

TAMPA BAY'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

February 2026

Tampa Bay Edition - Monthly

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I KNOW PAIN!

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BUT LIFE DOES
NOT ALWAYS
GIVE YOU A
CHOICE.**

Prof. William J. Cole, Jr., DO

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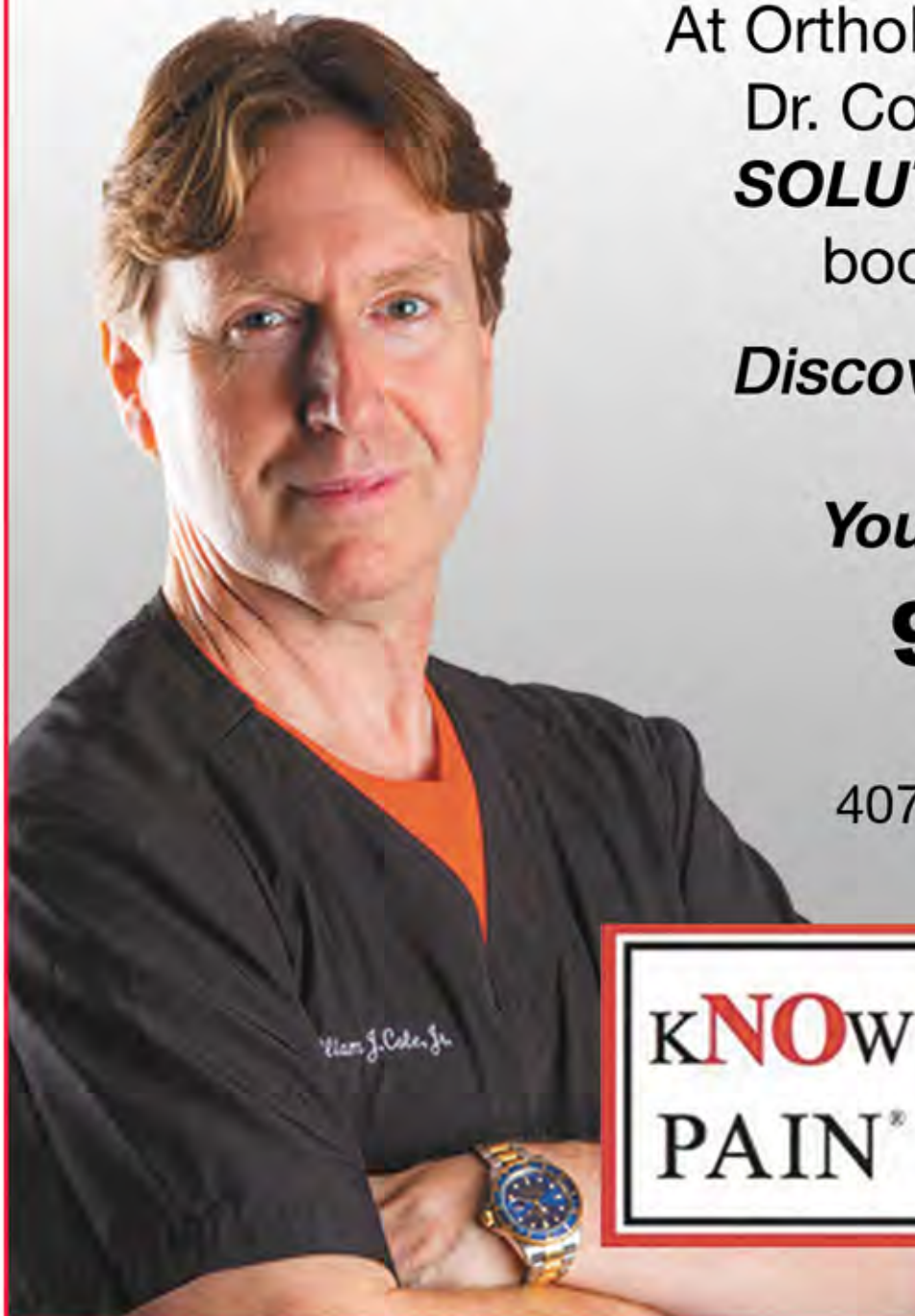
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I KNOW PAIN!

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

There 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...?

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

Bladder 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; hair-dressing; 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.

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In Pasco 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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Take Control of Your Health with BodyView Preventive MRI by Encore Imaging

In an era where healthcare costs continue to rise and medical conditions often go undetected until they become serious, preventive medicine has never been more crucial. Encore Imaging's BodyView Preventive MRI represents a revolutionary approach to health screening, offering comprehensive peace of mind in under 60 minutes through advanced, radiation-free technology.

