

HEALTH & Wellness

A photograph of three people: a woman in the center holding a baby, an older woman to her right, and a young girl in the bottom right corner. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman holding the baby is wearing a white long-sleeved top. The older woman is wearing a light-colored top. The young girl is wearing a grey sweater.

Eating Disorders in the Elderly

Different Impact as we age

Incorporating Exercise As We Age

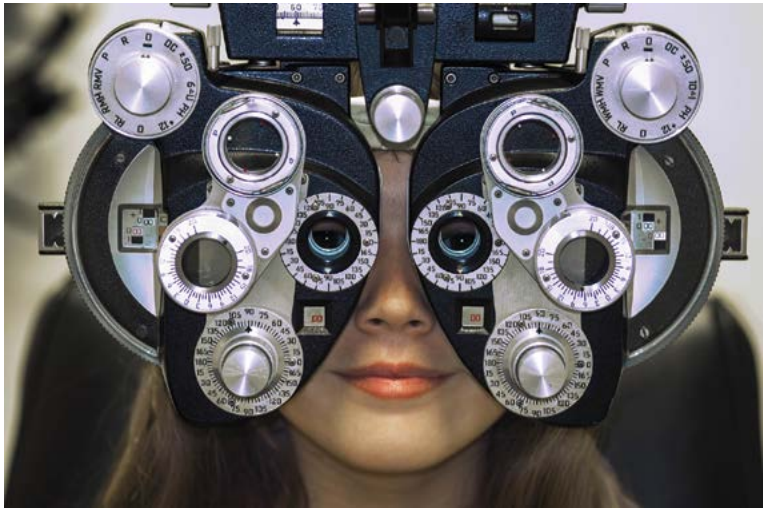
Staying physically fit to enjoy your golden years

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A PUBLICATION OF THE
CALEDONIAN-RECORD
PUBLISHING COMPANY
190 Federal Street,
P.O. Box 8,
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

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'Tis The Season For Ticks ... AND LYME DISEASE

BY JILL KIMBALL

It seems you can't read the news without hearing about the increase in ticks and tick-borne illnesses in our region. This year will likely bring another banner year of ticks and their diseases to the state. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2016 New Hampshire had the tenth highest instances of tick-born illness (13,710) in the nation. Diseases such as Lyme, Anaplasmosis and B. miyamotoi are caused by North American ticks such as the black-legged or deer tick. These diseases, if left unchecked can cause bacterial infections and multiple health problems including, muscle and joint problems, fatigue, fevers and headaches. Long-term effects to those infected can be devastating and debilitating. What's causing the increase in ticks? Experts note several reasons:

Changing climates - ticks are now flourishing in areas once thought to be too cold, even coming back to life even when frozen to -10 degrees.

Evolving land usage - more clear-cut land means more scrub areas which cater to mice and deer, the perfect hosts for ticks.

More encroaching suburbs - diminishing natural areas bring more deer closer to neighborhoods and nearer to humans.

Change in bird patterns - with the warming climate, new species of birds arrive to our areas and the ticks carried by them land in our own backyards.

Big acorn years - last year was a banner year for acorns which means more mice... and more ticks.

Despite the increase in these pesky creatures, it is still safe to be outside enjoying nature. All it takes is to use caution when hiking, walking the dog or just hanging out in the back yard. Here are a few easy tips to help keep ticks away:

— Wear Light colored clothing when outdoors or hiking. This will help you see the ticks before they attach.

- Wear long pants and tuck your socks into your pant leg.
- Spray your clothes with DEET insect repellent before you hike
- Stay on marked trails
- Check for ticks on yourself and your pets

When you return home, be sure to do a thorough tick check on your entire body, your child's and your pet's. Ticks tend to crawl up and look for warm places to latch on. Pay close attention to the areas with creases or where fabric and body intersect. If you do find a tick remove it immediately. The sooner you can get it off your body, the less chance it will have to infect you or your loved one. If you do find a tick, don't panic. Remove the tick right away.

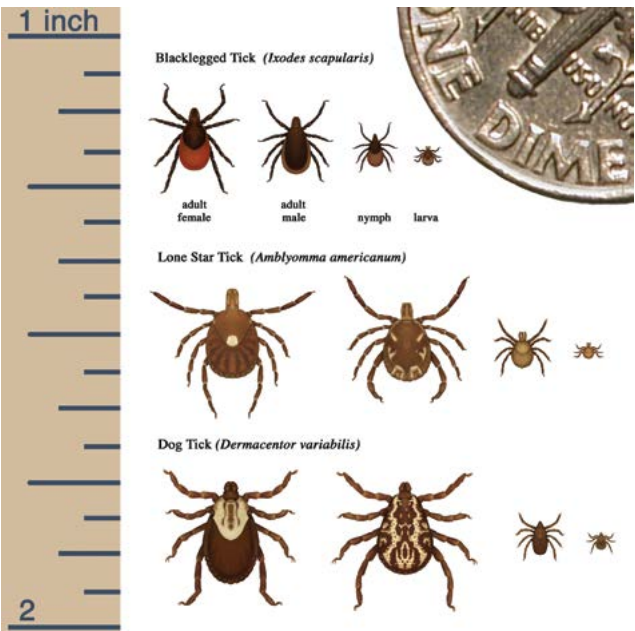
To remove the tick:

Use tweezers and pinch the tick as close to the skin as possible, pull straight up with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or wiggle. If the head or mouth part remains it is ok. Just remove as much as you can easily and clean the area with antiseptic. In a few days the spot will dry out and the remaining parts will fall away.

Lyme disease is unlikely if the tick is attached for a short time

According to the Mayo clinic, Lyme infection is unlikely if the tick is attached for less than 36 to 48 hours. Not all ticks carry Lyme or other diseases, and not all people who are bitten will get ill. Call your provider if you notice symptoms 3-30 days after your tick bite such as a bulls-eye type rash radiating from the bite area. Or if you have a fever, headaches or lethargy that won't seem to go away. Your provider may test you for Lyme or other diseases and treat you with antibiotics.


Jill Kimball, APR is the Community Relations Director at Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Inc. Prior to that she was a senior copywriter for a national retailer. In her free time, she enjoys outdoor activities with her family and pup, Bruin.



The black-legged or “deer” tick is the carrier of Lyme disease. In its larva stage it is the size of a poppy seed. Photo courtesy of the CDC. Want to learn more? Download the ACHS tick brochure at www.ammonoosuc.org.

