

50+ HealthConnection

INSIDE
News from Senior Care Network | Spring 2024
2
Taking charge

Keeping your heart healthy after 50.

3
Especially for caregivers

Caregiving plan B.

4
Ask the doctor

Q&A with Norman Chien, MD.

5
On the younger side

Reducing your risk of dementia.

6
Celebrating 40 years of service.
INSERT
Calendar of events

May - August

Around the campus
Helpful resources

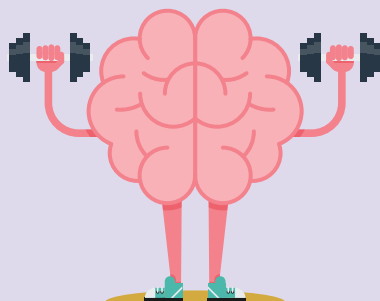
May is Older Americans Month.

The 2024 theme — Powered by Connection — recognizes the impact that relationships and social connections have on our health and well-being. Join us on Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 12 p.m., for a special in-person Noon Hour event titled *Powered by Connection*. Therapists from Huntington Hospital's Della Martin Center, including Megan Barr, MA, ATR; Mollie Basconcillo, MT-BC; and David Washington, LCSW, will share how connectedness plays a vital role in supporting independence and aging in place. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Brain injury rehabilitation.

Brain injuries can happen when there is a sudden jolt to the head or body. There are many possible causes, including falls and accidents. On Wednesday, June 5, 2024, come learn from Huntington Health certified neurological clinical specialist Megan Kwon, PT-DPT, about how physical therapy can help the brain recover after an injury, at 12:30 p.m., via Zoom. Megan will speak about *Rehabilitation After Brain Injury*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Get vaccinated.

National Immunization Month helps raise awareness about how vaccines can help prevent serious, sometimes deadly, illnesses. Vaccines are especially important for older adults who can be at higher risk of complications. On Wednesday, August 7, 2024, at 12:30 p.m., Pasadena Public Health Department experts will be available to talk about the current recommendations for vaccinations for older adults, as well as provide updates on current community conditions for common vaccine-preventable diseases. They will discuss what to expect this upcoming season with regard to respiratory illnesses like the flu, COVID-19 and RSV, as well as practices we can adopt to protect ourselves. Join us via Zoom as Matthew Feaster, PhD, lead epidemiologist with the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD), and Ying-Ying Goh, MD, PPHD's director and health officer, share important information about *Vaccinations and Older Adults*. See *Calendar of Events* for details.



Keeping your heart healthy after 50.

Hear-healthy strategies are essential for people of all ages, but are especially important for people over the age of 50. Aging can cause changes in the heart and blood vessels that may increase your risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Take heart: There is good news. There are science-backed ways to reduce your risk of heart problems, including dietary and lifestyle modifications that can bolster heart health. While the prevalence of cardiovascular disease may be on the rise, it doesn't have to be an inevitable part of getting older. Here are a few ways you can keep your heart healthy as you age:

Get regular exercise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends adults aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week. Brisk walking and swimming are great options.

Know your risk.

The biggest risk factors for heart disease are diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It's important to get your blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels checked regularly, so ask your doctor about whether you're due for screenings.

Adopt a heart-healthy diet.

"One of the best things you can do for your heart is to eat a wide variety of foods, including a range of colorful fruits and vegetables," says Crystal Kwan, MPH, RDN, CDCES, a registered dietitian at Huntington Hospital. Crystal recommends a diet that includes the following:

Whole grains. Oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain bread and ancient grains like bulgur, farro and quinoa are good options.

Lean proteins. Whether animal and plant-based sources, be sure they are minimally processed. Poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, soy products, nonfat dairy (Greek yogurt and nonfat milk) beans, legumes, nuts and seeds are all lean proteins.

Heart-healthy oils. Use plant-based oils, including olive oil, avocado oil, and nuts and seeds.

Omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon, walnuts, flax and chia seeds are good sources.

Manage stress.

Chronic stress taxes the heart. Consider incorporating relaxing activities like gentle yoga or tai chi classes, meditation, journaling, nature walks, listening to music, taking an art class, or spending regular time with a pet or loved one. Be sure to get enough sleep, too.

Never ignore symptoms.

