

50+ HealthConnection

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Every October, we celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month by educating the public and sharing information that can save lives. On Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 12:30 p.m., join us via Zoom as Ruth Williamson, MD, medical director of radiation oncology at Huntington Cancer Center, an affiliate of Cedars-Sinai Cancer, and Jeannie Shen, MD, medical director of the breast program, share information about *Breast Cancer Treatment*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Falls can be prevented.

One in four Americans age 65 and older experiences a fall each year. Falls can lead to injury — but, fortunately, they're often preventable. To learn about reducing your risk of falling at home, join Alison Birnie, RN, MSHCM, NE-BC, clinical director at Huntington Health, at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, via Zoom for *Preventing Falls at Home*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Reducing your diabetes risk.

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects more than 37 million Americans. It can result in serious health problems, including kidney failure, blindness and even death, but you can take steps to lower your risk. On Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 12:30 p.m., Huntington Health community outreach registered nurse Kathy Eastwood, BSN, will share information and prevention strategies via Zoom during *Diabetes Education and Empowerment*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Outsmarting arthritis.

Arthritis is a common disorder that affects your joints and can cause pain and inflammation. For the nearly 60 million adults in the U.S. with this condition, it can be difficult to move or stay active.

You can't always prevent arthritis. Some causes, such as age and family history, are out of your control. But you can take steps to reduce your risk of arthritis or delay its onset. Read on to learn more.

- **Build some muscle.** Lifting weights can help strengthen the muscles that surround your joints, so that they're supported and protected. When it's time to bend, the more work your muscles can take on, the better.

- **Stretch.** Daily stretching is another great way to keep your joints lubricated, your muscles strong and flexible, and your range of motion intact. Remember to stretch your hands as well, particularly if you spend a lot of time typing or texting. Give your muscles a chance to relax and lengthen.

- **Eat your omega-3s.** Omega-3 fatty acids have a number of health benefits, including reducing inflammation in the body. Try eating fish high in omega-3s, like salmon, trout, mackerel or sardines, twice a week. If you're vegan or vegetarian, some nuts and seeds such as walnuts also contain omega-3s.

- **Keep it low impact.** Low-impact exercise is joint-friendly. It gets your heart rate up and your muscles in motion without putting stress on your joints. Walking, cycling and swimming fit the criteria. Find a workout you love to ensure you'll keep it up.

- **Stay a healthy weight.** Excess weight puts strain on weight-bearing joints like knees and hips, which can lead to arthritis. The good news is that even a small amount of weight loss can make a difference: With every pound you lose, you remove four pounds of pressure on your knees and six pounds of pressure on your hips.

- **Kick the habit.** Smoking is a risk factor for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), an inflammatory disorder that affects the joints. Since smoking causes inflammation throughout your body, quitting can help protect against RA.

- **Avoid injury.** Preventing injury goes a long way toward keeping yourself healthy, now and in the future. That's because if you injure your joints, you can damage cartilage and cause it to wear out more quickly. Be sure you always warm up before playing sports and don't "tough it out" or "breathe through it" when pain occurs. Listen to what your body is telling you, especially when it's joint-related, and adjust accordingly.

Practicing healthy habits like these can reduce your risk for arthritis — and help improve your overall health and well-being.

Sources: CDC; AARP; Healthline; and Women's Health.



Especially for caregivers

How to hold a successful family meeting.

Taking on caregiving responsibilities for a loved one can be tough, even under the best of circumstances. Working cooperatively with other family members can help lighten the load, but it can also present challenges. It can be helpful to call a family meeting to help you communicate and make collective decisions. The following are some simple guidelines you can use.

Before your meeting.

- Decide who will be invited. You should include everyone who's going to be affected by the caregiving decisions: spouses, siblings, other family members, and friends or neighbors.
- Consider having a two-part meeting. The first part can be held without the loved one in your care, so that you can openly discuss concerns, fears and other issues before the larger conversation begins. The second part can then include your loved one.
- Choose a neutral setting for the meeting.
- Prepare an agenda to help guide the conversation.
- Think about what, if any, potential challenges may arise. If you think an objective third party would be helpful to facilitate the meeting, reach out to one, whether it be a trusted member of the clergy, a respected family friend, a family counselor or a professional mediator.

