

CENTRAL FLORIDA'S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

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Breast Cancer.

Let's Start With the Good News!

Any cancer diagnosis can be frightening, but breast cancer can be especially unsettling. The good news is that advances in early detection and treatment are changing the outlook for many people with the disease.

About one in eight women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. It is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women, other than skin cancers. Although rare, men can develop breast cancer, too, with nearly 3,000 American men expected to be diagnosed this year.

Breast cancer death rates have declined steadily over the past two decades, driven by improvements in screening and early detection, greater awareness and significant advances in treatment. Today, more than 4.3 million people in the United States are living with a history of breast cancer — a testament to how far diagnosis and treatment have come.

Breast cancer is not one disease. It has many subtypes, each with different characteristics and treatment approaches. Advances in genetic testing, immunotherapy and targeted therapies are transforming how it is diagnosed and treated.

So, what is breast cancer?

Breast cancer starts when healthy cells in the breast change and begin to grow out of control. A buildup of these cells can form a mass of tissue called a lump, growth or tumor. Cancer cells can enter the blood or lymphatic system and spread, or metastasize, to other parts of the body. Breast cancer can develop in one or both breasts and can begin in different areas of the breast.

What are the risk factors, and who is most at risk?

While researchers don't know exactly what causes every case of breast cancer, being born female and getting older are the strongest risk factors. The American Cancer Society estimates that about 13% of women in the U.S. will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime.

Having a first-degree relative — such as a mother, sister or daughter — with breast cancer can nearly double a woman's risk. If you have a family history of breast or other cancers, talk with your doctor about whether genetic counseling or testing may be appropriate.

Genes, lifestyle and environment all influence cancer risk. Some factors, such as obesity and alcohol use, can be modified through healthy lifestyle choices, while others — including age and inherited genetic changes — cannot.

Early detection can be a lifesaver!

Many women with breast cancer have no symptoms, which is why regular screening is important. Screening can detect cancer before symptoms appear, when it is often easier to treat.

Finding cancer before it has spread (metastasized) generally provides more treatment options and better outcomes.

When breast cancer is diagnosed while still localized to the breast, the five-year relative survival rate is 99%, according to the American Cancer Society. About 61% of breast cancers are diagnosed at this stage.

Know your breast cancer screening schedule
Mammograms, which use low-dose X-rays to create images of the breast, are the best screening test available for detecting breast cancer early. An abnormal mammogram does not necessarily mean cancer is present, but additional imaging or other follow-up tests may be needed to determine the cause of a change.

For women at average risk of breast cancer, the American Cancer Society recommends these general screening guidelines:

Ages 40 to 44: Women have the option to begin yearly mammograms.

Ages 45 to 54: Yearly mammograms are recommended.

Age 55 and older: Mammograms every two years, or the option to continue yearly screening.

**The American Cancer Society recommends that women continue screening as long as their overall health is good and they have a life expectancy of 10 years or longer.*



Mammograms are not routinely recommended for men. However, men can develop breast cancer, and any new lump, swelling or other breast change should be evaluated by a health care provider.

Knowing your breasts — how they normally look and feel — can help you recognize changes that may need attention. If you notice something new or unusual, don't ignore it; talk with your health care provider. And stay up to date with recommended screenings. Early detection can make a meaningful difference.

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Why Flu Prevention Matters More as We Age

By Isuruni Sonnadara, MD Primary Care at IMA Medical Group

Staying protected from the flu is an important part of staying healthy throughout the year. For older adults, influenza can be much more serious. As we age, changes in the immune system can make it harder to fight infections. At the same time, chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can increase the risk of complications.

That makes flu prevention essential to your overall wellness – especially as another flu season approaches. The good news is that a few simple steps, beginning with an annual flu vaccination, can help reduce the risk of serious illness.

Flu Season Is Coming. How Can You Prepare?

Flu is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. It spreads easily when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and you can also pick up the virus from contaminated surfaces before it reaches your eyes, nose, or mouth.

For the 2026-2027 flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months and older. Flu activity generally increases in fall and winter, although the timing and severity can vary each season. For most people, September and October are the ideal months to get vaccinated. The timing is particularly important for older adults because the body needs about two weeks after vaccination to develop its protective immune response.

This doesn't mean the opportunity to protect yourself passes after October. If you haven't received your flu vaccine, it is still worthwhile to get vaccinated later in the season while flu viruses are circulating and the vaccine is still available.

