



# ANIT-AGING CORNER



By Carlos E. Mercado, MD

## AGE SUCCESSFULLY, NOT JUST GRACEFULLY

**S**tarting at the age 30, hormone production declines for both men and women at a rate of two to three percent per year. By age 40, the side effects become more pronounced and noticeable. This change usually occurs in health related issues stemming from weight gain, reduced sex drive, mental acuity, and loss of muscle mass among others.

Several years ago, Dr. Carlos Mercado - a board certified geriatrician and owner of Eterna M.D. Medical Rejuvenation Center - noticed some of these same side effects in many of the patients he was seeing. His interest in youthful aging led him to the Cenegenics Medical Institute where he was privileged to be trained by some of the top pioneers in anti-aging medicine.

Dr. Mercado along with his wife Dr. Mara DeLaVega decided to open Eterna M.D. Medical Rejuvenation Center, which also provides VIP Geriatric services. It is located at 1307 S. International Parkway in Lake Mary. Their goal is to help their patients feel good from the inside out. They believe their clients should not only look fabulous, but feel fabulous!

Anti-aging medicine focuses on disease prevention and ways to improve your quality of life. Health issues like: Type II diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, osteopenia or osteoporosis are all avoidable through hormone modulation and lifestyle changes.

Eterna M.D. has become well respected in the field of age management and aesthetic services. They regularly host Health Seminars that cover a variety of topics including age management medicine and ways to improve your beauty through aesthetic services. Dr. Mercado has developed two customized age management programs called “**ETERNAL Program**” and “**DNA REPAIR Program**”. The focus is

on helping patients identify their health related weakness and ways to remedy those deficiencies through bio-identical hormone replacement, nutrition programs, as well as positive lifestyle changes when combined with exercise.

Gates of Seminole magazine recently spoke with Dr. Mercado about his exclusive “**ETERNAL Program**” and “**DNA REPAIR Program**” along with finding out what are the benefits of anti-aging medicine.

What is anti-aging medicine or age management?

Anti-aging medicine has its roots in Europe where the clinical assessment looks at the whole patient - their energy level, posture, skin, hair, mental attitude, hormones, and other factors. Physicians take the time to get to know their patients instead of just looking at charts, tests, and lab work. Having studied abroad, Dr. Mercado found that medicine in our country is good at handling serious life ailments; when it comes to prevention, he noticed medical science here seems to be lagging behind.

Why did you open Eterna M.D.?

In my geriatrics practice, I found that the medical system only treats the problem or the symptoms with medicine or hospitalization. It does not address prevention. I opened Eterna M.D. to take a proactive role in disease prevention through hormone replacement and anti-aging programs. Heart disease runs in my family and many of my extended family members have died young of cardiovascular disease. Had I waited for our general medical system to develop preventative measures, I may have not been available for this interview.

What is the “**ETERNAL Program**” or “**DNA REPAIR Program**”?

The DNA REPAIR Program is a personalized age

management plan that includes bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, recommendations for diet, exercise, nutritional and antioxidant supplementation while closely monitoring the patient.

It starts with a diagnostic workup to establish a patient's hormonal, metabolic, and physical baseline. The patient will fill our detailed questionnaire; undergo blood tests and a 24-hour urine collection to check hormone levels. We then perform DNA testing for 18 genes. We can identify defective genes which we then counteract with good nutrition, supplements, and lifestyle changes. We look at insulin sensitivity, which predisposes one to diabetes and inflammation at the cellular level. This factor can cause cancer, stroke, heart attacks, and other ailments. Lastly, we look at free radical activity in the genes, a cause of premature aging.

Once I receive the patient-questionnaire answers and the lab results, the patient returns for a comprehensive physical examination. All the information gathered through this research process is then used to structure a customized plan based on DNA, tests, and clinical information.

Why is the 24-hour urine collection important?

Medical science typically only measures estrogen in the blood. A 24-hour urine collection checks all estrogen variations - all metabolites, both good and bad. This in-depth information allows us to better manipulate the estrogens in the right direction. In Europe, the 24-hour urine collection is the gold standard of hormone replacement. In my opinion, no one should undergo hormone modulation without this test.

How do you manage the hormones?

I use bio-identical hormones. Those are the same hormones our bodies make. I use compounding pharmacies to customize the dosage and delivery method of each hormone.

What are the benefits of bio-identical hormone replacement?

There are multiple benefits. One of the main ones is increased vitality. In addition, hormone modulation can improve sexual function, weight loss, increase muscle mass, lower body fat, improve mental acuity, sleep quality, and a person's mental attitude. I have a good number of patients who have been taking anti-depressants and/or anti-anxiety medicines that no longer need them since undergoing hormone modulation.

At what age should someone consider an anti-aging program?

After the age of 30, a person should consider having a DNA test and hormone evaluation to get a base line of where their hormone

levels are and be equipped to take action - if needed - before a real decline process begins.

Can men benefit from hormone replacement?

As men age, they experience andropause which is a decrease in testosterone and other hormone levels. There are two types of andropause. Acute andropause can happen around the age of 40, with symptoms including joint pains, anxiety, panic attacks, and sexual dysfunction. A slower progression of andropause causes fat around the abdomen, depression, and a lack of concentration. Most people think that testosterone deficiency surfaces as a lack of sexual drive. Actually, it starts with many of the above-mentioned symptoms.

Is the **ETERNAL Program or DNA REPAIR Program** covered by Insurance?

This is an investment in your quality of life much like when you purchase a luxury car or vacation, splurge on designer clothing, or simply choose high quality foods in your every-day diet. The benefits of age management are priceless in terms of your ability to live life at its fullest. The potential cost savings of warding off age related diseases becomes your bonus. I have patients in their 90's actively being treated for hormone replacement and DNA repair.

Eterna M.D. also has a Geriatric Practice, what does it offer?

My philosophy is "**AGE SUCCESSFULLY, NOT JUST GRACEFULLY**"; contrary to the belief of other people in the field. This is and should be a VIP program customized specifically for our elderly population. The program includes a comprehensive geriatric assessment and priority access to the physician. We are able to attend to our patient the same day or within 24 hours of the call. This allows for easy access to the hospital, coordination of care, use of electronic medical records, faster hospitalization, strict coordination of care after hospitalization, and enrollment in a post-discharge "**VITALITY PROGRAM**". It is important to note that during this entire process we maintain full communication with the designated family members.

At our anti-aging and rejuvenation center, the physician becomes the patient's health advocate and serves as the point of contact for the coordination and delivery of health care services.

For more information on the Geriatric side of Eterna MD's practice please visit [www.geriaticsmid.com](http://www.geriaticsmid.com)



The image shows a business card for Eterna M.D. Medical Rejuvenation Center. The logo features a stylized blue flower-like shape composed of four petals. Below the logo, the text reads "eterna m.d." in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with "MEDICAL REJUVENATION CENTER" in a smaller font underneath. The slogan "It's Possible!" is prominently displayed in a bold, italicized font. At the bottom, the address "1307 S. International Pkwy., Ste 2091, Lake Mary, FL 32746" is listed, along with the phone number "407-771-0404", fax number "407-771-0405", and website "www.eternamd.com".

For a list of scheduled seminars and more information on available services visit them online at [www.eternamd.com](http://www.eternamd.com).

To schedule a consultation call 407-771-0404