CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness MAGAZINE®

August 2026

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INVEST IN YOURSELF:
The Power of Body Treatments and Advanced Skin Rejuvenation

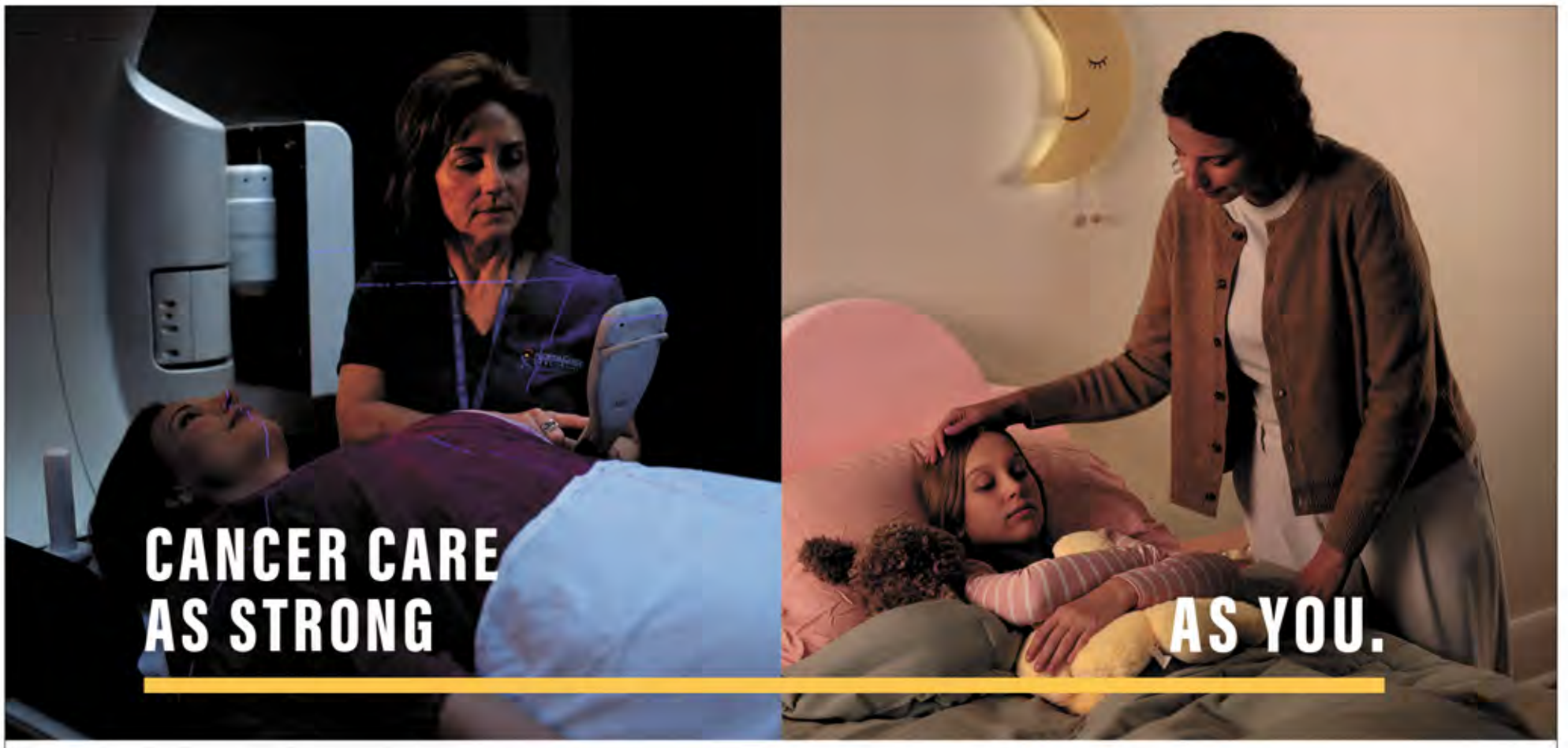
UNSIGHTLY VEINS

When Spider Veins and Varicose Veins Are More Than a Cosmetic Concern

HEALTHY EARS

Hearing, Balance & Tinnitus

WHEN TRAUMA DOESN'T LOOK LIKE TRAUMA



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WHEN TRAUMA DOESN'T LOOK LIKE TRAUMA

By Elizabeth Dosoretz, LCSW

Not all trauma is loud. Some of it is carried quietly.

When most people think about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), they picture panic attacks, flashbacks, emotional outbursts or someone who is visibly struggling. But trauma does not always present that way. Many people with PTSD are still going to work, taking care of their families, showing up for responsibilities and doing everything they can to appear "fine" on the outside, while silently struggling underneath the surface.

This is often referred to as silent PTSD, a form of post-traumatic stress where symptoms are internalized rather than outwardly visible. These individuals may look high functioning to everyone around them while privately carrying significant emotional and physical distress.

Psychiatrist Judith Herman wrote that trauma is often not simply remembered but relived through emotions, physical reactions and patterns of behavior.

Silent PTSD can show up in ways that are easy to overlook or misattribute to stress, anxiety, burnout or even personality changes. Some people experience a constant sense of uneasiness or hypervigilance without fully understanding why. Others begin to disconnect emotionally from people they love or lose interest in things they once enjoyed. Some avoid certain conversations, memories, places or emotions tied to painful experiences without even realizing how much avoidance has taken over their lives.

Trauma affects more than emotions. It can impact the body in very real ways. Chronic headaches, stomach issues, muscle tension, exhaustion, difficulty sleeping, trembling or unexplained physical pain can all be connected to unresolved emotional stress.

Psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk wrote in "The Body Keeps the Score" that trauma can continue living in the body long after the traumatic experience itself has ended. This helps explain why so many people struggling with unresolved trauma experience physical symptoms, chronic stress, exhaustion, sleep issues and anxiety while still appearing "fine" to

everyone around them. Because these symptoms overlap with so many other medical concerns, the underlying trauma can go unrecognized for years.

One of the reasons silent PTSD is so difficult to identify is because many people minimize their own experiences. They may tell themselves they "should be over it by now," especially if the event happened years ago. Others compare their trauma to someone else's and convince themselves that others have it worse. Over time, this can cause individuals to invalidate their own pain and avoid acknowledging what they are truly carrying.

Society and stigma also contribute to the problem. Many people were taught to push through difficult emotions, stay busy, avoid vulnerability or keep painful experiences private. As a result, countless individuals continue functioning while silently struggling, often without ever asking for help.

These hidden struggles can also deeply affect relationships. People experiencing silent PTSD may have difficulty trusting others, expressing emotions or maintaining close emotional connections. To family members, friends or coworkers, it may look like someone is becoming distant, withdrawn, irritable or emotionally unavailable. On the outside, they may still appear like themselves. But internally, they often feel isolated, exhausted and misunderstood.

Clinically, silent PTSD can also be challenging to recognize because people do not always walk into treatment talking about trauma. Many initially seek help for anxiety, sleep problems, stress, irritability or physical symptoms without immediately connecting those struggles to deeper emotional wounds.

Studies have also shown that PTSD is far more common than many realize. Research available through the National Institutes of Health found that PTSD prevalence in some primary care settings can exceed 10%, with many individuals remaining undiagnosed or untreated for years.

This is why compassionate and intentional care matters so much.

Providers trained to recognize the more subtle signs of trauma understand the importance of listening beyond surface-level symptoms. Sometimes, the most important part of treatment is creating a safe, nonjudgmental environment where someone finally feels comfortable enough to share experiences they may have carried alone for years. Healing often begins not with forcing someone to "prove" their pain, but by helping them feel seen, heard and understood. PTSD does not look the same in everyone, and trauma should never be minimized or compared. The reality is that many people are carrying invisible burdens that others know nothing about.

With the right support, healing is possible. For many people, the first step toward recovery is simply recognizing what they are experiencing matters.

About the Author

Elizabeth Dosoretz, LCSW, is the founder and CEO of Elite DNA Behavioral Health. Inspired by her own experience navigating postpartum depression and the challenges surrounding access to mental health care, she founded Elite DNA in 2013 with the goal of making behavioral health services more accessible and integrated into communities. Today, Elite DNA is one of the fastest growing behavioral health providers in the Southeast, offering in-person and virtual services across Florida, Virginia and Alabama.

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FINDING RELIEF FOR CHRONIC PAIN AND BENIGN CONDITIONS THROUGH RADIATION THERAPY

Living with chronic pain, stiffness, or limited mobility can quietly reshape daily life. When symptoms linger despite physical therapy, medications, or injections, many people are told their remaining choices are simply to "manage it" or consider surgery. However, there's hope for relief through a lesser-known option: radiation therapy. Low-dose, targeted radiation therapy has been used for decades to help people with certain benign, non-cancerous conditions. It's an advanced, non-surgical treatment designed to calm inflammation, control abnormal tissue growth, and restore comfort – often with minimal disruption to daily life.

A Gentle, Targeted Approach to Restoring Function

Radiation therapy for benign conditions is fundamentally different from the treatments most people associate with cancer care. It uses very low doses of precisely targeted energy, carefully designed to reduce inflammation and irritation rather than destroy tissue.

This approach allows physicians to focus treatment exactly where it's needed, helping to:

- Ease chronic inflammation
- Reduce pain and swelling
- Calm irritated nerves
- Slow or stabilize abnormal tissue growth

The goal is simple: improve comfort, mobility, and quality of life while avoiding more invasive interventions whenever possible.

How Low-Dose Radiation Therapy Works

Low-dose radiation therapy works by gently influencing inflammatory processes in the body. In certain chronic conditions, inflammation or abnormal tissue behavior continues long after the original injury or trigger has passed. Targeted radiation can help interrupt these cycles, allowing the affected area to settle and function more normally. Treatments are delivered over a short course, are noninvasive, and typically require no recovery time – allowing patients to continue with their usual routines.

A Strong Track Record of Safety and Precision

Low-dose radiation therapy for benign conditions has been used internationally for decades. Because these treatments involve much lower doses than cancer therapy, physicians carefully select patients and tailor treatment plans to balance benefit and long-term safety. Modern radiation technology allows specialists to precisely target the treatment area while protecting surrounding healthy tissue. For many patients, the potential benefits – reduced pain, improved mobility, and avoidance or delay of surgery – can meaningfully outweigh the risks.

Is Low-Dose Radiation Therapy Right for You?

If you're living with a chronic condition that limits your comfort or mobility – and traditional treatments haven't provided lasting relief – it may be worth asking whether low-dose radiation therapy is appropriate for you.

Exploring all available options empowers patients and providers to make informed decisions focused on long-term quality of life. A consultation with a radiation oncologist can help determine whether this approach fits within your overall care plan.

Radiation oncologists at Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) collaborate closely with surgeons, orthopedic specialists, neurologists, and other physicians to deliver thoughtful, personalized treatment plans – helping patients move forward with confidence and clarity.

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

Founded in 1984, 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.