And if you've already had the flu this season, vaccination is still beneficial. Flu vaccines protect against multiple influenza strains, so having one strain does not necessarily provide protection against others that may circulate later.

Why Older Adults Face Greater Flu Risks

Adults 65 and older are more likely than younger adults to experience serious complications from influenza. One reason is immunosenescence, the natural change in immune function that occurs with age. The immune system may not respond to infections as strongly as it once did, making recovery more difficult.



The risk can be even greater for older adults living with certain chronic health conditions. Influenza can worsen existing heart and lung conditions, and may contribute to complications such as pneumonia, hospitalization, and, in several cases, death.

Recent flu seasons demonstrate why prevention matters. During the 2024-2025 season, flu-related hospitalizations and outpatient visits reached their highest levels in 15 years, with more than an estimated 710,000 hospitalizations and more than 45,000 deaths reported, according to the CDC.

Is There a Different Flu Vaccine for Older Adults?

Because the immune response can become less robust with age, the CDC recommends that adults 65 and older receive one of three types of flu vaccines when available:

- A high-dose vaccine
- An adjuvanted vaccine
- A recombinant vaccine

These vaccines are designed to produce a stronger immune response in older adults than a standard dose flu vaccine. However, if a preferred vaccine isn't readily available, getting a standard flu vaccine is still better than delaying vaccination.

Pneumococcal Protection Matters, Too

Flu isn't the only respiratory illness worth preventing. Pneumococcal infections can cause serious conditions, including pneumonia, meningitis, and bloodstream infections, and pneumonia can also be a complication of influenza.

The CDC recommends pneumococcal vaccination for adults 50 and older, as well as for certain individuals at increased risk. If you're unsure whether you are up to date, your healthcare provider can review your vaccination history and determine which vaccine(s) is appropriate for you. In some cases, flu and pneumococcal vaccines can be given during the same visit.



A Flu Shot is One Part of Staying Well

Vaccination is an important step you can take to reduce your risk of seasonal flu, but it works best alongside everyday precautions:

- Wash hands regularly
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you're ill to limit spread

It's also important to recognize when you may need medical attention. Flu symptoms often begin suddenly and can include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Intense fatigue

Older adults do not always develop a fever, so any sudden change in how you feel during flu season is worth paying attention to.

Get Ready for Flu Season with IMA Medical Group

You don't have to navigate flu season alone. IMA Medical Group can help you understand your vaccination options, determine which prevention plan is right for you, and answer questions about protecting yourself and loved ones from influenza and other respiratory illnesses. A conversation with your healthcare provider today can help you take a proactive approach for your health throughout flu season.

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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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Helping Loved Ones Hear Better

Practical Ways Families Can Support Better Communication and Stronger Connections

Watching someone you love struggle to hear can be frustrating, especially when communication begins changing the rhythm of everyday life. Maybe conversations are repeated more often. Maybe the television volume keeps getting louder. Perhaps family dinners feel different because someone begins withdrawing or avoiding conversation altogether.

If you have ever found yourself thinking, "Why won't they just get their hearing checked?" you are certainly not alone.

As an audiologist here in Ocala, I often meet family members who are deeply concerned about a loved one's hearing. What many people do not realize is that hearing loss affects more than the person experiencing it. It can impact relationships, communication, patience, and even emotional connection within families. The encouraging news is that there are ways to help that feel supportive rather than frustrating.

One of the most important things to understand is that hearing loss often happens gradually. Many people do not realize how much they are missing because changes occur slowly over time. Instead of hearing clearly, the brain begins filling in gaps. It may seem like someone is ignoring conversations or not paying attention, when in reality they simply did not hear everything that was said.

For many adults, acknowledging hearing changes can also feel emotional. Hearing loss may bring feelings of aging, embarrassment, frustration, or fear of losing independence. That is why how families approach the conversation matters so much.

One of the biggest mistakes loved ones make is turning hearing concerns into repeated criticism. Statements like, "You never listen," "You need hearing aids," or "We are tired of repeating ourselves," often lead to defensiveness rather than action. Even when those comments come from a place of love, they can feel discouraging.

Instead, try approaching the conversation with empathy and curiosity. Focus on what you are noticing rather than assigning blame. For example, you might say, "I noticed restaurants seem more frustrating lately," or "I feel like conversations have become harder, and I want to help." Gentle, caring conversations are often much more effective than pressure or frustration.

There are also simple communication strategies families can use right away to make conversations easier.