During your meeting.

- Create an atmosphere of respect and safety. People are much more likely to be forthcoming when they know that confidentiality is a requirement.
- Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements. Particularly in emotional settings, it's important to speak your truth (“I feel overwhelmed”) rather than assign intent to others (“You don't care how much I'm doing!”).
- Take notes or select a designated note-taker in the group.
- End the meeting by making sure everyone understands what has been agreed to.
- Schedule a time for your next meeting.

After your meeting.

- Document in writing what decisions were made and what each person will do.
- Share the document with everyone who attended the meeting. This will help keep everyone on the same page about who agreed to do what, and when.

Planning a family meeting is one of the topics discussed in Senior Care Network's Powerful Tools for Caregivers class. Content for this article was drawn in part from the “The Caregiver Helpbook” used in the class. Powerful Tools for Caregivers helps family caregivers take better care of themselves while caring for a loved one. See Calendar of Events for registration information.

Sources: Powerful Tools for Caregivers; Family Caregiver Alliance; and NIH.



Are you a family caregiver? We invite you to attend Senior Care Network's Noon Hour lecture Taking Care of the Caregiver on Wednesday, November 29, 2023. See Calendar of Events for details.



Ask the doctor

Q&A with Norman Chien, MD

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

Q How do I know if I'm up to date with my COVID-19 vaccine?

A. While the U.S. has ended the public health emergency that doesn't mean the COVID-19 virus has stopped spreading. COVID-19 remains a threat in our community — and vaccination remains the best way to prevent serious illness and hospitalization.

The CDC has taken steps to simplify the COVID-19 vaccination schedule for most individuals. Everyone ages 6 years and older should get one updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to be considered up to date. The updated vaccines are called “updated” because they protect against both the original virus that causes COVID-19 and the Omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5.

For some specific groups, the risk of contracting COVID-19 is greater. People 65 years or older and/or those who are immunocompromised may get additional doses of the updated COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you're unsure about what is right for you.

Visit **huntingtonhealth.org/COVID-19** to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, including information on where you can get vaccinated.

Q. Recently, my father's behavior has become increasingly erratic. How do I know if he is struggling with his mental health?

A. Mental health issues can be difficult to identify and challenging to address. They can also be dangerous — and even life-threatening, so it's important to keep an eye out for warning signs, such as:

- **Lack of energy.** Having low or no energy, as well as eating or sleeping too much or too little, are potential symptoms of emotional distress.
- **Social isolation.** Withdrawing from others could be another symptom.
- **Difficulty concentrating.** Making more mistakes than usual and being easily distracted is a possible indicator that something is wrong.
- **Loss of motivation.** Changes in motivation, especially loss of interest in once-enjoyable activities, could be cause for concern.
- **Changes in mood or attitude.** Erratic mood swings or increased cynicism, irritability and/or restlessness may warrant an assessment.
- **Increased absences.** Repeatedly failing to show up for work or social

engagements could be a sign someone is hurting.

- **Substance use.** Excessive smoking, drinking, or using drugs, including prescription medications, would be a definite cause for concern.

If your dad is exhibiting any of these warning signs, he may be experiencing a mental health crisis. Check in with him and encourage him to speak to a mental health professional. Helping him schedule an appointment — and accompanying him there — could help ensure he gets the support he needs. Treatment may include antidepressants, talk therapy such as dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) or a combination of the two.

Huntington Health's Della Martin Center (DMC) also provides a wide range of comprehensive, confidential and compassionate mental health care services and referrals. To learn more about DMC, call (626) 397-2323.

If you or your loved one is in crisis, don't wait to get help.

- Call 911.
- Go to the nearest emergency department.
- Call or text 988 to be connected with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24 hours a day.

Sources: CDC and AARP.



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

On the younger side

Disconnecting for your health.