Founded in 1975, Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is a non-profit community health center offering a network of affordable primary health services, including dental. At their six sites throughout northern NH, they serve over 10,000 patients. Their sliding-fee payment scale for those who qualify, makes health care affordable for all.

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN AGING WELL

BY MEG BURMEISTER

Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging

Do you wonder what the secrets are to aging well? Aging brings new opportunities for growth, contribution, and self-expression. It is not synonymous with decline, disease, or disability. Experts emphasize that with the right physical and social supports, older adults can remain healthy and maintain high levels of independence and lifestyle.

Much research has been done to explore aging well and there are several common themes; keep moving; build regular exercise into your lifestyle, eat well and be thoughtful about what you put in your body, stay connected with others, and do what you enjoy doing. Based on this research, regular physical activity and eating healthy are two of the most important daily activities one can focus on to age well.

We know from research that regular activity is key to aging well. Exercise has proven benefits for older Vermonters. It reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, colon cancer, and

breast cancer. It also decreases the risk of falls and fall-related injuries. Strength and balance are key to maintaining good health.

There are many reasons why poor eating habits can develop as people get older. A decreased sense of smell and taste, dental problems, or depression can cause a change in diet. Older people may also have difficulty getting to a supermarket or standing long enough to cook a meal. Although energy needs may decrease with age, the need for certain vitamins and minerals including calcium, vitamin D, and vitamins B6 and B12, increases after age 50. We are fortunate to be in a state where locally-sourced fresh produce and grass-fed meats are readily available and used to prepare the meals for Community Dining Areas and Meals-On-Wheels programs.

*“Youth is the gift of nature
but aging is a work of art.”*

— Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

Everyone, no matter his or her age, to embrace lifestyle choices that will support living and aging well. So keep moving and eat that apple every day!

Meg Burmeister is the Executive Director at Northeast Kingdom Council On Aging. (Picture to come)

New directions in Aging Well is what we live by here at the NEK Council on Aging. We support older Vermonters with services and programs that encourage aging well...their way. We provide local exercise programs such as Golden Ball Tai Chi, Bone Builders, and Tai Chi for fall prevention. These programs are FREE and a great way to meet people and stay well!

To learn more about our programs and ser-



vices, including Meals-On-Wheels, call the NEKCOA helpline at 800-642-5119. For exercise program schedules, visit our website: www.nekcouncil.org



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UNDERSTANDING LOW BACK PAIN AND SCIATICA

BY STACEY HICKS
Carlisle Place Physical Therapy
and Wellness Center

Back pain is one of the most common reasons for a visit to the doctor’s office. Experts estimate that as many as eighty percent of the population will experience a back problem at some point in their lifetime. In the Unites States we spend over 50 billion dollars annually in medical costs due to low back pain. Most causes of back pain are mechanical or non-organic, meaning they are not caused by a serious condition such as inflammatory arthritis, infection, fracture, or cancer. There are two factors that predispose us to low back pain. The first is poor sitting posture. The second is the frequency in which we flex or bend forward during the day. From the moment we rise in the morning until we go to bed in the evening, the average person bends forward 3,500 times. This combined with poor sitting posture, which also places the spine in flexion, creates mechanical alterations in the spine. This can stress tissues, break down discs, and create impingement on nerves that can cause sciatica or low back pain.

Evaluation of your pain by a therapist trained in the Mackenzie Method or Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy (MDT) will determine your treatment strategy an provide lifelong applications for preventing future back pain. The Mackenzie procedure for assessing patients with low back pain was found to be more accurate than an MRI in differentiating disc pain from non discogenic pain. (Donelson et

al, 1997). Therapeutic treatment as well as more effective, is less expensive, avoids unnecessary diagnostic testing and teaches you lifelong techniques in avoiding future episodes.



Stacey Hicks, PT, cert. MDT, CLT LANA is trained in the Mackenzie Method and owner of Carlisle Place Physical Therapy and Wellness Center in Jefferson, NH. Stacy attended University of New England in Biddeford Maine graduating with bachelor of science in Physical Therapy in 1996. In addition to her certification in the Mackenzie method of mechanical diagnosis, she is also a nationally certified lymphedema therapist (CLT LANA). If you are experiencing low back pain or sciatica ask your physician for a referral to the Carlisle Place for an evaluation. Stacey as well as her staff will get you on the right track. We can be reached directly at 603-586-4100 , by fax at 603-586-4101 or www.carlisleplacerehab.net

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REIKI: THE ART OF HEALING WITH THE HANDS

BY JANICE NAREY

Barnet Tradepost Wellness Center

Reiki, the art of healing with the hands, was founded by Mikao Usui in Japan in the 1920's. Reiki is translated as: spiritually guided life force energy. This universal energy flows through all things. A person's energy can become stagnant when there has been physical or emotional injury or pain. Practitioners of Reiki learn to help to remove these areas of stagnation and thus improve the flow of energy. This improvement in energy flow can help to provide relaxation, reduce stress, reduce pain, and assist the body in its natural healing abilities.

Reiki is a complementary alternative medicine practice. This is a term used for practices that are not part of standard medical care. Regular Reiki treatments are beneficial to your mental and physical health in the same way that other complementary alternative medicine therapies are. Do you practice yoga on a regular basis? Do you have regularly scheduled chiropractic, massage, or acupuncture appointments? All of these therapies help to improve and maintain your overall wellbeing. Self-care is not something that should be done when your world is unraveling. Taking care of yourself on a regular basis will mean that you don't have to

play catch up in order to restore balance in your life. It is a commitment to staying healthy.

A Reiki Treatment typically lasts for one hour but can be as short as 30 minutes. During a treatment, the Reiki recipient lies fully clothed on a treatment table or sits comfortably in a chair. Reiki is offered through light touch or with hands placed over various areas of the head and body. The practitioner's hands may be held over an area for a few

minutes or for a longer period if there seems to be a need to linger. People have varying experiences during a Reiki session. They may feel a slight tingling, heat, pulsations of energy, or nothing at all. Often, they will doze off. Some recipients fall into a meditative state or become emotional as feelings are brought to the surface. Almost everyone has a sense of relaxation and stress relief during and after the treatment.