First, try getting your loved one's attention before speaking. Saying their name first or making eye contact can help prepare the brain to focus on speech.

Second, avoid talking from another room. Hearing becomes much harder when people cannot see facial expressions or are trying to understand speech through walls, background noise, or distance.

Speaking clearly is helpful, but shouting usually is not. Many people assume talking louder solves the problem, but shouting can actually distort speech and increase frustration. Slowing down slightly, speaking naturally, and facing the person often improves understanding far more than volume alone.

Background noise also plays a major role. Restaurants, televisions, crowded family gatherings, and multiple conversations happening at once can make communication much harder for someone with hearing loss. Choosing quieter seating areas or reducing competing noise when possible can make conversations feel more enjoyable again.

Patience matters too. Hearing loss can be exhausting. Many people work incredibly hard to follow conversations, often using extra mental energy to piece together words and meaning. What may look like withdrawal or distraction is sometimes simple listening fatigue.

At the same time, families should not ignore signs that hearing changes may be affecting quality of life. If a loved one frequently asks people to repeat themselves, struggles in noisy environments, turns

up the television volume, misunderstands conversations, or begins pulling back socially, those may be signs it is time for a hearing evaluation.

One thing I often remind families is that hearing care is not simply about hearing louder. It is about staying connected. Better hearing supports conversations with grandchildren, dinners with friends, church services, favorite hobbies, and everyday moments that bring meaning to life.

Sometimes the hardest step is simply getting started. Offering to attend an appointment together, helping ask questions, or framing the visit as gathering information rather than committing to treatment can help ease anxiety.

If someone you love may be struggling with hearing, you do not have to navigate it alone. At our office, we work closely with patients and families to better understand hearing changes and create solutions that feel comfortable and supportive.

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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SMOKING AND VASCULAR DISEASE:

The Hidden Threat to Your Legs

By The Vein Center of North Florida

Most people know smoking harms the lungs and heart. Fewer realize that some of its most serious damage happens far from the chest, in the arteries and veins of the legs. At The Vein Center of North Florida, we see this connection every day. We want our Ocala-area patients to understand what's at stake before symptoms become serious.

How Smoking Damages Your Blood Vessels

Every cigarette sends thousands of chemicals into the bloodstream. Nicotine narrows the blood vessels, so the heart works harder while less blood reaches the arms and legs. Carbon monoxide takes the place of oxygen in red blood cells, which starves tissues of what they need to stay healthy. Other toxins in tobacco smoke irritate and inflame the delicate inner lining of the blood vessels, called the endothelium.

Cholesterol and fatty deposits stick to that damaged lining and harden into plaque. Over time, this plaque buildup, known as atherosclerosis, narrows the arteries and restricts circulation. Smoking also makes blood stickier and more likely to clot, which raises the risk of sudden blockages.

Peripheral Artery Disease: The Leg Connection

When plaque narrows the arteries that supply the legs, the result is peripheral artery disease (PAD). Smoking is the most important preventable risk factor for PAD, and smokers are several times more likely than nonsmokers to develop it. They also tend to be diagnosed earlier and to have more severe disease.

Early warning signs of PAD include:

- Cramping, aching or fatigue in the calves, thighs or hips while walking that eases with rest
- Numbness or weakness in the legs
- Cold feet or toes, especially compared to the other leg
- Shiny skin, hair loss or slow toenail growth on the legs
- Sores on the feet or toes that heal slowly or not at all

Left untreated, advanced PAD can lead to critical limb ischemia, a condition in which tissue begins to die from lack of blood flow. In the most serious



cases, it can result in amputation. PAD is also a warning sign that similar blockages may exist in the arteries of the heart and brain.

Smoking and Your Veins

Arteries aren't the only vessels at risk. The inflammation and clotting that smoking causes can make deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a potentially dangerous clot in the deep veins of the legs, more likely. Poor circulation can also worsen the symptoms of chronic venous insufficiency, such as swelling, heaviness and varicose veins.

The Good News: It's Never Too Late to Quit

Your blood vessels begin to benefit soon after your last cigarette. Circulation improves, your blood becomes less likely to clot, and the risk that PAD will get worse drops over time. Patients who quit smoking also tend to respond better to vascular treatments and heal more reliably after procedures. Ask your primary care provider about tools to help you quit, such as nicotine replacement, prescription medications or support programs.

Protect Your Legs With an Expert Evaluation

If you smoke or used to smoke and notice any of the symptoms above, don't wait. Catching vascular disease early makes a significant difference. The Vein Center of North Florida offers accredited vascular testing that checks blood flow quickly and without surgery, along with minimally invasive treatment options when needed.

