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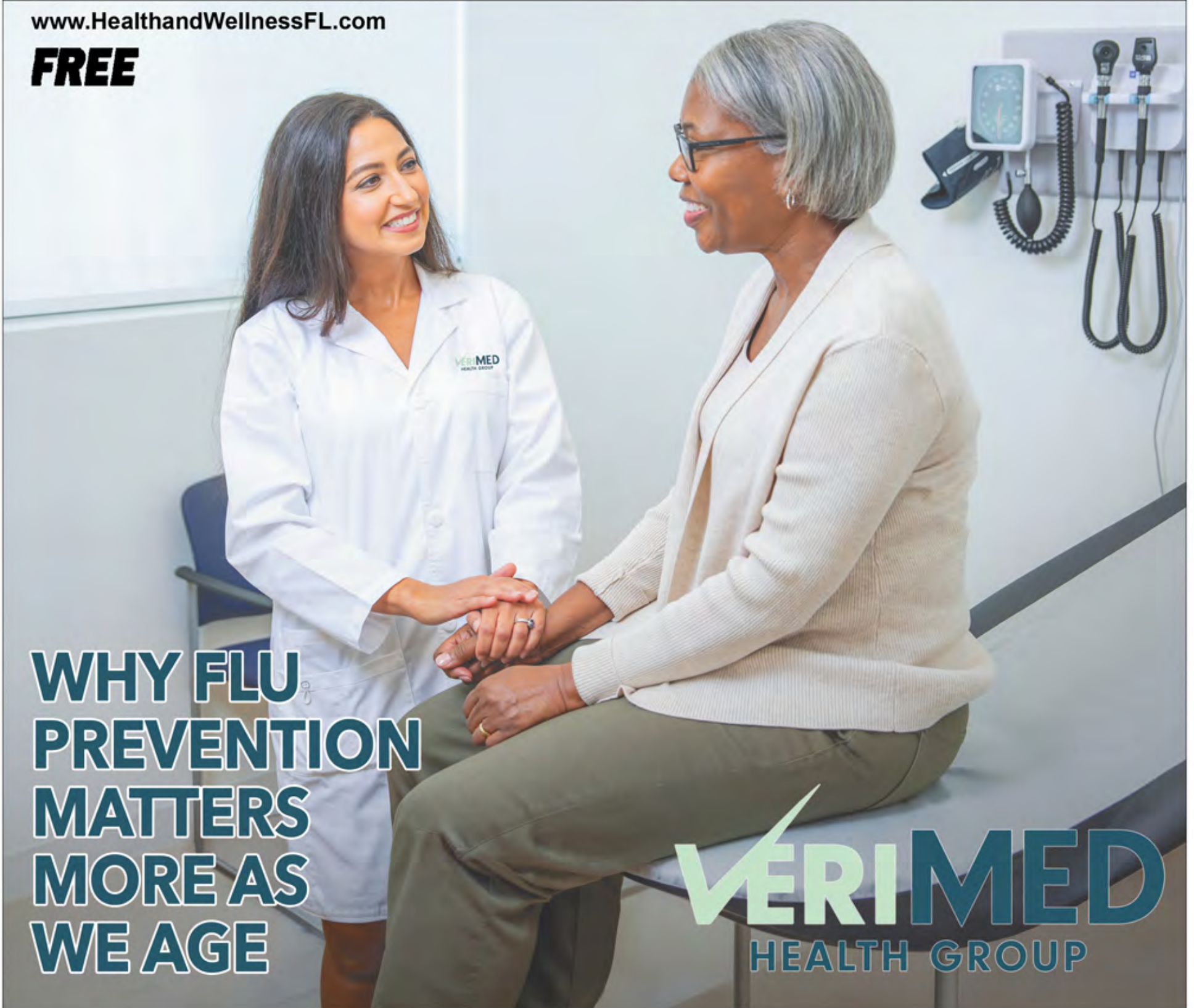
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Breast Cancer. Let's Start With the Good News!

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 veriMED Health 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 veriMED Health Group

You don't have to navigate flu season alone. veriMED Health 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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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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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 Tampa Bay, 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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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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UNDERSTANDING YOUR BREAST CANCER RISK: THE IMPORTANCE OF MAMMOGRAMS AND GENETIC TESTING

By Parveen Vahora, M.D.

Breast cancer remains one of the most common cancers affecting women today, with approximately 1 in 8 women developing the disease during their lifetime. As a physician, I cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of understanding your personal risk factors and taking proactive steps toward early detection and prevention.