The use of Reiki is becoming more common in medical settings as a therapy that can bring relaxation, stress relief, and an aide to healing. Locally, Reiki practitioners volunteer at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Norris Cotton Cancer Center, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Reiki volunteers through the Vermont Reiki Association participate in clinics for addiction recovery and for cancer survivors and their families.



Janice worked as a nurse for 34 years, obtaining her MSN in 2012. She has been a Reiki practitioner since 2014. She practices at both the NEK Reiki Collective in St. Johnsbury and the Barnet Tradepost Wellness Center in Barnet, and she is a Reiki volunteer at Norris Cotton Cancer Center

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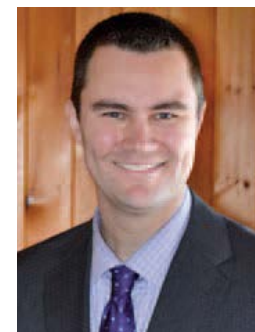


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DIM LIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT: How To Use LIGHT AND DARKNESS To OPTIMIZE SLEEP

ANNIKA MCCANN

Certified Health Coach

Feeling sleepy? You're not alone. More than a third of Americans aren't getting the recommended minimum of seven hours of sleep per night, and on average we get a full hour less sleep than we did 60 years ago. This has far greater implications than simply feeling tired and cranky or needing that extra cup of coffee to keep yourself going. Inadequate sleep has been linked to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, impaired cognitive function, depression, and many other health problems.

For millennia, our bodies have been governed by circadian rhythms set by the rising and setting of the sun. We are hard-wired through millions of years of evolution to wind down in the evening and go to sleep soon after dark. Modern society has disrupted this natural pattern, and man-made light is partly to blame. Research has shown that nighttime light exposure suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone that controls sleep and wake cycles. This can be disastrous for sleep quality.

For thousands of years, humans were exposed to bright light from the sun throughout the day, while the night had only the warm yellow glow from fire and candles. Sixty years ago, we had plenty of light at night, but homes were mostly lit with warm-spectrum incandescent bulbs. TV, phone, and computer screens, on the other hand, emit blue-spectrum light, which suppresses melatonin much more than warmer light. In many homes, incandescent bulbs have been replaced with more energy-efficient fluorescent or LED bulbs, which emit considerably more blue light. All this blue-light exposure sends the message to our brains that it's daytime and time to be awake.

When TV became widespread, there were only a handful of channels, and most signed off at night. Today, we have infinite digital entertainment available 24 hours a day. If there's nothing good on TV, you can watch something on Netflix or YouTube. There's always Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat to keep up with, strangers to argue with, and cat videos to watch. All this temptation makes it much more difficult to get to bed at a decent time. This constant online entertainment keeps us up later, while bathing our eyes in a constant flood of blue light. This has contributed to an epidemic of poor sleep, insomnia, and chronic sleep deprivation.

Solutions

- Getting bright light exposure before noon increases the production of serotonin, a precursor to melatonin, and helps optimize our circadian rhythm. A walk outside before work or at lunchtime (without sunglasses) can make a big difference at bedtime.

- Make your bedroom a pitch-dark space. Get rid of any glowing clocks, night-lights, and anything else that has a light. Even tiny lights, like those on a power strip, can have an effect on melatonin; these can be covered with electrical tape. Get blackout shades for your windows if light comes in from outside.

- Choose warm-white bulbs for lights in your bedroom and other rooms where you spend time in the evening. You can even replace regular bulbs with orange bulbs for a cozy, firelight ambiance. I have an orange LED nightlight in my bathroom so I don't have to turn a light on when I get up during the night.

- Use your phone's settings or an app to automatically change the color of your screen to a warmer hue, which will reduce the amount of blue light getting to your eyes. You can also do this on your desktop or laptop with a free app called f.lux.

- Geek out and try orange glasses! If you want to watch TV or can't keep off your devices, blue-blocker glasses can, as the name implies, block blue light. You can buy blue-blocker glasses for less than \$10 on Amazon.

- This is a tough one: turn off your devices in the evening. Most of us are hopelessly addicted to our phones or tablets, and the urge to check your email one last time or see if anyone commented on your Facebook post is powerful. This not only exposes you to blue light, it also stimulates your brain much more than something more passive such as reading a book. Before bed, you want to be winding your brain down, not firing it up!

- Set an alarm 60 or 90 minutes before bed to remind you to turn your devices off or put them away. Keeping them out of the bedroom can also reduce temptation.

Sleep well, everybody!



Annika McCann, RN is a Certified Health Coach who helps people make sustainable food and lifestyle changes for a lifetime of better health. She also works as an operating room nurse at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital. www.annikamccann.com



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PREVENTING EATING DISORDERS IN THE ELDERLY

BY MARTHA SWATS
Comfort Keepers

For many years, it was suggested that eating disorders existed almost exclusively with younger age groups, such as adolescents and teenagers. It's only been in the last decade or so that medical experts have come to discover that these problems are not exactly unique to younger people. In fact, eating disorders, namely anorexia and bulimia, are also quite common among one group in particular: aging adults.

Different Impact as We Age

This may come as a surprise, especially when one considers the contributors of eating disorders in younger groups, such as low self-esteem and negative body image – factors that we don't usually associate with older adults. But we shouldn't forget that, for younger people, these feelings don't simply manifest from thin air. They're often brought on by external stressors, like bullying. It's no different for older

FAST FACT

Research indicates that 78% of the deaths caused by anorexia nervosa occur in older adults.