Not sure where you stand? Take our online PAD Risk Assessment Quiz, or call The Vein Center of North Florida at 352-237-1820 to schedule a consultation. Your legs carry you through life. Let us help keep them healthy.



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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

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

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

Understanding Skin Cancer and Melanoma

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

The Power of Early Detection

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

Recognizing the Warning Signs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Screening Process

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

Who Should Get Screened and How Often?

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

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

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

Beyond Professional Screenings: The Importance of Self-Checks

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

Prevention: Your First Line of Defense

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

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

The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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

Conclusion:

A Small Step for Significant Peace of Mind

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

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



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SAFE SLEEP / SIDS

The scene repeats itself in homes and neighborhoods everywhere. Parents bring home their newborn bundle of joy, excited but exhausted, wondering how to keep their babies safe through the night.

Parents may be tempted to rely on family tradition or hand-me-down wisdom to decide where their babies sleep. But there are evidence-based practices that can help create a secure sleep setup that actually works in practice.

Bed-sharing is Dangerous

When babies share a bed with mom and dad, it puts them at risk for suffocation and sudden unexpected infant death. This can happen if an adult rolls over onto the baby, or if a soft object such as a pillow, blanket, sheet, or the mattress blocks the baby's airway. Do not fall asleep with your baby in your bed or in any other place while you are holding your baby, such as on a sofa or recliner. Do not cover your baby with a loose blanket. Instead, dress your baby in a sleeper appropriate for the room temperature.

The Alternative: Room-Sharing

If you want to keep your baby close to you, try room-sharing. Place the bassinet or crib by your bed. This way, your baby can sleep safely in their own safe sleep area, and you can sleep better knowing your baby is near. Keep your baby's sleep area in the same room where you sleep until your baby is at least 6 months old.

On Their Back is Best

Place your baby on his or her back for all sleep times—naps and at night. Use a firm, flat (not at an angle or inclined) sleep surface. For example, a mattress in a safety-approved crib, covered by a fitted sheet. A bassinet or portable crib will work too.

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death

When an infant under the age of one year dies suddenly and unexpectedly, it is called sudden unexpected infant death (SUID).

Some of these deaths may be caused by suffocation, asphyxia, infection, metabolic diseases, heart problems, injuries, or other reasons. In some cases, the death is considered to be from an undetermined cause.

Sudden unexpected infant deaths often happen during sleep or in the baby's sleep area. You can help prevent that by following the ABCs of safe sleep.



ABCs of Safe Sleep for Babies

Your baby should sleep...

ALONE — Adult beds are dangerous for babies. Your baby can get trapped between the bed, wall, or bedframe, and be unable to breathe. They can suffocate in bed when another child or adult rolls over or onto them. Put them in a baby-safe bed or a crib beside your bed. Your baby will know you're nearby.

On their **BACK** — Reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) risks.

Put your baby to bed on their back. Make sure to instruct anyone caring for your baby about baby-safe places for sleeping and that they must put your baby to sleep on their back.

In a CRIB — Your baby is safest sleeping:

On a firm mattress in a baby-safe crib approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. On crib sheets that fit tightly over the mattress. With no loose blankets, quilts, sheets, or comforters.

With no pillows, soft toys, stuffed animals, or bumpers.

Dressed in a sleeper appropriate for the room's temperature. Don't let your baby get overheated. Keep the room temperature comfortable for a lightly-clothed adult.

Resources:

Florida Department of Health Infant Safe Sleep Webpage
floridahealth.gov/individual-family-health/child-infant-youth/safe-sleeping-environment

Safe Sleep ABCs Flyer
floridahealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/ABCSafeSleep.pdf

Better Sleep for You & Your Baby — English
floridahealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/better_sleep.pdf

Better Sleep for You & Your Baby — Spanish
floridahealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/better_sleep_SP.pdf

Better Sleep for You & Your Baby — Creole
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Aging Well, Worry Less

How SafeWell55 Brings Peace of Mind to Life After 55

Life after 55 can be some of the richest years of a person's life — more time for family, hobbies, travel, and doing things on your own terms. But it also comes with new realities: health can change unexpectedly, living situations shift, and the world can feel a little less predictable than it used to. For many adults in this stage of life, and for the adult children who worry about them, the question isn't whether something might happen — it's whether help will be there when it does.

