

# 50+ HealthConnection

INSIDE

News from Senior Care Network | Spring 2023

2

## Taking charge

Putting your best gut forward.

3

## Especially for caregivers

Preventing elder abuse fraud.

4

## Ask the doctor

Q&amp;A with Norman Chien, MD.

5

## On the younger side

Stay fit and healthy this summer.

6

Senior Care Network is here for you.

## INSERT

### Calendar of events

May – August

### Around the campus

### Helpful resources

## Aging unbound.

**A**ging should be respected and not stigmatized. Explore the positive aspects of growing older, take charge in the fight against ageism and learn how you can lead an active life by attending our Noon Hour lecture on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 12:30 p.m., held via Zoom. Senior Care Network Director Eileen Koons and our expert panelists — Pamela Weatherspoon, MBA, vice president of enterprise diversity, equity, inclusion, engagement and wellness at Huntington Hospital; Akila Gibbs, executive director of the Pasadena Senior Center; and Huntington Health Physician Stuart Miller, MD — will share their insights on *Aging Unbound*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



## Avoid elder abuse scams.

**Are you receiving suspicious phone calls or emails from individuals claiming to be someone they're not?** Learn how to identify, prevent and report common elder abuse scams at our *Don't Be Scammed!* Noon Hour lecture on Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. Join Ralph Pascual, PhD, training manager with Adult Protective Services in Los Angeles County, and Miles McNeeley, LCSW, director of elder abuse prevention at WISE & Healthy Aging, via Zoom for an in-depth discussion about elder abuse fraud. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



## Stay aware of Alzheimer's.

### *Forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging.*

But when does memory loss indicate something more serious, like early Alzheimer's disease?



On Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at

12:30 p.m., join us via Zoom for our Noon Hour lecture *Alzheimer's and Brain Health* as Linda Loera, program and education manager at the Alzheimer's Association – California Southland Chapter, and Roxy Kirakosyan, MPH, associate director of education and outreach at

Alzheimer's Los Angeles, discuss everything you need to know about Alzheimer's — including free local programs and services. See *Calendar of Events* for details.

# Putting your best gut forward.



**Y**our gut is alive. The gastrointestinal tract — more commonly known as the gut — is home to trillions of bacteria and other microscopic organisms that make up the gut microbiome. This biome influences different aspects of our health.

## What is the gut microbiome?

Your body is full of many wonders, both big and small. Sometimes, the smallest parts can have the biggest impact on your health. Throughout your body, the presence of microorganisms — also known as microbes — is a common feature. Microbes often find a home in a “pocket” of the large intestine called the cecum. The microbes here are commonly known as the gut microbiome.

## Why is it so important to your health?

Research shows that your gut microbiome — and the diversity of microbes within it — influences different bodily functions and aspects of our health. Specifically, the gut microbiome can impact:

**Gut health.** An imbalance in the gut microbiome can affect overall gut health and may even play a role in intestinal diseases. Gasses and chemical byproducts of gut microbes can also contribute to symptoms of intestinal discomfort.

**Heart health.** Microbial diversity in the gut can produce chemical compounds that affect heart health very differently. In some cases, they can promote healthy cholesterol. In others, these microbes can increase the risk of heart disease.

**Immune health.** The gut microbiome is also a key factor in the

health of your immune system. For example, gut microbes communicate with immune cells to influence how your body responds to infection and diseases.

**Brain health.** Through brain chemistry and connections with the central nervous system, the gut microbiome is even related to our overall brain health. One example of this is serotonin — an antidepressant neurotransmitter used in the brain — which has been shown to be mostly produced in the gut.

## How do I improve my gut microbiome?

Taking care of your gut health is particularly important as you age because microbial diversity often declines in older adults. The good news is you can enhance your gut microbiome through your diet. Being intentional about what you eat is the first and most important step in improving the overall ecosystem of microbes in your gut. For those with no dietary restrictions, eating a diverse range of foods — including fiber rich food such as fruits and beans, for example — can promote an increase in healthy bacteria. The consumption of probiotic foods like artichokes, oats and bananas can also help to cultivate healthier gut microbes. Taking probiotic supplements, eating foods rich in polyphenols (like cherries, strawberries, red grapes, spinach, hazelnuts, coffee and black tea), and adopting a plant-based diet are also some ways you can develop a healthier gut microbiome — and ultimately improve your overall health.