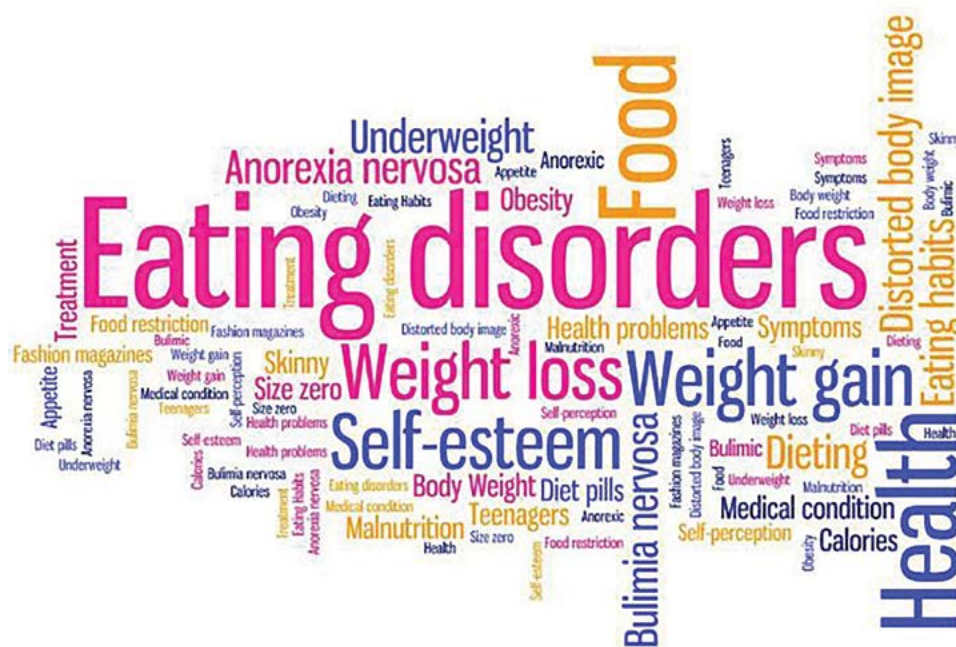
adults, expect that the stressors are often dramatic life events, such as the death of a spouse, a serious illness, or a debilitating injury.

What also separates eating disorders in the elderly vs. younger people is that the resulting damage is much more severe. Natural aging processes already make the body more fragile and less resilient – and nutritional deprivation will ultimately increase a senior's risk of developing everything from osteoporosis to sarcopenia.

Signs of an Eating Disorder

Despite its prevalence in the aging community, eating disorders often go unnoticed by family caregivers because the symptoms may be similar to those found in the aging process. In many cases, it simply doesn't occur to the family caregiver that the root cause may be an eating disorder. However, it's imperative for family caregivers to recognize the signs of eating disorder. Below are a few to look out for:

- Stained or discolored teeth
- Dramatic weight loss



- Change in behavior, especially during/after meals
- Going to the bathroom immediately after meals
- Extreme sensitivity to cold

Having the Discussion

If you've identified that your loved one may be suffering from an eating disorder, plan out how to approach the issue. First and foremost, find a good time to talk in private and be upfront about what you've observed and why you're concerned. Secondly, anticipate that there will be some resistance and denial. It's no easy task to admit when we have a problem, and it's natural to become defensive.

Let it be known that you are always available to discuss next steps and ready to help find treatment (if necessary). Most importantly, when discussing an eating disorder with a loved one, be sure not to trivialize the problem, but also don't pretend to understand exactly what they're going through. Simply keep the lines of communication open, and offer your support.

Martha Swats is Owner/Administrator of Comfort Keepers.

Comfort Keepers is a leader in providing in-home care consisting of such services as companionship, transportation, housekeeping, meal preparation, bathing, mobility assistance, nursing services, and a host of additional items all meant to keep seniors living independently worry free in the comfort of their homes. Comfort Keepers have been serving New Hampshire residents since 2005. Let us help you stay independent. Please call 603-536-6060 or visit our website at www.comfortkeepers.com/plymouthnh for more information.

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References:

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- Our volunteer force supported older residents of our communities with **466** hours of time.
- Our caregiver support team awarded **24** dementia respite grants and **15** family caregiver grants for the new fiscal year. **16** people attended classes and support groups this month.
- Our free Medicare Bootcamp (held once a month) welcomed **11** people and **61** people received Medicare counseling.

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*data reflects amounts for the month of June 2018.

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Looking Out For Your Loved Ones

BY BRETT GALE
Brett Gale Insurance

In December of 2017 I lost my best friend to a rare illness. It was a one in a million disease, yet it struck someone close to me. Fortunately, my friend was a planner, and had a good amount of life insurance.

Now during this difficult time it is allowing his family to carry on without the huge financial burdens that would have come with the loss of his income. Yet 4 out of 10 Americans have no life insurance of any kind.

We don't like to think about it, but making sure those we love are taken care of in the event of the unexpected is part of a well-planned life, and is the responsible thing to do.

A good agent will not try and sell you something, but will guide you through a process to discover what your goals are, and what is important to you.

Some questions they might ask:

— Would it be important to you that your mortgage be paid off so that your family can still afford to stay in their home?

— If your income was lost how would that impact your family's lifestyle?

— Would you like to make provision for that?

— How much would they need?

— How long would they need it for? Would funding your children's college education be important to you if you were not there to help

with that?

— Do you want to provide any sort of financial legacy for your children, or a charity that is important to you?

— Do you have anyone else who depends on you financially such as an elderly parent who would be impacted if you were not around?

— What kind of funeral do you want?

— How much will that cost?

Temporary Policies

Some needs are temporary some are permanent. Your kids won't be dependent forever, hopefully! One day the home will be paid for.

Term insurance is designed for a fixed amount of time such as 10 or 20 years. It is the most affordable, so you can buy the most coverage for the least amount of money, but it is temporary and has no cash value once the term is up. Often when you are starting out with your family you need the most coverage, but can least afford it. That makes term a good solution in that instance.

Permanent Policies

Permanent policies are not only for "if" something happens, but for "when" something happens. They work well for concerns such as final expenses and legacy.

Permanent policies are also assets with cash value, and they earn dividends. In the long run that makes them a better value, but in the near term they cost more.

That brings us to budget. The best policy is the one you can afford, so you can keep

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it. Even if it is not as much coverage as you would like, something is better than nothing. The important thing is to find a solid company with an advisor you trust and TAKE ACTION.

The likelihood of something happening unexpectedly may be small, but the consequences are huge.

Brett took over the local State Farm agency in December of 2016. He is a lifelong Lyndon resident. His passion is helping families be prepared for the unexpected with life, health, property and casualty insurance.

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-Susie Duckett RN



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"If you have health, you probably will be happy, and if you have health and happiness, you have all the wealth you need, even if it is not all you want."

- Elbert Hubbard

BRAIN-HEALTHY HABITS To EMBRACE

Cognitive decline is a condition that is often associated with aging, but even middle-aged people can experience memory loss or cognition issues.

The Alzheimer’s Association says that more than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. By 2050, that number could rise to as high as 16 million people. More than 747,000 Canadians are living with Alzheimer’s or another dementia, says the Canadian Alzheimer’s Association.

Although there is no definitive way to prevent dementia, living a long, vibrant life may be possible by encouraging some healthy habits for the brain. It is never too late or too early to begin health and lifestyle changes.