Knowledge Is Your Greatest Health Asset

The old adage "knowledge is power" takes on profound meaning when applied to personal health. BodyView Full Body MRI empowers individuals to take charge of their wellbeing by providing detailed insights into their body's current state. This innovative screening technology transforms the traditional reactive approach to healthcare into a proactive strategy that can literally save lives.

For individuals with a family history of cancer or other hereditary conditions, the psychological burden of uncertainty can be overwhelming. BodyView MRI addresses this concern head-on, offering a simple yet comprehensive scan that can deliver worry-free results or identify potential issues while they're still manageable. The relief that comes from knowing your body is healthy – or the advantage of early detection – cannot be overstated.

Comprehensive Screening Without Compromise

What sets BodyView apart from traditional screening methods is its remarkable scope and safety profile. This radiation-free scan screens for cancer and over 500 different medical conditions across 13 vital organs, providing a full internal snapshot of your health in a single session.

The scan examines critical areas including the brain, thyroid, spine, lungs, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, adrenal glands, bladder, and reproductive organs (ovaries, uterus, and prostate). This thorough approach means that potential health issues across multiple body systems can be identified simultaneously, eliminating the need for multiple separate screenings and reducing the overall time and cost associated with comprehensive health monitoring.



The Power of Early Detection

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of BodyView Preventive MRI is its ability to reveal hidden conditions before they become symptomatic. Many serious health conditions, including various forms of cancer, develop silently over months or years. By the time symptoms appear, treatment options may be more limited and outcomes less favorable.

BodyView MRI changes this narrative by enabling early intervention. When conditions are detected in their initial stages, treatment is typically more effective, less invasive, and often less expensive. For health-conscious individuals who understand the value of prevention, this technology represents the ultimate proactive health tool.

Safety and Convenience Combined

Unlike traditional CT scans or other imaging methods that expose patients to ionizing radiation, BodyView MRI utilizes magnetic resonance technology that is completely radiation-free. This safety advantage makes it suitable for regular health monitoring without the cumulative radiation exposure concerns associated with other screening methods.

In less than an hour, patients receive a comprehensive health screening followed by a virtual consultation with a physician to review the results in detail, which would traditionally require multiple appointments,

various specialists, and extensive testing. This efficiency makes preventive screening accessible to busy professionals and anyone who values their time while prioritizing their health.

Investing in Your Future Self

BodyView Preventive MRI represents more than just a medical screening – it's an investment in your future health and quality of life. The peace of mind that comes from comprehensive health knowledge allows individuals to plan confidently, whether that means pursuing aggressive career goals, planning family expansion, or simply enjoying life without the nagging worry about undetected health issues.

For those ready to embrace truly preventive healthcare, Encore Imaging's BodyView MRI offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain comprehensive health insights quickly, safely, and conveniently. In the world of modern medicine, this level of preventive screening allows you to be in control of managing your health and your future.

Take the first step. It's peace of mind and early detection when it matters most.

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THE LIFE-SAVING POWER OF REGULAR SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS: WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

In a world where health consciousness is on the rise, one critical aspect of preventive care often goes overlooked: regular skin cancer screenings. With skin cancer being one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, the importance of early detection through routine check-ups cannot be overstated. This article delves into why staying vigilant about your skin health, particularly in checking for melanomas, could be a life-saving decision.

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow abnormally, often due to damage from UV radiation. While there are several types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most dangerous. Melanoma develops in the melanocytes, the cells responsible for producing skin pigment. Although it's less common than other skin cancers, melanoma is far more likely to spread to other parts of the body if not caught early.

The Power of Early Detection

The key to successfully treating skin cancer, especially melanoma, lies in early detection. When caught in its initial stages, the five-year survival rate for melanoma is an impressive 99%. However, this rate drops dramatically to 27% for melanomas that have spread to distant parts of the body. These statistics underscore the critical importance of regular skin checks and professional screenings.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

While professional screenings are crucial, being aware of your own skin and any changes is equally important. The "ABCDE" rule is a helpful guide for identifying potential melanomas:

Asymmetry: One half of the mole doesn't match the other half.

Border: The edges are irregular, ragged, or blurred.

Color: The color is not uniform and may include shades of brown, black, or tan.

Diameter: Melanomas are usually larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).

Evolving: The mole changes in size, shape, or color over time.

Any mole or skin growth exhibiting these characteristics warrants immediate medical attention.

The Screening Process

A professional skin cancer screening is a quick, painless procedure that can be performed by a dermatologist or trained healthcare provider. During the screening, the doctor will thoroughly examine your skin, paying close attention to areas frequently exposed to the sun. They may use a dermatoscope, a special magnifying tool, to get a closer look at suspicious spots.

