



MY ELITE MASSAGE

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Office Hours

Mondays	1:30PM–7:00PM
Tuesdays	9:00AM–1:00PM
Wednesdays	11:00AM–7:00PM
Thursdays	9:00AM–1:00PM
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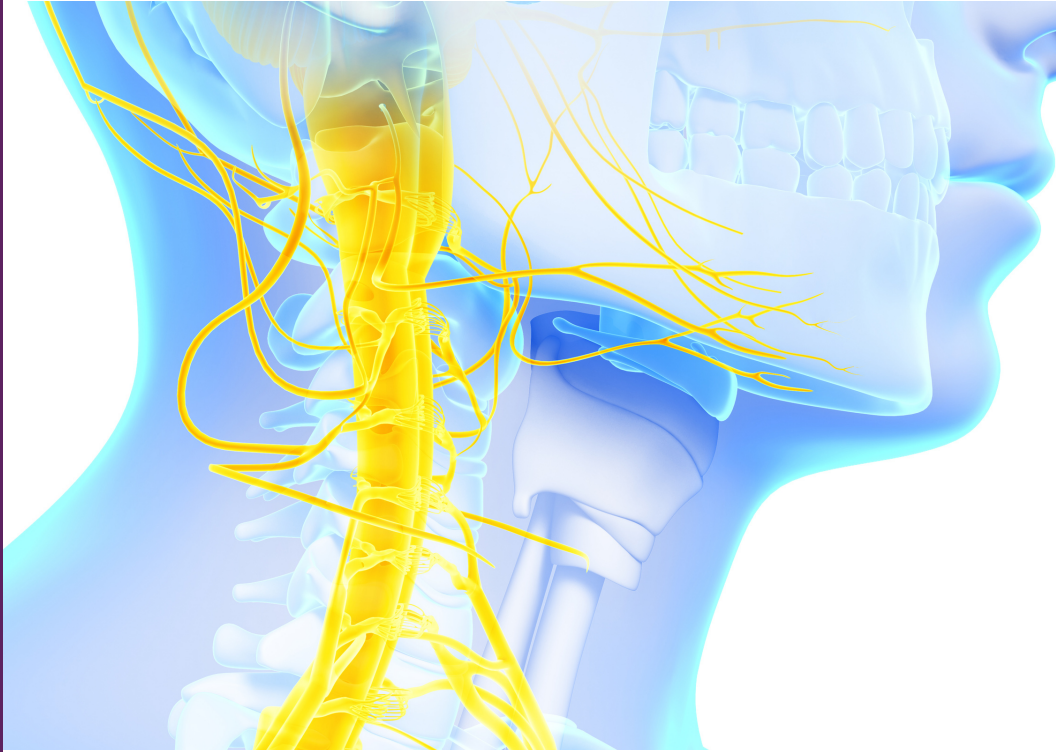


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Off the Table

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WHAT HAPPENS IN VAGUS... IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR HEALTH



By Kevin Smith, LMT, MMP

The Vagus Nerve is the 10th of your 12 cranial nerves, which are pairs of nerves that connect your brain to different parts of your head, neck, and trunk. The Vagus (a.k.a. Vagal) nerve is not only the longest cranial nerve in the human body, running from your brain to your large intestine, but it is also the most complex. Among its responsibilities are transmitting motor (movement) information from the brain to your tissues and organs, carrying signals to your brain, heart, lungs and digestive system. It also plays a role in taste & touch perception and in the movement of some speech & swallowing muscles, as well as helping control your mood regulation.

Perhaps most important to your overall health, the Vagus Nerve represents 80% of your Parasympathetic

What Happens in Vagus... is Important to... (cont.)

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Nervous System (PNS), directly controlling heart rate, breathing, digestion, detoxification, and immune system activity, not to mention countering stress from our Sympathetic Nervous System (Fight-or-Flight mode). This is important because if you get "stuck" in your sympathetic mode, Vagus Nerve-related disorders such as depression or anxiety (or both), insomnia/sleep apnea, higher blood pressure, sudden drops in blood pressure/fainting or dizziness, and gastrointestinal complaints are likely.



It's possible to stimulate your vagus nerve, "wake up" your PNS, and naturally improve your health by turning off your sympathetic nervous system when it's not needed. This can be done using Microcurrent Point Stimulation (MPS – available at My Elite Massage) or self-activation techniques such as exercise, humming/singing, and more. This benefits your body in various ways:

- Lowering blood pressure naturally by reducing cortisol and other stress hormone activity
- Decreasing muscle tension & trigger point tenderness
- Activating the innate immune system, reducing body-wide inflammation (Pavlov 2012).
- Deactivating stress/anxiety
- Improving lung function
- General Relaxation
- Reducing inflammation and chronic pain
- Improving digestion
- Helping control blood sugar levels

One simple method of activating your Vagus Nerve is called "The Basic Exercise." To perform it, interlock your hands behind your head. Keeping your head facing forward, look with your eyes to the left until you yawn, swallow, or sigh. Perform this again but looking to the right. Signs your Vagus Nerve has been activated by this include increased saliva in your mouth, slower breathing rate, deeper breathing, and warmer hands. If you find this particular exercise doesn't work for you, a quick online search will reveal numerous alternatives.