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Two Dimensions of Healing:

How EMFACE® Addresses TMJ Relief and Facial Enhancement

By Dr. Tina Chandra

For many people, the jaw is a silent source of suffering. Temporomandibular Joint Disorder — commonly known as TMJ — affects millions of adults, causing chronic pain, headaches, facial tension, and disrupted sleep. At the same time, concerns about facial aging, loss of muscle tone, and skin laxity continue to be among the most common wellness goals clients bring to our center. Until recently, these two concerns required entirely separate treatment paths. Today, EMFACE® is changing that conversation.

At Chandra Wellness Center, we are proud to offer EMFACE® as part of our integrative approach to health and beauty — a technology that works on two powerful dimensions simultaneously: TMJ relief and facial enhancement.

Understanding EMFACE® Technology

EMFACE® is a non-invasive, needle-free treatment that combines two synergistic energies: Synchronized Radio Frequency (RF) and High-Intensity Facial Electromagnetic Stimulation (HIFES™). RF energy heats the dermis and deeper tissue layers to stimulate collagen and elastin production, while HIFES™ directly contracts facial muscles at a level beyond what voluntary movement can achieve. The result is a dual-action treatment that tightens skin from within while simultaneously strengthening and lifting the underlying muscular structure.

What makes EMFACE® particularly compelling at Chandra Wellness Center is our recognition that these same mechanisms have meaningful therapeutic implications for clients dealing with TMJ dysfunction.

Dimension One: TMJ Relief

TMJ disorders often stem from chronic muscle tension, poor muscle coordination, inflammation in the jaw joint, and imbalanced muscular engagement around the face and neck. Traditional approaches have focused on bite guards, physical therapy, and in more serious cases, surgery. EMFACE® offers a non-surgical complement to these approaches.

The HIFES™ electromagnetic stimulation used in EMFACE® engages the muscles of the face in deep, rhythmic contractions. For TMJ sufferers, this targeted muscular stimulation can help re-educate and rebalance the facial musculature — particularly

the masseter, temporalis, and surrounding musculature that directly influence jaw function. By promoting more balanced muscle tone and improving circulation to tense, overworked tissue, clients frequently report reduced jaw tightness, diminished facial pain, and greater ease of movement following treatment.

The RF component adds another layer of benefit: thermal energy penetrates deeply into connective tissue, reducing inflammation and supporting tissue repair. For clients whose TMJ symptoms include chronic soreness, stiffness, or clicking in the joint, this warming, restorative energy can provide meaningful relief and support the body's natural healing response.

Dimension Two: Facial Enhancement

On the aesthetic side, EMFACE® delivers clinically validated results. Studies have shown measurable improvements in facial lifting, wrinkle reduction, and muscle density after a series of treatments. The forehead, cheeks, and lower face all respond to the combined RF and HIFES™ energy, producing a naturally refreshed, lifted appearance without injectables or downtime.

At Chandra Wellness Center, we appreciate that beauty and wellness are not separate goals. When your facial muscles are strong, balanced, and well-supported, you look better and feel better. EMFACE® honors that connection — addressing both function and form in a single, comfortable, 20-minute session.

The Chandra Wellness Center Difference

Our holistic philosophy means we never treat a symptom in isolation. When a client comes to us with TMJ concerns, we assess the whole picture — stress levels, posture, sleep quality, and overall facial health. EMFACE® fits naturally into this comprehensive framework, offering a treatment that respects the body's interconnectedness.

If you are living with jaw pain, facial tension, or simply want to restore a more youthful, lifted appearance, we invite you to discover how EMFACE® at Chandra Wellness Center can support your journey — across two powerful dimensions at once.

Contact Chandra Wellness Center today to schedule your EMFACE® consultation.

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 (LVI 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.

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Healthy Ears: Hearing, Balance & Tinnitus

Understanding Ringing, Dizziness, Earwax, and the Surprising Ways Your Ears Affect Everyday Life

Most people think of their ears as something that simply helps them hear, but your ears actually do much more than that. They play an important role in balance, communication, and how you experience the world around you. When something feels "off," whether it is ringing in the ears, dizziness, muffled hearing, or a feeling of fullness, it can affect daily life more than many people realize.

As an audiologist here in Central Florida, I often meet patients who are unsure whether what they are experiencing is serious or simply something to ignore. The truth is that changes in hearing, balance, or ear comfort are worth paying attention to. Sometimes the solution is simple, while other times these symptoms may point to issues that deserve evaluation.

One of the most common concerns I hear about is tinnitus, often described as ringing in the ears. Some people notice buzzing, humming, clicking, roaring, or a high-pitched sound that no one else can hear. For some, it comes and goes. For others, it can feel constant and frustrating.

Tinnitus itself is not a disease. Instead, it is often a sign that something in the auditory system has changed. In many cases, tinnitus is connected to hearing loss, even mild hearing loss that someone may not yet recognize. Noise exposure, aging, stress, certain medications, jaw issues, and other medical conditions may also play a role.

One thing I tell patients often is this: tinnitus may be common, but that does not mean you should simply "learn to live with it" without understanding why it is happening. A hearing evaluation can often provide important clues and help guide treatment recommendations that improve quality of life.

Another concern many people experience is dizziness or balance problems. If you have ever felt unsteady, experienced spinning sensations, or found yourself feeling off-balance for no obvious reason, your ears may actually be involved.

Many people are surprised to learn that the inner ear houses part of the body's balance system. Your brain depends on information from your ears, eyes, and body working together to help you stay steady. When one part of that system is disrupted, balance problems can occur.

Sometimes dizziness happens because of inner ear conditions, infections, or changes in the balance system. Other times, it may be related to medications, blood pressure, dehydration, or other health concerns. Because there are many possible causes, persistent dizziness should not be ignored. Understanding the source of the problem is an important step toward finding relief.