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

While everyone should be mindful of their skin health, certain factors increase the risk of skin cancer:

- Fair skin
- History of sunburns or excessive sun exposure
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Family history of skin cancer
- Weakened immune system

For those at average risk, an annual skin check is recommended. However, individuals with higher risk factors may need more frequent screenings. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate screening schedule for your specific situation.

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

In between professional screenings, monthly self-examinations are crucial. These self-checks allow you to become familiar with your skin's normal appearance and help you spot any changes quickly. Use a full-length mirror and a hand mirror to examine your entire body, including hard-to-see areas like your back, scalp, and between your toes.

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

While regular screenings are vital, prevention remains the best strategy against skin cancer. Protect your skin by:

- Applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 daily
- Wearing protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses
- Seeking shade, especially during peak sun hours (10 am to 4 pm)
- Avoiding tanning beds and sun lamps

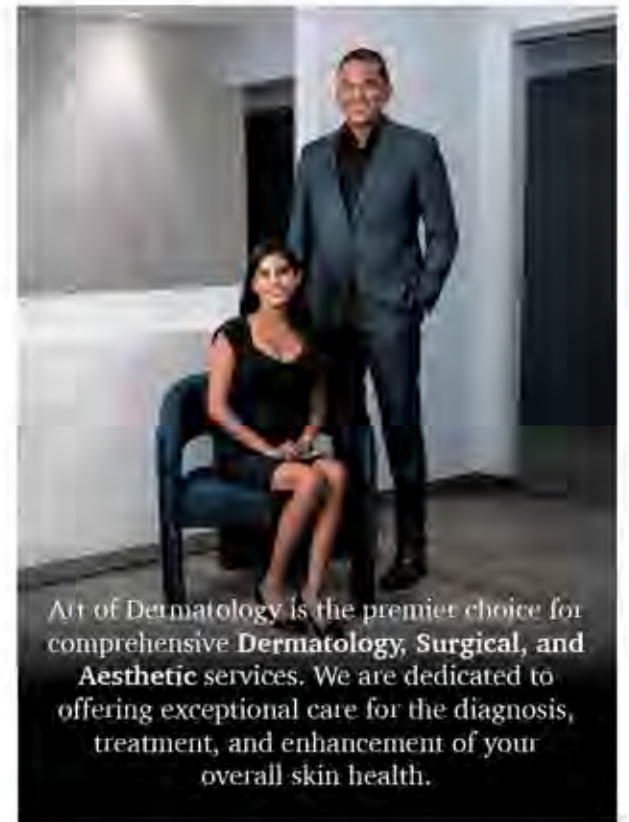
The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

Regular skin cancer screenings don't just benefit individuals; they have a broader societal impact. Early detection reduces the overall burden on healthcare systems by catching cancers when they're most treatable. It also helps raise awareness about skin cancer, encouraging others to prioritize their skin health.

Conclusion: A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

In the grand scheme of health maintenance, skin cancer screenings are a relatively small investment of time that can yield enormous benefits. By making these screenings a regular part of your health routine, you're taking a proactive step in protecting yourself against one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. Remember, your skin is your body's largest organ and its first line of defense against the environment. Treating it with the care and attention it deserves isn't just about aesthetics—it's about preserving your overall health and potentially saving your life.

Don't wait for a problem to arise. Schedule a skin cancer screening today and empower yourself with the knowledge and vigilance needed to keep your skin healthy for years to come. Your future self will thank you for this simple yet powerful act of self-care.



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COMING SOON

Heart Health Awareness Month:

The Link Between Cardiovascular Health and Hearing Loss

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.

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YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUFFER IN SILENCE:

Understanding Pelvic Pain, Endometriosis, and Fibroids

Dr. Vahora, MD, FACOG

For millions of women, pelvic pain is an unwelcome companion that disrupts daily life, strains relationships, and diminishes quality of life. Whether caused by endometriosis, uterine fibroids, or other conditions, this pain is not something you should accept as "normal" or endure in silence. According to Dr. Parveen Vahora, MD, effective treatment options exist that can help you reclaim your life.

Understanding the Conditions

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the uterine lining grows outside the uterus, often on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or pelvic tissue. This condition affects approximately one in ten women of reproductive age and can cause severe cramping, heavy periods, pain during intercourse, and infertility. The displaced tissue responds to hormonal changes just like uterine lining, leading to inflammation, scarring, and debilitating pain.

Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous growths that develop in or around the uterus. While some women experience no symptoms, others suffer from heavy menstrual bleeding, prolonged periods, pelvic pressure, frequent urination, and lower back pain. Fibroids can range from tiny seedlings to bulky masses that distort the uterus.

Both conditions share common symptoms, including chronic pelvic pain that can significantly impact work, relationships, and mental health. Many women wait years before receiving an accurate diagnosis, often dismissed with suggestions that their pain is "just bad periods."

