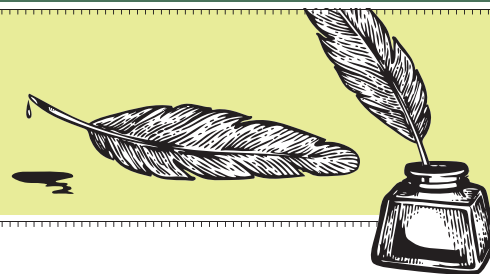


# ideas & opinions



Online: [thevillagesdailysun.com](http://thevillagesdailysun.com)  
 On Facebook: [vdailysun](https://www.facebook.com/vdailysun)  
 On X: [@vdailysun](https://twitter.com/vdailysun)

**THE DAILY SUN IS** The Villages' oldest, largest and most connected source of local news. **We are ...**

**Reputable:** Our award-winning journalists are held to the highest standards of professional excellence, ethics and integrity.  
**Truthful:** Our reporting is based on reliable, verified sources — not surreptitious methods for gathering information.

**Honest:** We immediately acknowledge and publicly correct any mistakes in our reporting.  
**Respectful:** We care about our community's reputation, and we don't pander to lurid curiosity.

**Courteous:** We do not provide a forum for anonymous or uncivil feedback.  
**Accessible:** Story ideas and feedback are always welcome! Call the newsroom at 352-753-1119.

SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, TUESDAY & FRIDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, WELLNESS ADVICE | THURSDAY, POSITIVE LIVING | SATURDAY, BY THE NUMBERS

**A VIEW FROM THE VILLAGES HEALTH**

## Remember those old Victorian-era movies with women in tight-laced corsets who were prone to fainting? In those days, the condition was called “the vapors.”



**Ronald Grose**

COMMENTARY

Today, it's referred to as syncope (sink-o-pee), a brief and abrupt loss of consciousness due to a lack of blood flow to the brain.

Prior to the event, a person might experience lightheadedness, sweating or a visual disturbance (prodrome).

If no preceding symptoms occur, the syncopal episode is likely due to a serious cardiac problem. Fortunately, the causes of syncope are more often benign.

### Different Types of Syncope

Syncope is generally grouped by types

- » reflex/autonomic
- » cardiogenic
- » orthostatic

Reflex syncope accounts for about 50% of all cases and is part of our body's “fight or flight” mechanism.

Vasovagal syncope (also referred to as neurocardiogenic syncope) falls into this category and is the most common cause of all types, often resulting from stress or emotions (“the vapors”), intraabdominal pain, blood drawing/donation or prolonged standing (such as in groomsman who pass out at weddings).

Situational syncope is a type of vasovagal syncope triggered by sneezing, coughing, eating a large meal, urination or even defecation.

The last form of reflex syncope, carotid hypersensitivity, happens when carotid artery receptors become overly sensitive to pressure placed on them, such as in men wearing very tight-collared shirts or when shaving.

Cardiogenic is the most dangerous form of syncope, which occurs in about 20% of all cases.

Although some people become briefly lightheaded beforehand, most have no warning.

Injuries are therefore common, with patients falling and awakening on the floor, unaware of what happened. The prognosis is also worse with this

type of syncope.

Serious heart arrhythmias such as ventricular tachycardia and brady-arrhythmias (slow heart rate, pauses between beats and atrioventricular blocks) are contributing factors.

### A Few Personal Examples of Syncope

This topic is especially personal to me. My mother saw her doctor due to falls on several occasions (with normal office ECG's). She was eventually hospitalized for additional testing, but it took six days for her syncopal cause to show up on a telemetry monitor. She had a heart pause of 9 seconds, and a pacemaker solved her problem.

Similarly, my father-in-law, a retired physician, experienced episodes of lightheadedness and dizziness.

Fortunately, his Apple Watch captured his slow heart rate and even alerted us once when he'd passed out.

After his son had to rescue him from a syncopal episode while swimming, my father-in-law finally got a pacemaker. This solved his problem as well.

These examples from my family represent the potential serious cardiac causes of syncope, specifically regarding life-threatening arrhythmias.



**If no preceding symptoms occur, the syncopal episode is likely due to a serious cardiac problem. Fortunately, the causes of syncope are more often benign.”**

### When Medications Are The Culprit

Orthostatic syncope accounts for about 10% of the cases. It is due to a drop in blood pressure when a person changes from a sitting or supine position to standing.

Blood pressure medications are frequently the culprit.

As a person stands, blood pools in their legs and abdomen; this causes less blood to return to their heart and to be pumped out, causing a drop in blood pressure.

Many times, this drop in blood pressure is enough to cause symptoms of dizziness or

lightheadedness or even cause syncope.

This is due to conditions where the autonomic nervous system does not respond properly to the normal baroreceptor inputs. Conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis, diabetes (one of the most common), amyloidosis and alcoholism are examples.

All anti-hypertensive medications are a major cause of orthostatic hypotension, specifically, alphablockers, beta-blockers, diuretics (such as Furosemide), Clonidine and Hydralazine. Men taking prostate medications need to be very careful, as Tamsulosin or similar alphablockers may cause them to experience dizziness or pass out.