Sources: Healthline; and Gut Microbes.

## Mental Health Month

Throughout Mental Health Month in May, Huntington Health’s Della Martin Center (DMC) will present informative online lectures and discussions on various mental health topics. Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/DMC](https://huntingtonhealth.org/DMC) for more information on schedule and topics. You may also call DMC’s access department at (626) 397-2323 for more information.

## Important information about Medi-Cal

Are you a Medi-Cal beneficiary? California will soon restart yearly eligibility reviews to decide if you still qualify for coverage. Be sure Medi-Cal has your current address and contact information to ensure you receive your renewal form. Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/SCN](https://huntingtonhealth.org/SCN) to learn more or call our Resource Center at (626) 397-3110 (option 1) if you have questions.



## Especially for caregivers

# Preventing elder abuse fraud.

**N**o one wants to see their elderly loved ones fall victim to a crime. Yet, older adults are disproportionately targeted by fraudulent scams. In fact, in 2021, more than 92,000 victims over the age of 60 reported losses of \$1.7 billion to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3). This represents a 74 percent increase in losses over 2020.

Losing money or possessions to scams, fraud, and exploitation can be especially devastating to older adults, who may not be able to earn back what they've lost. In most cases, though, scams can be prevented before they start — and, as a caregiver, you can encourage your loved ones to take steps to protect themselves against fraud.

### 1. **Appoint a trusted contact for accounts and investments.**

Your loved one can contact his bank or brokerage or visit its website for information on how to add you as a trusted contact. A bank or financial institution will then be able to reach out to you about questionable activity. Similarly, if your loved one gives you view-only access, you can help him monitor transactions on his accounts to be sure there isn't any fraudulent activity.

### 2. **Sign up for a service that tracks bank accounts, investments and credit cards.**

Tools such as EverSafe and LifeLock can provide your loved one with frontline protection in detecting scams, fraud and identity theft. These services can also be set up to notify a trusted contact of potential fraud. Some services may even offer support in reporting and recouping any losses.

### 3. **Stay in touch.**

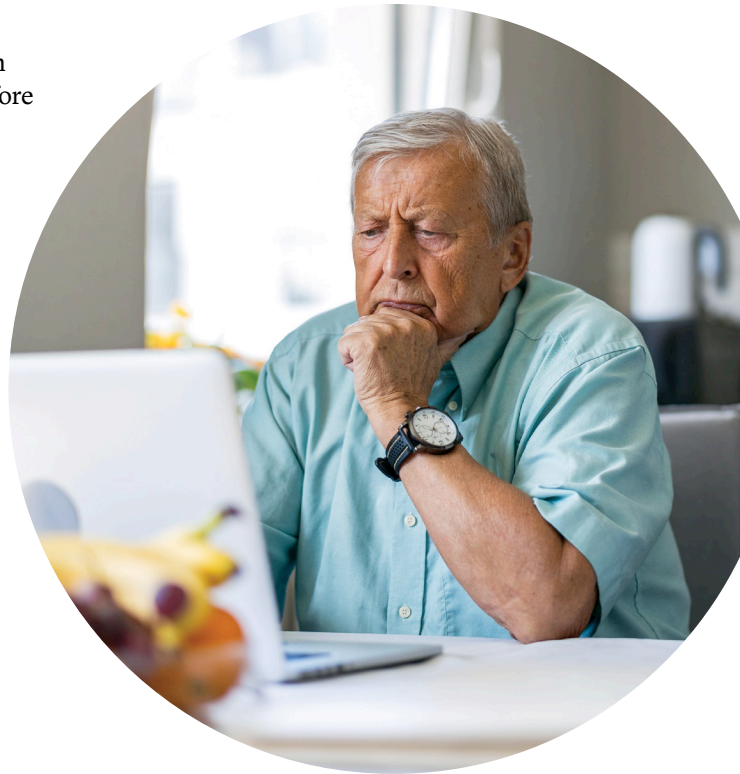
Reminding your loved one of what to look out for can go a long way in safeguarding his financial security. Encourage him to consult you before making big financial decisions. It's also a good idea to tell him not to answer calls from numbers he doesn't recognize, in order to avoid possible scams.

If your loved one does fall victim to elder fraud, it's important to report the incident right away, even if you don't have all the details. You may file a complaint with the IC3 by visiting **ic3.gov** or by contacting your local Adult Protective Services office. The U.S. Department of Justice's National Elder Fraud Hotline (833-372-8311) is also a great resource and can help guide you through reporting procedures.