Then there is earwax, something almost everyone deals with but few people understand.

Earwax often gets a bad reputation, but it actually serves an important purpose. It helps protect the ear canal by trapping dust and debris while keeping the ear healthy. In many cases, the ear naturally clears wax on its own.

Problems happen when wax becomes impacted or builds up excessively. This can cause muffled hearing, pressure, discomfort, ringing, or even balance concerns. Patients are often surprised to learn that what felt like sudden hearing loss was actually impacted earwax.

One important tip I always share is to avoid putting cotton swabs or other objects inside the ear canal. While it may feel like you are cleaning your ears, these tools often push wax deeper and can irritate the ear canal. In most cases, ears are better left alone unless there is a true problem.

Healthy ears are about more than hearing clearly. Hearing loss, tinnitus, and balance issues can quietly affect confidence, relationships, energy, and even safety. When hearing becomes more difficult, many people start avoiding restaurants, group conversations, or social activities because listening becomes exhausting. Balance issues can increase fall risk, especially as we age. Persistent ringing can interfere with sleep, concentration, and overall well-being.

The encouraging news is that many ear-related concerns can be managed once we understand what is causing them. Whether it is identifying hearing changes, addressing tinnitus, helping determine the cause of dizziness, or evaluating earwax concerns, there are often solutions available.

One of the best things you can do for your ear health is simply pay attention to changes. If you notice ringing, dizziness, muffled hearing, ear fullness, or changes in balance, do not assume it is something you just have to tolerate. Early evaluation often leads to better outcomes.

At our office, we are passionate about helping patients better understand their hearing and ear health so they can continue enjoying the activities and relationships that matter most. If you are experiencing ringing in the ears, balance concerns, hearing changes, or simply want peace of mind, our team are here to help.

To schedule an appointment, visit us online at www.AudioNova.com, or call us today. Healthy ears play an important role in living well, and taking care of them today can make a meaningful difference tomorrow.

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UNSIGHTLY VEINS:

When Spider Veins and Varicose Veins Are More Than a Cosmetic Concern

By The Vein Center of North Florida

Spider veins and varicose veins are often dismissed as minor cosmetic nuisances, the faint blue webs behind a knee, or the bulging cords along a calf. Many people cover them up with pants or makeup and move on. But for a significant number of sufferers, these visible veins are a signal of an underlying vascular problem that deserves medical attention, not just aesthetic correction.

What's Actually Happening Beneath the Skin

Veins carry blood back to the heart using one-way valves that keep blood moving in a single direction. When those valves weaken or fail, blood pools and backs up, causing veins to stretch, twist, and bulge. This condition, known as chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), is the root cause behind most varicose veins and many spider veins. It isn't simply a cosmetic quirk, it's a circulatory malfunction that tends to worsen over time if left untreated.

Warning Signs Beyond Appearance

While some people with visible veins experience no discomfort, many others report symptoms that point to a deeper issue:

- Aching, throbbing, or heaviness in the legs, especially after standing
- Swelling in the ankles or feet by day's end
- Itching or a burning sensation around affected veins
- Nighttime leg cramps or restless legs
- Skin changes, including discoloration, dryness, or hardening near the ankles

Left unaddressed, chronic venous insufficiency can progress to more serious complications, including venous ulcers (slow-healing sores near the ankle), superficial thrombophlebitis (inflammation and clotting in a vein near the skin's surface), and in rarer cases, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a potentially dangerous clot in a deeper vein that can travel to the lungs.

Who's at Risk

Certain factors increase the likelihood of developing problematic veins: family history, prolonged sitting or standing, pregnancy, obesity, aging, and hormonal changes. Women are diagnosed more

Why Early Evaluation Matters

Many people delay seeing a doctor because they assume treatment is purely elective and won't be covered by insurance. In reality, when veins cause pain, swelling, or skin changes, treatment is often considered medically necessary rather than cosmetic and insurance frequently covers evaluation and therapy in these cases. A vascular specialist can perform a simple ultrasound to assess valve function and blood flow, determining whether the issue is superficial or something that warrants closer monitoring.

Treatment Has Come a Long Way

Modern vein treatments are far less invasive than the vein-stripping surgeries of the past. Options now include:

- **Sclerotherapy:** injecting a solution that closes off smaller veins
- **Endovenous laser or radiofrequency ablation:** using heat energy to seal larger problematic veins
- **Compression therapy:** supporting circulation with medical-grade stockings
- **Lifestyle changes:** regular movement, leg elevation, and weight management

Most procedures are outpatient, require minimal downtime, and offer both symptom relief and cosmetic improvement.

The Takeaway

Unsightly veins are sometimes exactly what they appear to be, a cosmetic issue with no deeper cause. But persistent pain, swelling, or skin changes are signs worth discussing with a healthcare provider. Catching venous insufficiency early can prevent complications down the road and restore both comfort and confidence.

At The Vein Center of North Florida, we specialize in identifying exactly what's happening beneath the surface and creating a treatment plan that gets you back to enjoying life, not dreading it. If your legs have been talking to you all season, it might be time to listen.

Schedule a vein evaluation today and find out what relief actually feels like.

The Leaders in Comprehensive Vein Care

Ravi Chandra, MD, FRCS

Ocala's leading vascular surgeon, ***Dr. Ravi Chandra***, is the only local surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery, the American Board of Phlebology, and the American Board of Vascular Medicine as a diplomat in Endo-Vascular medicine. Dr. Ravi Chandra leads a team of medical professionals who take a personalized approach with each patient. The Vein Center of North Florida's staff takes their time to listen to patient concerns and develop a customized treatment plan to address each patient's medical concerns. Our goal is to perform the safest and least invasive procedure possible and get you back to living life at its fullest!

