

TAMPA BAY'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

September 2026

Tampa Bay Edition - Monthly

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FREE

BETTER TOGETHER:

How Advanced Wound & Lymphatics Institute and Aetherus Wound & Lymphatics Are Changing the Approach to Wound Healing



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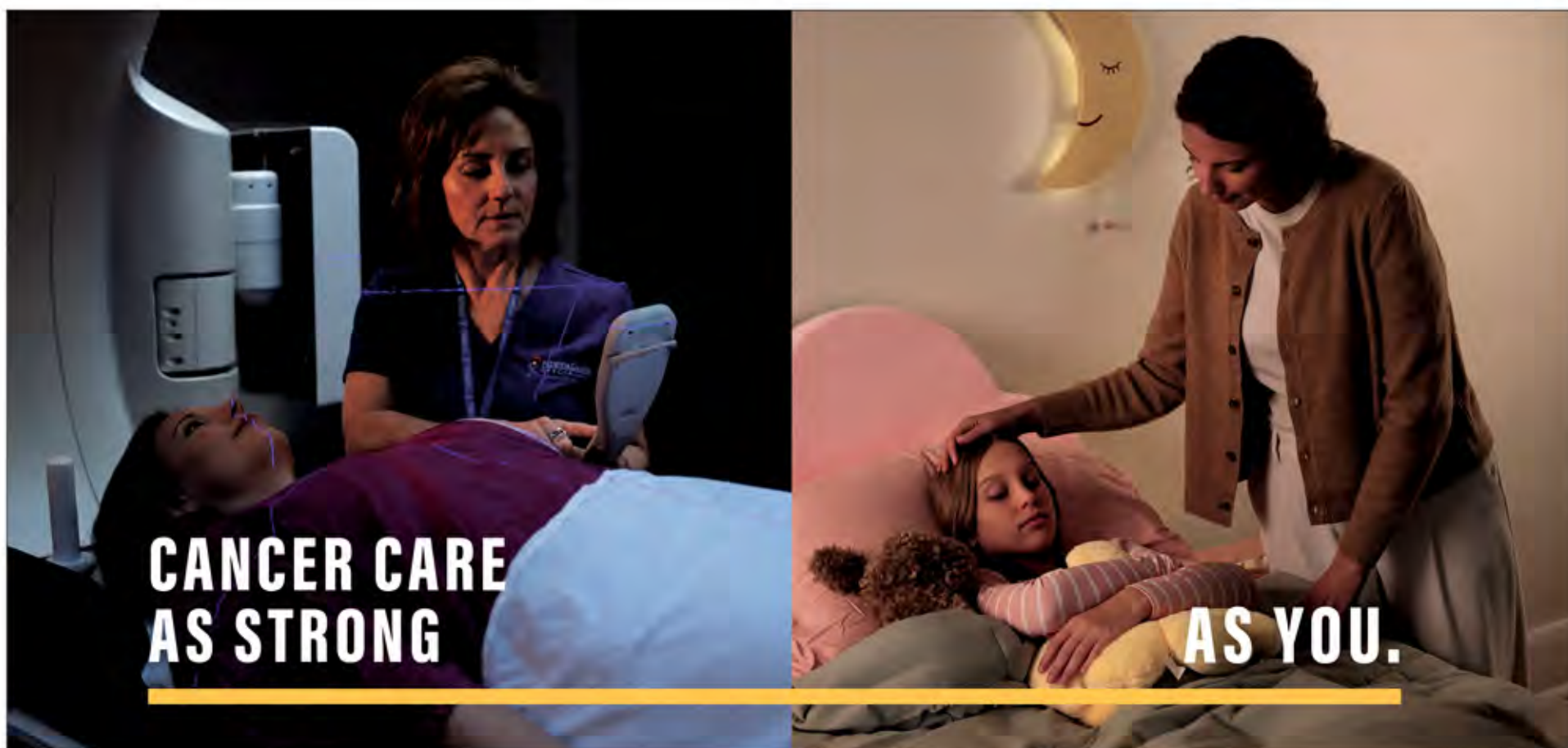


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*Comparison based on a study published by the Oxford Academic in June 2023 stating that the average primary care exam was approximately 21 minutes. Times vary based on services performed.

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Understanding Joint Injuries and Abnormalities: WHY EARLY IMAGING MATTERS

Joint pain is one of the most common reasons people seek medical care, and for good reason. The back and knees bear the brunt of daily wear, athletic activity, and the natural aging process, making them especially prone to injury and degeneration. At Encore Imaging, we see firsthand how timely, accurate diagnostic imaging can make the difference between a quick recovery and a prolonged struggle with chronic pain. Understanding the most common joint conditions and how imaging helps identify them, can empower patients to seek care sooner and make informed treatment decisions.

THE BACK:

A Complex Structure Under Constant Stress

The spine is a remarkable system of vertebrae, discs, nerves, and connective tissue that supports nearly every movement we make. Unfortunately, this complexity also makes it vulnerable to a wide range of problems. Herniated or bulging discs occur when the soft cushioning between vertebrae shifts or ruptures, often pressing on nearby nerves and causing pain that radiates into the legs. Degenerative disc disease, a natural consequence of aging, gradually wears down these discs, reducing flexibility and increasing discomfort. Spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal canal, can compress the spinal cord or nerve roots, leading to numbness, weakness, or pain during standing or walking.

Compression fractures, often linked to osteoporosis, and spondylolisthesis, where one vertebra slips forward over another, are additional conditions that frequently go undiagnosed without proper imaging. Because back pain can stem from so many different sources, guesswork is rarely sufficient. Advanced imaging is often essential to pinpoint the exact cause.

