AARP tax preparation
Are You OK? wake-up program
Berkshire Writers Room
Bingo
Breakfast Club
Brown Bag
Card Games, Bridge, Pitch
Ceramics
Chair Caning
Coffee Shop
Comedy Dungeon!
Community Outreach
Computer Workshop
Exercise Classes-Osteo
Foot Clinic
From Stage to Screen
Gift Shop
“Hand and Foot” card game
Health Education Workshops
Income Tax Preparation
Information/Referrals
Knitting and Crochet
“Legal Education”
Line Dancing
Lunch Served Daily
Mah Jongg
Meditation
Molari Blood Pressure Visits
Pinochle
Poetry
Pool Tables
Quality Time Club
Quilting
Seasonal Celebrations
Scrapbooking & Card Making
Scrabble
Shake Your Soul dance-exercise
SHINE Medicare Counseling
Supportive Day Program
Tai Chi, Tai Chi w/ weights
Transportation
Traveling Friends
TRIAD
Volunteer Opportunities
Woodcarving, Woodworking
Medicare Enrollment Might Be Easier This Year

New tools could help beneficiaries pick the coverage that's best for them

When Medicare's 60 million beneficiaries begin to review their benefits during open enrollment, which starts Oct. 15, they will have several new tools to help guide their decisions, the program's administrator says.

Seema Verma, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) administrator, last week outlined a handful of new tools at a conference about Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans. Some of the improvements will be seen in updates to the Medicare handbook sent to all beneficiaries this fall. Verma said the changes to the handbook, which will include checklists and flowcharts to ease decision-making, were based on consumer testing.

Among the other new tools:

- A calculator that beneficiaries can use on a computer or mobile phone to help them determine how much they will pay out of pocket for health plans and specific prescription drugs
- An improved "coverage wizard" that will help beneficiaries compare out-of-pocket costs and coverage between Original Medicare and a Medicare Advantage plan
- A simplified online log-in for the Medicare Plan Finder tool, which helps enrollees pick a plan
- A pilot program for a Medicare Plan Finder webchat tool, which some beneficiaries will be able to participate in

Verma's announcement of the new Medicare tools came just weeks after the release of a report that was highly critical of the Medicare Plan Finder. According to the National Council on Aging and the Clear Choices Campaign, an advocacy project, the plan finder is "overwhelming, information is poorly presented, and the user design is potentially misleading — all of which confuses beneficiaries and can contribute to many making poor plan selections."

By Dena Bunis, AARP The Magazine, May 15, 2018

Quiz: Are You Eating Too Much Sugar?

Test your knowledge of the latest health news on the sweet stuff

1. These days, sugar seems to be in just about everything we eat. Which of the following foods should you limit your consumption of, for that very reason?
   A. Fruits and vegetables
   B. Cereals and crackers
   C. Milk and plain yogurt
   D. All of the above

2. When it comes to weight control, the real problem with eating lots of sugary foods is:
   A. Sugar contains empty calories — 16 per teaspoon — but no nutrients.
   B. Consuming excessive amounts of added sugar promotes the storage of body fat.
   C. Added sugar stimulates your appetite and overrides your natural satiety signals.
   D. All of the above.

3. How much sugar does the average adult in the U.S. consume per day?
   A. 12 teaspoons of added sugars
   B. 17 teaspoons of added sugars
   C. 22 teaspoons of added sugars
   D. 27 teaspoons of added sugars

4. An excessive intake of added sugars has long been known to contribute to an increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Which of the following can it also contribute to:
   A. High blood pressure
   B. Cholesterol abnormalities
   C. Chronic inflammation
   D. All of the above

5. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting your consumption of added sugars to which of the following:
   A. Less than 20 percent of your total daily calories
   B. Less than 15 percent of your total daily calories
   C. Less than 10 percent of your total daily calories
   D. Less than 5 percent of your total daily calories

6. Which of the following has the most sugar?
   A. 5.3 oz. Dannon fruit on the bottom cherry yogurt
   B. Chocolate chip Clif Bar
   C. 12 oz. Coke
   D. 12 oz. Starbucks Iced Cinnamon Almond-milk Macchiato

Continued on insert page
our SENIOR CENTER

A convenient source for local services

FIND AN ADVERTISER NEAR YOU
SEARCH SUPPORTERS OF OUR CENTER to find trusted services in our area!