Exercise

Becoming more active can improve brain volume, reduce risk for dementia and improve thinking and memory skills. The journal *Neurology* found that older people who vigorously exercise performed better on cognitive tests than others of the same age, placing them at the equivalent of 10 years younger. Increased blood flow that occurs with physical activity may help generate new neurons in the hippocampus, an area of the brain involved with learning and memory.

The Harvard Medical School says aerobic exercise may help improve brain tissue by improving blood flow and reducing the chances of injury to the brain from cholesterol buildup in blood vessels.

Quit smoking

The Alzheimer’s Association indicates that evidence shows smoking increases the risk of cognitive decline. Smoking can impair blood flow to the brain and cause small strokes that may damage blood vessels.

Eat healthy foods

Foods that are good for the heart and blood vessels also are good for the brain. These include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish-based proteins, unsaturated fats, and foods containing omega-3 fatty acids. Neurologists state that, while research on diet and cognitive function is limited, diets, such as Mediterranean and Mediterranean-DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), may contribute to a lower risk of cognitive issues.

Consume caffeine

Caffeine may help boost memory performance and brain health. A *Journal of Nutrition* study found people ages 70 and older who consumed more caffeine scored better on tests of mental function than those who consumed less caffeine. Caffeine may help improve attention span, cognitive function and feelings of well-being. Information from *Psychology Today* also indicates caffeine may help in the storage of dopamine, which can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety. In addition, compounds in cocoa and coffee beans may improve vascular health and help repair cellular damage due to high antioxidant levels.

Work the brain

Engaging in mentally stimulating activities can create new brain connections and more backup circuits, states Dr. Joel Salinas, a

neurologist at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital. Working the brain through puzzles, reading and participating in social situations can stimulate the release of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a molecule essential for repairing brain cells and creating connections between them. A good way to

combine these lifestyle factors is to take an exercise class with friends, mixing the social, stimulation and exercise recommendations together. Cognitive decline can come with aging, but through healthy habits, people can reduce their risk of memory loss and dementia.





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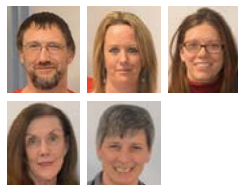
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THE BENEFITS OF BIRTHING IN WATER

BY JADE KAPLAN

Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital

There are legends from the South Pacific about giving birth in shallow sea water and of Egyptian pharaohs being born in water. But in truth, no one knows how many centuries women have taken to the water to have their babies.

For the past several decades more and more women around the world have chosen to deliver their children in water. And as the numbers grew, these standard terms were developed and accepted.

- Water immersion is during the first stage of labor before the baby is born.

- In a waterbirth, the woman remains in the water during the pushing phase and actual birth of the baby. The baby is then brought to the surface of the water immediately after he or she is born.

Though not all agree on the science of waterbirths, it is commonly accepted that the warm water in a tub or pool feels similar to the warmth of the womb. Doctors and midwives report how calm babies were after they had been born in water, they cried less than babies born in air and they were eager to have eye contact and to nurse.

"Being in a warm water bath can be very comforting to a woman in labor. Simply being calmed and supported can help her cope with the sensations for labor and birth, and the water itself helps the birth be more gentle on both her and her baby," said Jade Kaplan, Nurse-Midwife at NVRH. "We know that the less we interfere in a normal birth, the healthier the mother and baby will be."

The buoyancy of water immersion allows spontaneous movement of the mother. No one has to help the mother get into a new position. Her body moves naturally in response to position

of her baby. Movement helps open the pelvis, allowing the baby to descend. When a woman in labor relaxes in a warm tub, her body is less likely to secrete stress-related hormones. This allows her body to produce the pain inhibitors-endorphins-that assist in labor.

In recent trials with 2,615 participants of water immersion during labor, (Shaw-Battista 2017), it was found that laboring in water poses no extra risks to mother or baby and helps relieve pain, leading to less use of pain medication. In addition, the same study found that mothers who labored in water had less anxiety, better fetal positioning in the pelvis, less use of drugs to speed up labor, and were more satisfied with privacy and the ability to move around. According to Waterbirth International, waterbirths are highly rated by mothers – typically stating they would consider giving birth in water again; some even stating they would never give birth any other way.

Get the facts: <https://waterbirth.org/faqs/>



Jade Kaplan is a Nurse-Midwife at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital. <https://nvrh.org/birth-center>

PLANNING FOR END-OF-LIFE HEALTH CARE

JAY C. ABRAMSON

Law Offices of Jay C. Abramson

End of life is not something we like to think about but something we always want to have some degree of control over. Planning for end-of-life health care decision making is the most important step in taking control. There are two key components to health care decision making that in Vermont are reflected in an Advance Directive document.

One is the clear expression of the type of medical interventions you want at the end of life. The other is appointing someone to be your trusted agent to speak for you regarding health care decisions when you are unable to do so. These need to be in your Advance Directive, sometimes commonly referred to as a Living Will or Durable Health Care Power of Attorney, or Health Care Proxy. In Vermont we call it an Advance Directive.

Advance Directives are legal documents. They contain, among other things, an expression of your wishes about medical decisions at the end of your life. This document becomes an expression of your values and the type of medical care you want when you are unable to communicate that directly to your health care providers. Since it is a legal document done in accordance with specific statutory authority, health care providers are required under the law to follow your wishes.

Vermont has adopted a broad range of end of life issues that can be addressed in an Advance Directive. The central part of the Advance Directive is the type of care you would want when end of life approaches. Whether it be at a time when you are suffering an illness from which death is imminent or when your thought process is impaired and may continue to deteriorate to the point where you are in a permanently vegetative state.

Since the Advance Directive is reviewed by your health care provider in detail at the time in which you are unable to communicate your wishes for medical treatment, it is also critical that you appoint a trusted agent to speak for you and promote your values about end of life care. Within the Advance Directive document you may also appoint alternate agents that will be able to perform that function if your first agent is unable to do so.

It is also very important that you share your wishes with your loved ones and the doctor. These discussions will help you clarify your specific wishes and make your family and doctor aware of how you would like your end of life decisions to be followed.

In addition, the Vermont Advance Directive Statute allows you to address other end-of-life issues such as hospice care, pain management, persons responsible for decisions at the time of death including preferences for burial, cremation, or other post-death affairs.