THE KNEE:

A Hinge Under Heavy Load

The knee joint absorbs enormous force with every step, jump, and pivot, which explains why it's among the most frequently injured joints in the body. Ligament injuries, particularly to the anterior



cruciate ligament (ACL) and medial collateral ligament (MCL), are common among athletes and active individuals, often resulting from sudden twists or direct impacts. Meniscus tears, involving the cartilage that cushions the knee, can occur from acute trauma or gradual degeneration over time.

Osteoarthritis remains one of the leading causes of chronic knee pain, particularly among older adults, as cartilage breaks down and bones begin to rub against one another. Patellar tracking disorders, tendonitis, and bursitis round out the list of conditions that can significantly limit mobility and quality of life if left untreated.

Why Imaging Is the Key to Accurate Diagnosis

Physical exams and patient-reported symptoms provide valuable starting points, but they rarely tell the whole story. X-rays remain excellent for identifying fractures, bone spurs, and joint space narrowing associated with arthritis. MRI scans offer a more detailed view of soft tissues, making them indispensable for diagnosing ligament tears, disc herniations, and cartilage damage.

At Encore Imaging, our state-of-the-art equipment and experienced radiologists work closely with referring physicians to ensure every scan delivers the clearest possible picture. Accurate imaging doesn't just confirm a diagnosis, it shapes the entire treatment plan, whether that means physical therapy, medication, minimally invasive procedures, or surgery.

Don't Wait to Get Answers

Joint pain that persists for more than a few weeks, worsens with activity, or is accompanied by swelling, numbness, or instability warrants professional evaluation. Early imaging can catch problems before they progress, often opening the door to less invasive and more effective treatment options.

If you're experiencing back or knee pain, don't leave your diagnosis to guesswork. Contact Encore Imaging today to schedule a scan and take the first step toward understanding and resolving the source of your discomfort.

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PANCREATIC CANCER

Pancreatic cancer can be difficult to detect because symptoms are often vague and may not appear until the disease has progressed. Understanding the signs, symptoms and risk factors can help individuals recognize when it may be time to speak with a healthcare provider.

Understanding the Pancreas

The pancreas is a gland located deep within the abdomen that helps regulate blood sugar and aids digestion. Pancreatic cancer develops when abnormal cells in the pancreas grow out of control and form a tumor. Because the pancreas is not easily examined during routine medical visits, diagnosis often requires imaging tests such as CT scans, MRI scans or ultrasounds.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of pancreatic cancer can vary and may resemble those of other conditions. Potential signs include:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- Changes in stool color or dark urine
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- Nausea or digestive changes
- Fatigue
- Pain in the upper abdomen or back

While most back pain is caused by muscle strain or injury, persistent pain in the mid-back can occasionally be associated with pancreatic cancer. Because the pancreas sits near major nerves, a tumor may cause discomfort that radiates to the back. Back pain that persists or occurs alongside other symptoms should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

Know Your Risk Factors

Several factors may increase the risk of pancreatic cancer, including:

- Age over 60
- Family history of pancreatic cancer
- Inherited genetic mutations
- Smoking
- Long-standing diabetes
- Chronic pancreatitis
- Obesity



About 10% of pancreatic cancers are believed to be hereditary. Individuals with a close family member who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer should talk with their physician about whether genetic counseling or testing may be appropriate.

Advances in Treatment

Treatment options may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapies and clinical trials. Ongoing research continues to improve understanding of pancreatic cancer and expand treatment options, offering patients access to more personalized approaches to care. According to the American Cancer Society, patients diagnosed when the cancer is still localized to the pancreas have a 44% five-year relative survival rate, highlighting the importance of timely evaluation and treatment.

When to Talk to Your Doctor

While these symptoms can be caused by many conditions, it is important to speak with your doctor if you experience persistent or unexplained changes in your health, including ongoing abdominal or back pain, jaundice, unexplained weight loss or digestive changes.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute offers personalized treatment plans, access to innovative therapies and expert cancer care close to home.

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HEARING & WHOLE-BODY HEALTH

THE SURPRISING CONNECTION BETWEEN HEARING, HEART HEALTH, DIABETES, AND OVERALL WELLNESS

When most people think about hearing, they think about their ears. But what many people do not realize is that hearing health is closely connected to overall health. In fact, conditions affecting the heart, circulation, blood sugar, and general wellness can all play an important role in how well we hear.

As an audiologist, one of the things I enjoy helping patients understand is that hearing loss is often not just an “ear problem.” Sometimes it can be one piece of a larger health picture. Paying attention to hearing changes may even encourage conversations about wellness that help people feel better in many areas of life.

One of the strongest connections we see is between hearing and heart health. Your inner ear depends on healthy blood flow to function properly. Tiny sensory cells inside the ear help turn sound into signals your brain can understand, and those cells rely on oxygen and nutrients carried through the bloodstream. Because these structures are so delicate, changes in circulation may affect hearing over time.

This is one reason researchers have found links between cardiovascular health and hearing loss. Conditions such as heart disease, high cholesterol, and poor circulation may increase the risk of hearing changes. While hearing loss does not automatically mean someone has heart concerns, it does remind us that the body often works as one connected system.

Blood pressure can also play a role. High blood pressure may place strain on blood vessels throughout the body, including those that support the inner ear. Some people with uncontrolled blood pressure may notice changes in hearing, ringing in the ears, or sensations that seem unusual. In some cases, fluctuations in blood pressure can even contribute to dizziness or balance concerns.

Diabetes is another important area where hearing health and overall wellness intersect. Research has shown that adults with diabetes may be more likely



to experience hearing loss compared to those without diabetes. Over time, high blood sugar can affect nerves and blood vessels throughout the body, including those involved in hearing.

For patients managing diabetes, hearing evaluations can become an important part of overall preventive care. Just as routine eye exams help monitor vision changes, checking hearing may help identify subtle shifts before they begin affecting communication and daily life.