Heart attack symptoms may differ from person to person. However, the major symptoms include chest discomfort; pain or discomfort in your back, neck, jaw, stomach or arm; shortness of breath; nausea and cold sweats. Importantly, women may also experience the following: dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting, pain or pressure in the lower chest or upper abdomen, and extreme fatigue. If you have any of these signs, call 911 and get to the hospital right away.

Sources: American Heart Association and CDC.



Especially for caregivers

Caregiving plan B.

If you're a caregiver, you may have wondered what would happen to your loved one if you became unable to provide care. What would you do if you suddenly got sick or if you had an accident? It's unpleasant to think about, but creating a plan B can make your sudden absence, or need for additional support, a smoother transition. It can also bring you peace of mind. Read on to learn about what to consider when creating a contingency caregiving plan.

Rely on your team.

Build a support system before an emergency happens. Caregiving works best when friends or family members can pitch in, so the burden isn't solely on your shoulders. Start by creating a list of tasks others you trust can assist you with, like buying groceries or picking up prescriptions. If they're comfortable doing more, ask about what specific help they can offer if something were to happen to you.

Make your plan B official.

Review financial documents, insurance forms, living wills and other official documents. Make sure your loved one has a designated power of attorney, health care proxy or conservator. If you're that person, work to update your loved one's paperwork to list someone else who can take over your duties in an emergency. Also, make sure others on your trusted caregiving team have access to important online accounts and passwords.

Stay organized.

Important documents should be stored in a specific location. Create a folder or binder that also includes essential information like phone numbers of family members and doctors, medication lists, daily routines and preferences such as food likes/dislikes. Keep this information in your kitchen or other central location — and create a secure digital copy.

Take care of yourself.

It's easy to neglect yourself when caring for others. But this can worsen existing health problems or lead to burnout (or both). To maintain good health, try your best to eat a healthy diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly. Don't have time for an hour workout? Take the stairs, go on a 20-minute brisk walk or take a free online yoga class. Practice wellness through a relaxing evening routine such as taking a warm bath, reading a book, meditating, listening to music, knitting — anything that quiets your mind. Finally, don't put off preventive care and screenings, like your annual physical, colonoscopy, mammogram and flu shot. Your health is worth it — for both you and your loved one.

Sources: AARP and CDC.



Are you a family caregiver? Senior Care Network (SCN) offers professional assistance; referrals to important resources; and support and educational groups specifically designed for family caregivers, including our Powerful Tools for Caregivers class. For more information, call SCN at (626) 397-3110 or (800) 664-4664 or email us at 50+membership@huntingtonhealth.org. See also Calendar of Events for information about Powerful Tools for Caregivers.



Ask the doctor

Q&A with Norman Chien, MD

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

Q. My regular eye exam is coming up soon. Do I have to get my eyes dilated?

A. Yes. If your provider says you should have your eyes dilated, it's for good reason. The dilation drops are an essential tool to help your doctor see all the different parts of your eye more closely. This allows for early detection of more than 270 diseases and abnormalities.

If you're a senior, your dilation exam is especially important. As you age, your risk increases for developing specific eye problems that can lead to vision impairment or blindness. Eye dilation can help to diagnose serious issues such as:

- Cataracts, a slow clouding of the eye's lens. It can cause blurry vision and makes it difficult to see, especially at night.
- Macular degeneration, an eye disease that affects the retina and can lead to vision loss and blindness. Catching this early is essential to slowing its progression.
- Glaucoma, which affects the nerve connecting the eye to the brain. It is often symptomless, and many people don't know they have it until their vision is severely impaired. Although there is

no cure for glaucoma, when caught early, treatments can prevent further vision loss.

You may be surprised to learn that some diseases that can be detected during a dilated eye exam include diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, sexually transmitted diseases, brain tumors, cancer and bacterial infections. In short, dilating your eyes can help protect more than just your vision.

Q. I'm having surgery in a few weeks and my doctor wants to prescribe me pain medication. I'm concerned about the potential for addiction. Should I be worried?

A. While prescription opioid pain medications can ease pain after surgery, they do carry the potential for side effects and serious risk for addiction. That's why it's critical that they be taken properly. Always listen to your doctor and only take the prescribed dosage for the length of time advised. Ask about any potential side effects and what steps you should take if you experience any complications.