"Taking control of your medical decisions are important at all times and especially at end of life."

— Jay C. Abramson
Law Offices Of Jay C. Abramson

Within the Advance Directive you may also identify your feelings about measures being taken to keep you alive. Medical innovations that keep people alive longer include artificial food and water through tubes inserted to the body, reviving the heart, and maintaining breathing through a heart-lung machine even when the brain is no longer able to command the heart and lungs to work.

Within an Advance Directive you can express your wishes as to whether these interventions are something you want or those you will decline to have at a time when there is no prospect of either regaining your ability to think and act for yourself or have improvement in your condition which is likely to progress to imminent death.

You may also state your preference with regard to who would be your guardian should someone file a petition in court challenging your medical decisions. In the choice of an agent you may also declare them as your preference to be your guardian. This declaration will be followed by the probate court, ensuring your trusted agent will be responsible for your medical decisions.

Taking control of your medical decisions are important at all times and especially at end of life. Many people consider an Advance Directive unnecessary until they are in advanced age. However, the law around surrogate decision making comes from the medical tragedies of younger individuals including Karen Ann Quinlan and Terry Schiavo, two of the most celebrated cases of end-of-life decisions being made by a third party. This illustrates the importance of communicating your values surrounding medical decisions early on in life to ensure that your end of life is managed in a manner consistent with your own personal values. Having the Advance Directive in place in case something happens can avoid the uncertainty of how the end of life care will be handled for you.

In Vermont, the Department of Health maintains an Advance Directive Registry allowing electronic storage and access to your Advance Directive by medical practitioners if you happen to not have the actual document on hand. This is very convenient both while in Vermont or if you should suffer some medical condition while traveling. It is free of charge and

easy to do. The Advance Directive Registry can be contacted at 523 Westfield Avenue, PO Box 2789, Westfield, NJ 07091-2789. For forms or additional information visit: <http://www.healthvermont.gov/systems/advance-directives>, call 1-800-548-9455, or <http://www.vtethicsnetwork.org>.

Jay C. Abramson opened the Law Offices of Jay C. Abramson in St. Johnsbury in 1995. In May of 2005, Jay became a Certified Elder



Law Attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation. He provides counseling and represents special needs, older persons and their representatives about the legal aspects of health and long-term care planning, public benefits, surrogate decision-making, and older persons' legal capacity. For more information, call 802-748-6200 or visit us at www.kingdomlawyers.com.

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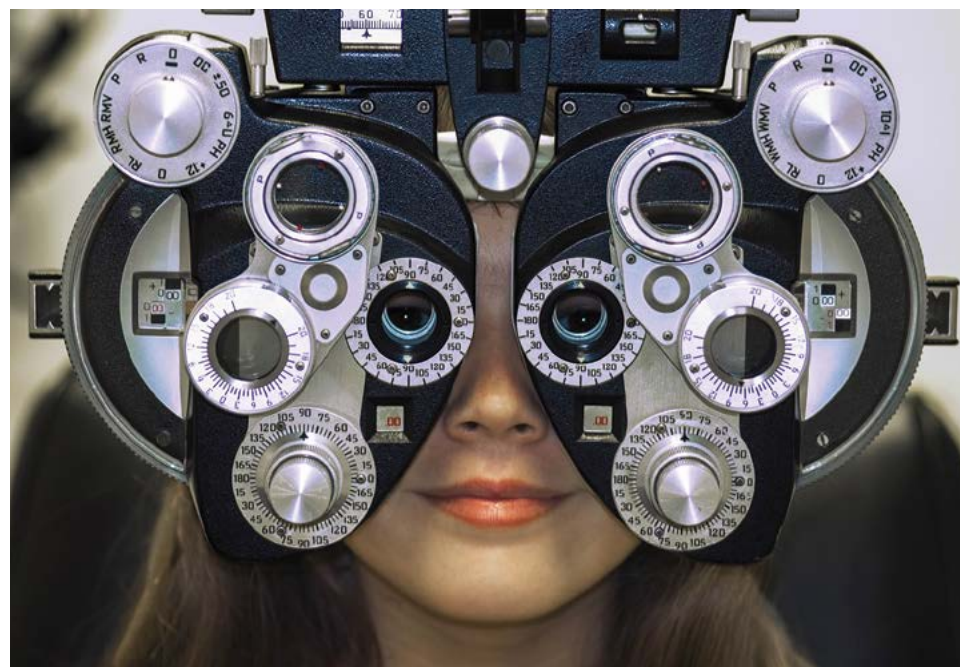
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THE IMPORTANCE OF ANNUAL EYE EXAMS

BY DR. JOEL TUITE
Hometown Eye Care

Routine eye examinations should be an annual part of each individual's health care regimen. During an eye examination, optometrists not only provide corrective lenses for vision, but also can detect a multitude of eye disease conditions.

When someone has perfect vision it does not always mean they have perfect eye health. Glaucoma, macular degeneration, cataracts, dry eye, diabetic eye disease, and hypertensive eye disease are just a few conditions that are detected and monitored with routine eye care.

Within an eye examination, the patient's visual acuity is tested along with a refraction which helps the doctor determine if someone needs spectacle correction or not. This also allows the doctor to determine if someone is capable of 20/20 vision or not. If not, it is an optometrist's job to find out why.

During the examination, a full interior and exterior evaluation of each eye will be performed. Eye pressure testing is essential in monitoring eye health, along with pupil dilation, which allows the doctor a much more expansive view of the inside of the eye.

The dilation allows the doctor to look for things such as cataracts, retinal damage or detachments, as well as other anomalies like freckles on the back of the eye. Yes, someone can have a freckle in their eye!

The big question most individuals have is, "How do I prevent these conditions in the first place?" Many of these conditions are preventable or can be postponed by maintaining a healthy lifestyle, even if we are genetically

predisposed to one or more of them. Smoking, for instance, has been linked to eye disease such as macular degeneration.

Having a balanced diet to provide the eyes with needed nutrients, along with the use of sun protection and avoidance of habits like smoking, is essential in maintaining proper eye health. With annual routine eye examinations patients are educated on their risks for eye disease due to family history or lifestyle, and given essential steps in avoiding these conditions.

We can't manipulate genetics, but we can do our best to maintain a healthy lifestyle with proper nutrition, eye protection, prevention of bad habits, and having annual routine eye examinations.