Inflammation, sleep, stress, and lifestyle habits may also influence hearing health more than many people realize. Poor sleep, unmanaged stress, smoking, and lack of physical activity can affect circulation and wellness throughout the body. While there is no perfect formula for preventing hearing loss, taking care of your overall health may also help support healthier hearing.

One thing I often tell patients is that hearing loss does not only affect how loudly we hear. It can also influence energy, focus, relationships, and emotional well-being. Many people with untreated hearing loss describe feeling tired at the end of the day because listening becomes harder work. Others withdraw from restaurants, social gatherings, or family conversations because hearing feels frustrating or overwhelming.

When hearing becomes difficult, the effects can quietly ripple into other areas of life. Staying socially connected, active, and engaged is an important part of healthy aging, and hearing plays a meaningful role in helping us stay connected to the people and moments we care about most.

The encouraging news is that small, healthy habits can support wellness throughout the body, including hearing health. Managing blood pressure, controlling diabetes, staying physically active, prioritizing sleep, protecting hearing from loud noise, and keeping up with routine medical care all contribute to a healthier future.

One of the simplest but most important things you can do is pay attention to changes. If conversations seem harder to follow, family members sound muffled, ringing in the ears becomes more noticeable, or listening simply feels more exhausting than it used to, it may be time for a hearing evaluation.

At our office, we believe hearing health is an important part of whole-body wellness. Whether you have concerns about hearing changes, manage conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure, or simply want a baseline evaluation, 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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BETTER TOGETHER:

HOW ADVANCED WOUND & LYMPHATICS INSTITUTE AND AETHERUS WOUND & LYMPHATICS ARE CHANGING THE APPROACH TO WOUND HEALING

Treating More Than the Wound

Chronic wounds are rarely limited to the skin. In patients with chronic venous insufficiency, edema, or lymphedema, the visible wound may be only one part of a larger problem.

That is why the partnership between Advanced Wound & Lymphatics Institute and Aetherus Wound & Lymphatics combines advanced wound care with specialized lymphedema therapy. The goal is to address both the wound and the edema or lymphatic dysfunction that may be delaying healing, reducing complications, restoring function, and helping prevent recurrence.

The Missing Link in Many Chronic Wounds: Edema

Significant lower-extremity swelling can be a major barrier to healing. Persistent edema increases tissue pressure and may contribute to inflammation, leakage, skin breakdown, impaired mobility, and poor tissue health. The International Lymphoedema Framework emphasizes a joined-up approach for patients with both chronic edema and wounds. (Lympho.org)

For appropriate patients, edema control is therefore an important part of wound management.

How Lymphedema Therapy Supports Wound Healing

Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) may include compression, skin care, therapeutic exercise, patient education, fibrosis management, and other lymphatic interventions. For patients with wounds, compression and edema control can be particularly important when clinically appropriate and after vascular and medical considerations have been addressed.

The World Health Organization recognizes compression as an important component of wound and lymphedema management, including chronic venous leg-ulcer care. (World Health Organization) The 2025 SCAI Clinical Practice Guidelines also found that compression was associated with a greater likelihood of venous-ulcer healing and a shorter time to healing compared with no compression. (PubMed Central (PMC))

Controlling edema can reduce excess tissue fluid, improve calf-muscle-pump function, decrease leakage and congestion, support healthier skin, and help wound treatments work more effectively.

Breaking the Wound-Edema Cycle

Many patients become trapped in a cycle:

Swelling → inflammation → skin changes → drainage or wound formation → decreased mobility → worsening swelling → delayed healing.

Treating only the wound may leave this cycle intact. The combined approach of Advanced Wound & Lymphatics Institute and Aetherus Wound & Lymphatics addresses both sides.

The wound-care component evaluates the wound bed, drainage, tissue quality, surrounding skin, infection risk, dressings, debridement when indicated, and advanced interventions.

The lymphedema component addresses edema, fibrosis, skin integrity, compression, mobility, education, and long-term management.

Instead of asking only, "What should we put on this wound?" the team also asks, "Why isn't this wound healing?"

Two Specialties Working Toward One Goal

This partnership brings wound-care and lymphedema expertise together around the patient. The clinical team can evaluate:

- The wound and surrounding tissue
- Edema, lymphatic dysfunction, and venous disease
- Vascular considerations, fibrosis, and chronic skin changes
- Compression needs and calf-muscle-pump function
- Dressings and advanced wound treatments
- Long-term compression garments
- Patient and caregiver education
- Strategies to reduce recurrence

This multidisciplinary philosophy reflects the International Lymphoedema Framework's emphasis on collaboration and patient-centered care. (Lympho.org)

Healing the Wound Is Only Part of the Goal

Wound closure is an important milestone, but uncontrolled edema may continue to promote skin breakdown. Long-term management is therefore central to this partnership.

After the limb has been appropriately decongested and the wound is healing or closed, patients may be evaluated for medical-grade compression garments, custom flat-knit garments, adjustable wraps, nighttime compression, or other options. Patients and caregivers can also receive guidance on donning and doffing, skin inspection, compression management, exercise, and recognizing early signs of recurrent swelling or breakdown.

The objective is not simply:
"Close the wound."

It is:

Heal the wound. Control the edema. Protect the limb. Restore independence. Reduce the risk of recurrence.

A Different Model for Chronic Wound Care

The partnership between Advanced Wound & Lymphatics Institute and Aetherus Wound & Lymphatics reflects a simple but powerful idea:

You cannot always successfully treat a chronic wound without treating the environment surrounding it.

When chronic edema or lymphedema is part of that environment, specialized edema management may be essential. Research and international guidance increasingly recognize the connection between chronic edema and wounds and the value of integrated care. (Lympho.org)

By combining specialized wound care with comprehensive lymphedema management, Advanced Wound & Lymphatics Institute and Aetherus Wound & Lymphatics are helping patients move from an open, swollen limb toward wound closure, edema control, appropriate compression, greater independence, and long-term protection.