In today's society, there's no doubt that technology is ubiquitous. It allows us to manage information and communicate with each other fast and efficiently. There is, however, a darker side to technology — and people of all ages should be mindful of how it can affect physical and mental health. Research shows that frequent technology use can adversely impact function and behavior. Extensive screen time and technology use can lead to:

Poor sleep hygiene. The screens on electronic devices such as smartphones, computers, tablets and televisions emit blue light that can disrupt our natural sleep cycles. This can lead to unsatisfactory sleep, which in turn can impact productivity, attention span, memory, mood and recovery.

Weight gain. Greater reliance on screens in our everyday lives can lead to more time spent seated and less time spent exercising, which may cause weight gain.

Other physical problems. Sitting in a fixed position for long periods of time can also cause neck and back problems and change your posture over time, potentially impacting your health and physical functioning. Additionally, eye strain from extensive screen time can result in vision problems.

Addiction. Yes, you can be addicted to your devices! An overdependence on technology can lead to addiction, with symptoms such as mood changes, withdrawal and functional impairment.

It's important to take steps to safeguard your mental and physical well-being from the potentially negative effects of technology. Disconnecting from technology may look different for everyone. Here are a few ideas:

Take a break. Get up from your desk and away from your computer every hour during the work day, even if it's just for a few minutes.

Read. Pick up a book at home instead of your phone.

Socialize. Spend more time with your friends and family.

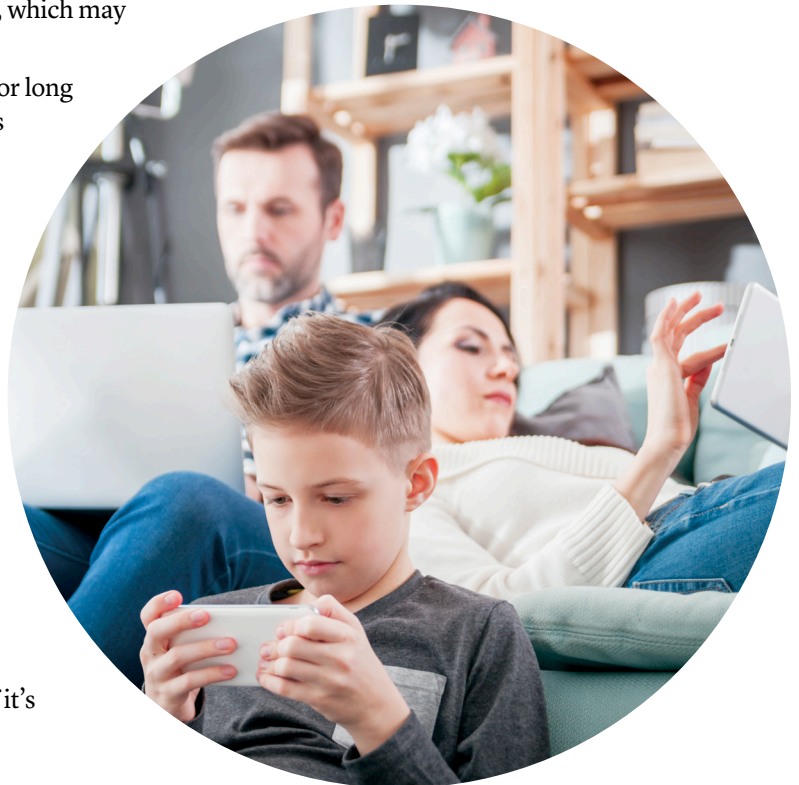
Set a curfew. A curfew on the use of electronics in the bedroom can help reserve your bedroom and nighttime routine for sleep.

Find new ways to wind down. If you're concerned you might not be able to settle down without screens at night, there are many other things you can do to quiet your mind. Read, journal about your day, meditate, listen to music or find other ways to relax.

Go outside. Spending time outdoors is also a good way to disconnect from technology. This could mean reconnecting with nature or participating in activities such as gardening, hiking or playing sports. Even taking a walk can help.

Taking a step back from technology can be hard, but it can be worth it for your health.

Sources: Providence Health; UCLA; and NIH.



Senior Care Network

100 W. California Blvd.
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huntingtonhealth.org/SCN

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。



Supporting seniors.