It can be natural to experience feelings of frustration if your loved one is the target of a scam. However, it's important to have empathy. Chances are that he already feels regret and may even be embarrassed. If you remain calm, it will increase the likelihood that your loved one will alert you to suspicious contact in the future, rather than keeping silent about it.

*To learn more about common elder abuse scams, we invite you to attend Senior Care Network's Noon Hour lecture Don't Be Scammed! on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. See Calendar of Events for details.*

*Sources: AARP; FBI; IC3; and U.S. Department of Justice.*



---

*Are you a family caregiver? Senior Care Network is here to help. We offer professional assistance; referrals to important resources; and support and educational groups specifically designed for family caregivers. For more information, call us at (626) 397-3110 or (800) 664-4664. You may also email us at [50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com](mailto:50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com).*



## Ask the doctor

### Q&A with Norman Chien, MD

Norman Chien, MD, is a  
Huntington Health-affiliated geriatrician.

**Q.** Recently, my mother has been misplacing her car keys and forgetting names. Is that normal?

**A.** It's normal to forget things from time to time, and it's normal to become somewhat more forgetful as you age. Below are some examples of normal forgetfulness — and ones that aren't normal — to help you monitor your mother's condition.

**Forgetting words.** One of the most common types of memory retrieval failure is having a word stuck on the tip of your tongue (blocking). This is a normal phenomenon, but there is one caveat to this rule: Blocking on dozens of words a day and/or failure to retrieve common nouns (e.g., pen, spoon, bicycle) could be a sign of a more serious problem.

**Forgetting where you parked or where you put your keys.**

It's normal to forget where you parked your car because you simply didn't pay attention. However, wondering how you arrived at the destination or not recognizing your car when you're standing right in front of it could be indicative of serious memory problems.

Misplacing your keys is also normal. But finding your keys

in places like the refrigerator or microwave is not. Similarly, finding them and wondering who they belong to or what they're used for may be cause for concern.

**Forgetting how to do routine activities.** Muscle memory is remarkably stable over time. It's not normal to be stumped by regular tasks you've long known how to do (such as using your coffee maker or laundry machine). This could be a sign of Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia.

If you're concerned about your mother's cognitive state, encourage her to talk to a health care professional, who can conduct a comprehensive assessment and recommend ways to help her strengthen her brain health.

**Q.** I tested positive for COVID-19 three months ago and have tested negative ever since, but I still feel fatigued all the time. Should I be concerned about long COVID-19?

**A.** Most people infected with COVID-19 experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, and recover without requiring special treatment. For some patients, however, symptoms of the virus remain, even months

after they were first diagnosed. These patients may have long COVID-19.

Long COVID-19 is still poorly understood, and symptoms can be wildly different from one patient to the next. Patients may experience multi-organ problems with a broad spectrum of manifestations. Symptoms may include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; fatigue; brain fog; cough; chest or stomach pain; headache; heart palpitations; joint or muscle pain; diarrhea; insomnia; fever; lightheadedness; rash; mood changes; depression; change in smell or taste; and/or changes in menstrual cycle.

For many of these patients, symptoms can be debilitating and negatively impact quality of life. While there is no cure for long COVID-19, symptoms can be managed with treatment. Huntington Health has established a Long COVID-19 Recovery Clinic (LCRC) to provide comprehensive, specialized care to patients with long COVID symptoms. With a doctor's referral, you can make an appointment at our LCRC by calling (626) 397-8410.

*COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of developing long COVID by lowering the chances of contracting the virus in the first place. Be sure to stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines. Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/](https://huntingtonhealth.org/) COVID-19 to learn more. See also Calendar of Events.*

*Sources: CDC; TED Courses; and Time.*

*This column is for information only. Please discuss any treatment options with your doctor.*

## On the younger side

# Stay fit and healthy this summer.

**A**s the days get longer and the weather warms up, the summer brings more opportunities to get outside and stay physically active. Whether you take a morning walk, play pickleball or go for a swim, there are many ways you can make regular exercise a part of your routine while getting vitamin D from the sunshine.

When creating your own exercise routine — especially over the summer months — pace yourself and avoid overuse injuries. Consider starting with an easy and light regimen, and steadily increase the intensity as your body adjusts. Depending on the weather, also consider exercising in the morning or late in the evening to take advantage of cooler temperatures.