Our goal isn't simply to cover the wound. It is to identify and treat what is keeping it from healing—and help keep it healed.



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THE ART OF AGING GRACEFULLY: WHY SKIN CHECKS MATTER AT ART OF DERMATOLOGY

Our skin tells the story of our lives—every laugh line, sun-kissed moment, and year of experience. As we age, maintaining skin health becomes increasingly important, not just for aesthetics but for overall wellbeing. At Art of Dermatology, we believe that healthy aging skin begins with proactive care and regular professional assessment.

Understanding Skin's Aging Process

Skin ages through two distinct processes: intrinsic aging (determined by genetics) and extrinsic aging (influenced by environmental factors). While we cannot control our genetic timeline, we can significantly impact how external factors affect our skin.

With age, our skin naturally produces less collagen and elastin, leading to thinner, less resilient skin. Cell turnover slows, and moisture retention diminishes. Meanwhile, years of sun exposure, pollution, and lifestyle choices accelerate these changes, potentially leading to premature aging and increased risk of skin conditions, including cancer.

The Crucial Role of Regular Skin Checks

Regular dermatological examinations serve as the cornerstone of proactive skin health management. These checks provide much more than peace of mind—they can be lifesaving. Consider these compelling reasons to schedule regular visits to Art of Dermatology:

- **Early Detection of Skin Cancer:** With over one million Americans diagnosed with skin cancer annually, early detection dramatically improves treatment outcomes. Professional dermatologists can identify suspicious changes that might go unnoticed during self-examinations.
- **Personalized Aging Management:** Everyone's skin ages differently. Regular assessments allow dermatologists to craft personalized treatment plans that address your skin's unique needs, from addressing sun damage to managing age-related conditions like rosacea or seborrheic keratosis.
- **Tracking Changing Moles and Spots:** What appears as a harmless freckle today could develop concerning characteristics over time. Consistent monitoring creates a valuable baseline for detecting meaningful changes.



Expert Guidance on Products and Treatments:

The skincare industry overwhelms consumers with countless anti-aging products. Your dermatologist can recommend evidence-based solutions truly appropriate for your skin type and concerns.

Healthy Habits for Aging Skin

Between professional visits to Art of Dermatology, maintaining these daily habits supports optimal skin health:

- **Sun Protection:** Apply broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen daily, regardless of weather conditions. Wear protective clothing and seek shade when possible.
- **Hydration:** Both internal hydration (drinking water) and external moisturizing help maintain skin's barrier function and elasticity.
- **Gentle Cleansing:** As skin becomes more delicate with age, harsh products can cause irritation. Opt for gentle, pH-balanced cleansers.
- **Antioxidant-Rich Diet:** Consuming foods high in vitamins C, E, and omega-3 fatty acids supports skin's natural repair processes.
- **Quality Sleep:** During deep sleep, skin undergoes essential regeneration and repair processes critical for healthy aging.

The Art of Dermatology Difference

At Art of Dermatology, we combine medical expertise with aesthetic sensibility. Our comprehensive skin examinations include advanced technologies

for detecting subtle changes invisible to the naked eye. Our dermatologists take time to understand your concerns, family history, and lifestyle factors affecting your skin health.

Rather than simply treating visible problems, we partner with you in preventative care—identifying risk factors and potential issues before they manifest. This approach not only supports graceful aging but potentially prevents serious health complications.

Don't wait for visible problems to appear. Schedule your comprehensive skin check at Art of Dermatology today and take the first step toward lifetime skin health. Remember, healthy aging isn't about fighting time—it's about supporting your skin's natural processes with expert care and attention.

Your skin's journey deserves the art of professional dermatology.



Art of Dermatology is the premier choice for comprehensive Dermatology, Surgical, and Aesthetic services. We are dedicated to offering exceptional care for the diagnosis, treatment, and enhancement of your overall skin health.

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HOW EVEXIAS CHANGES LIVES:

DR. PARVEEN VAHORA BRINGS HORMONE PELLET THERAPY TO MEN AND WOMEN

By Parveen Vahora, M.D.

Board-certified gynecologic surgeon Dr. Parveen Vahora, MD, FACOG, is expanding her Trinity, Florida practice to offer EvexiPEL hormone pellet therapy through EVEXIAS Health Solutions, giving both women and men across Tampa Bay a new option for managing the hormonal shifts that come with aging, menopause, and andropause.

Dr. Vahora has spent more than two decades in women's health, building a reputation for minimally invasive surgery, pelvic pain management, and a patient-first philosophy that puts education ahead of intervention. While her practice has long centered on women's health, hormonal imbalance is not exclusive to one gender, and the addition of EvexiPEL reflects her broader approach of treating the whole person, whoever walks through her door.

What EvexiPEL Offers Patients

EvexiPEL uses bioidentical hormone pellets, small, rice-sized implants placed just beneath the skin in a brief in-office procedure. Once inserted, the pellets release a steady, consistent dose of hormones such as estrogen or testosterone over several months, closely mirroring the body's own natural rhythms. That steady release is the core appeal of pellet therapy: rather than the daily peaks and valleys that can come with pills, creams, patches, or injections, patients get round-the-clock hormonal support from just two to four treatments a year.

For women navigating perimenopause and menopause, that consistency can ease hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, fatigue, brain fog, and a decline in sexual desire. For men experiencing andropause, or age-related low testosterone, the same steady dosing can help restore energy, focus, muscle tone, and libido, without the daily hassle of gels or the fluctuations common with weekly injections. Dosing isn't one-size-fits-all for either group: EVEXIAS providers rely on comprehensive lab testing and a precision dosing algorithm that factors in more than two dozen data points from a patient's bloodwork and health history to calculate a personalized dose.