That's the problem SafeWell55 was built to solve. It's a personal safety and wellness app designed specifically for adults 55 and older, bundling emergency response, everyday health care, prescription savings, cybersecurity protection, and more into a single, easy-to-use membership. Rather than juggling multiple different services — a medical alert device, a telehealth subscription, a prescription discount card, an identity theft monitor, a pet health subscription — SafeWell55 folds them into one program, accessible from a smartphone.

Help at Your Fingertips

At the core of SafeWell55 is personal safety. With a single tap, members can alert family and friends in an emergency, contact law enforcement if needed, or activate a virtual companion feature that keeps a caring eye on them during a walk, an errand, or any outing where they'd simply feel better knowing someone is watching out for them. It's the kind of quiet reassurance that lets someone head out the door with confidence instead of hesitation.

Privacy is built into the design, not an afterthought. Location is only shared with the people a member chooses, and only while safety features are actively in use — so the app supports independence rather than constant surveillance.

A companion feature, "I'm OK / I'm Not OK," gives members an easy way to check in with loved ones on their own schedule. Instead of relying on loved ones to call and check in — or worse, not hearing from someone for days and fearing the worst — members can send a quick daily update about how they're doing. They decide how often to check in and exactly who receives those updates, keeping the family circle informed without feeling like they're being monitored.

Health Care Without the Hassle

One of the more compelling parts of the SafeWell55 program is virtual care. Members get access to licensed doctors and mental health counselors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, from the comfort of home — with \$0 copay for primary care visits, urgent care needs, and behavioral health sessions. That means a nagging cough, a medication refill, a stressful week that calls for someone to talk to — all of it is a video call away, without the cost, the waiting room, or the drive.

For many older adults, prescription costs are one of the biggest recurring expenses in a monthly budget. SafeWell55 addresses this directly through its Generic Prescription Program. Depending on the plan selected, members get \$0 copay access to over 200 common acute-care generic medications, or broader coverage that includes over 2,500 chronic condition medications with no copays and no deductible. A digital card can be used at pickup, and the benefits are honored at more than 65,000 pharmacies nationwide, including major chains like CVS, Costco, Rite-Aid, and Walgreens, as well as national grocery store pharmacies. For a household managing several prescriptions a month, that kind of savings can add up quickly.

Even the family pet is covered. Through the program's pet telehealth benefit, members can consult a licensed veterinarian through the app at no additional cost — a convenient way to get guidance on a pet's symptoms before deciding whether an expensive in-person vet visit is really necessary.

Protecting More Than Physical Safety

Physical safety is only part of the picture. Adults 55 and older are frequently and disproportionately targeted by online scammers and hackers, and the financial and emotional toll of a cyberattack or identity theft can be devastating. SafeWell55's cybersecurity features monitor for threats, alert members to risks, and provide support to recover if an attack does happen — adding a layer of digital protection alongside the app's physical safety tools.

There's also a rewards component that quietly pays members back for spending they're already doing. Through SafeWell Rewards, members can earn cash back — an average of 5% instantly — at more than 300 retailers, restaurants, and travel partners, including grocery stores and pharmacies. Linking rewards to a cash-back credit card can boost those savings even further, turning routine shopping into a small but steady financial benefit.

For those who want an extra layer of protection, SafeWell55 also offers an optional wearable device that can be connected to the app. If a member falls, feels unwell, or faces another emergency, the wearable can instantly alert their loved ones — giving families additional peace of mind, especially for members who live alone or spend significant time outdoors.

Plans Built for Real Life

SafeWell55 offers two membership tiers, and both can be extended to cover a spouse:

Plan 1 — \$27.95/month individual, or \$38.95/month for individual plus spouse — includes \$0 copay acute generic prescription coverage alongside all core safety, telehealth, and wellness features.

Plan 2 — \$37.95/month individual, or \$52.95/month for individual plus spouse — expands prescription coverage to include acute and chronic condition generic medications with no copays and no deductible.

Both plans include the full suite of personal safety tools, virtual care, pet telehealth, cybersecurity protection, and rewards, with the wearable device available as an add-on for those who want it.

Why It Matters

What makes SafeWell55 stand out isn't any single feature — it's the way the pieces work together. A fall, a scam attempt, a skipped medication because of cost, a lonely stretch without a family check-in — these are often separate problems handled by separate services, if they're handled at all. SafeWell55 brings them under one roof, with one app, one monthly cost, and one goal: helping people over 55 move through their day with confidence, knowing that help — medical, financial, or personal — is never more than a tap away.