The Essential Role of Mammograms

defense against breast cancer. Current guidelines recommend that women begin annual mammograms at age 40, though some organizations suggest starting at 50. However, these are general recommendations that may not apply to everyone. Women with elevated risk factors may need to begin screening earlier and more frequently.

Mammograms can detect abnormalities up to two years before they can be felt during a physical examination. This early detection capability is crucial because breast cancer treatment is most effective when the disease is caught in its earliest stages. Studies consistently show that regular mammographic screening reduces breast cancer mortality by 20-40% in women aged 50-69, with significant benefits extending to younger women as well.

Family History: A Critical Risk Factor

Does cancer run in your family? This question is more important than many people realize. Family history plays a significant role in determining your breast cancer risk. If you have a first-degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) who has had breast cancer, your risk approximately doubles. The risk increases further if multiple family members have been affected or if the cancer occurred at a young age.

It's important to consider both maternal and paternal family histories. Many people mistakenly believe that only their mother's side matters, but hereditary cancer syndromes can be inherited from either parent. Additionally, family history of ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer, and certain other cancers may also increase your breast cancer risk.

The Power of Genetic Testing

Genetic testing has revolutionized our understanding of hereditary breast cancer risk. The most well-known genetic mutations are BRCA1 and BRCA2, which significantly increase the lifetime risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers. Women with BRCA1 mutations have approximately a 55-72% lifetime risk of breast cancer, while those with BRCA2 mutations face a 45-69% risk.

However, BRCA mutations are just part of the story. Advanced genetic testing panels can now evaluate dozens of genes associated with hereditary cancer syndromes. These include PALB2, CHEK2, ATM, and many others, each contributing differently to cancer risk.

Determining Your Personal Risk

If you have a family history of breast, ovarian, or related cancers, genetic counseling should be considered. A genetic counselor can help assess whether testing is appropriate for you and explain what the results might mean for your health management.

The decision to undergo genetic testing is deeply personal and should involve careful consideration of the potential benefits and limitations. Positive results can inform important medical decisions, including enhanced screening protocols, preventive medications, or even prophylactic surgery. However, genetic testing also has psychological implications and may affect insurance considerations.

Personalized Care and Treatment Options

As a physician, I pride myself on screening every patient thoroughly and offering comprehensive genetic testing through the MyRisk Myriad panel testing. This advanced testing provides detailed insights into your hereditary cancer risks, allowing us to create truly personalized prevention and screening strategies.

It's important to note that patients who have had breast cancer or who are at high risk may not be candidates for traditional estrogen therapy. However, this doesn't mean you have to suffer in silence. We offer many different personalized treatment options to address concerns like painful intimacy and vaginal dryness, including innovative treatments like the MonaLisa Touch laser therapy, which can significantly improve quality of life without hormonal risks.

Taking Action - Schedule Your Consultation Today

Understanding your risk is the first step toward taking control of your breast health. Whether through regular mammograms, genetic testing, or enhanced screening protocols based on your individual risk factors, early detection remains our most powerful tool in fighting breast cancer.

I offer virtual consultations to make accessing specialized care more convenient for you. Don't wait to address your concerns about breast cancer risk, genetic testing, or treatment options that fit your unique situation.

Contact our office today to schedule your consultation. Your proactive approach today could save your life tomorrow, and I'm here to guide you through every step of your personalized care journey.

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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

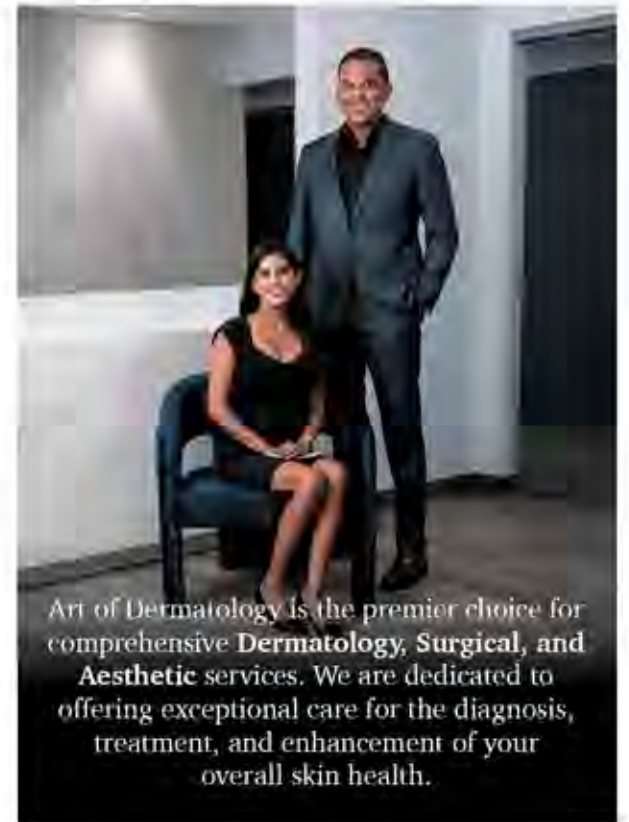
The Broader Impact of Regular Screenings