Being active is just one way to stay healthy this summer. Here are some other tips that can help you stay healthy as you enjoy the season.

### Be cool.

Avoid spending too much time in the sun during peak hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) and seek out air-conditioned spaces, such as malls or libraries, to beat the heat. Consider a morning swim to cool off and get some exercise. Wearing loose-fitting, lightweight clothing that covers your skin, can also help keep your body temperature regulated.

### Protect against the sun.

Protect your skin from the harmful effects of the sun's rays by wearing sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. Apply it generously and frequently, especially if you're spending time outdoors. Opt for lighter colors to reflect the sun's rays and help keep you cooler.

### Stay hydrated.

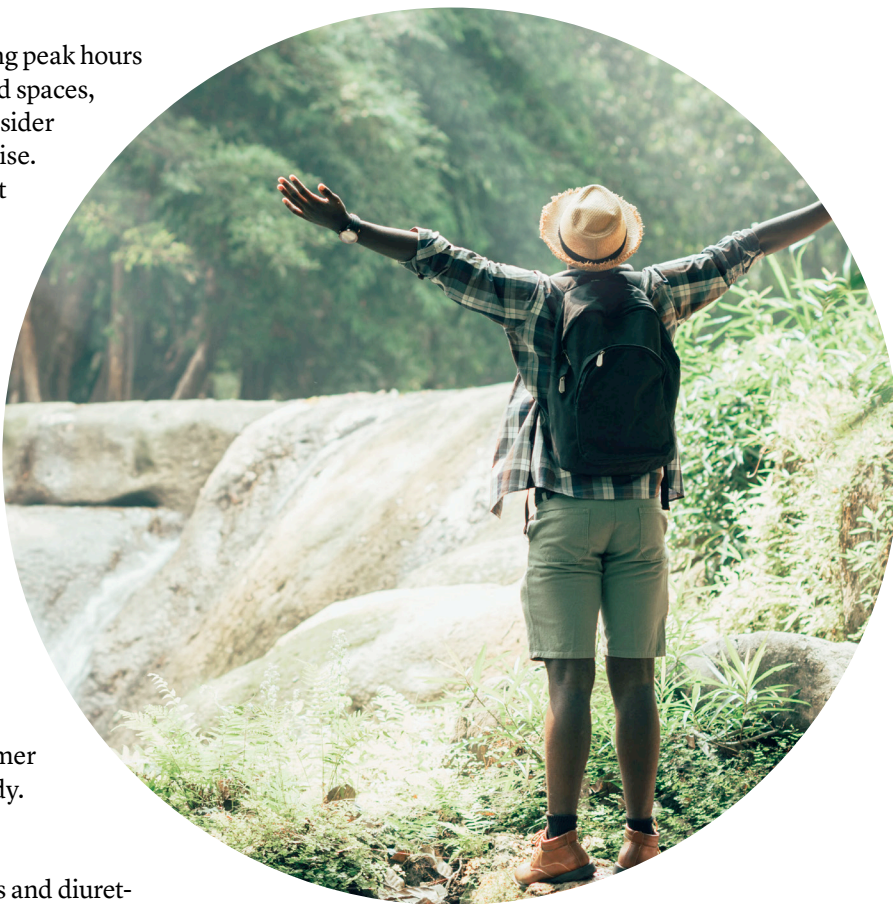
It's crucial to stay hydrated during the summer, so you'll want to be sure to drink plenty of water. It's also important to be conscious of your alcohol and caffeine consumption in warmer weather, which can further dehydrate your body.

### Review your medications.

Some common medications such as antibiotics and diuretics can raise your risk of photosensitivity — a chemically induced change in the skin. Photosensitivity can make you more sensitive to sunlight and can cause sunburn-like symptoms, a rash or other unwanted side effects. If you're unsure whether sunlight can interfere with your medication, be sure to talk to your doctor.