Regardless of the method, having a way to activate your Vagus Nerve as needed is simple way to reduce your stress and improve your health.

MEDICARE CHANGES TO WATCH FOR THIS YEAR



By Mike Bauer, licensed broker, Houston Independent Insurance

If you're taking part in this year's annual enrollment for Medicare, there are some changes you should know about and understand, as they can affect your healthcare coverage and its costs significantly. Here are seven key alterations to look for in your Medicare plans during this year's enrollment period (Oct 15-Dec 7).

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"Autumn shows us
how beautiful it is
to let things go."

~ Unknown

Medicare Changes to Watch... (cont.)

Continued from page 2

- 1. Updates to your Medicare Advantage Plan:** Medicare Advantage plans, also known as Part C, may experience changes in their coverage, premiums, and network of healthcare providers. It's crucial to review your plan's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) to see how these adjustments may affect your benefits.
- 2. Prescription Drug Plan Adjustments:** Part D prescription drug plans may modify their formularies (the list of generic and brand-name prescription medications they will cover), which can impact the availability and cost of your medications. Be sure to review your plan's formulary to ensure your essential drugs are covered.
- 3. Medicare Cost Changes:** The standard Medicare Part B premium may change each year. Keep an eye on these updates, as they can influence your monthly expenses for medical services.
- 4. Telehealth Services:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth services have become more accessible under Medicare, but it's uncertain how long these temporary expansions will continue or if there will be any limitations. If these are important services to you, it's important to stay informed about this.
- 5. Updates to your Medicare Supplement Plan:** If you have a Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plan, be aware that these plans do not change with annual enrollment. However, you should regularly review your Medigap coverage to ensure it still meets your needs.
- 6. Star Ratings and Quality Measures:** Medicare Advantage plans are evaluated using a star rating system. Check the star ratings for your plan, as higher-rated plans may offer better quality and customer satisfaction.

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Medicare Changes to Watch... (cont.)

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7. Beneficiary Assistance Programs: Some changes may occur in programs that assist low-income beneficiaries with healthcare costs, such as Extra Help for prescription drugs and Medicare Savings Programs. Ensure you are aware of any updates to these programs.

Staying informed about upcoming changes to your Medicare during the annual enrollment period is essential for all beneficiaries. By carefully reviewing your plan's ANOC, assessing cost changes, and staying up-to-

date on program adjustments, you'll be able to make the best decisions you can to ensure your healthcare needs are met effectively and affordably.

Don't hesitate to seek assistance from Medicare counselors or advisors if you have questions or need guidance during this crucial enrollment period.

Mike Bauer is a 5-star reviewed, independent, licensed insurance broker at Houston Independent Insurance whose goal is to take the SCARE out of Medicare. You can reach Mike at: 281-787-7358, houstonii@proton.me, or on his website, Houstonii.com

FIVE STRESS BUSTERS FOR A HAPPIER HOLIDAY SEASON

(Edited from an ABMP article, author unknown)

You have the best of intentions coming into the holidays – looking forward to time spent with family and friends, decorating, shopping, baking – but then all the holiday activities start piling onto your already busy life, and you may suddenly feel more like Ebenezer Scrooge than Martha Stewart.

Give these five suggestions a try for keeping holiday stress to a minimum:

1. Determine a Shopping Budget. For many, gift giving is an important part of the holidays, serving as a way to express love and appreciation for friends and family. But when the credit card bills arrive in January, you may discover you've extended your holiday stress well into the New Year. Plan your budget in advance, determine what you can spend, and stick to the plan.

2. Create a Time Budget. A shopping budget's a great start; how about making a time budget? Before accepting every invitation this year, decide in advance how many parties you can and want to attend in order to keep your sanity. Make your time commitment choices based on what you'd really like to do this year, rather than

what you think you should do or what you've always done. Don't forget to leave time for yourself so you can "recharge" before the next event.

3. Set Food-Intake Boundaries. Who doesn't have one or more favorite holiday foods? You'll likely be tempted to eat more than you expect to or should – and you shouldn't be too hard on yourself if you don't stick to your pre-holiday eating standards; Just be sure to decide ahead of time just how much you'll deviate from your normal eating routine.

4. Stick to Your Exercise Regimen. Regular exercise is a powerful stress buster. You'll feel better, sleep better, avoid weight gain, boost your immune system, and maintain a positive outlook about yourself. While it may seem like an easy time concession to make, it's much better for you if you don't. Stick to your exercise; you'll thank yourself for it.

5. Take Time to Rest. Schedule time to just stop, breathe, and refresh your spirit. If you're feeling stressed, stimulate your vagus nerve so you can face the next holiday challenge with a calm mind and heart, and most of all – enjoy your holidays.