Patricia D. Hurst, ARNP-BC

In addition to our physician, physician assistants and nurse practitioners, we also have two full-time RVTs (certified vascular techs) to serve you. The Vein Center of North Florida is International Accreditation Commission (IAC) accredited for vascular testing. The IAC develops standards for evaluating quality of care and provides peer review processes. Maintaining IAC accreditation is our way of pursuing the highest level of excellence in patient care.

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Invest in Yourself: The Power of Body Treatments and Advanced Skin Rejuvenation

Self-care is no longer considered a luxury—it's an essential part of maintaining your physical health, emotional well-being, and confidence. Two of the most effective ways to care for yourself from the inside out are regular massage therapy and advanced facial rejuvenation treatments. Together, they help you feel energized, reduce the effects of stress, and support healthy, youthful-looking skin.

Healthy Skin Starts Here: The Benefits of Hydrating and Detoxifying Body Treatments

Body treatments do more than pamper; they support skin health, relaxation, and overall wellness. Combining hydration lotion applications with specialized wraps and exfoliation creates a restorative experience that leaves the body refreshed and revitalized. Hydrating lotions help replenish moisture, strengthen the skin barrier, soften rough areas, and improve elasticity, making skin feel smoother and look healthier.

Benefits Include

- Hydration lotion applications lock in moisture, reduce dryness, and promote a supple, radiant appearance.
- Castor oil wraps may encourage relaxation, nourish the skin, support circulation, and are commonly used to promote comfort and a sense of detoxification.
- Mud wraps provide mineral-rich nourishment, cleanse impurities from the skin, and improve softness and texture.

When paired with massage and proper hydration, these treatments can create a soothing self-care ritual that benefits both body and mind. While some claimed detox effects have limited scientific evidence, many people enjoy improvements in skin texture, relaxation, and overall comfort. Choosing high-quality products and receiving treatments from trained prof3essionals helps maximize results while keeping the experience safe, enjoyable, and tailored to individual skincare needs for lasting wellness, confidence, every single day naturally and beautifully.

The Ultimate Self-Care Combination

Body treatments nurtures your body. Advanced skincare rejuvenates your appearance. Together, they create a complete wellness experience that helps you feel relaxed, energized, and confident both inside and out. When you make self-care a regular part of your lifestyle, you're investing in your long-term health, your confidence, and the first impression you make every day. Looking your best begins with feeling your best—and both are well within reach.

Healthy, Youthful Skin Starts with Advanced Facial Treatments

Your face is often the first thing people notice. Healthy, vibrant skin not only reflects good skincare habits but also helps create a positive and confident first impression. Modern aesthetic treatments make it possible to improve skin quality naturally by stimulating your body's own regenerative processes.

Benefits of Professional Facial Treatments

- Deeply cleanses and hydrates the skin
- Improves overall skin tone and texture
- Reduces the appearance of fine lines
- Softens wrinkles over time
- Minimizes enlarged pores
- Brightens dull or tired-looking skin
- Stimulates healthy collagen production
- Improves elasticity and firmness
- Supports healthier aging
- Leaves skin glowing and refreshed

One of today's most advanced treatments combines radiofrequency microneedling, which creates controlled microchannels in the skin while delivering gentle heat below the surface. This process stimulates collagen and elastin production—the building blocks responsible for firm, youthful skin. Over time, the skin becomes smoother, tighter, and more resilient.

Medical-grade hydrating treatments such as the AquaFirm facial deeply cleanse, exfoliate, and infuse the skin with nourishing serums that replenish moisture while improving overall skin health. These treatments help restore radiance, leaving skin refreshed, hydrated, and visibly brighter immediately after treatment.

Plant-based stem cell technology has also become an exciting addition to modern skincare. These botanical ingredients are rich in antioxidants and bioactive compounds that help protect the skin from environmental damage while supporting its natural repair processes.

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By Sabrina Ciceri

Sabrina Ciceri is a dynamic leader in health and wellness, recognized for her holistic approach to medicine and her dedication to empowering others through preventative health care. She is the founder of Immunity Health, a wellness company offering advanced treatments including IV therapy, functional medicine, bio-identical hormone therapy, cryotherapy, hyperbaric and red light therapy, and microneedling with plant-based stem cells. Each service is designed to strengthen the immune system and help clients look and feel their best from the inside out.

Over the past 21 years, Sabrina has extensively studied and researched the preventative side of medicine, collaborating with leading experts at Hippocrates Wellness Center, a world-renowned holistic health institute in West Palm Beach. There, she conducted in-depth inter-views with health professionals worldwide and served as a plant-based health educator, helping others achieve optimal well-being through natural, sustainable methods.

In addition to her work in healthcare, Sabrina has made significant contributions to health education and publishing. In 2008, she helped launch *Healthy Living Magazine*, which was named "Best Overall Magazine" for nine consecutive years by the Florida Magazine Association. She also served as publisher of *Hippocrates Wellness Center's Healing Our World* magazine and as a board member for several respected organizations, including the American Cancer Society, LifeStream Behavioral Center, and the Central Florida Boys and Girls Club.

Beyond her professional achievements, Sabrina and her husband, Joe, are deeply committed to family and community. Together, they have fostered and adopted multiple children, earning the honor of 2014 Foster Parents of the Year by Kids Central Inc. The couple also co-own a successful nationwide electrical contracting business, founded in 2008, which now operates in more than 23 states.