For adults navigating this stage of life, and for the families who care about them, that kind of consolidated peace of mind can be worth far more than the modest monthly cost. It's not just a safety app. It's a way to keep living fully, with a safety net quietly in place underneath. Start now and watch our informational video at www.SafeWell55.com today.



www.SafeWell55.com



OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

HEALING IN LAYERS

More than 300,000 women in the U.S. are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. For them, survival marks the beginning of a new journey, one that is deeply personal, often misunderstood, and rarely linear. Long after treatment ends, the body holds on. To fatigue. To scar tissue. To stiffness. To fear.

For Jennifer Yozzo, an occupational therapist and Pilates instructor, recovery came in layers. Post-mastectomy pain, scar tissue, fatigue, and the guarded posture that so often follows treatment each asked for patience, persistence, and self-grace.

"From diagnosis to surgery to extended treatments and additional surgery, it felt like my body was just surviving, not thriving," she says. "Pain and doubt took over. Until I found Pilates, I struggled."

The Disconnection No One Talks About

Breast cancer doesn't just affect cells. It can fracture a woman's sense of self. Mastectomies, drains, expanders, scar tissue, and nerve changes can make everyday movements feel unsafe, or impossible. Muscles weaken. Breath shortens. Movement feels foreign.

Physical therapy often addresses the acute phase of healing. But what comes after? Where does a survivor go when she's cleared for exercise but still feels far from whole?

For many, Pilates becomes the bridge back into the body.

Layer One: Breath

Joseph Pilates developed his method with rehabilitation in mind, and its core principles of controlled movement, mindful alignment, and deep breathing still meet people where they are. Modifications aren't just welcome; they're expected. A good instructor sees the whole person, not just the range of motion or the scar.

Every session begins with breath, and that's where Jennifer's healing began too. "I learned that scar tissue and guarding had limited my breathing," she explains. "Pilates breath gave me full expansion of my chest wall, and focusing on breath as I stretched into difficult ranges helped me regain strength and length."



Breathwork steadied her nervous system and eased the tension she'd been carrying. From there, small movements began to reawaken muscles that had gone quiet.

Layer Two: Movement That Flows

Gentle rotation, spinal twists, arm arcs, and rib cage mobility restore movement in directions often missing from other workouts. Unlike the heart, the lymphatic system has no pump of its own; it relies on movement, breath, and muscle activity. That makes mindful, multi-directional movement a valuable part of life after surgery or radiation, especially when guided by a care team that knows your lymphedema risk.

Pilates also works with fascia, the web of connective tissue that can tighten after surgery. Slow, spiraling movements help ease restriction and create space over time, without the strain of aggressive stretching. For Jennifer, the changes were tangible. "I can now reach my arms overhead without pain or tension. My neck and back pain have shifted from constant to occasional. I can lift and move in ways I thought were no longer possible. My shoulders no longer slump forward, and I stand tall, proud of the work I've done to recover."

Layer Three: Calm and Trust

The emotional toll of breast cancer, from anxiety and grief to a body that no longer feels like home, can outlast the physical one. In Pilates, movement becomes meditation and breath becomes an anchor. For many survivors, it's the first time in months they feel calm in their own skin.

Jennifer rebuilt trust layer by layer. Journaling gave her clarity. Private sessions addressed delicate limitations, while group classes offered community and the reminder that she wasn't recovering alone. What began as survival grew into confidence.

Science Is Catching Up

Research supports what instructors have long observed. A systematic review and meta-analysis of Pilates for women with breast cancer found it safe and linked it to improvements in pain, upper-body function, mood, and quality of life. Other studies have reported gains in fatigue and body image.

But the data only tells part of the story. It can't capture the moment a woman lifts her arms overhead for the first time in months, breathes fully again, or reclaims the word "strong."

Layer Four: Purpose

As her practice deepened, Jennifer came to see healing as a conversation between effort and grace. Recovery grew into passion, and she advanced her training to become an instructor, bringing her clinical background and lived experience to others on the path of renewal.

"My journey isn't over," she says. "I look forward to continuing Pilates not only for myself but for others who may need the same care of self."

Survivorship Deserves Momentum

Survivorship deserves more than maintenance. It deserves momentum. Pilates offers that, not through intensity, but through intention. It invites women to move again. To rotate. To breathe. To feel. To reconnect.

At Club Pilates, instructors can modify exercises to meet you where you are. If you're navigating recovery, talk with your healthcare team about what's right for you, then let your instructor know, so your practice can support you, layer by layer.