Why Dr. Vahora Chose EVEXIAS

Dr. Vahora has built her career around listening closely to patients and offering the least disruptive path to the outcome they want. She describes herself as a surgical minimalist, someone who doesn't recommend a procedure unless it's truly necessary, and that



same instinct shapes how she approaches hormone therapy. Pellet therapy fits naturally into a practice already built on individualized, evidence-based care: it requires no daily maintenance, avoids the guesswork of self-administered treatments, and is backed by lab-driven dosing rather than a standard protocol applied to every patient, regardless of gender.

Beyond her clinical work, Dr. Vahora is a national speaker and educator who trains other physicians on menopause care, hereditary cancer screening, and sexual health. Bringing EvexiPEL into her practice extends that same commitment to evidence-based education to a wider range of patients, giving both women and men a therapy grounded in current research rather than trends.

The Bigger Picture

Hormonal decline is often dismissed as simply "part of getting older," whether it shows up as a woman's hot flashes or a man's flagging energy and low drive. Dr. Vahora's approach and the reason EVEXIAS resonates with providers like her, is the belief that these symptoms don't have to be endured quietly by anyone. Balanced hormones can mean sharper focus, more stable energy, better sleep, improved mood, and a renewed sense of intimacy and confidence, regardless of whether the patient is a woman managing menopause or a man managing low testosterone.

By adding hormone pellet therapy to her Trinity practice, Dr. Vahora is giving Tampa Bay men and women alike another tool to reclaim that sense of

vitality, delivered with the same compassionate, thoroughly explained, patient-centered care that has defined her practice for years.

Patients interested in learning whether hormone pellet therapy is right for them can schedule a consultation with Dr. Vahora's practice to discuss lab testing and personalized treatment options.

Take the first step toward improving your health and quality of life by calling Dr. Vahora's office at 727-376-1536 or visiting [ParveenVahoraMD.com](https://www.ParveenVahoraMD.com).

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Our gynecologist's office is small, intimate, and welcoming. Women under our care are treated with the utmost respect, which means we offer personalized care, educating them on conditions, treatment options, and preventive measures. Our focus is on sexual health. We are proud to offer the **MonaLisa Touch®** for patients going through menopause as well as post-menopausal women, breast cancer survivors, and those suffering from pain during intercourse or intense dryness. We also offer genetic testing for breast, ovarian, and colon cancer. From birth control to robotic surgery, we have got you covered.



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REVOLUTIONIZING WELLNESS:

INFINITY MEDICAL INSTITUTE'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ANTI-AGING AND LONGEVITY

In the heart of Tampa, Florida, a beacon of medical innovation is transforming how we approach aging and personal health. Infinity Medical Institute has been at the forefront of regenerative medicine since its establishment in 2009, offering a holistic and personalized approach to wellness that goes far beyond traditional medical treatments.

Founded in Tampa and now bringing its cutting-edge services to The Villages, Infinity Medical Institute represents a paradigm shift in healthcare. The institute's philosophy is simple yet profound: it's not just about adding years to life, but adding life to years. This approach recognizes that aging is not something to be feared, but a process that can be optimized and embraced with the right medical support.

A Comprehensive Suite of Innovative Treatments

What sets Infinity Medical Institute apart is its comprehensive range of advanced therapies designed to address the multifaceted challenges of aging. The clinic offers a diverse array of treatments that target various aspects of health and wellness:

- **Bioidentical Hormone Therapy:** provides a natural approach to hormone balance, addressing common age-related symptoms like fatigue, mood fluctuations, and decreased libido.
- **Testosterone Replacement Therapy:** helps men restore vitality by supporting healthy testosterone levels, enhancing energy, muscle mass, and overall well-being.
- **Sexual Wellness Treatments:** offer targeted therapies to improve intimate health and quality of life.
- **Aesthetic Services:** Including Botox, Derma fillers, laser skin resurfacing, PRP, Body contouring, cellulite reduction.
- **Pulse Wave Therapy:** Improves circulation and activates stem cell regeneration correcting conditions like chronic pain, neuropathy and erectile dysfunction.
- **Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy:** harnesses the body's own growth factors to accelerate healing and tissue repair.

- **Stem Cell Therapy:** represents a groundbreaking regenerative approach to treating injuries and revitalizing aging tissues.
- **Peptide Therapy:** uses specialized treatments to stimulate natural bodily processes, including metabolism and immune function.
- **Weight Loss Programs:** offer comprehensive, sustainable solutions supported by medical expertise.

Patient-Centered Care: Beyond Treatment

Infinity Medical Institute stands out not just for its advanced treatments, but for its commitment to patient care. The clinic offers free consultations, allowing individuals to explore their health options without financial pressure. This approach reflects their belief in transparency and patient empowerment.

Located at 322 Heald Way in The Villages, the clinic operates Monday through Thursday from 8 AM to 4 PM, and Fridays from 8 AM to 1 PM. Each patient receives a customized treatment plan that recognizes their unique health needs and personal wellness goals.

The Science of Regenerative Medicine

The institute's approach is grounded in regenerative medicine – a field that focuses on natural, integrative therapies working in harmony with the body's inherent healing processes. Their experienced medical team is dedicated to delivering evidence-based care that optimizes health and longevity.

A Vision for Transformative Healthcare

Infinity Medical Institute represents more than just a medical clinic; it's a vision of healthcare that sees aging as an opportunity for growth, renewal, and continued vitality. By combining advanced medical technologies with a compassionate, individualized approach, they are redefining what it means to age gracefully and healthily.

For those seeking to take control of their health, optimize their wellness, and embrace a more vibrant future, Infinity Medical Institute in The Villages offers a beacon of hope and innovative medical care.