*To learn more about how you can stay active during the summer, register to attend Senior Care Network's Noon Hour lecture Stay Fit in the Hot Months on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. See Calendar of Events for details.*

*Sources: Help4Seniors; and AARP.*



**Senior Care Network**

100 W. California Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
[huntingtonhealth.org/SCN](http://huntingtonhealth.org/SCN)  
Return Service Requested

**We speak your language.** We are committed to providing you with compassionate care regardless of the language you speak. ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al (626) 397-5211. 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 (626) 397-5211。



## Senior Care Network is here for you.

**S**enior Care Network (SCN) helps improve the lives of local seniors and adults with disabilities. We offer care coordination services, support groups for caregivers, classes for those affected by memory loss and other programs that make a real difference for our community. Two of the programs we provide for people on Medi-Cal are the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) and Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP). ALW allows older adults and adults with disabilities to choose to live in an assisted living community with extra support and care coordination services — rather than a skilled nursing facility. MSSP provides care coordination services to seniors living at home with physical and/or cognitive impairments that put them at risk of nursing home placement. Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/SCN](http://huntingtonhealth.org/SCN) to learn more about SCN, including eligibility for ALW and MSSP.

**50+ members** receive informative publications, including event calendars, from Senior Care Network throughout the year. If you received this newsletter and are not yet a 50+ member, you can sign up for free by visiting [huntingtonhealth.org/50+](http://huntingtonhealth.org/50+). If you prefer, you can leave a message on our membership line at (626) 397-3147 or (800) 664-4664 and a member of our staff will be in touch to sign you up by phone. Alternatively, you may email us at [50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com](mailto:50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com). In addition to sending our future publications, we'll also provide you with a membership card so you can take advantage of membership benefits, including a discount at Huntington Hospital's cafeteria and S. Robert and Denise Zeilstra Gift Shop.

Since 1984, Senior Care Network has worked to positively impact the health and well-being of older adults, adults with disabilities and their families throughout our community. Reaching thousands of individuals each year, we educate on aging; link to in-home and community services; and increase the skills of caregivers, service providers and others. Our models of eldercare have earned us a national reputation for excellence and innovation.

**Eileen Koons, MSW**  
*Director*

**Kristen Tachiki, LCSW**  
*50+ HealthConnection  
Program Coordinator*

(626) 397-3110 or (800) 664-4664 | Fax (626) 397-2982 | [huntingtonhealth.org/SCN](http://huntingtonhealth.org/SCN)

## FRIDAYS, AUG. 4 through SEPT. 8 Taking Care of You: Powerful Tools for Caregivers. 10 – 11:30 a.m. via online platform

This six-session online course — designed for family caregivers of adults — will provide information you can use to increase your self-care skills and help you manage difficult situations. Instructors include expert staff from Senior Care Network. Please call Karla Palma, MSW, at (626) 397-8135 to register. Class size is limited so be sure to register early. Cost: \$25 for digital copy of workbook or \$30 for hard copy of workbook (plus shipping). Scholarships are available for those unable to afford the cost.

## Noon Hour

**Information you can use to pursue good health and age well, while remaining safe at home.** Noon Hour lectures are held via Zoom, and a call-in option is also available. All events begin at 12:30 p.m. Each last about an hour and include time for questions. Participation is free.

### There are two ways to join:

**By computer, smartphone or tablet.** Sign up at <https://qrco.de/bdAJec> or scan the QR code with your smartphone. You'll receive an email with instructions on how to join the Zoom webinar.



**By phone.** At the time of the event, call (564) 217-2000, then enter the following when prompted:  
Meeting ID: 862 5512 7925#  
Participant ID: press #  
Meeting Password: 599251#

*If you need help using Zoom or would like to join by phone only, please call Senior Care Network's membership line at (626) 397-3147.*

### Wed., May 10 | Aging unbound.

During Older Americans Month, join us as Senior Care Network Director **Eileen Koons** talks with expert panelists — **Pamela Weatherspoon**, MBA, vice president of enterprise diversity, equity, inclusion, engagement and wellness at Huntington Hospital; **Akila Gibbs**, executive director of the Pasadena Senior Center; and Huntington Health Physician **Stuart Miller**, MD — about how to combat ageism and share how you can stay active in your community.



### Wed., May 24 | Life transitions and older adults.

In honor of Mental Health Month, join us as psychiatrist **Colin Dias**, MD, shares about how to deal with grief and other forms of loss, as well as the warning signs of depression.



### Wed., June 14 | Alzheimer's and brain health.

Come learn about Alzheimer's from panelists **Roxy Kirakosyan**, MPH, associate director of education and outreach at Alzheimer's Los Angeles, and **Linda Loera**, program and education manager at Alzheimer's Association – California Southland Chapter. The panel will also share information about free local Alzheimer's educational programs and support services.