PLUS Sign up to have our newsletter emailed to you!
Using Humor to Combat Dementia

Seriously funny: How a comedian breathed new life into a fading Alzheimer’s patient

My mother’s adjustment to the left coast, after spending most of her life in Manhattan, went more smoothly than anyone expected. Despite her struggle with Alzheimer’s, the first 10 months at her new senior residence in Los Angeles went off without a hitch.

Then around the one-year mark, something changed. I’d show up and find her sitting away from the group, her head dropped to the side, surrendered to the forces of gravity and a desire to sleep. When people talked to her, she looked blankly into the distance. She had lost interest in food, one of her great passions. I started to doubt my decision to uproot her from the Upper West Side.

I knew there were senior services that provide companionship, programs with names like Visiting Angels, Senior Helpers and Good Company Senior Care. But I wanted something else for my 84-year-old mother. I wanted someone who could make her laugh. I was a professional comedian for years, but when she looks in my eyes, she just sees a daughter she can’t communicate with anymore. I took to social media. “Looking for a funny person with an interest in geriatrics. Paying gig. Part time,” I posted. Within minutes the phone rang, a friend from New York.

“Call my friend Sue. She’s a comic, was, she’s kind of over it now. She wants to work with seniors.” I phoned Sue immediately. She has one of those rare voices, equal parts warmth and candor. We made a date for her to meet with my mother.

Introductions

“Mom, this is Sue,” I said, steering her wheelchair so we could sit close together.

“What’s up, Muriel?” Sue asked. My mother stared ahead. Without missing a beat, Sue moved to make eye contact with her. My mother looked away.

“You don’t want to talk, do you, Muriel?” Nothing.

“I get that,” Sue said. “Some days I don’t want to talk, either. When someone gets in my face I think, ‘Schmuck, do I look like I want to talk?’”

My mother turned her head back to Sue and smiled. Sue repeated herself, this time with a little more moxie. “Schmuck, do I look like I want to talk?”

My mother smiled even bigger, then laughed and blurted out “schmuck!” like a kid getting away with something. She looked at Sue for a reaction. Sue laughed heartily and then, like any comedian, topped her. “Hey, schmuck! Do I look like I want to talk?” she asked, bigger, like a character from The Sopranos.

No Luck Finding the Right Nursing Home?

Maybe Yelp Can Help

Can you really select a quality nursing home by reading Yelp reviews?

There’s a nursing home the next town over from me, for instance. Nine reviewers have given the place both laudatory five-star ratings (“She has a far greater quality of life than she would have living at home”) and outraged one-star complaints (“The nursing staff, RN’s and CNA’s are caring but overworked”).

Overall, the place gets three stars. It’s a highly flawed measurement, of course. Nine reviewers for a 300-plus-bed facility? Over four years, in an industry known for such sky-high turnover that many of the hands-on staff have undoubtedly left since the first online critic weighed in? Reviewers can deplore the food, but can they know how often residents fall?

Yet gerontologists at the University of Southern California have been looking into Yelp nursing home reviews and think they make a useful addition to the homework any prospective resident or family member needs to undertake.

It’s not that reviews posted on Yelp and other online platforms (Google, Facebook, Caring.com) are such reliable guides to nursing home quality, said Anna Rahman, senior author of a recent article in The Gerontologist. It’s that the supposed gold standard, the five-star ratings on the federal government’s own Nursing Home Compare website, remains so faulty.

“We had a growing sense of how disappointing those measures have been,” Dr. Rahman said of Nursing Home Compare. “After 20 years and all the money spent to create it, it’s become a marketing tool. But most people don’t realize how little it measures. It’s garbage in and garbage out.”

A primer: Nursing Home Compare made its online debut in 1998 and added the starred ranking system in 2009, after a senator complained at a congressional hearing that it was easier to shop for a washing machine than a nursing home.

The site contains a trove of information about nursing homes, for those willing to click through to findings like hours of staff time per resident per day, deficiencies discovered during the most recent inspections, and how many residents have bedsores and other indications of poor care. This year, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services anticipates that the tool will be used 2.4 million times.
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)
Call for appt. 499-9346
Tuesdays @ 12:00

"Flexible Feet & Core Stability"
Limited summer engagement!
Tues & Thurs @ 10:15

Art du Jure!
Millie Kelly initiates a new, multi-disciplined art class. It's free. Bring your interest!
Tue, 1:00 - 3:00

New! New! New!
Atty. General's Community Engagement Office

Got Questions?
1st Fridays! 8:30 to 10:30

Pittsfield Tree Watch
Nurture the roots of your tree interests!
Thurs Aug 9th
4:00 p.m. in Coffee Shop