Medication Options

Dr. Vahora emphasizes that treatment should be personalized based on symptom severity, desire for future pregnancy, and overall health. For many women, medication provides effective relief.

Hormonal therapies, including birth control pills, hormonal IUDs, and progestin therapy, can help manage endometriosis by reducing or eliminating menstruation, thereby decreasing pain and slowing endometrial tissue growth. GnRH agonists create a temporary menopause-like state, shrinking endometrial implants and providing significant pain relief.

For fibroids, similar hormonal medications can reduce heavy bleeding and shrink fibroids. Tranexamic acid helps control excessive menstrual bleeding, while non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) address pain and inflammation. Newer medications like GnRH antagonists can shrink fibroids while causing fewer side effects than older treatments.



Surgical Solutions

When medication proves insufficient, surgical options offer more definitive relief. For endometriosis, laparoscopic surgery allows surgeons to remove or destroy endometrial tissue through small incisions, often providing significant pain relief and improving fertility prospects. In severe cases, hysterectomy may be recommended.

Fibroid treatment includes several surgical approaches. Myomectomy removes fibroids while preserving the uterus, making it ideal for women who wish to maintain fertility. Uterine artery embolization blocks blood flow to fibroids, causing them to shrink. Focused ultrasound surgery uses sound waves to destroy fibroid tissue non-invasively. For women who have completed childbearing and experience severe symptoms, hysterectomy offers permanent resolution.

Taking Action

Dr. Vahora stresses that no woman should accept chronic pelvic pain as inevitable. If you experience persistent symptoms, seek evaluation from a specialist who understands these conditions. Tracking your symptoms, pain levels, and menstrual patterns can help your physician develop an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment plan.

Remember, you deserve relief—especially when it comes to intimacy. With today's treatment options, living with debilitating pelvic pain or painful sex is no longer necessary. Women do not deserve to be in pain during sex, and you shouldn't have to suffer in silence. We offer MonaLisa Touch, a gentle laser treatment that can help restore comfort and confidence. This Valentine's Day, give yourself the gift of pain-free intimacy. Don't wait—reach out to a healthcare provider who will listen, investigate, and work with you to find the solution that's right for your unique situation.

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Oxygen Therapy for Stroke:

Can it Help to Regenerate the Damaged Brain?

Every year in the United States nearly 800,000 people will suffer from a stroke. If it's not caught early enough, it can lead to death, paralysis, cognitive impairment, aphasia and many more complications. When oxygen and blood can't reach the brain, the brain cells begin to die very rapidly.

Oxygen is the critical element of every cell in our body. Our bodies take in oxygen, and our blood-stream begins to flood our tissues and organs with oxygen-rich blood.

Countless researchers conceive that increasing the supply of oxygen to a stroke patient's damaged brain areas will alleviate brain damage by reducing swelling and regenerating brain matter.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is a medical treatment that delivers 100% oxygen to a patient's pulmonary system while they are within a pressurized chamber. This saturation of oxygen allows high-levels of life-sustaining oxygen to be delivered to the tissues and organs. This increase of the partial pressure of oxygen at the cellular level accelerates the healing processes and assists in the recovery from numerous indications.

In 2014 an extensive study called *Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in Acute Ischemic Stroke*, researchers studied Acute Ischemic Stroke patients and how HBOT effects oxidative stress, inflammation, apoptosis, neuroprotection and cerebral blood flow. They concluded that HBOT seems promising in reducing secondary hemorrhage of ischemic stroke patients which is worthy of further studies.¹

Many patients have tried HBOT for various disorders and disease states, and the majority of them will give glowing reviews for disease reversal and regression. There are no guarantees and off-label use is at the person's personal discretion. Individuals wanting to explore HBOT have the right to do so, although results are always based on a patient's overall health, physical condition, and other medical factors.

References:

1. Z Ding, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in Acute Ischemic Stroke: A Review, *Interv Neurol*. 2014 Aug; 2(4): 201-211.



Hyperbaric Centers of Florida is a premier hyperbaric treatment facility located in the Tampa Bay area. Their state-of-the-art hyperbaric clinic provides therapy to outpatients on a 7-day per week basis, closing only on major holidays.

Currently, There Are 15 FDA Approved HBOT Conditions:

- Air or Gas Embolism
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Compromised Skin Grafts or Flaps
- Crush Injury, Compartment Syndrome
- Decompression Sickness (Bends)
- Diabetic & Other Non-healing Wounds
- Enhancement of Healing in Selected Problem Wounds
- Exceptional Anemia: Resulting of Bleeding
- Gas Gangrene
- Intracranial Abscess
- Osteomyelitis
- Radiation Injury
- Refractory Osteomyelitis
- Thermal Burns
- Idiopathic Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss

HBOT is used "off-label" for various disease states and disorders and HBOT may be ordered by a physician for off-label indications. Hyperbaric Centers of Florida makes no claims as to the efficacy for any indications other than the fifteen approved by FDA.