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On a GLP-1?

YOUR GUT NEEDS ATTENTION, TOO

By Aiste Magitman

GLP-1 medications such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and Zepbound have changed the lives of many people. But as a pharmacist, I'm also seeing another side of the story.

People taking these medications are reaching for laxatives because they're constipated, antacids because they're experiencing reflux, and sometimes even hemorrhoid creams because they're straining.

It makes sense when you look at how GLP-1 medications work. They reduce appetite and can slow gastric emptying, helping you feel full sooner and eat less.

But there's something we don't talk about enough:

When you eat less, you may also be feeding your beneficial gut bacteria less.

A smaller appetite can mean less fiber, fewer plants and less variety. Some people may also drink less because they feel full more easily. Combine that with changes in gastrointestinal motility, and constipation, bloating and unpredictable bowel habits aren't so surprising.

And this is where the **gut microbiome** comes in.

Your gut is home to trillions of microorganisms that depend, in part, on what you eat. Certain gut bacteria ferment fiber and produce beneficial compounds called **short-chain fatty acids**, including butyrate. Butyrate provides energy to the cells lining your colon and helps support your gut barrier—the protective lining that helps absorb what your body needs while keeping potentially harmful substances and microbes from crossing where they don't belong.

Your gut microbes also interact with your immune system, metabolism and nervous system. Some bacteria can produce certain B vitamins and vitamin K, while microbial activity can influence how nutrients and other compounds are processed in the gut.

So supporting your gut is about much more than bowel regularity. You're supporting an entire ecosystem.

Different gut microbes thrive on different fibers and plant compounds, which is why dietary variety matters. Prebiotic fibers provide food for gut microbes, while polyphenols can influence which bacteria thrive. Research has linked polyphenol-rich foods and supplements with beneficial bacteria such as *Akkermansia*, *Bifidobacterium* and *Faecalibacterium*.

This is exactly what inspired me to create **Best Gut Forever**.

As a pharmacist, I didn't want to focus only on managing one digestive symptom after another. I wanted to create a simple daily formula designed to support the gut from several angles.

That became my **3-3-2 formula**: three prebiotic fibers—psyllium, acacia and baobab; three polyphenol sources—pomegranate, grape seed and blueberry; and two digestive botanicals—ginger and turmeric.

Each group has a purpose. The fibers help support stool consistency and regularity while providing food for gut microbes. The polyphenol-rich ingredients provide plant compounds that can help beneficial bacteria thrive and support a diverse microbiome. Ginger and turmeric add another layer of digestive support, with ginger particularly studied for its role in gastrointestinal motility.

Instead of focusing on just one digestive symptom, the idea behind my 3-3-2 approach is simple: **support regularity, nourish your gut bacteria and support digestion—all at the same time.**

If you're taking a GLP-1, eating less may be part of the goal—but nourishing your gut still matters.

Focus not only on how much you eat, but on what you're giving your gut each day: adequate hydration, fiber and a variety of plant foods.

Your GLP-1 can support your weight-management journey. **Don't forget to support your gut along the way.**



Aiste Magitman is a licensed pharmacist and founder of Best Gut Forever. This article is for educational purposes and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease.

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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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MANAGING GRIEF AND DEPRESSION

Submitted by Hospice of Marion County

The loss of a loved one often brings both grief and depression. What's the difference or are they one and the same emotion?

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Vestibular Balance Issues Should Not be Ignored:

A Physical Therapy Method has Helped Countless Individuals Find Restoration

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



Innovative Therapies Group, Inc.
352-433-0091 | innovativetherapiesgroup.com

DENGUE FEVER

Know the Symptoms and Protect Your Family

Central Florida is facing something it rarely sees: a growing outbreak of dengue fever spread by local mosquitoes. Florida has recorded nearly 200 locally acquired dengue cases this year, the most on record, with the largest share in the Tampa Bay area. Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties have declared local states of emergency, and the Florida Department of Health has raised Orange County's mosquito-borne illness advisory to an alert for the first time since 2011. Sadly, an elderly Hillsborough County woman has died from the virus.

At Quick Care Med Walk-In Clinic & Urgent Care, we want our neighbors to know what to watch for and how to stay protected.

What Is Dengue?

Dengue is a viral infection passed to people through the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes, which live throughout Florida. These mosquitoes bite mostly during the day and lay eggs in small amounts of standing water around homes. Dengue does not spread directly from person to person, but a mosquito that bites an infected person can carry the virus to others. Recent heavy rains across Central Florida have helped mosquito populations grow.