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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Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: Can it Boost the Immune System?

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is one of the methods used to increase oxygen throughout the tissues cells to destroy anaerobic bacteria, which cannot exist in an oxygenated area. It is also touted as having the ability to improve immune function and repair damaged tissues. Many researchers purport that HBOT can destroy and kill viruses and bacteria. Additionally, many patients report feeling better after HBOT sessions. Repeatedly these same patients show marked signs of improvement rather quickly, and over time, they very often show little to no symptoms or signs of their disease or condition.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy 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 regenerative processes and assists in the recovery from numerous indications.

With hyperbaric oxygen, enough molecular oxygen can be dissolved into a patient's blood stream and tissues to fulfill all metabolic necessities. Breathing 100% oxygen at 1, 2 or 3 atmospheres results in 2,4 and 6 ml of oxygen in solution per 100 ml of blood, respectively. Patients are usually treated with 1.2 to 3.0 times atmospheric pressure for 30 to 90 minutes, which is equivalent to the pressure that a diver is exposed to at a depth of between 5 and 20 meters underwater.¹ A study on rheumatoid arthritis and immune function with HBOT showed that hyperbaric oxygen has immunosuppressive properties modulated by decreasing interleukin 1 (white blood cells) and prostaglandin E2 (mediator in inflammation) production.²

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 always at the patients personal discretion and referral by the physician. 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.

Hyperbaric Centers of Florida provides a clean, professional and caring environment for all of our patients. The founders of our new center have over 40 years of cumulative experience in Hyperbaric Medicine and providing Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for a broad spectrum of indications.

Why Patient's Prefer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy at our Center?

Not all clinics are created equal. With Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy It is always more important to find a safe clinic with a fully trained knowledgeable staff rather than a close clinic, or one that touts false claims. This is one reason people from all over the world travel to Hyperbaric Centers of Florida. We use Real ASME PVHO Chambers capable of 3 Atmospheres Absolute of pressure (29.4psi), Medical Grade oil-less / oil-free breathing air compressors, 100% Medical Grade Oxygen, Sea-Long Hoods, and 100% Cotton Scrubs. Hyperbaric Centers of Florida has a reputation of providing the safest and most comfortable treatments available.

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.

Patient Testimonials

"My son and I had this treatment done for Lyme disease. The staff were amazing and so empathetic to our needs, they really go above and beyond for their clients."—Rachel W.

"Total confidence. We have used several different Hyperbaric Medicine facilities around the country, and this is the best overall experience, by far. Everything is up to date and safe, and the staff makes you feel like you are family. They make a point of it!"—Thomas P.

"Wonderful staff and amazing results. Words cannot describe how it feels to hear your child's voice again after TBI took it away. To see my daughter color, play with her toys, and eat by mouth again is something that is truly amazing. We will definitely be back in the fall. #PrayforGia."—Tyler Z.

"This place is great. They have helped our family out for several years with safe, effective and professional hyperbaric treatments."—The Payne Family

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.

Reference:

1. DJ Wallace, "Use of hyperbaric oxygen in rheumatic diseases: case report and critical analysis," UCLA, aamhel.com/wp-content/uploads/bibliografia-cientifica/use-of-hyperbaric-oxygen-in-rheumatic-diseases-case-report-and-critical-analysis.pdf
2. Inamoto Y et al Effect of hyperbaric oxygen on macrophage function in mice. Biochem Biophys Res Commun 1991; 179: 886-891.



www.hyperbariccentersofflorida.com

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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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.

Contact our team at
Trusted HomeCare and let's discuss
how we can support
you or your loved one
727-771-5053

Spiritual Wellness

BETTER SPIRITUAL HEALTH

By Pastor Timothy L. 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.

>>> Tim Neptune is the Lead Pastor of Venture Church located at 14601 Tamiami Trail E. Naples. For service times, visit venturenaples.com or call (239) 775-5323.



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