Her lifelong dedication to health, service, and leadership continues to inspire others, and she is honored to contribute her experience and passion as a member of the AdventHealth Waterman Board.

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BREAKTHROUGH IN NEUROPATHY TREATMENT:

HOW SUMMUS LASER THERAPY OFFERS HOPE FOR NERVE PAIN SUFFERERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Clinical Evidence and Patient Outcomes
Numerous clinical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Summus Laser therapy in treating neuropathy. Patients report significant improvements

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

Treatment Process and Expectations
A typical Summus Laser treatment protocol involves:

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

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

Advantages Over Traditional Neuropathy Treatments
The Summus Laser offers several distinct advantages:

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

Who Can Benefit?
Summus Laser therapy is particularly beneficial for patients with:

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

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

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

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

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

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Understanding Basal Cell Carcinoma: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By David Kosiorek, PA-C

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

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

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

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

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (SCC)

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

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

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

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

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

Expert Dermatology Care for Your Skin
At Lumen Dermatology, we bring over 50 years combined experience in skin health. Our team specializes in diagnosing, treating, and preventing skin cancer. With a patient-centered approach, we provide personalized care to help you achieve and maintain healthy skin for life.

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PREVENTING FALLS IN OLDER ADULTS SAVES LIVES

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

According to the CDC, falls are the leading cause of injury for adults ages 65 and older. In Florida, 24.4% of older adults fell per its latest 2021 data, with the number of older adults in Florida who fell at 1,028,468. Across the U.S. over 14 million or 1 in 4 adults report falling every year and the adjusted death rate across the U.S. is rising. Each year millions of people aged 65 or older fall, but most do not tell their doctor. Here are more statistics:

- 3 million older adults are treated in emergency rooms for falls each year.
- Over 800 million are hospitalized due to a fall that caused head injuries and/or hip fractures.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.
- Each year approximately $50 billion is spent on medical costs for falls that are non-fatal and $754 million is spent on fatal falls.

According to the National Council on Aging, one-fourth of Americans aged 65+ falls each year and falls are the leading cause of non-fatal emergency room visits and hospital admissions among older adults. Plus, statistics reveal that one fall usually leads to another in the future among this age group.

Preventing falls in the home helps curb hospital stays and emergency room visits. Falls at any age take away what matters most, our quality of life and independence. This is especially true for older age groups. Taking extra care when walking and taking precautions goes a long way in maintaining better health as you age.

Tips to help prevent falls:

- Increase strength and balance through walking, swimming or other types of exercise such as yoga or tai chi.
- Get rid of trip hazards in your home such as clutter and extension cords in walkways.
- Removing rugs that slip or that are worn and curled up around the edges.
- Add grab bars in bathrooms and at outside doors of the house.
- Install handrails and better lighting where needed inside your home.

There are currently over 40 million people in the U.S. aged 65+ and this number is anticipated to double by 2050. As a result, demand for durable medical equipment (DME) is in higher demand for this segment of the population due to normal aging ailments, falls and other illnesses.

Whether in short-term or long-term care, and especially with post-surgery care at home, DME home medical equipment and supplies play an assistive role in faster patient recovery. Luckily, there are many options for consumers of home medical supplies and equipment ranging from personal aids for daily living, mobility aids such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, to monitoring equipment such as oxygen and diabetic supplies to hospital beds.

Accent Medical, a durable medical equipment company and affiliate of Hospice of Marion County, is a not-for-profit organization that offers quality care and products to anyone in Marion County.

Clients can pick up or if home delivery is required, that too can be arranged. Accent Medical technicians will hand-assemble in the home, provide education on safe and easy ways to operate the equipment, making sure clients understand "how to" instructions before leaving their home.

Additionally, if purchasing equipment is not in your budget or required for long-term use, an option to rent is available as well. Accent Medical will provide a free price estimate and recommend only the items that are right for the customer. To learn more about Accent Medical, call (352) 622-7260 or visit: www.accentmedical.org

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Breaking Through the Pain:

INNOVATIVE SHOCKWAVE THERAPY TRANSFORMS ARTHRITIS TREATMENT

By Gene Turner, MD, FAARFM

Mid-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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CYCLOSPORIASIS OUTBREAK:

Recognizing the Symptoms and Knowing When to Seek Care

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by a microscopic parasite called ***Cyclospora cayetanensis***. It's most often linked to eating contaminated fresh produce, such as imported herbs, leafy greens, or berries, and cases tend to spike during the warmer months. While it isn't as widely known as other foodborne illnesses, cyclosporiasis can cause weeks of uncomfortable symptoms if left untreated. Here's what to watch for and what to do if you think you've been infected.

What Is Cyclosporiasis?
The parasite is passed through contaminated food or water and infects the small intestine. Unlike many foodborne illnesses that resolve within a few days, cyclosporiasis symptoms can drag on for weeks or even months without proper treatment. It's also known for causing symptoms that come and go in cycles, which can make it tricky to identify without a proper evaluation.

Common Symptoms
Symptoms typically appear about a week after exposure, though this can vary from a few days to two weeks. The most frequently reported signs include:

- Watery diarrhea, often frequent and sometimes explosive
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- Stomach cramps or bloating
- Nausea, sometimes with vomiting
- Fatigue and general malaise
- Low-grade fever
- Muscle aches

One hallmark of cyclosporiasis is that symptoms can seem to improve, then return just as you start feeling better. This relapsing pattern is a key clue for providers trying to distinguish it from other stomach bugs. Left untreated, the illness can last anywhere from a few weeks to more than a month, and fatigue or digestive issues may linger even after the parasite is gone.