New Member Day
Find your way.
Let us know you're coming. 499-9346
Wed Aug 15th 10:00

August Card Party
Get connected!
1:00 p.m. Four-somes are best. Thurs Aug 16th

Brown Bag Day
10:30 Fri Aug 24th

Molari Blood Pressure Clinic
By Appt. 499-9346
Tues Aug 28th
7. If you want to retrain your taste buds and help yourself beat a sugar habit, you should replace real sugar with an artificial sweetener in your coffee or tea.
A. True
B. False

8. Sugar goes by many different names on food labels. Which of the following is not another moniker for added sugar?
A. Maltose
B. Guar gum
C. Rice syrup
D. Molasses

ANSWERS

1. B Cereals and crackers
Most cereals and many crackers contain added sugar, which is devoid of nutritional value and therefore what you want to limit. You don’t need to worry about the sugar in fruits, vegetables and unsweetened dairy products; it’s present naturally and accompanied by vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.

2. D All of the above.
Eating lots of foods with added sugar has all of these effects — and consuming processed sugar causes a major rush of dopamine (the pleasure neurotransmitter), which makes you want to keep eating more of the sweet stuff to maintain that sugar high.

3. C 22 teaspoons of added sugars
That’s right — 22 teaspoons per day, which adds up to 352 calories from sugar alone (and doesn’t include the type of sugars found naturally in things like fruit.)

4. D All of the above
Consuming too much sugar can bring on every one of these conditions, all of which happen to be risk factors for developing heart disease. In fact, a study in the April 2014 issue of the journal JAMA Internal Medicine found that adults who got 17 to 21 percent of their daily calories from added sugar had a 38 percent higher risk of dying from cardiovascular disease than those who consumed 8 percent of their calories from added sugar.

5. C Less than 10 percent of your total daily calories
The recommendation is to limit your intake of calories from added sugars to less than 10 percent per day, which translates to a maximum of 40 grams (or 180 calories) from added sugars if you consume 1,800 calories per day. The American Heart Association is even stricter, recommending a max of 6 teaspoons (or 100 calories) of added sugar per day for women, a max of 9 teaspoons (or 150 calories) of added sugar per day for men.

6. C 12 oz. Coke
But here's the real surprise: While a 12 oz. Coke contains a whopping 39 grams of sugar, the others also have plenty of it. The yogurt has 22 grams, the Clif Bar has 21 and the iced coffee drink has 19. Sugar bombs, all around!

7. B False
Artificial sweeteners may be low in calories but they're intensely sweet, and research suggests consuming them can actually stimulate appetite and cause you to crave even sweeter foods and beverages.

8. B Guar gum
Guar gum comes from guar beans and it’s used to thicken or stabilize the texture of certain foods; it is loaded with fiber and actually may help temper the blood-sugar rise that occurs after eating. For the record, anything ending with -ose (as in dextrose, fructose, sucrose, maltose) or syrup (as in corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, malt syrup or agave syrup) is a form of sugar, and molasses is a syrup that’s produced during the sugar-refining process. You can tell what’s been added by perusing the ingredients list.

By Stacey Colino, AARP The Magazine, July 2018

Keep Properly Hydrated

Continued from page 5
they absorb 30 times their weight in water and can provide the body with slow-release hydration, especially during long bouts of physical activity in high heat and humidity.

Naturally packaged plant water hydrates more efficiently than plain drinking water, the “Quench” authors maintain, because it’s already purified, is packed with soluble nutrients and gradually supplies the body with water.

That said, while there is considerable anecdotal evidence for the effectiveness of plant water, especially among enthusiasts of green smoothies, well designed clinical studies are still lacking. Yet I feel comfortable in recommending an increased reliance on these hydrating foods because, at the very least, they can result in a more nutritious diet and foster better weight control.

Getting more of your water from plant foods can also help to cut down on pollution. The earth is being overrun with disposable plastic water bottles that can be found littering streets and parks and floating in rivers, oceans and lakes everywhere. Unless you are visiting a region of the world where it is unsafe to drink the water, try to avoid buying water. If you are in doubt about the safety of your municipal water supply, if you rely on well water that has not been tested, or if you dislike the taste or your local water, consider installing a faucet filter or using a portable filter container like Brita.

Now, join me as I take a big drink to your health.