It's also important that you talk with your doctor about *all* the medications you currently take — including any over-the-counter medicines — as there

can be interactions that may affect your health. Mention any family history of addiction. And be honest about your alcohol consumption levels, as opioids and alcohol can be a deadly combination.

If you feel like the medication is not working well, contact your provider to see if there are any alternative treatment options that may help ease pain, before requesting the dosage level be increased. Remember that a manageable degree of pain can protect you from doing things that can further harm you.

Finally, since opioids can be highly addictive, be sure to store them in a secure place that others (including family members and pets) cannot reach. Remember to also safely dispose of any leftover medication after your treatment period ends, so they aren't sitting around the house.

If you, or someone you love, becomes addicted to opioids, Medicare and many other insurance plans cover treatment services, so don't delay reaching out for help.

Sources: AARP, American Optometric Association and National Institutes of Health.

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

On the younger side

Reducing your risk of dementia.

Dementia is a topic that has been studied extensively, and new studies continue to shine a light on the condition. Scientists now believe there isn't a single cause of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. It likely develops from multiple factors, such as age, family history and heredity. While these are risk factors we can't change, we may be able to influence some through lifestyle modifications. Some risk factors include:

- Smoking cigarettes.
- Not getting enough aerobic physical activity.
- Excessive alcohol use or binge drinking.
- Being significantly overweight.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.
- Being clinically depressed.
- Hearing loss.

The good news is that these risk factors can be addressed through lifestyle changes. It's well worth it: Exciting new research now shows that nearly 40% of all Alzheimer's disease and related dementias may be able to be prevented or delayed. It's never too late to break old habits and start new ones to help reduce your risk. Here are some things you can do:

Get active. Aim for at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise a day, seven days a week. Don't worry, brisk walking counts! Adding light resistance or strength training can do even more to protect your health. Exercise can help you maintain or lose weight, which contributes to good health now and as you age.

Protect your heart. Some of the strongest evidence links brain health to heart health. Work with your doctor to monitor your heart health and treat any problems that arise.

Manage blood sugar. If you have diabetes, get your blood sugar under control. And even if you're not diabetic, watch your sugar intake and avoid highly processed carbohydrate foods like white bread. Making small modifications can help — such as not adding sugar to meals; eating more whole-grain, high fiber foods; making fresh fruits and vegetables your go-to snack and drinking more water.

Prevent and correct hearing loss. If you're repeatedly exposed to loud noises (like power tools) over time, it may cause hearing loss. Take steps to protect your hearing and talk to a hearing care professional if you think you may have hearing loss.

Find support. If you suffer from depression, contact your health care provider or therapist, and stay connected with your friends and family for support.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and managing related chronic conditions is good for your overall physical health, facilitates and improves brain health, and may help decrease the risk of dementia or slow its progression.

Sources: CDC, American Heart Association and Alzheimer's Association.





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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。



Celebrating 40 years of service.

Senior Care Network (SCN) offers a broad range of important services for older adults, adults with disabilities, and their families. The organization was founded in 1984 to create a safety net for aging well that would fill resource gaps and bring fragmented services into an integrated system. One of the first hospital-based programs of its kind in the nation, SCN soon developed a reputation for the quality and scope of its care-coordination and other services.

Today, SCN serves more than 15,000 community members in the San Gabriel Valley and beyond every year — with the ultimate goal of helping people age well and live safely in their homes. SCN’s team includes social workers and public health nurses, as well as volunteers and students, who work closely together to help clients and their families navigate the health-related challenges of aging. This year, SCN is celebrating four extraordinary decades of serving our community. Visit huntingtonhealth.org/SCN to learn more.

50+ members receive informative publications, including event calendars, from SCN 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 you 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 Bistro Café and at the S. Robert and Denise Zeilstra Gift Shop.

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

Eileen Koons, MSW
Director

Claudia Chavez, MSW
50+ HealthConnection
Program Coordinator

FRIDAYS, AUG. 2 through SEPT. 6

**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 (SCN). To register, please contact Karla Palma, MSW, at (626) 397-8135 or karla.palma@huntingtonhealth.org. 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

SCN's Noon Hour lecture series provides information you can use to pursue good health and age well. All Noon Hour events begin at 12:30 p.m. on the dates listed. Each lasts about an hour and includes time for your questions. Participation is free. There are two ways to join:

- 1. By computer, smartphone or tablet.** Complete the registration form online by visiting <https://qrco.de/bdAJec> or scanning the QR code with your smartphone. 
- 2. 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#

Not technologically savvy? If you need help using Zoom, please call Senior Care Network's membership line at (626) 397-3147. We're happy to help!