Huntington Collection is an upscale resale store that provides shoppers with high-quality goods, including vintage and designer items, at attractive prices. Proceeds from sales at the Collection are donated back to Senior Care Network (SCN), and in 2023, these funds hit a record high. Stop by the Collection's new location at 2670 East Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena today — and help us continue to make a difference in the lives of older adults in our community. Visit huntingtoncollection.org to learn more.

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+. 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@huntingtonhealth.org. 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.

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

Eileen Koons, MSW
Director

COMING THIS WINTER

FRIDAYS, JANUARY 19 through FEBRUARY 23, 2024 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 \$37 for hard copy of workbook. 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 lasts about an hour and includes 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., September 13 | Get ahead of sepsis.

Come learn lifesaving information about sepsis from **Marina Sarkisian**, RN, sepsis coordinator at Huntington Health, including warning signs and symptoms.

Wed., September 27 | Preventing falls at home.

During National Fall Prevention Awareness Month, **Alison Birnie**, RN, MSHCM, NE-BC, clinical director at Huntington Health, will educate on how to avoid falling at home.

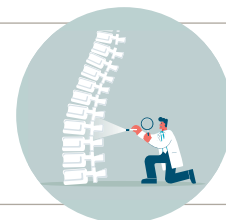


Wed., October 11 | Breast cancer treatment.

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, join us as **Ruth Williamson**, MD, medical director of radiation oncology at Huntington Cancer Center, an affiliate of Cedars-Sinai Cancer, and **Jeannie Shen**, MD, medical director of the breast program, talk about the history of breast cancer treatment and common misconceptions.

Wed., October 25 | Spine surgery in 2023.

Huntington Health-affiliated orthopedic spine surgeon **Bradley Johnson**, MD, will discuss common spine disorders, as well as the latest treatment options.



Wed., November 1 | Stroke awareness.

In honor of World Stroke Awareness Day, join us as neurologist **Arbi Ohanian**, MD, medical director of comprehensive stroke program at Huntington Health, talks about stroke symptoms, risk factors and treatment options.

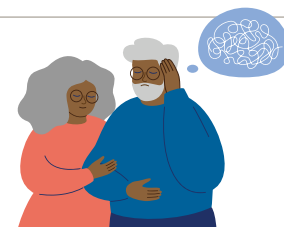


Wed., Nov. 15 | Diabetes education and empowerment.

Huntington Health community outreach registered nurse **Kathy Eastwood**, BSN, will speak about diabetes prevention strategies and how she empowers patients to take control of their disease.

Wed., November 29 | Taking care of the caregiver.

Kathleen Coatta, LCSW, clinical supervisor at Senior Care Network, will share tips on how caregivers can take care of themselves, using lessons from Powerful Tools for Caregivers.



Wed., December 13 | Managing medications.

A Huntington Health pharmacist will talk about services offered by the hospital's Medication Therapy Management Clinic and how you can keep yourself safe if you take multiple medications.



Around the campus

Expanding cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgical care.



As an affiliate of Cedars-Sinai, Huntington Health now offers comprehensive cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgery at our Helen and Will Webster Heart & Vascular Center. Here, expert surgeons provide a wide range of lifesaving and life-enhancing cardiothoracic and vascular procedures.

Innovative treatment options range from complex valve repair and replacement, coronary artery bypass grafting, aortic root and arch surgery to surgical treatment of arrhythmias and minimally invasive valve and thoracic surgeries. Thanks to the recent expansion of this program, you can get the local care you trust, and the experts you need, to keep your heart healthy. Visit huntingtonhealth.org/heartsurgery to learn more.

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 huntingtoncollection.org to learn more.

Huntington Health's Calendar of Events

Visit 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@huntingtonhealth.org 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.



Volunteer for Senior CareLine

Senior CareLine is a free service that provides friendly ongoing phone calls to older adults in the community — and the program is always in need of volunteers. If you're interested in becoming a Senior CareLine volunteer, please contact the Huntington Health volunteer department at (626) 397-5208 for more information. 50+ members may call Senior Care Network's membership line at (626) 397-3147 or (800) 664-4664 to be matched with a volunteer.

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