By Jane E. Brody, New York Times “Well” column, July 9, 2018. Jane Brody is the Personal Health columnist, a position she has held since 1976. She has written more than a dozen books including the best sellers “Jane Brody’s Nutrition Book” and “Jane Brody’s Good Food Book.”
**August Senior Center Events**

**Everyday! 11:30 a.m.  Meal Site**
French novelist Marcel Proust noted that, "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." At daily Meal Site, the dining experience will elicit newfound wonderment in culinary adventure! Enjoy! Reserve a day ahead, 1-800-981-5201.

**Tuesdays! 12:00 p.m.  SHINE (by appt.)**
S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselors help you navigate the oft treacherous maze of health insurance programs. Call Froio at 499-9346, or Elder Services directly at 499-0524.

**Tuesdays 1:00 p.m.  Art du Jure!  (New Art Class!)**
Millie Kelly initiates a new, multi-discipline art class, and encourages all interested parties and skill levels to participate. Free, just bring your enthusiasm!

**Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:15 a.m.  Flexible Feet & Core Stability**
Carol Bennett continues a limited-run engagement of her Flexible Feet and Core Stability program. As in the past, it will be on Tuesdays & Thursdays, and will encourage Froio folks to be limber and nimble, optimizing their fluidity of movement.

**New! First Fridays!  8:30 to 10:30 a.m.  Attorney General’s Community Engagement**
Take advantage of a brand spankin’ new outreach effort by the Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office to have a consultation regarding your civil and legal concerns. For this inaugural round at least, there’re no appointments necessary.

**Thursday, August 9  4:00 p.m.  Pittsfield Tree Watch**
Tree Watch continues to explore your deep-seeded tree interests. 4:00 p.m. in the Coffee Shop.

**Monday, August 13  10:00 a.m.  The Councilman is In!**
The Froio Center hosts councilman Kevin Morandi’s invaluable “open office” sessions. His informal Q & As take place a day before City Council meetings, maximizing the potential for a responsive “public-to-council” conduit.

**Wednesday, August 15  10:00 a.m.  New Member Day Tour**
Unearth the basic facts, and the nuances, of the Senior Center. There’s more than meets the eye and we relish the opportunity to convey the full essence de Froio. Let us know you’re coming, 499-9346.

**Thursday, August 16  1:00 p.m.  Legal Education (by apt.)**
Attorneys from Pittsfield Family and Probate Court evaluate your legal issues. By appointment, 499-9346.

**Thursday, August 16  1:00 p.m.  Card Party**
The young ancient Greek ruler and warrior Alexander the Great wisely advised, “Remember, upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all.” Perceptive Monthly Card Party players are well aware that their table fates are interdependent! Bottomless coffee, prizes and snacks! Unless otherwise arranged, four-somes are best.

**Friday, August 24  10:30 a.m.  Brown Bag**
Be a part of this monthly nutritional grocery program. Inquire about Brown Bag and SNAP benefits.

**Tuesday, August 28  8:45 a.m.  Blood Pressure Clinic (by appt.)**
Molari Health Care monitors your blood pressure. Call 49-9346 for an appointment.
“Schmuck!” my mother yelled back, laughing so hard she almost couldn’t get the word out. I looked around, feeling slightly self-conscious by this schmuck-off. Maybe people nearby wouldn’t appreciate it. Except the two of them were having so much fun.

A comedian. What a perfect fit for this job. Who better to be in the moment, to draw someone out and, after years of dealing with hecklers, be undaunted by the volatility of a person in the grip of Alzheimer’s, a brain disease with no known cure that affects some 5.7 million Americans?

They paused to catch their breath. “You want some water?” Sue asked my mother, holding the glass toward her. She nodded. Sue held it up to her lips. I turned my head, catching a tear with my finger — not so much from sadness, but from one of those Oprah “Aha!” moments. It suddenly became clear that when rational thought, memory and language are gone, the only thing we have is the present moment. And the greatest gift you can give anyone in this state is to do your best to fill the moment with laughter.

I hired Sue to work with my mother for 10 hours a week. Within days of meeting Sue, she started eating again. Even during the hours that Sue wasn’t there, my mother was more engaged with people, waving hello and reaching out for contact with the aides and other residents. She started singing, not actual lyrics, but crooning and smiling. It was nothing short of remarkable.

About a month ago when I was walking down the hall for a visit, I heard Tony Bennett’s “I Get a Kick Out of You” blaring from my mother’s room and then Sue’s distinct voice. I silently peeked in without them seeing. There was Sue, dancing a kind of solo waltz around my mother.