### Wed., June 28 | Don't be scammed!

**Ralph Pascual**, PhD, training manager with Adult Protective Services in Los Angeles County, and **Miles McNeeley**, LCSW, director of elder abuse prevention at WISE & Healthy Aging, will discuss elder abuse fraud and how you can avoid being scammed.

### Wed., July 12 | Stay fit in the hot months.

At the height of the summer, physical therapist **Blair Chang**, PT, DPT, will share tips on how to stay fit and have fun during the hottest months of the year.



### Wed., July 26 | The benefits of permaculture.

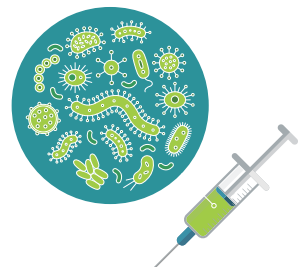
Rescheduled from April 2023! **Gina Bardo**, RN, will discuss how you can learn from permaculture practices and the laws of nature to reduce stress and improve your mental health.

### Wed., August 9 | Mohs surgery and aesthetic skin treatments.

Hear from dermatologist **Joanna Chan**, MD, about Mohs surgery — a procedure used to treat skin cancer. Dr. Chan will also discuss a variety of cosmetic dermatology procedures.

### Wed., August 23 | Keep up to date on COVID-19.

During National Immunization Awareness Month, come hear the latest news about COVID-19 from **Kimberly Shriner**, MD, medical director of infection, prevention and control. Dr. Shriner will also share an update on Huntington Health's Long COVID-19 Recovery Clinic (LCRC).



## Around the campus

### Expert cancer care.



**Huntington Cancer Center**, an affiliate of Cedars-Sinai Cancer, offers exceptional cancer care, close to home. We recently welcomed nine new cancer specialists to our cancer program. These specialists are expert oncologists and cancer surgeons. They each bring extensive knowledge in a wide array of expertise — including reconstructive microsurgery, gynecological cancer, breast cancer, melanoma, surgical oncology, liver cancer, lung cancer, immunotherapy, supportive care and many others.

Our new oncology specialists provide patients with innovative treatment options and access to Cedars-Sinai Cancer clinical trials. They have joined our dedicated team of nurse navigators and other cancer professionals in Huntington Cancer Center. Together, they are led by medical director Howard Kaufman, MD, a cancer specialist who has practiced at Huntington for 17 years.

Thanks to our recent affiliation with Cedars-Sinai Cancer, we have also recently expanded our cancer services to include a new on-site infusion center. As always, we offer extensive support services, including an integrative oncology program.

Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/cancer](https://huntingtonhealth.org/cancer) to learn more about our trusted cancer program — now powered by a world-class health care system.

## Helpful resources.

### Huntington Collection

Visit Huntington Collection's new location at 2670 East Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena. Purchases made at this unique resale shop help fund Senior Care Network's important work supporting seniors and other vulnerable adults. Donations are welcome and tax deductible. The Collection is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please note the entrance to the store is located off of San Gabriel Boulevard. Call (626) 535-2468 or visit [huntingtonhealth.org/huntingtoncollection](https://huntingtonhealth.org/huntingtoncollection) to learn more.

### Huntington Health's Calendar of Events

Visit [huntingtonhealth.org/events](https://huntingtonhealth.org/events) to view classes and events offered by Huntington Health, including virtual support groups. You may also call Senior Care Network's membership line at (626) 397-3147 or (800) 664-4664 or email us at [50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com](mailto:50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com) for assistance.



### Senior Care Network Resource Center

If you're caring for an older adult or an adult with a disability, need information on community resources for seniors, or have questions about aging, the kind and knowledgeable professionals in our Resource Center can help. Call (626) 397-3110 or (800) 664-4664 (option 1) to learn more.



### Senior CareLine

Are you looking to connect and laugh with someone new? Senior CareLine is a free service that will match you with a friendly volunteer to chat with by phone from time to time. To get connected to this service, call our membership line at (626) 397-3147 or (800) 664-4664. You may also email us at [50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com](mailto:50+membership@huntingtonhospital.com).

### Support groups for caregivers

When caring for an aging relative or close friend, participating in a support group can make a difference. Online and in-person support groups are available, offering opportunities to share feelings and exchange information and ideas. Call our Resource Center at (626) 397-3110 (option 1) for a referral.



[huntingtonhealth.org/SCN](https://huntingtonhealth.org/SCN)