Who's Most at Risk
Anyone can contract cyclosporiasis, but people with weakened immune systems, including those undergoing chemotherapy, living with HIV/AIDS, or taking immunosuppressive medications, are more likely to

experience severe or prolonged symptoms. Travelers to regions with limited access to clean water and sanitation also face higher exposure risk, as do people who eat imported fresh produce that hasn't been thoroughly washed.

What to Do If You Think You're Infected
If you're experiencing persistent watery diarrhea lasting more than a couple of days, especially alongside fatigue, cramping, or unexplained weight loss, it's time to get checked out. Here's what we recommend:

1. Stay hydrated. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration quickly, especially in children, older adults, and anyone with underlying health conditions. Water, electrolyte drinks, and broths can help replace lost fluids.

2. Track your symptoms. Note when they started, how often you're having diarrhea, and whether you've traveled recently or eaten any imported produce. This information helps your provider narrow down the cause quickly.

3. Visit a walk-in clinic promptly. Cyclosporiasis is diagnosed through a stool sample test, which specifically looks for the parasite. Because it isn't part of routine stool testing, you'll need to let your provider know you suspect cyclosporiasis so the right test can be ordered.

4. Avoid self-treating with over-the-counter anti-diarrheal medication before seeing a provider, as it can sometimes mask symptoms or complicate diagnosis.

5. Follow the prescribed treatment plan. Cyclosporiasis is typically treated with a course of antibiotics, most commonly trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX). For those with sulfa allergies, alternative treatment options are available, so be sure to mention any allergies during your visit.

Prevention Tips
While it's not always possible to avoid exposure, thoroughly washing fresh produce, staying informed about food recalls, and practicing good hand hygiene can lower your risk.

When to Come In
If you're dealing with diarrhea that won't quit, unexplained fatigue, or stomach issues that keep coming back, don't wait it out. Quick Care Med Walk-in Clinic & Urgent Care offers same-day evaluations and stool testing to help identify the cause of your symptoms and get you started on the right treatment — no appointment necessary. Walk in today, and let our team help you feel like yourself again.

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BEYOND ARTIFICIAL TEARS:
MODERN APPROACHES TO DRY EYE THERAPY

Dry eye disease affects millions of people worldwide, causing symptoms that range from mild irritation to debilitating pain that interferes with daily life. For years, the standard advice for sufferers was simple: use artificial tears and hope for relief. Today, the landscape of dry eye therapy has expanded dramatically, offering patients a range of options tailored to the underlying cause of their condition.

Understanding Dry Eye Disease

Dry eye occurs when the eyes don't produce enough tears, or when the tears produced are of poor quality and evaporate too quickly. This can result from a variety of factors, including aging, hormonal changes, autoimmune conditions, prolonged screen time, contact lens wear, certain medications, and environmental factors like dry or windy climates. Symptoms typically include a gritty or burning sensation, redness, blurred vision, light sensitivity, and paradoxically, excessive watering as the eyes attempt to compensate for the underlying dryness.

Because dry eye has so many potential causes, effective treatment often requires identifying the specific mechanism at play. This is why eye care providers increasingly emphasize a personalized, stepwise approach rather than a one-size-fits-all solution.

Traditional First-Line Treatments

For many patients, relief begins with the basics. Over-the-counter artificial tears, gel drops, and lubricating ointments can provide temporary comfort by supplementing the eye's natural tear film. Warm compresses and eyelid hygiene routines help address meibomian gland dysfunction, a common contributor to dry eye in which the oil-producing glands along the eyelid margin become blocked or inflamed. Omega-3 fatty acid supplements, humidifiers, and simple lifestyle changes, like taking regular breaks from screens, round out the conservative treatment options that many patients try first.

Advanced In-Office Procedures

When basic measures aren't enough, eye care specialists have a growing toolkit of in-office treatments. Punctal plugs, tiny devices inserted into the tear ducts, help retain natural tears on the eye's surface longer. Intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy uses light energy to reduce inflammation and

improve meibomian gland function. Thermal pulsation treatments apply heat and gentle pressure to unclog blocked glands. Prescription anti-inflammatory drops, such as cyclosporine or lifitegrast, target the underlying inflammation that drives chronic dry eye in many patients.

The Emergence of Platelet-Rich Plasma Therapy

One of the more innovative developments in dry eye treatment is the use of Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) eye drops. PRP therapy involves drawing a small sample of the patient's own blood, processing it to concentrate the platelets and growth factors, and formulating the result into customized eye drops. Because these drops are derived from the patient's own biological material, they contain a rich mixture of growth factors, vitamins, and proteins that closely mimic the composition of natural human tears, something artificial tear substitutes simply cannot replicate.

Lake Eye Associates has incorporated Platelet-Rich Plasma eye drops into its dry eye treatment offerings, providing patients with a biologically based option designed to support corneal healing and reduce ocular surface inflammation. This approach is often considered for patients with more severe or treatment-resistant dry eye, including those with associated corneal surface damage, who haven't found adequate relief through conventional therapies. Because PRP drops are prepared from the patient's own blood, they also carry a lower risk of allergic reaction or rejection compared to some other specialty formulations.

Finding the Right Path Forward

Dry eye disease can be frustrating to manage, particularly when standard treatments fall short. The good news is that patients today have more options than ever before, from simple lubricating drops to advanced regenerative therapies like PRP eye drops. Practices such as Lake Eye Associates reflect a broader shift in the field toward individualized care, where treatment plans are built around a thorough evaluation of each patient's specific type and severity of dry eye.