“What do you think, you like my dancing?” she asked my mother.

“No,” she shot back. Warm and fuzzy was never her style. Sue slowed down her movement and looked at my mother. “Wow, that hurt my feelings, Muriel,” she said.

And then I heard something that sounded a lot like my mother’s voice. “I’m sorry.”

“That’s OK,” Sue responded. “I know you didn’t mean to.”

“No,” my mother said. Startled by this exchange, I forgot I was supposed to be hiding.

“Oh, hey,” Sue said, seeing me outside the doorway.

“Hi,” I said. “My mother just said she was sorry to you.”

“Yeah. Yep, she did. Right, Muriel? Only took four months, right, Mutz?” (Mutz is Sue’s nickname for Mom.)

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard her say she’s sorry about anything.”

“See that, Mutz? You can teach an old dog new tricks!”

“Old dog,” my mother said, laughing. “Old dog,” she said again.

“Yep, we’re a couple of old dogs, you and me,” Sue said, laughing with her and then leaning over to kiss the top of her head. “Yet I get a kick out of you!” she sang.

Seeing this relationship blossom over these months — held together by gales of laughter — has convinced me that so many people, at every stage of life, could use a person with the gift of wit and timing to spend time with, to show them it is still possible to be moved to laughter. To feel, if only for that brief moment of joy, that they aren’t done yet — and that’s a good thing.


Dani Klein Modisett has launched Laughter On Call to match Alzheimer’s patients with comedians.

The Healing Power of Humor

Humor therapy can be as effective as some drugs in managing agitation in dementia patients. That’s according to research at the University of New South Wales in Australia. The study examined the effectiveness of professional humor therapists, called Elder Clowns, who work with nursing home staff trained in the practice, called Laughter Bosses. They performed weekly humor sessions with individuals and groups of patients, using methods based on improv comedy — much like Clown Doctors, who work in children’s hospitals to lift the mood of the patients and increase interaction.

Another published study conducted at the Osaka University Graduate School of Medicine in Suita, Japan, found that the positive effects of humor can last for weeks after a therapy session.

As dementia patients lose cognitive function, they lose the ability to laugh and smile, especially as a tool of social communication. But some types of laughter are preserved. As the Japanese study explains, some dementia patients will smile or laugh after sleeping well or having a good meal. They also respond with laughter or smiles when they reach a goal or their accomplishment is recognized.

But those with dementia can feel offended by humor, too. Alzheimer’s patients may have a heightened sensitivity to jokes, since they know that they have trouble understanding some things. While you can aim playful put-downs at your friends, a person with Alzheimer’s will likely find such humor humiliating or stigmatizing.

Andrea Cwieka, AARP The Magazine, June, 2018
No Luck Finding the Right Nursing Home?
Maybe Yelp can Help!

Continued from page 4

Those on-site inspections, which Medicare requires every 12 to 15 months, constitute a key component of the ratings. But the two other categories contributing to the ratings—staffing and quality measures—are reported by the homes themselves. Critics have charged for years that the metrics are untrustworthy and prone to manipulation.

A New York Times investigation in 2014 reported that facilities had learned how to game the system, resulting in rising proportions of four- and five-star nursing homes. A Brookings Institution report two years later concurred that ratings had become inflated.

“I would never use it for quality measures because I don’t believe it,” said John Schnelle, director of the Center for Quality Aging at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “I think they’re distorted.”

Dr. Schnelle, note, serves on the expert panel that advises C.M.S. on its nursing home rating system.

Researchers also have discovered that even if the star ratings were accurate, they don’t bear much relationship to how residents and families feel about these facilities.

In Ohio, which conducts its own statewide nursing home surveys, “plenty of times residents really liked a facility with a low star rating, and vice versa,” said Robert Applebaum, a gerontologist at Miami University in Ohio.

He has found that families’ and residents’ satisfaction varied significantly at the poles—they did prefer five-star to one-star homes—but the differences in satisfaction between one- and two-star homes, or those with four versus five stars, were negligible.

Nursing Home Compare doesn’t include consumer feedback at all, although a Government Accountability Office report urged C.M.S. to add this feature.

“It excludes the most important element,” Dr. Applebaum said. “The problem is, it’s really expensive to do. Collecting data from families and residents is no small task if you do it systematically.”