### Diagnosing Syncope

Despite extensive diagnostic testing, a patient's history and the clinician's judgement are usually the best ways to determine the causes of syncope. Astonishingly, healthy 60-year-olds without known cardiovascular disease have a higher risk of death if they've experienced a syncopal episode. In fact, older adults have an 8% mortality rate within a year of their episode.

Please See **NEXT PAGE**

# Florida Blue



# Plans starting at \$0

Plans that include  
**The Villages Health, Shands,  
 Moffitt Cancer Center**



We offer Health, Medicare, Dental, Critical Illness, Travelers, for people over and under 65.  
 You are eligible to make changes to your health coverage if you move.

## A 5-minute call could save you thousands!

Other circumstances may apply. Call to see if you qualify to enroll today.

Brownwood® 352-775-1979

Mulberry (Hwy. 42) 352-775-1131

Creekside - Lake Sumter Landing™ 352-775-1161

Your Local Agency for

**Florida Blue**

Florida Blue and Florida Blue Medicare are Independent Licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Florida Blue is a trade name of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Inc. We comply with applicable Federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. View the Discrimination and Accessibility Notice at [floridablue.com/ndnotice](http://floridablue.com/ndnotice), plus information on our free language assistance services. Or call 1-800-352-2583 (TTY: 1-800-955-8770). Puede ver la notificación de no discriminación y accesibilidad, además de información sobre nuestros servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística en [floridablue.com/es/ndnotice](http://floridablue.com/es/ndnotice). O llame al 1-800-352-2583 (TTY: 1-877-955-8773).

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. President  
**Joseph R. Biden, Jr.**  
Democrat

**Switchboard:** 202-456-2121  
**Comment Line:** 202-456-1111

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

U.S. Senate  
**Rick Scott**  
Republican

**P:** 202-224-5274

716 Hart Senate  
Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senate  
**Marco Rubio**  
Republican

**P:** 202-224-3041

284 Russell Senate  
Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

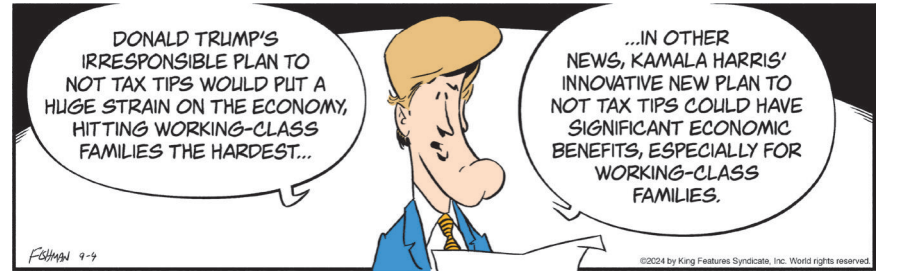
U.S. House  
**Daniel Webster**  
Republican

**P:** 202-225-1002

2184 Rayburn House  
Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

CONSERVATIVE CORNER | MALLARD FILLMORE

By Loren Fishman



SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, TUESDAY & FRIDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, WELLNESS ADVICE | THURSDAY, POSITIVE LIVING | SATURDAY, BY THE NUMBERS

Continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

Typically, a trip to the emergency department for syncope costs thousands of dollars.

Unless clinically indicated, tests such as head CT scans, brain MRI's, echocardiograms, carotid ultrasounds, and cardiac stress testing may be unnecessary and may yield little useful information.

The best, cost-effective diagnostic testing includes orthostatic blood pressures and an electrocardiogram (ECG).

Remember, we are looking for findings on the ECG that indicate serious underlying heart arrhythmias.

If an immediate cause is not noted in the emergency room, a Holter monitor may be recommended.

his small device is worn on a patient's upper left chest and continuously records their heart rhythm.

It is typically worn for 2-7 days, but if it does not capture the arrhythmia during this short duration, a loop recorder can be implanted under the skin of the left upper chest.

This monitor is smaller than a USB flash drive and can be left in place for months to years. It is

typically recommended when the initial work up is negative but there is still suspicion of life-threatening arrhythmias.

**Preventing a Syncopal Episode**

The first step to prevention is learning the causes and avoiding the triggers of syncope, if possible.

If you are afraid of certain things and become faint from seeing them, do your best to avoid them.

If you must stand in one place for long periods, try to tighten your leg muscles and squeeze them or move around. Compression stockings may also be helpful. Avoid tight corsets!

If you have trouble having your blood drawn or receiving injections, inform the technician prior to the procedure and have them lay you down.

Your physician may also prescribe certain medications (B-blockers, Midodrine or Fludrocortisone) depending on your symptoms.

Decreasing the dose of certain medications or eliminating them completely may be necessary if they are reducing your blood pressure too much.

If, however, a serious heart arrhythmia is found, a pacemaker, implantable cardio defibrillator or a cardiac ablation procedure may be recommended as treatment.

**Important Take-Home Message**

Without proper diagnosis and treatment for the underlying cause of syncope, many state laws require that an individual's driver's license be suspended for six months.