Dr. Joel Tuite is a glaucoma certified optometrist born, raised, and currently practicing at Hometown Eye Care in Littleton, NH. He has 11 years of experience in the field of optometry.

UNDERSTANDING DRY EYES AND HOW TO TREAT THEM

DR. WINNIE TSENG

Littleton, Woodsville and Lincoln Eye Care Centers

Dry Eye is a multifactorial, chronic, progressive disease of the ocular surface in which a person does not produce sufficient, good quality tears to lubricate and nourish the eye. Like many disease processes, inflammation plays a role in the condition and the condition is accompanied by ocular symptoms that can negatively impact your day-to-day activities, including eye pain, blurry vision, feeling like there's something in your eyes, itching, sandy/gritty feeling, burning sensation, sticky, tearing/watery eyes, redness, crusting on lashes and light sensitivity.

About 20 to 25 million Americans suffer from dry eyes. Your chances of having dry eyes increase with age. It has been estimated that 14% of the population over the age of 50 have symptoms of dry eyes. Women are twice more likely to have Dry Eye Disease than men. Working hours on end on the computer also can contribute to dry eyes as studies have shown we do not blink often enough and we tend to blink incompletely when staring on our digital device. Besides our environment, the structural integrity of your eyelids (e.g. having outward or inward turning eyelids), any history of ocular surface conditions such as recent laser vision correction surgery, chronic eyelid inflammation, medical conditions such as Sjogren's disease and taking certain types of medications can all contribute to dry eyes.

As an overview on dry eyes, we should first go over facts about our tears. When you blink, a film of tears spreads over the eye, helping in smoothing the surface of the eye, giving you clear vision. So, blinking helps keep the eyes moist and clear our vision. Besides keeping the eyes lubricated, tears also play a role in fighting off infection and washing away foreign particles.

The tear film basically has three layers:

- 1) outermost, oily layer produced by the Meibomian glands lining our eyelids. The function of this layer is to smooth out the surface of the tear film and decrease evaporation.
- 2) middle, watery layer, what we think of as our tears, produced by the lacrimal glands in the eyelids. This layer lubricates and protects the eye from foreign debris and irritants.
- 3) inner, mucin layer that helps our tears to stick to the eye.

At this time, there is no cure for Dry Eye Disease, but there are myriads of available treatment options aimed towards addressing the root cause of a person's dry eyes and improving the balance of the tear film to provide stable, good quality vision, maintain the health of your eyes and reduce dry eye symptoms. It should be noted that a series of various treatments are commonly used to manage dry eyes and there's no saying that everyone benefits from one particular kind of treatment.

A common approach to treat dry eyes is to increase tear production by the use of prescription eye drops such as Restasis. A similar eye drop called Xiidra can also be used to relieve dry eye symptoms. A short course of steroid eye drops may be used concomitantly to combat the inflammatory component of this condition.

To maintain the health of the tear film, some studies have shown the benefits of taking omega-3 fatty acid supplements (e.g. fish oils) for improving dry eye symptoms as it is thought that omega-3s help augment the oily layer of the tear film. Omega-3s are generally safe for most healthy adults and have few side effects, taken in a standard dose. Talk to your eye doctor first if you're considering omega-3s so he/she can review your medical history and determine what's appropriate for you.

Another means of managing dry eyes is to keep the natural tears in our eyes longer by blocking the tear ducts through which the tears normally drain. We do this inserting tiny, removable, silicone punctal plugs into our tear ducts.

Of course, using artificial tears and a daily regimen of warm compresses to stimulate the Meibomian glands to secrete oil to the tear film may be adequate to control mild cases of dry eyes. In some in-

stances, over-the-counter artificial tear ointment may be added at bedtime for additional relief. And don't forget to blink - take breaks for every 20 minutes you're on the computer, for 20 seconds by looking at something about 20 feet from you - and blink.

For the majority of patients with dry eyes, they usually suffer from a type of dry eyes called evaporative dry eyes. In these cases, the Meibomian glands that line our lid margins are the culprits. In these cases, the glands are usually clogged or in some cases have lost their function from the progression of the disease, and are not secreting adequate amounts of oil to the tear film (Meibomian Gland Dysfunction). As a result, the tears would evaporate too quickly on the ocular surface, triggering dry eyes. To manage these kinds of dry eyes, warm compresses, artificial tears and a daily regimen of cleaning your lids may be the first line of treatment to help relieve some of your dry eye symptoms. In some cases, a more tailored, effective approach may be necessary to get to the root of the problem. This comes in the form of an in-office treatment called Lipiflow, which uses gently applied, controlled heat and pulsed pressure to unblock and restore the function of Meibomian glands. The treatment feels like a warm massage to the eyelids and lasts 12 minutes. Studies show Lipiflow to be effective in about 8 out of 10 dry eye patients, i.e. about 80% of treated patients report an overall improvement in dry eye symptoms after the procedure. The treatment usually lasts 8 to 12 months and are recommended annually.

Last year, the FDA approved a novel, non-invasive nasal neurostimulation device to temporarily increase your own natural tear production. The device is called TrueTear and let me explain how it works. You insert the tip of the device into the nasal cavity (yes, like you're picking your nose) as far as comfortable until you hit the "sweet spot", which stimulates a nerve in the nasal cavity that signals the pertinent glands to produce more tears. You know it's working if you feel a tingling sensation in your nose and your eyes begin to tear, which can occur within seconds. With the relatively newness of this device, the verdict is still out on whether patients feel this device helps them with their symptoms.

As with any chronic, progressive ocular disease that can negative-

ly affect your vision, early diagnosis and management of dry eyes is essential in maintaining a person's ocular health, vision and comfort. There are many treatment options available to help in the relief of dry eye symptoms. If you are suffering from symptoms of dry eyes and are seeking relief, see an optometrist or ophthalmologist for an evaluation and management of the condition.

Reference:

<http://www.tearfilm.org/dewsreport/pdfs/The%20Epidemiology%20of%20Dry%20Eye%20Disease.pdf>

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/dry-eyes>



Dr. Winnie Tseng practices optometry at Littleton, Woodsville and Lincoln Eye Care Centers, with a special interest in the treatment of dry eyes, contact lens fitting, ocular disease and comprehensive eye care for the entire family. She is Board Certified by the American Board of Optometry and is a current board member of the New Hampshire Optometric Association.