About Infinity Medical Institute

Pioneers in Integrative Medicine, Infinity Medical Institute is a company dedicated to bench marking health in concert with breakthroughs in education through



science. Understanding where individuals are in their "Life Cycle" as opposed to treating symptoms that are often an expression of a greater challenge they are experiencing with their bodies at the cellular level. A new approach in health and wellness based on recently made available research, allowing us to understand the differences in Biological Age as compared to Chronological Age.

Most of us fail to realize that our personal health is the result of the "aging process" complimented and/or penalized by the manner in which we take care of and/or misuse ourselves. Our consumption patterns combined with normal aging and physical activities directly affect our quality of life.

Our approach to wellness is based on meeting people where they are in their personal life and developing an individualized plan of action in and around nutrition, supplementation, and lifestyle.

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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 bloodstream 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

To find out more, or to schedule your appointment today, please call Hyperbaric Centers of Florida at 813-788-3969.



www.hyperbariccentersofflorida.com

The Power of Compound Interest and Investment Gains: WHY TIME MAY BE YOUR GREATEST INVESTMENT

By Rick Walker, Financial Planner & CPA, and Kimberlee Clark, Financial Planner

When it comes to building wealth, we often focus on how much money we invest, which investments we choose, or what the market is doing. But there is another factor that can be just as important—and it doesn't cost anything: **time**.

Time gives compound interest the opportunity to work its magic.

Compound interest is essentially “earning on your earnings.” When your investment grows, those gains remain invested and have the potential to generate additional growth. Over many years, this can create a snowball effect, where your money has the opportunity to grow at an increasing rate as your account balance becomes larger.

Historically, the S&P 500 has delivered approximately 10%–11% annualized returns over very long periods, including dividends. Of course, the market does not produce that return every year, and past performance does not guarantee future results. The illustration below simply demonstrates the potential impact of compounding over time.

Consider this example: If someone who is 25 invested \$5,000 per year until age 65, and those investments earned an average annual return of 10.5%, they would contribute \$200,000 of their own money over 40 years. The account could grow to approximately \$2.54 million. About \$2.34 million of that amount would come from investment growth.

Time Invested	You Contribute	Approx. Value at 10.5%
15 years	\$75,000	\$165,000
20 years	\$100,000	\$303,000
30 years	\$150,000	\$904,000
40 years	\$200,000	\$2.54 million

That is the power of giving your money time to grow.

The difference isn't simply the amount invested. **It is the amount of time your money has to compound.**

And there is another important lesson: **starting early can matter more than starting big.**



Someone who waited until age 50 to begin the same strategy would contribute \$75,000 over 15 years and could accumulate approximately **\$165,000** assuming the same hypothetical 10.5% return. That's still meaningful growth—but compare it with the potential \$2.54 million accumulated by someone who started 25 years earlier.

This is why we often encourage people not to wait for the “perfect” time to begin investing. You don't necessarily need a large amount of money to get started. What matters is developing the habit of saving and investing consistently and then giving those dollars as much time as possible to work.

Interestingly, compounding can also work against you. Credit card balances and other high-interest debt can compound in the wrong direction, causing what you owe to grow rapidly. Understanding the difference between compounding that builds wealth and compounding that increases debt is an important part of financial planning.

Ultimately, successful investing isn't about finding a magic investment or predicting exactly what the market will do next. It is about creating a thoughtful plan, investing consistently, staying disciplined through market ups and downs, and giving that plan enough time to work.

The greatest advantage many investors have isn't necessarily more money—it's more time.

Whether you're 25, 50, or somewhere in between, it is never too early—or too late—to take a closer look at your financial strategy. The important question

isn't whether you have enough money to start. It is whether you are willing to give the money you do have the opportunity to grow. Here at Naples Wealth Strategies, we believe that thoughtful planning, disciplined investing, and time can make a meaningful difference in your financial future. Our goal is to help you make informed decisions today that can give your money the opportunity to work harder for you tomorrow.

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HEALTHCARE • REGENERATIVE MEDICINE • QUALITY OF LIFE

TOP 50 MEDICAL MYTHS IN AMERICA

What if the Biggest Medical Myth is that you cannot get healthy, must live with pain, and have no choice?

By William J. Cole Jr., DO, FAASCP, FAOBPMR

Before you read another medical advertisement, accept another prescription, schedule another procedure, or surrender to another surgery, I want you to do something radical: **STOP. THINK. AND ASK BETTER QUESTIONS.**

For decades, Americans have been taught that more healthcare automatically means more health. More appointments. More medications. More injections. More procedures. More surgeries. More money. Yet millions remain in pain, lose function, become dependent on medications, and are told that decline is simply part of aging.

I am not asking you to reject medicine. Drugs can save lives. Surgery can be essential. I am asking why repeated drugs and surgeries—especially those that have already failed—are so often presented as the beginning, middle, and end of the conversation. What if the American healthcare system has become far better at managing dependence than restoring independence?

Read every question. One of them may change the way you see your health—and your future.

I. WHAT HAVE WE BEEN TAUGHT TO BELIEVE?

1. Healthcare makes you healthy—and the system always puts your health first?
2. The body cannot regenerate, repair, or heal?
3. Surgical procedures are always performed to eliminate pain?
4. More medications automatically produce better results?
5. Imaging always reveals the true source of the problem?
6. COVID has been eliminated—and so have the long-term problems associated with it?
7. Surgery will eliminate pain?
8. You cannot negotiate the price of medical treatments?
9. The government could never reduce certain drug prices dramatically through decisive action?
10. As you get older, you simply must live with pain?