Enter Yelp, where the first nursing home review appeared a decade ago, and its online competitors, including Facebook. Dr. Rahman and her colleagues, looking at 51 Yelp-rated nursing homes across California, found that most reviewers commented on intangibles like staff attitude, caring and responsiveness; they rarely mentioned health care quality or safety concerns.

So perhaps it’s not surprising that in an earlier study, the team found that consumer rankings on Yelp correlated only weakly to the star ratings on Nursing Home Compare.

“They’re not measuring the same things,” Dr. Rahman said. In fact, they rather complement one another.

You wouldn’t want to rely too much on Yelp and other online platforms. Relatively few nursing homes, assisted living facilities and retirement communities have Yelp reviews at all. The 51 California nursing homes in Dr. Rahman’s study had garnered just five reviews on average—a tiny, probably unrepresentative sample.

And the great majority were polarized—either five-star reviews or one star. “Nursing homes inspire a lot of emotion,” Dr. Rahman said.

That bimodal response isn’t typical in most Yelp categories, but “you’d expect that to normalize over time” as more users post reviews, said Luther Lowe, the company’s senior vice president for public policy.

For now, only 7 percent of Yelp’s roughly 150 million total reviews concern health care: doctors, dentists, hospitals, acupuncturists and reiki practitioners, along with assisted living and nursing homes.

Yelp uses software to try to weed out fake reviews and sorts roughly one in five into its “not recommended” category, though users can still read them. Probably its most consumer-friendly move, though, was joining forces in 2015 with the nonprofit investigative news organization ProPublica, which created the tool Nursing Home Inspect with federal data.

Now, Yelp users see a small ProPublica box reporting each nursing home’s size, how many serious deficiencies showed up on its most recent inspections, fines levied and whether the facility is so troubled that C.M.S. has suspended payments. The box also identifies “special focus” facilities flagged for serious quality problems.

Nursing Home Compare is also making changes. Most importantly, C.M.S. now requires nursing homes to submit timecards quarterly, a more auditable staffing measure than annual self-reporting. “A big improvement,” Dr. Schnelle said.

The bottom line, though, is that all these sources have dismaying limitations. Others may be even worse: Nursing homes conduct their own consumer satisfaction surveys, but “they say everybody is as happy as can be,” Dr. Schnelle noted. Online placement services like A Place for Mom get paid by the nursing homes they refer people to.

So experts advise starting your investigation online, using Yelp and other consumer reviews—and Nursing Home Compare and Nursing Home Inspect, and talking to friends and relatives who’ve had recent experience with local facilities.

Then, inescapably, you’ve got to show up at the nursing home, walk around, talk to residents and family and staff, ask a zillion questions. Then, go back and do it again.

Still, online consumer reviews can become part of the effort, and the more we post, the more useful they’ll become.

“You want to use as many sources as you can,” Dr. Applebaum said. “Everybody has a different piece of the elephant to touch.”

By Paula Span, New York Times, “The New Old Age” column, May 11, 2018
CAPITOL MARQUEE HERITAGE RESIDES IN THE TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF FROIO MEMORY
How to Keep Your Body Properly Hydrated

Inadequate hydration can cause fatigue, poor appetite, heat intolerance, dizziness, constipation, kidney stones and a dangerous drop in blood pressure.

I wonder how we all survived — and even thrived — in our younger years without the plethora of water bottles that nearly everyone seems to carry around these days.

In reading about the risks and consequences of dehydration, especially for the elderly and anyone who exercises vigorously in hot weather, it’s nothing short of a miracle that more of us hadn’t succumbed years ago to the damaging physical, cognitive and health effects of inadequate hydration.

Even with the current ubiquity of portable water containers, far too many people still fail to consume enough liquid to compensate for losses suffered especially, though not exclusively, during the dehydrating months of summer.

For those of you who know or suspect that you don’t drink enough to compensate for daily water losses, the good news is you don’t have to rely entirely on your liquid intake to remain well-hydrated.

Studies in societies with limited supplies of drinking water suggest you can help to counter dehydration and, at the same time, enhance the healthfulness of your diet by consuming nutritious foods that are laden with a hidden water source. Plant foods like fruits, vegetables and seeds are a source of so-called gel water — pure, safe, hydrating water that is slowly absorbed into the body when the foods are consumed.

That’s the message in a newly published book, “Quench,” by Dr. Dana Cohen, an integrative medicine specialist in New York, and Gina Bria, an anthropologist whose studies of the water challenges faced by desert dwellers led to the establishment of the Hydration Foundation, a nonprofit group that promotes understanding and consumption of nonliquid sources of water.