Common Off-Label Indications:

- Autism
- Brain Injury
- Bells Palsy
- Cerebral Palsy
- Cosmetic Surgery
- Infections
- Inflammations
- Lyme Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Nerve Injuries
- Oral Disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Scleroderma
- Shingles
- Severe Migraines
- Sports Injury
- Stroke
- Tendon Injuries
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Venomous snake and spider bites

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Dr. Sunil Panchal

A PATIENT'S EXCRUCIATING BACK AND LEG PAIN...

Relieved in One Day!

One year ago, David was lifting a fire pit in his back yard and fell to the ground in infuriating pain. He could not get up as the pain was completely unbearable. EMS transported him to the emergency room, and he was admitted to the hospital. David had a herniated disc and was prescribed pain medications and discharged.

"The pain medications worked for a while, but eventually, the pain returned, and I had excruciating pain in my left leg as well." Said David.

After seeing multiple doctors, including a spine surgeon, and getting CT scans, ultrasounds, and MRIs, no one could figure out why David's pain was so immense, and they also had no idea why his left leg was painful, even more so than his back. Unable to accurately diagnose and treat him, David was left to suffer for another five months.

His Primary care physician finally referred him to a pain specialist that has been helping numerous patients find relief through regenerative and alternative procedures. Dr. Panchal is the founder of the National Institute of Spine and Pain.

David continued, "At the very first visit that I had with Dr. Panchal, he looked over my images and immediately knew the root cause of my pain, and he explained to me in full detail exactly what he needed to do to relieve it."

From the images, Dr. Panchal saw that David had a nerve that was being impinged and compressed by spinal neural foraminal stenosis of L3. Spinal neural foraminal stenosis refers to the narrowing of the foramen, which are small openings between each vertebra in the spine. Nerve roots pass through the foramen, so in David's case, his nerve was severely compressed in the gap and causing him unyielding leg pain along with lower back pain.

Dr. Panchal explained that David needed a procedure to shave the disc down to relieve the pressure on the nerve. The procedure is called endoscopic discectomy and decompression of the nerve root.

This procedure is performed while the patient is under light anesthesia, which allows open communication for patients to express pain thresholds with Dr. Panchal. David was not happy about having to have any surgery, even though Dr. Panchal explained that it was minimally invasive. After two months, David decided he needed to do it to relieve his daily pain that was disrupting his life.

David told us that after the surgery, which was this past December, he has no pain! David no longer needs pain medications, and he is back to living the quality of life that he and his family enjoy, pain-free with complete resolution.

Endoscopic discectomy and decompression is an outpatient procedure done under x-ray fluoroscopy to remove herniated disc material through a small, half-inch incision. It's done under light sedation and local anesthetic.

A 3-D video is used to guide guidance, tiny instruments through an endoscopic probe. The procedure takes approximately an hour and causes minimal discomfort, and a small bandage is usually enough for the closure of the tiny incision.

Dr. Sunil Panchal of the National Institute of Spine and Pain has been committed to regenerative medicine and stem cell therapy for several years. Dr. Panchal explains exosome therapy further, "This is an exciting new approach for regenerative medicine. Unlike PRP which has limited growth factors, or bone marrow and fat aspirate, which has an unknown quantity of stem cells, or growth factors from the patient, or the use of fetal cord blood stem cells (which has unknown function after thawing and also the risk

of tumor formation from foreign DNA), exosomes are a highly concentrated and reproducible source of growth factors for regenerative techniques.

"The other approaches typically take six months to see any results. With exosomes, I've had some patients begin to notice improvement as early as 2-3 weeks. And since this is an acellular product, there is no risk of tumor development." said, Dr. Panchal.

Dr. Panchal has treated patients with exosome therapy for pain in the cervical and lumbar facet joints, sacroiliac joints, knees, hips, ankles, elbows, shoulders, ligament injuries, and also degenerative discs. These tiny exosome communicators that secrete therapeutic and regenerative effects to the cells and tissues throughout the body are becoming highly-sought-after by many patients that have suffered from pain and chronic disorders. Some of the additional findings within peer-reviewed studies are as follows:

- Self-Renewing Capabilities
- Cellular Differentiating Ability
- Tissue Repair
- Anti-Inflammatory Effect
- Immunosuppression
- Neuroprotection

Although surgery is critical in certain situations, finding alternative methods to treat the underlying condition is always the first step. The National Institute of Spine and Pain is a state-of-the-art facility that specializes in the treatment of spine and orthopedic conditions, as well as acute and chronic pain management. They provide the utmost quality of care for patients to address the problem directly, and if needed, provide for their pain management needs.