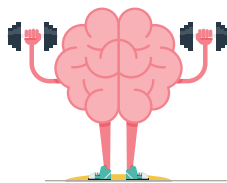


Wed., May 15 | Taboo topics in men's health.

Men's health includes a wide range of topics, but some issues are shrouded in stigma. Come hear from Huntington Health physical therapist **Jimmy Gargollo, PT-DPT**, as he sheds light on important issues for men like incontinence, erectile dysfunction and more.

Wed., May 29 | Powered by connection.

During Older Americans Month, join us for a special in-person event as therapists from Huntington Hospital's Della Martin Center, including **Megan Barr, MA, ATR; Mollie Basconcillo, MT-BC;** and **David Washington, LCSW**, share how connectedness plays a vital role in supporting independence and aging in place. The event will begin at 12:00 p.m. and will take place at the South Pasadena Senior Center, located at 1102 Oxley St., South Pasadena, CA 91030. Visit <https://forms.office.com/r/CHLdKQk7E4> or scan the QR code to register for this in-person event. Please note limited street parking is available on Fairview Ave., Oxley St. and El Centro St.



Wed., June 5 | Rehabilitation after brain injury.

In honor of Brain Awareness Month, come learn from Huntington Health certified neurological clinical specialist **Megan Kwon, PT-DPT**, about how the brain responds to an injury and how physical therapy can help it heal.

Wed., June 12 | Becoming a smart patient.

Emergency medicine physician **Robert Goldweber, MD**, will share helpful information about the differences between primary, urgent and emergency care to help you make smart decisions and get the right care you need at the right time.

Wed., July 31 | All about palliative care.

Members of Huntington Health's palliative care team, including **Chandra Jain, MD; Reverend Doctor Shirley Lin; Katherine Donnelly-Crocker, LCSW;** and **Zoila Nova, LCSW**, will talk about how palliative care can provide whole-person support to patients with serious illness and their families.



Wed., August 7 | Vaccinations and older adults.

During National Immunization Awareness Month, **Matthew Feaster, PhD**, lead epidemiologist with the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD), and **Ying-Ying Goh, MD**, PPHD's director and health officer, will talk about recommended vaccines for older adults.

Wed., August 28 | Advance care planning.

Patty Watson-Swan, BSN, RN, PHN, nurse care manager at Senior Care Network, will speak on the importance of advance care planning, how to complete an advance directive, and how it can offer peace of mind to your loved ones.

Around the campus

Giving back.



Huntington Hospital is a nonprofit institution. We must remain financially sound to continue our work, but we are driven by our mission of care rather than by profits. That's why we make a pledge that every dollar will be invested back into the community in ways that do the most good — often providing services that would otherwise be absent from our region.

Our above-and-beyond commitment includes care for patients who lack insurance coverage or other means to pay (sometimes referred to as charity care). It also includes a wide range of other services, both on our campus and beyond our walls, including support for older adults.

Through education, early diagnostic screenings, emergency preparedness and more, our outreach programs and educational resources help improve the health of our community. In 2023, we were happy to provide community benefits valued at \$161.5 million.

Visit huntingtonhealth.org/communitybenefit to learn more about the community benefit services we provide.



Introducing Claudia.



Senior Care Network (SCN) is pleased to introduce the newest member of our team: Claudia Chavez, MSW. Claudia is a clinical social work specialist and our 50+ HealthConnection program coordinator. She is responsible for helping bring awareness to SCN's broad array of services and supports, including our Noon Hour events. Claudia has more than 18 years of experience working in the field of social work, including experience working with older adults, adults with disabilities and their families. Please join us in welcoming Claudia to our team!

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 SCN'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 SCN's membership line at (626) 397-3147 or (800) 664-4664 or email us at 50+membership@huntingtonhealth.org for assistance.



Resources from Senior Care Network

Do you or a loved one need assistance living more safely at home? The professionals in SCN's Resource Center are available to talk to you and can provide referrals to home care agencies. They can also help you make a list of questions to ask when interviewing potential caregivers. Call (626) 397-3110 or (800) 664-4664 (option 1) to learn more.



huntingtonhealth.org/SCN