More about these foods later. First, I must convince more of you that remaining well hydrated is crucial to your health. However solid your body, the majority of it is water, ranging from 75 percent of the body weight of infants to 55 percent of the elderly. Every bodily process, every living cell, depends on water to function properly. Water transports nutrients, regulates body temperature, lubricates joints and internal organs, supports the structure of cells and tissues and preserves cardiovascular function. People can survive for only three or four days — a week at most — without water.

But more to the point is the quality of survival. Inadequate hydration can cause fatigue, poor appetite, heat intolerance, dizziness, constipation, kidney stones and a dangerous drop in blood pressure. Brain effects include mood shifts, muddled thinking, inattentiveness and poor memory. A loss of only 1 to 2 percent of body water can impair cognitive performance, according to studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Your body’s water balance is determined by how much you consume, your age and activity level and environmental conditions. The body loses water through the skin, lungs, kidneys and digestive tract; in other words, by sweating, breathing and elimination of waste, both liquid and solid.

“Water needs can vary from person to person — and no one person will need the same amount of fluid from one day to the next,” the Virginia scientists wrote in the American College of Sports Medicine’s Health and Fitness Journal.

The typical American consumes about one liter — a little over four cups — of drinking water a day. But people like me who engage in quasi-vigorous physical activity daily need more, and those who exercise strenuously for more than an hour a day need even more than that, perhaps supplemented by a sports drink containing the electrolytes sodium and potassium (but avoid those with more than a pinch of sugar). Keep in mind that skimping on your liquid intake or relying on sugary drinks can take a toll on your physical performance.

If you’re planning to engage in strenuous exercise or do physical work outdoors on a hot day, it’s best to start hydrating the day before. Check the color of your urine; the paler it is, the better. Also continue to drink water or other fluids throughout your activity and for hours afterward.

A critical factor in remaining well hydrated is not to rely on thirst to remind you to drink but rather to be proactive by consuming enough liquid before, during and after meals and physical activity. The longstanding advice to drink eight glasses of water a day was something I (among many others) was never able to achieve. I’m happy to say that experts have since modified that rule. Current thinking calls for getting about 70 percent of daily water needs from liquids (including coffee and tea, by the way, though not alcohol) and the rest from solid foods.

The authors of “Quench” suggest two dozen fruits and vegetables that are especially hydrating, ranging from cucumbers with 96.7 percent water to grapes with 81.5 percent water. Surely you can find many you would enjoy in a list that includes lettuce, tomatoes, cauliflower, spinach, broccoli, carrots, peppers, watermelon, strawberries, pineapple, blueberries, apples and pears.

Even chia seeds, an ancient so-called superfood said to sustain the ultra-running prowess of the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico, can be a force against dehydration;

Continued on insert page
PROTECTING SENIORS NATIONWIDE
MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM

$29.95/MO
PLUS SPECIAL OFFER
BILLING QUARTERLY

CALL NOW! 1.877.801.5055
WWW.24-7MED.COM

Quality Care & Service
• Skilled nursing
• Short-term rehab
• Long-term care

Mt. Greylock
Extended Care Facility
A Member of Berkshire Healthcare
Managed by an Affiliate of Berkshire Health Systems

1000 North Street
Pittsfield, MA
413-499-7186
www.mountgreylockextendedcare.org

La Bella
BASKETS & GIFTS
Luanne Forgea
Gift Director
413-212-3412
Luanne.labellabaskets.com

Beautiful Gifts for a Beautiful Cause

Flynn and Dagnoli
Funeral Homes
Serving the Berkshires and Southern Vermont

Pittsfield Chapel
5 Elm Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Telephone 413-663-8523

Central Chapel
74 Marshall St. • No. Adams, MA

West Chapel
521 West Main St. • No. Adams, MA
413-442-1733

HOSPICE CARE
in The Berkshires, Inc.
877 South Street Suite 1W
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-443-2994
www.hcb.org

Exceptional hospice care for more than 35 years

Savino Empire Monuments Inc.
Donna Brewer
Owner

MONUMENTS MARKERS
LETTERING BRONZE PLAQUES
VASES
★ Home Visits Available ★
442-4149
100 Wahconah St., Pittsfield

Mount View Home Care
...because home is where the heart is!
• Personal Care
• Medication Reminding
• Live-in Service
• Homemaking
• Companionship
• Shopping & Errands
• Up to & Including 24 Hour Care
137 North Street, Pittsfield, MA • www.mtviewhomecare.com
Call us to set up an appointment for a complimentary assessment! 413-464-7524

The Quality Time Club®
for Greylock members age 55 and over

Join QTC and take advantage of all the benefits and services the Club has to offer.