At The National Institute of Spine and Pain, they treat each patient individually, using the latest equipment and various innovative procedures to diagnose pain and determine your care needs. The National Institute of Spine and Pain's President and Founder, Sunil J. Panchal, MD, is a board-certified interventional pain/ minimally invasive spine physician.

At The National Institute of Spine and Pain, their goal is to strive to deliver the highest quality of comprehensive care for those who are suffering from spine, joint, and nerve injuries. They have many alternatives to help you with your personalized treatment needs. Please visit their website at www.nationalinstituteofpain.org, or call them at (813) 264-PAIN (7246).

The National Institute of Spine and Pain

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Blood Biomarkers for Dementia: A New Window into Brain Health

By Karen Leggett, DO

For decades, the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias relied primarily on cognitive testing, brain imaging, and—when necessary—spinal fluid analysis. While these tools remain important, medicine is now entering a new era: the era of blood-based biomarkers for dementia.

These simple blood tests are transforming how we detect, evaluate, and understand cognitive change—often years before symptoms become severe.

WHY EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

Many people notice subtle changes long before a diagnosis is made:

- Misplacing items more often
- Trouble recalling recent conversations
- Word-finding difficulty
- Increased mental fatigue

This stage is often called subjective cognitive decline or mild cognitive impairment (MCI). At this point, the brain may already be developing disease-related changes—especially in Alzheimer's disease—even though daily function remains mostly intact.

Identifying the *biology* behind these changes early allows us to:

- Clarify the likely cause of symptoms
- Estimate risk of progression
- Guide further testing
- Begin prevention and treatment strategies sooner

WHAT ARE BLOOD BIOMARKERS?

Blood biomarkers are proteins released into the bloodstream that reflect what is happening in the brain. In dementia, they can signal three major processes:

1. **Amyloid accumulation** – a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease
2. **Tau pathology** – the process that closely tracks nerve cell injury
3. **Neurodegeneration** – general injury to brain cells, regardless of cause

Together, these markers help us distinguish Alzheimer's disease from other causes of cognitive decline.

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT ALZHEIMER'S BLOOD MARKERS TODAY

In current clinical studies and practice, two markers stand out.

1. AMYLOID BETA 42/40 RATIO (Aβ42/40)

Amyloid beta is a protein that accumulates in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

- A lower Aβ42/40 ratio suggests amyloid plaques are building up in the brain
- This change often appears years before dementia develops
- It helps identify who is likely developing Alzheimer's pathology

This marker answers the question: *Is Alzheimer-type amyloid biology present?*

2. PHOSPHORYLATED TAU 217 (P-TAU217)

Tau is a protein inside nerve cells that becomes abnormal in Alzheimer's disease.

- p-tau217 is currently the most specific blood marker for Alzheimer's disease
- Elevated levels strongly correlate with both amyloid plaques and tau tangles on brain scans
- It helps distinguish Alzheimer's disease from other dementias

This marker answers the question: *Is this cognitive change biologically consistent with Alzheimer's disease?* When both Aβ42/40 is low and p-tau217 is elevated, the likelihood of underlying Alzheimer's disease is high.

MARKERS THAT SUGGEST OTHER TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Not all cognitive decline is Alzheimer's disease.

Other causes include:

- Frontotemporal dementia (FTD)
- Vascular cognitive impairment
- Lewy body dementia
- Parkinson's disease dementia
- Inflammatory or metabolic brain injury

One important marker here is:

NEUROFILAMENT LIGHT CHAIN (NFL)

NfL is a marker of active nerve cell injury.

- Elevated in many neurodegenerative diseases
- Not specific for Alzheimer's disease
- Helps detect how active and aggressive the process is

HOW THESE TESTS ARE USED IN PRACTICE

Blood biomarkers are not used in isolation. They are combined with:

- Detailed history and cognitive testing
- Brain MRI
- Hearing, sleep, mood, and metabolic evaluation
- Review of medications and vascular risk factors

They help answer key clinical questions:

- Is Alzheimer's biology present?
- Is this more likely vascular, frontotemporal, or mixed?
- How active is the disease process?
- Who should go on to PET scanning or spinal fluid testing?

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR PATIENTS 50 AND UP

We now know that Alzheimer's disease begins 10–20 years before dementia.

This opens a new opportunity to:

- Identify risk early
- Modify lifestyle and vascular factors
- Optimize sleep, hearing, mood, and nutrition
- Consider emerging disease-modifying therapies
- Monitor progression more accurately

Brain health is no longer something we address only after memory is lost. It is something we can evaluate, protect, and preserve earlier than ever before.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Blood biomarkers are changing the landscape of dementia care. They allow us to move from: "We think this might be Alzheimer's disease" to "We can now see the biology of what is happening in your brain." For patients with memory concerns, this represents a profound shift toward earlier clarity, earlier prevention, and more personalized care.