Symptoms to Watch For

Many people infected with dengue have mild symptoms or none at all. When symptoms appear, they usually start within 3 to 10 days of a bite and can include:



- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache or pain behind the eyes
- Muscle, joint or bone pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Skin rash
- Mild bleeding, such as nosebleeds or bleeding gums

Most people recover within about a week. However, some develop severe dengue, which can be life-threatening. Warning signs often appear just as the fever begins to go away: severe stomach pain, repeated vomiting, bleeding from the nose or gums, blood in vomit or stool, or feeling extremely tired or restless. **If you notice any of these, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 right away.**

Infants, older adults, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions and anyone who has had dengue before face a higher risk of severe illness.

When to Visit Quick Care Med

If you develop a fever with any of the symptoms above, especially after spending time outdoors or traveling, stop by for an evaluation — no appointment needed. Our providers can assess your symptoms, order testing and help you manage your recovery.

There is no specific medicine to treat dengue, so care focuses on rest, fluids and fever control. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain and fever, and avoid aspirin and ibuprofen, which can increase the risk of bleeding.

Stay alert, stay protected, and remember that Quick Care Med Walk-In Clinic & Urgent Care is here when you need us.

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

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

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 (On Silver Springs Blvd. across from Publix)

8119 SW State Rd 200, Ocala, FL 3448
 (Just past Walgreens)

6341 N US 441, Ocala, FL 34475
 (Across from John Deer)

2205 N Young Blvd, Chiefland, FL 32626



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Attorney Patrick Smith Celebrates 20 Years In Practice

For the last 20 years, Patrick Smith has served Clermont as a local estate planning attorney and radio show host. This past year, Attorney Smith signed a two year extension for his radio show. Attorney Smith hosts his own legal advice call-in show heard Saturday mornings from 8-9 live on 102.5 FM and various stations throughout Florida where you can call in with your legal questions. Broadcasts can also be streamed at theBoneOnline.com. The previous year's radio content can be found and streamed at **www.AttorneyPatrickSmith.com**. In addition to extending his radio contract, he has also renewed his commitment as a Professor at Stetson University's College of Law.



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BETTER SPIRITUAL HEALTH

By Pastor Tim Neptune

As the years accumulate, many of us notice a quiet tendency to settle. What once demanded excellence now receives a polite “good enough.” That drift appears in our exercise routines, our closest relationships—and often in the condition of our souls.

Holistic wellness is incomplete without the spiritual life. Nothing in us stays fixed. Bodies change, circumstances shift, and so does our inner world. Jesus described His purpose in terms that reach far beyond mere survival: “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). The word translated “abundantly” points to a life that exceeds what we anticipated—more, beyond measure.

Author Jim Collins captured a truth that applies as readily to the soul as to a company: good is the enemy of great. Contentment with an adequate prayer life, a functional marriage, or average health can quietly close the door on something richer. Greatness in any domain is largely a matter of choice followed by consistent work.

A vibrant relationship with God does not happen by accident. It requires the same kind of intentionality we already apply to nutrition, sleep, and movement. Three practices make the difference.

Clear what competes.

Before adding more spiritual activity, identify what to stop. Hebrews 12:1 urges us to “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.” Screen time that crowds out quiet, over-commitment that leaves no margin, a hobby that has become an idol, or a habit that dulls the spirit all steal the capacity we need. Discipline is the bridge between good and great. People who grow spiritually do what they do not always feel like doing.

Protect a daily appointment.

Small choices repeated over time compound. Seeking first God’s kingdom (Matthew 6:33) often looks like a few unhurried minutes with Scripture and prayer even when motivation is low. Feelings come and go; habits remain. Consistency produces the inner strength that supports every other area of wellness—physical energy, emotional resilience, and relational patience.



Walk with people who want the same thing.

Isolated effort rarely lasts. Hebrews 10:24–25 calls us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds and not to neglect meeting together. Community is God’s design both for loneliness and for growth. A handful of people who know you well and will tell you the truth keep laziness from winning.

The aim is not religious performance. It is an abundant life that overflows into the rest of who we are. This week, name one distraction to release, one

daily slot to protect, and one person or group with whom you will walk. Been thinking about visiting a church? Why not start this Sunday?

God is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20). Settling for good is optional. Better is available. But great is worth the extra effort.

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