If you're struggling with persistent dry eye symptoms that haven't responded to over-the-counter remedies, it may be worth scheduling a comprehensive evaluation with an eye care provider. Advances in diagnostic tools now allow specialists to pinpoint the underlying cause of dry eye more precisely, which in turn makes it possible to recommend targeted therapies, whether that means a simple change in eye drop formulation or an advanced treatment like Platelet-Rich Plasma therapy. With the right combination of treatments, most patients can find meaningful, lasting relief.

You don't have to keep living with the discomfort, irritation, and frustration of chronic dry eye. Every day spent relying on temporary fixes is another day you could be spending in real comfort. Lake Eye Associates offers comprehensive dry eye evaluations to help determine which treatment path, including advanced options like PRP eye drops, is right for you. Call Lake Eye Associates today to schedule your consultation and take the first step toward clearer, more comfortable vision.

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Why Learning Pilates Might Be the Smartest Thing You Do for Your Brain

The Brain Loves a Challenge
Dementia now affects tens of millions of people globally, and the number climbs every year. But there's encouraging news buried in longevity research: people who take up demanding, multi-skill pursuits later in life tend to hold onto their cognitive sharpness far better than those who don't.

Studies on aging populations have found that people engaged in mentally challenging activities, especially ones that involve learning a new physical skill, show meaningfully lower rates of cognitive decline over time. Other research points to a related mechanism: exercises that train motor planning and body awareness appear to slow the thinning of brain tissue that normally comes with age.

The takeaway is simple. Staying mentally engaged protects the brain. Staying physically engaged *while* learning protects it even more.

Why Pilates Is Different From Ordinary Learning
Most learning is passive, you read, you listen, you watch. Pilates asks for something else entirely. It's embodied learning: your body isn't just the tool, it's the subject being studied. You're not memorizing facts; you're refining breath, alignment, and movement in real time, which forces your brain to process visual, auditory, and physical feedback all at once.

That kind of multi-sensory engagement lights up brain regions tied to coordination, memory, and executive function. Research on sensory-rich motor learning has linked this style of practice to real neurological payoffs: new neural connections, greater volume in brain areas that govern movement, and better regulation of stress and emotion.

Learning to move with precision doesn't just build stronger muscles, it may be quietly building a more resilient brain.

The Case for "Physical Literacy" as You Age
Physical literacy — moving with skill, confidence, and awareness across different activities, is usually discussed in the context of childhood development. But it may matter even more for older adults, since balance, coordination, and adaptability often determine whether someone stays independent or becomes fragile.

Going deep into a discipline like Pilates, rather than dabbling casually, builds this literacy in a way that surface-level participation doesn't. Studying joint mechanics, breathing patterns, and movement efficiency at a detailed level tends to produce real, functional payoffs:

- Sharper body awareness and balance
- Better postural stamina
- Fewer falls and overuse injuries
- Improved circulation and respiratory capacity

None of this is cosmetic. It's the kind of function that keeps someone active and self-sufficient well into their later decades.

Rediscovering Purpose Through Movement
Meaningful learning in midlife has also been tied to greater life satisfaction and a stronger sense of identity. Purpose, in this framing, isn't something you stumble on, it's something you build through consistent action.

People who commit to deeply studying Pilates often describe a kind of turning point. Instead of viewing their body as something in decline, they start to see it as something capable of adapting and even healing. That mental shift, from managing decay to actively discovering capability, can be powerful.

It compounds when people start sharing what they've learned, even informally, with friends or small groups. Teaching activates reward-related brain chemistry in a way that simply absorbing information doesn't, turning learners into mentors and, often, community anchors.

A Practical Payoff: Career Flexibility
For people who take their Pilates education further, toward formal instructor certification, the benefits extend beyond personal health. The broader fitness instruction field is projected to keep growing faster than the average occupation over the next decade, and mind-body disciplines like Pilates are among the fastest-growing niches within it, partly because healthcare providers are increasingly folding preventative movement work into orthopedic, neurological, and women's health care.

Certified instructors find work in a wide range of settings:

- Private studios and wellness centers
- Physical therapy and rehab clinics
- Corporate wellness programs
- Travel and retreat programs
- Online and virtual instruction

Whether it becomes a full career, a side pursuit, or a semi-retirement path, this kind of certification offers an unusual combination: purpose, flexibility, and income aligned with personal values.

The Bigger Picture
In a culture obsessed with shortcuts, real depth is rare and it's powerful. Pilates asks practitioners to pay close attention to structure, breath, sensation, and self. That kind of sustained attention tends to be healing in ways that quick fixes never are.

For anyone in midlife looking for more than maintenance, looking for purpose, contribution, and genuine vitality, going back to serious learning may be one of the smartest health investments available.

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Developing Social Communication in Children

Innovative Therapies Group

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Make sure you talk about what you're doing (model words), model actions and assist them with hand over hand assistance if necessary! ("Clap hands, stomp feet, arms up", "touch your eyes/nose/toes" and "Walk, run, jump, hop")
- Work on opposites (up/down, stop/go, loud/soft, high/low)
- Make instructions harder if the children are older (have them follow two "clap your hands then stomp your feet" or "touch your nose then touch your toes")
- Take turns being the leader and being "Simon". Encourage your child to tell you what to do!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Innovative Therapies Group, Inc.
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Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

As we turn through the pages of Scripture, we find that the thoughts and writings of the Psalmist David bring comfort and hope to those in pain.

David understood painful situations for he faced many of them in his own life. He too, buried many loved ones and faced enormous family problems. How did he get through these challenges? He turned to God for help.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church Naples. For more information, visit www.venturenaples.com.

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