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PATTERNS CAN GUIDE DIAGNOSIS:

Pattern	Suggests
Low amyloid + high p-tau217	Alzheimer's disease
Normal amyloid + normal p-tau + high NfL	Non-Alzheimer's neurodegeneration (such as FTD or vascular)
Mixed abnormalities	Mixed dementia (common in older adults)

Exploring Senior Living Options: 55+ Communities vs. Independent Living

Unless you're one of the rare people who enjoys mowing the lawn, unclogging a drain, or doing other household upkeep and maintenance, you're probably exploring your senior living options. As you've done your research, you have likely come across terms like "active senior living," "55+ communities" and "independent living." While they may all sound similar, there are quite a few differences between 55 plus and independent living communities.

WHAT IS A 55+ COMMUNITY?

55+ communities, also called active adult communities, are like typical residential communities except they have a minimum age requirement and are designed with a retirement-friendly, low-maintenance lifestyle.

This type of community can be made up of single-family houses, duplexes, condominiums, or townhomes, with units that are owned by the residents. Interior maintenance and daily upkeep are the responsibility of the homeowner, but exterior maintenance is usually covered by your monthly Homeowners' Association (HOA) dues. Other than the HOA dues (and possible mortgage payment), there are no other monthly fees required for residents in an active adult community.

PROS AND CONS OF 55+ COMMUNITIES

Since these types of communities are residential neighborhoods designed to attract active adults who want to downsize from a bigger home, they offer an array of opportunities for enjoying life to the fullest.

Pros include:

- **Social life:** You'll live around people close in age with similar interests and goals.
- **Resort-style amenities:** Some outside maintenance may be provided, and community services and amenities — such as a tennis court, golf course, swimming pool, fitness center, etc. — may be available as part of your monthly service fees.

Cons include:

- **Selling your 55+ residence:** Since there's a limited number of people who can buy a home in a 55+ community, it may take you awhile to sell it. Rising interest rates and cost of homeowner's insurance also may contribute to difficulty selling your home in the future.
- **Taxes and utilities:** You're responsible for real estate taxes, insurance, garbage collection, inside maintenance, appliances, utilities, internet service and cable/satellite TV.

- **No on-site healthcare options:** If you or your spouse needs higher levels of care, you could have to move again or pay for both the 55+ community and any needed care.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

An independent living community is often called a retirement community for the simple reason that most of the people who live there are retired. However, they offer an active lifestyle and freedom from the hassles of home maintenance. You'll find residence options like senior apartments and villas in a variety of floor plans and sizes.

At a senior living community, you'll find helpful services and amenities to make things easier and more convenient. Housekeeping, linen service, dining plans, transportation services and security are common. Amenities often include a fitness center, heated indoor pool, multiple dining venues, full-service salon and barber shop, woodworking shop, arts and craft studio, and more.

PROS AND CONS OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living that's part of a Life Plan Community is ideal if you're in good health. You can continue to live life as you do now but without the concerns of maintaining a home and the worries about future health care if something were to happen to you or your partner.

Pros include:

- **Maintenance-free lifestyle:** Independent living communities have a knowledgeable team to take care of all your home's needs, inside and out.
- **One and done:** Your monthly fee covers a wide variety of services, amenities, wellness programs, indoor and outdoor maintenance, a calendar full of activities and a dining program.
- **Social opportunities:** Scheduled parties, happy hours, special events, and outings with friends and neighbors who share your interests ensure you're never at a loss for things to do.
- **On-site senior care:** If you or your spouse needs long-term health care, you won't have to make another move, and you'll be close to people you already know.
- **Tax savings:** A portion of your entrance and monthly fee could be tax-deductible. Consult your tax adviser to be sure.



Cons include:

- **Decisions, decisions:** With an activity calendar full of classes, events, committees and clubs, you may find it hard to squeeze everything in.
- **Unneeded care:** You could pay for care you don't end up needing. However, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 70% of seniors 65 or older will need some type of long-term care for an average of three years.

WHAT DOES "A CONTINUUM OF CARE" MEAN?

One of the biggest advantages of choosing independent living at a Life Plan Community is not having to move if you need help with daily activities or even round-the-clock care. That's because Life Plan Communities provide access to higher levels of care — assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation — right on-site. Plus, if you choose a Life Plan Community with Life Care like Freedom Village, you'll have guaranteed access to higher levels of care at predictable monthly rates.

SEE WHY LIFE IS BETTER HERE

You can learn more about why you should choose independent living at Freedom Village by calling us today at 941-798-8122, clicking on FVBradenton.com.