For information about membership, visit any Greylock branch throughout Berkshire County, or go online at www.greylock.org.

Federally insured by NCUA

WE'RE HIRING
AD SALES EXECUTIVES

Join our team

CONTACT US AT
careers@4LPi.com • www.4LPi.com/careers

Ad info. 1-800-477-4574 • Publication Support 1-800-888-4574 • www.4LPi.com Pittsfield Council on Aging, Pittsfield, MA 06-5153
By Victoria Passier
Senior Center Poetry Group

The Retreat

Silence has boundaries, bouncing from room to room, crying for a sound. It stirs up a need to speak, to fill the void with words, any nuance of laughter, any fragment of communication to hang onto.

We've been instructed not to speak, to sit with silence and let it reap what hides behind our words.

And so we ten sit, some eyes closed, some staring at the ceiling as though it would open and release us, some examining hands, rubbing them together for solace, for a spark of warmth.

Time drips slowly from us like drops of blood, each one a life.

How can this be helpful?

I am praying to the corner of the windowsill. If I squint my eyes I see a beard, a benevolent smile, a sense of why we're here at this retreat, our watches and cells in a bowl, on hold for the duration.

Still I long to curl up for a fetal sleep in the poppies.

Each movement of our bodies feels wooden, crackly, louder than reality.

We have become a unit of one instead of ten individual systems; each breath, each nod of our collective heads, each sniffle, now belongs to all of us and we absorb each difference into the communal whole.

I study the dark curly tendrils of the woman next to me and they are mine. She inhales the scent of my fear and it is hers. We are sealed in silence, straining for relief.

A door slams.

The sound snaps us like a rubber band. We're back again.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Advanced Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>8:30 Attorney General’s Community Engagement Office consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Poetry</td>
<td>10:30 Tai Chi</td>
<td>10:30 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>9:00 Ceramics</td>
<td>12:30 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Brand New Line Dancing</td>
<td>12:30 Tai Chi</td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
<td>12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 Ladies Pool</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>12:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle</td>
<td>1:35 Yoga</td>
<td>12:00 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Chess</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 Meditation</td>
<td>12:00 Tai Chi w/Weights</td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>12:15 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 SHINE</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi</td>
<td>12:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>1:00 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Art du Jure!</td>
<td>1:15 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>1:15 Art du Jure!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td>1:35 Yoga</td>
<td>1:35 Yoga</td>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Advanced Osteo</td>
<td>10:00 New Member Day</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo 9:00 Ceramics</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 The Counselman is In!</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving</td>
<td>12:30 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Poetry</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Brand New Line Dancing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 Card Party</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 &quot;Shake Your Soul&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 Legal Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 Ladies Pool</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:15 Art du Jure!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Advanced Osteo</td>
<td>10:00 Tai Chi</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Poetry</td>
<td>12:30 Tai Chi</td>
<td>10:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving</td>
<td>10:30 Brown Bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Brand New Line Dancing</td>
<td>1:00 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
<td>12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 &quot;Shake Your Soul&quot;</td>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>12:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 Ladies Pool</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>11:00 Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Scrabble 12:00 Pinochle</td>
<td>1:00 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Mah Jong, Hand &amp; Foot!</td>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Art du Jure!</td>
<td>1:15 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td>1:35 Yoga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 Blood Pressure Clinic (by apt.)</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Beginner Osteo</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
<td>9:00 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 Chess</td>
<td>10:30 Tai Chi</td>
<td>10:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>12:30 Quilting, Woodcarving</td>
<td>12:30 Knitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>12:30 Tai Chi</td>
<td>12:15 Flexible Feet &amp; Core Stability</td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 Meditation</td>
<td>12:30 Chair Caning</td>
<td>1:00 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>1:00 Bingo</td>
<td>1:45 Beginner Tai Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 SHINE</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td>1:00 Bridge, Canasta!</td>
<td>1:15 Tai Chi w/weights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 Canasta! 1:00 Art du Jure!</td>
<td>1:15 Scrapping &amp; Cardmaking</td>
<td>1:15 Art du Jure!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td>1:35 Yoga</td>
<td>1:30 From Stage to Screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>