The "take home" message is this: Proper hydration is important, and most cases of syncope are due to benign causes that are simple to treat.

However, certain life-threatening cardiac causes must be distinguished, diagnosed and treated appropriately.

Please do not dismiss a syncopal event that does not have a clear-cut etiology as being insignificant.

Instead, inform your physician.

Hopefully, this will keep "swooning" to a minimum here in The Villages.

*Dr. Ronald Grose is a family medicine physician with The Villages Health.*

NUTRITION TIP SHEET

**School has started and fall sports are underway. Fueling the body those sports with healthy nutrient-rich snacks is important. Here are tips to help you make it happen.**



**Charlyn Fargo**

COMMENTARY

**No. 1:** Cut back on added sugars and choose calories that provide good fuel over empty calories. It's like gas in your car — the better the fuel, the better it will run. Young athletes are still growing, so calorie needs vary depending on age, sex, type and amount of activity. How much a teen eats needs to match their activity level and simultaneously support growth and development. Like any other healthy diet, calories should come from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins and heart-healthy fats.

**No. 2:** Breakfast is important to help athletes get all the calories they need. Choose whole-grain cereals with low-fat milk and fruit, whole-grain waffles with peanut butter or Greek yogurt with fruit.

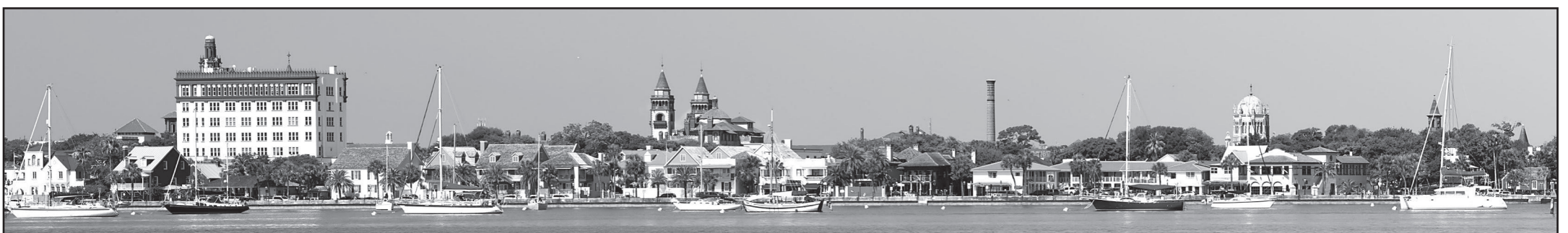
**No. 3:** If your teen prefers to pack a lunch for school, try bean and beef burritos topped with salsa; grilled

chicken sandwiches with coleslaw; and Mediterranean veggie wraps spread with hummus and filled with veggies, feta or other cheese, chicken or turkey and a light vinaigrette. Try to combine protein with vegetables with whole grains.

**No. 4:** For dinner, don't be afraid of carbs — carbohydrates are the most important fuel for an athlete. Carbs are stored as fuel inside muscles — the only fuel the body can use for power moves. For dinner, think whole-wheat spaghetti with a meat sauce, salad, whole grain Italian bread and plenty of milk to drink. It's a great recovery meal after a hard practice or a great before-game meal to load some carbohydrates.

**No. 5:** For snacks, think a hard-boiled egg, fresh fruit, veggies with hummus, string cheese and whole-grain crackers, Greek yogurt or seasoned air-popped popcorn and almonds. Have your athlete drink plenty of water and eat a light snack before practice, such as half a turkey sandwich or an orange and a handful of nuts. Refuel with chocolate milk, a low-sugar sports drink, a banana, Greek yogurt or a handful of trail mix.

*Charlyn Fargo is a registered dietitian with SIU Med School in Springfield, Illinois. For questions, contact her at charfarg@aol.com.*



**St. Augustine | Ponte Vedra Travel Expo**

Tuesday, September 10  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Brownwood Hotel & Spa  
3003 Brownwood Blvd., Wildwood, FL 32163



ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

**FREE:**

ADMISSION  
DOOR PRIZES  
PARKING

Meet & Greet Destination Staff  
from Hotels and Attractions

Each vendor will have in-depth  
information to help you plan your next  
adventure on Florida's Historic Coast!

FLORIDASHISTORICCOAST.COM

**MASTER'S TOUCH GARAGE DOOR & SCREEN**

Specializing in  
Garage Door and Screens  
Service and Installation



LIMITED TIME OFFER: ~~\$349~~ **\$185**

**Tune-Up & Inspection + 10 New Vinyl Wheels**



Enjoy the elevated experience of Lifestyle Screens® and Progressive Screens®. Approved dealer for Progressive Screens®, a best in class, patented, brand designed for extreme durability to withstand hurricanes.

**From installation to production, your custom experience is sourced locally & supplied reliably.**



Experience Haas Door® — our garage door product line.



**CALL TODAY 352-216-0060 • MTGARAGEDOORS.NET**

Established in 2005 with over 20 years of experience serving the residents of Central Florida, including The Villages® Community. Family owned & veteran operated, with traditional values & ethics.