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SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

For today's seniors, the desire to stay at home is strong. In fact, the modern elderly population is much different from its past counterparts. Almost 90% of people over 65 want to live in their home and community as long as possible, according to a report by the AARP Public Policy Institute and the National Conference of State Legislatures. A whopping 80% believe they will stay in their home for the remainder of their life. Aging in place allows seniors to enjoy all the comforts their familiar home has to offer. Today's options to support seniors in their home offer seniors and their families the peace of mind and support to make staying at home a healthy option.



AGING IN PLACE PROVIDES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Seniors have spent a lifetime building family relationships and likely years bonding with neighbors. Removing older adults from their long-time homes can make them feel like those connections have weakened. According to research published in *The Gerontologist*, the majority of seniors want to age in place because of the attachment and familiarity they feel with their home and communities.

IT FIGHTS ISOLATION

That sense of community provided through aging in place does more than make seniors feel comfortable. It is also integral for fighting feelings of isolation, a dangerous trend among seniors. Researchers from the University of Chicago found a link between loneliness and high blood pressure in older adults. The study authors noted that feelings of loneliness can occur even when a senior is surrounded by people. This further demonstrates the importance of the familiarity and sense of community provided through aging in place.

Besides being preferred by seniors, aging in place offers another benefit: savings.

While it may seem that aging at home would be more expensive than moving to a nursing or assisted living home, the opposite is actually true. With help from a home healthcare worker, staying in your home costs about 20% of what a nursing home costs on a monthly basis.

HOME HEALTH CARE CAN HELP

For many families and seniors, home health care is a beneficial choice – a safe and affordable solution that supports the family, while allowing seniors to stay in the comfort of their own homes and communities.

HERE ARE TEN WAYS HOME HEALTH CARE CAN SUPPORT YOU:

1. Home health care professionals can be there when needed. If family and loved ones are a distance away, home health care can give you peace of mind. Trained and qualified professionals

can assess safety risks and make simple corrections in the home – from placing a rug on a slippery floor, to recommendations for ambulatory assistance.

2. Home care supports activities of daily living (ADLs). In-home services allow adults to receive day-to-day help with the personal care they need, preserving their dignity and maintaining a good quality of life. Assistance with activities of daily living can include bathing, grooming, and medication reminders.

3. Access to skilled nursing care at home. Skilled medical care can be delivered at home by thoroughly supervised nurses, certified, licensed and knowledgeable about high-technology medical equipment. Home health care can ensure that your loved one's complex medical needs are met.

4. Support with diet and nutrition. Adults age 65 and older, people with chronic conditions, and those recently discharged from a hospital or nursing facility are likely to be nutritionally at-risk. Aging, bed rest, illness, and injury can all contribute to the loss of lean body mass. Home care may include nutritional counseling and home-cooked meals to protect against malnutrition.

5. Medication management. Multiple prescriptions it can be confusing to manage. Home health care professionals can ensure the right medications are being taken at the right times to control health conditions and prevent harmful drug interactions.

6. Home health care professionals provide caring companionship. Research shows that aging adults stay healthier with social interaction. Home health aides can become trusted friends for walks, reading, cards, games, movies, meals, and other social activities. Accompaniment on errands such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other activities are also added benefits.

7. Home care helps with light household chores. When aging adults struggle the daily demands of housework, such as laundry, vacuuming, dishes, and simple chores home care helps to consistently maintain a safe and healthy living environment.

8. Home health care clients have comparable or better health outcomes. Research has shown that clinical results are comparable or better with fewer complications when home care is provided to individuals with chronic conditions such as pneumonia, diabetes, or COPD.

9. One-on-one focus and support. Home health care services are truly unique, providing meaningful, one-on-one personal and skilled care that builds strong bonds between professionals and their clients. According to the *Cleveland Clinical Journal* a person who is seen by a clinician in the comfort of home more readily trusts that the health care team places their needs first.

10. An affordable alternative to facility or hospital care. According to the National Association of Home Care, the average cost of care from a skilled nursing facility is \$544 dollars per day, while the average cost of home health care is \$132 dollars.

OUR PROMISE

Through Trusted HomeCare Home Care Services, you can rest assured that your loved one and family will be safe and secure in a positive environment right at their home. Even if you simply have questions or want to understand how to better care for your elderly loved one experiencing the inevitable process of aging, we are able to help with that.

TRUSTED HOMECARE SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT

As a whole group, our mission statement says that we are here to access the needs of each client to help them maintain their independence while living in their own homes and communities.

Contact our team at
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how we can support
you or your loved one
727-771-5053

What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

Weight-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 fulfillment,"* 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 it is 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 fulfillment 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 fulfillment 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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