II. WHO DOES THE CURRENT SYSTEM REALLY SERVE?

11. There are no options beyond traditional, expensive drugs and surgery?

12. The American healthcare system works equally well for all Americans?
13. The government will eventually fix our broken healthcare system for us?
14. If a doctor did not prescribe it, you do not need it?
15. America must have the world's best healthcare because we spend the most money?
16. If you have back pain, it must be a pinched nerve?
17. Patients should not question their doctors?
18. All of your doctors routinely communicate and coordinate your care?
19. Doctors and healthcare systems are financially rewarded primarily for making you healthy?
20. Drugs and surgery work better than your God-given ability to heal?

III. PAIN, PRIVILEGE, AND PERSONAL TRUTH

21. Health-insurance coverage is automatically going to become better?
22. Dr. Cole, you have no idea what it is like to live with constant pain and dysfunction?
23. Dr. Cole, are you really one of only a few physicians with your combination of credentials?
24. Did you ever experience hardship, hunger, homelessness, disability, or being told that you could not succeed?
25. Do peptides work—and are they safe when appropriately selected and medically supervised?

IV. REGENERATIVE MEDICINE: FACT, FEAR, OR FUTURE?

26. All PRP and stem cell treatments are the same?
27. Stem cell treatments are completely illegal in the United States?
28. There are no regenerative treatments or biologic signals beyond stem cells?
29. Neurologic and brain disorders can never be meaningfully improved?
30. Long COVID affecting the body and brain has no effective treatment strategies?
31. Stem cell treatments must always be repeated again and again?
32. Any nurse, chiropractor, physician assistant, or untrained provider should be allowed to perform stem cell procedures?

33. Ozone therapy has no potential role in integrative or regenerative care?

34. After Failed Joint Surgery or Failed Back Surgery Syndrome, the only remaining choice is another surgery?

35. Politicians receive exactly the same healthcare choices and access as everyone else?

V. ACCESS, COST, AND THE CARE AMERICANS DESERVE

36. Insurance currently covers the full cost of regenerative treatments?
37. Insurance will never cover responsible regenerative treatments?
38. Regenerative medicine, peptides, and adjunct treatments must cost more than years of medications, disability, procedures, and repeat surgery?
39. The current system is working for American families, workers, seniors, and veterans to decrease pain and increase function?
40. AI alone will solve the healthcare crisis?
41. You do not need health insurance because a hospital is obligated to treat every problem anyway?
42. Expert, effective, affordable, and legally compliant regenerative treatment options are unavailable in America?
43. No one cares about quality patient care anymore?
44. You can ask 'Dr. Google' to diagnose and treat you—and you will be fine?
45. There is no such thing as SMART medicine: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely?

VI. WHO WILL CHANGE THE FUTURE?

46. There can be no 'Policies Over Politics'?
47. No one has a plan to transform American healthcare?
48. Medicare, Medicaid, and the VA are fully prepared for every future need?
49. Mental healthcare is easily accessible to every American?
50. Women already receive all the individualized healthcare they need and deserve?

NOW—HERE ARE SOME FACTS

America does not lack brilliant physicians, nurses, scientists, hospitals, or lifesaving technology. We lack a system consistently designed to reward prevention, restoration, function, and independence. We routinely pay after people become sicker, but struggle to invest before they lose their health, mobility, jobs, hope, and Quality of Life.

Americans also pay exceptionally high prices for many prescription drugs. So far, Medicare can only Negotiate 10 of 20,000 FDA Drugs in 2026. That's 99.5% subject to sky high overcharging! Policies helped create these prices, and better policies can change them.

Our medication supply is also far more dependent on foreign production than most Americans realize. The FDA reports that approximately 78% of active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturers are located outside the United States. That is not a partisan talking point. It is a national-health, economic, and security vulnerability.

And surgery is not a guarantee. Even technically successful operations can leave patients with persistent pain, weakness, limited function, complications, or the devastating cycle called Failed Back Surgery Syndrome or Failed Joint Surgery Syndrome. When the first operation does not restore the person, why is another operation so often treated as the only serious option?

Americans do not need more failed drugs and surgeries. Americans should demand responsible access to Advanced Regenerative Stem Cell Therapy and Peptides—to help decrease pain, increase function, and provide the Quality of Life we deserve. This is our God-Given Right as Americans!

THIS IS PERSONAL

I have not reached these conclusions from a comfortable distance. I grew up with poverty, hunger, and periods of homelessness. Near the end of medical school, a life-threatening automobile collision changed my body and nearly ended my life. I lost the use of my arms more than once. I know what pain, dysfunction, fear, and being told to accept limitations feel like.

For more than 25 years, I have treated patients with chronic pain, disabling injuries, failed surgeries, brain disorders and complex neurologic disorders, and musculoskeletal damage. I have performed more than 100,000 interventional procedures. That experience taught me a lesson no textbook can fully communicate: a scan is not the patient, a diagnosis code is not a life, and managing symptoms is not the same as restoring function.

My position is not 'never use drugs' or 'never have surgery.' My position is: stop pretending they are always the best, first, only, or final answers. Use the right treatment for the right patient, at the right time, based on a proper diagnosis—and measure success by what matters: less pain, more function, greater independence, and a better Quality of Life.

WHAT IS POSSIBLE NOW?

The Human Body is Amazing! Not some passive machinery. It communicates, adapts, repairs, and regenerates through cells, growth factors, signaling molecules, immune responses, circulation, neuroplasticity, and thousands of coordinated biologic processes. Regenerative medicine seeks to work with those processes—to **Have the Body Heal the Body®**—instead of automatically overpowering symptoms or removing anatomy.

Advanced Regenerative Stem Cell Therapy is Legal in Florida, under defined state-law conditions. When ethically sourced, appropriately selected, precisely placed, and performed by a qualified and experienced physician, it accelerates the body's restorative processes. Peptides—short chains of amino acids that can act as biologic messengers—may also have important roles in carefully selected patients. Some peptide medications are FDA-approved; others remain investigational or are used under specialized medical frameworks. They are not interchangeable, they are not appropriate for everyone, and non-certified Internet products are not a substitute for medical judgment.

