prevention Strategies

Fortunately, vaccines exist for both illnesses. Annual flu shots remain the best defense against seasonal influenza, reformulated yearly to match circulating strains. COVID-19 vaccines, now updated to target current variants, have dramatically reduced severe illness and death. Health experts recommend staying current with both vaccinations, especially for high-risk groups including older adults, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic medical conditions.

Beyond vaccination, preventive measures include staying home when sick, practicing good respiratory etiquette, and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits that support immune function.

## Treatment Options

Antiviral medications like Tamiflu can reduce flu severity if taken early. Similarly, COVID-19 antivirals such as Paxlovid can prevent severe disease when administered promptly after symptom onset. Early testing and treatment are essential for both conditions, particularly for vulnerable populations.

## Moving Forward

As COVID-19 transitions from pandemic to endemic status, it joins the seasonal flu as a recurring public health concern. The key difference is that we're still learning about long-term COVID impacts while having decades of flu data. Both viruses will likely continue circulating, potentially peaking during colder months when people gather indoors.

Understanding these differences empowers us to make informed decisions about vaccination, testing, and treatment. By taking both illnesses seriously and following public health guidelines, we can better protect ourselves and our communities during respiratory virus season.

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# What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

**W**eight-watchers. Nutrisystem. Mediterranean diet. Paleo. Living healthy has become a craze, although obesity in our country, rather legitimizes it. For many people it is about looking and feeling better, living longer, stronger and disease-free. These are all important reasons for eating clean, exercising, and learning to rest our bodies sufficiently.

For Christians, however, trying to maintain healthy habits finds its motivation in more than adopting diet fads to longevity and better quality of life. Taking care of our bodies is stewardship. That is, it is a reflection of our recognition of having been created by God, and how our lives can be instruments in his hands to serve and honor him on earth. Of course, God can use both the healthy and the unfit for his purposes, including the sick, feeble, and dying. Human worth and value is not in question.

The reality is that our earthly lives are only a speck in the sands of eternity. However, Christ followers understand that life doesn't belong to them. It is a gift from a Good Father who entrusted them with a brief span of years that should be invested in loving others and making our world a better place. For those who have believed in Christ and experienced God's forgiveness of sin, the reason for taking care of their bodies goes beyond living longer and healthier. It's about honoring Jesus Christ with all of life, including the way they take care of their bodies.

In his book, *"The Unknown God: Searching for spiritual fulfilment,"* Oxford University professor, Alister McGrath, describes the parable of Plato's Cave, a story about people enslaved inside the cave oblivious to the reality that existed on the outside beyond the flickering shadows which they knew. That is, until the day someone was able to find their way out and discover a world beyond description, a world of beauty and splendor. McGrath writes, "Our desires have become attached to things that are little more than shadows, when they are meant to be attached to something which cannot decay or disappoint" (32).

How does this relate to healthy living? Focusing on living healthier and longer, like any other pursuit we might obsess about, really reveals a spiritual longing in our souls for something more: *eternity*. Whether is it longing for a "perfect" relationship that often disenchant, earthly riches that can quickly vanish, or a healthy and strong body that is suddenly brought to a standstill due to an unexpected medical report, our hearts are longing for something beyond what this world can provide.

McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfilment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfilment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

May you achieve physical well-being and wholeness. But may you also discover the gift of eternal life which Jesus promises to all who believe and trust in him alone. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). I would enjoy exploring with you the meaning of life and God.

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