The same caution applies to stem cell products: not every product marketed as 'stem cells' is equivalent, and many promoted orthopedic or neurologic uses are not FDA-approved. Americans should not demand hype. They should demand science, transparency, legitimate products, qualified physicians, sterile technique, accurate diagnosis, precise placement, responsible research, ethical regulation—and access.

Imagine a system that compares your history, examination, imaging, laboratory testing, medications, nutrition, hormones, sleep, function, genetics, goals, and response to treatment—not to replace the physician, but to expand what the physician can see. AI should mean Augmented Intelligence: technology amplifying experience, recognizing patterns, measuring outcomes, and helping build a truly individualized plan.

HERE'S THE PLAN

First, stop accepting dependence as the definition of healthcare. Ask whether each treatment is merely managing a symptom or working toward restoration. Ask what happens if it fails. Ask about alternatives before—not after—irreversible surgery.

Second, demand transparency. What exactly is being prescribed, injected, implanted, or removed? What evidence supports it? What are the risks, costs, conflicts, qualifications, and realistic outcomes? Who benefits financially if you remain on the same cycle for years?

Third, demand responsible access to Advanced Regenerative Stem Cell Therapy and Peptides—not reckless access, counterfeit products, Internet injections, or promises of miracles. Demand qualified physicians, enforceable standards, real outcome registries, continuing research, ethical sourcing, honest informed consent, and treatment pathways that can eventually be recognized by insurers, Medicare, Medicaid, and the VA as evidence supports the Transition to Real Health, from Those Who Care.

Finally, demand Policies Over Politics. America should aggressively negotiate all excessively priced drugs. Only 10 negotiated Medicare drug prices are in effect. Against more than 20,000 FDA-approved prescription drug products, that is under 0.05%—meaning over 99.95% lack a Medicare-negotiated price! Strengthen domestic manufacturing, reward prevention and function, reduce unnecessary procedures, and invest in treatments that return people to their lives.

You should NOT have to be wealthy to be healthy.

This is bigger than one physician, one clinic, one therapy, or one political party. This is About America and All Americans' Right to Effective Healthcare! It is about moving from a system that too often manages decline to one that actively pursues Life, Liberty, healing, function, independence, and the Quality of Life that Every American Desires...and Deserves.

It is about "Personalized Stem Cell Therapy Augmented with AI."

THIS is "The Future of Medicine for All Americans" that You Must Demand—AND THE FUTURE IS NOW!



**William J. Cole Jr., DO,
FAASCP, FAOBPMR**
Double Board-Certified
Physician | Interventional PM&R
and Regenerative Medicine

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IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION: This article is educational and expresses the author's perspective. It is not individualized medical advice. Regenerative products and peptides vary in regulatory status, evidence, quality, and risk. Many promoted stem cell uses are not FDA-approved. Consult a qualified, appropriately licensed physician and verify the product, evidence, risks, alternatives, and applicable federal and state requirements before treatment.

EDITORIAL VERIFICATION SOURCES: Florida Statutes §458.3245, Stem Cell Therapy; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program and Negotiated Prices for Initial Price Applicability Year 2026; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA at a Glance and FDA Globalization; FDA Consumer Alert on Regenerative Medicine Products Including Stem Cells and Exosomes; FDA Patient and Consumer Warning About Potential Serious Risks of Harm Following Use of Unapproved Products From Human Cells or Tissues.

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.

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727-771-5053

Hope and Optimism

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

Hope is confidence in God...not wishful thinking. To have hope is to trust in God to meet our needs ...even in the midst of difficult times. When we do go through tough times our confidence in God can get a little rattled, as the Old Testament figure Job experienced. In the midst of his pain and heartache he cried out, *"Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?"* (Job. 17:15)

Ultimately, hope comes from God. The Scriptures say, *"May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13) Hope is an essential element of the Christian's life. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul included hope as one of the top three qualities of a person's life: *"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."* (1 Cor. 13:13)

As followers of Christ, we are called to be dispensers of hope. We should exude a confidence and trust in God that demonstrates that we have hope. Yet I pose the question, "Can a person be filled with hope without being filled with optimism?" According to the encyclopedia, optimism is "to anticipate the best possible outcome." Can we demonstrate hope in God without anticipating the best possible outcomes of the situations we face?

I believe we can. In fact, I think hope is best exemplified when it is demonstrated in the face of negative circumstances. There are many times when hope and optimism go hand in hand. David had both when he faced Goliath. He had confidence in God and he expected the best possible outcomes...Goliath's defeat and an Israelite victory over the Philistines. And yet, there are many examples of people who had hope in God but did not anticipate the best possible outcomes.

Simon Peter is a good example. He and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They had worked so hard and yet still had nothing to show for their labors. And then Jesus tells them to cast out the net one more time. Simon did not expect to catch any fish. He was pessimistic. But, he had confidence in Jesus, so he cast the net. Though the circumstances did not look promising, his hope in God made up for his lack of optimism.

Esther is another good example. She had confidence that God would ultimately provide deliverance for the Jews but as she prepared to go before the King she said, *"...I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"* (Esther 4:16) She demonstrated hope but not necessarily optimism.

The point is this: hope and optimism are not the same thing. You can still be hopeful even if you are not optimistic. You can still be a dispenser of hope even if you think you are going to face hard times ahead because you know that God will meet your needs.

Jesus didn't sound very optimistic when he said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (a rather pessimistic view); but be of good cheer (maintain your hope), I have overcome the world (which is the basis of our hope)."* (John 16:33)

Hope doesn't mean that the best possible situations will always occur, but it does mean that in some way God will bring something good or useful out of the situation. As we look into the future, we may not always be filled with optimism, but we must always be filled with hope...God is still in control!



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