Dr. Tseng lives in Lisbon with her husband, Kevin, and their 3 children. Outside of the office, she enjoys cooking, reading and spending time outdoors kayaking, hiking and biking with her family.



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KNOWING WHEN AND HOW BEST TO DOWNSIZE

BY ZACHARY SHEPHARD
Margaret Pratt Community

Few people enjoy moving. The sorting, packing, loading....and the inevitable question, how did we accumulate so much stuff? Even younger people find moving disruptive and stressful. Moving may bring more than just work, it may signal a time of transition for the entire family.

As we grow older and children leave home, there is less need for a large house. Some people move during mid-life, but it's usually easier to stay settled in the family home. This works for many years, but health changes and financial considerations can change everything.

Acknowledging the need to downsize may be difficult for all concerned. To some, it's an admission that one is aging and less capable of handling everyday tasks. Adult children may see it as an unwelcome progression in life and a realization of mortality and be reluctant to admit that their parents are aging and less able to maintain the same role in their life. Responsibilities shift, and adult children are soon participating in more decisions for their parents.

Most will experience mixed feelings which should be addressed with sensitivity. Any sense of loss that comes with downsizing, can be countered with good preparation and an optimistic attitude. The best decisions are made when all family members have an opportunity to explore options and make informed choices. This does not mean that an older adult should move before he or she is ready, only that a plan should be developed before the need arises.

When planning for a move, both the adult child, and most importantly, the parent, should participate in the decision-making process. If moving when some family are not available, or the older person is not well, a plan ensures that a measure of respect and consideration has been incorporated beforehand. When decisions need to be made quickly, it will greatly decrease the amount of stress during an already emotional time. While each situation is unique, a good downsizing plan should include the following:

— Housing Options – An active adult home on one floor, apartment, independent living, assisted living, and memory care. The selection varies depending on one's health care needs.

— Location - If family members live some distance away and a parent requires a move,



should they relocate closer to one of the family? If a parent is moving closer, research the area's healthcare, housing options, social and spiritual opportunities in advance.

— Costs - This is time for family members to have an honest and open review of finances. If help is needed, can a family member be appointed, or is an accountant or attorney more appropriate? What type of living accommodations and healthcare can the parent afford? If their personal resources are limited, what family and public resources are available?

— Healthcare requirements - Older adults often have strong bonds to their physician. Relocation will require considerable research to find appropriate healthcare providers, particularly if they no longer drive.

With proper planning and the right resources, downsizing can be an experience that you enjoy.



Zachary Shephard is the Executive Director at Margaret Pratt Community, Vermont's newest assisted living and memory care in Bradford, opening late 2018. To contact him, call 1-800-741-2104 or email at zshephard@margaretp Pratt.org

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DIET AND EXERCISE NEEDS CHANGE As Men And Women Age

Maintaining a healthy weight is important at any age. But avoiding being overweight or obese can be particularly crucial for seniors, considering many illnesses are tied to body weight. Maintaining a healthy immune system also can require eating a balanced, nutritionally sound diet. The Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center at Durham Medical Center in Virginia says people need to change how they eat for every decade they reach. Caloric intake should be

reduced because individuals are generally moving around less, have less muscle and their metabolic rates decline. People who find that they are having trouble losing weight in their 50s and older may be basing weight-loss goals on calorie recommendations for younger people. One challenging thing about eating less overall is supplementing with more nutrient-rich foods. Older bodies still require similar amounts of protein, vitamins and minerals as younger ones, but older men and women must balance that need with their need to consume

less calories. Consuming more fruits, vegetables and lean protein sources, including beans, and choosing whole grains over refined starchy foods can be the key. Watch what you drink, as well. Soft drinks and other sugary beverages may be packed with calories you don't need. Choose unsweetened beverages and opt for water as much as possible. Protect yourself against dehydration, which can be harder to detect as you get older. In addition to modifying food and beverage choices and reducing their calorie intake,

Exercise continues on 17

BOND BETWEEN GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDKIDS BENEFITS BOTH

What used to be the “golden years” of life for seniors is now turning into any opportunity to spend even more time with their youngest family members. Nowadays, a growing number of grandparents are called on to provide child care for their grandkids, many of whom are growing up in two-income households. Others are helping to raise grandkids while providing financial assistance for adult children who may not be able to live on their own.

This trend has been corroborated in a few recent studies. Information from the Pew Research Center showed 7.7 million children in the United States were living in the same household as one of their grandparents in 2011. A University of Chicago analysis of a decade of data based on interviews with 13,614 grandparents, ages 50 and older, found that 61 percent of grandparents provided at least 50 hours of care for their grandchildren during any given year between 1998 and 2008. And an April 2012 study for the MetLife Mature Market Institute and the nonprofit Generations United, an intergenerational policy group, found that 74 percent of respondents provided weekly child care or babysitting service for grandkids.

Grandparents often cite helping their own children financially as well as staying in touch with grandchildren as motivating factors behind providing care. According to Generations United, staying in touch with grandkids can give seniors a feeling of self-worth and improve their overall health. When spending so much time together, grandparents may develop special relationships with their grandchildren, who may benefit from the knowledge and wisdom offered by their elders. The following are some lessons grandparents can share with youngsters.

— Empathy: By sharing stories of how things were when they were younger, when opportunities may have been more scarce, grandparents can help teach grandchildren empathy. Grandchildren may learn to be grateful for the things they have and the people around them, rather than taking what they have for granted.

— Family history: Grandparents can tell grandchildren about family members, including youngsters’ own parents, and shed light on the generations that came before them. Looking through photos or watching old movies can provide the avenue by which to start conversations about family history and give children opportunities to ask questions.

— Interests: Children may be excited about learning new skills or hobbies taught to them by their grandparents. Any-

thing from gardening to woodworking can be shared.

— Respect: Children who grow up respecting their grandparents may have an increased tendency to respect authority figures outside their homes, which may help kids grow up to be more courteous and kind. Grandchildren also offer benefits to their grandparents. Companionship, new experiences and conversation can help keep grandparents’ minds sharp and bodies active well into their golden years.

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Exercise

Continued from Page 16

seniors should continue to exercise. Healthy eating paired with moderate exercise remains one of the best combinations for healthy weight loss or weight maintenance. The goal is to consume fewer calories and expend more energy. While cardiovascular exercises can be a good way to get the heart pumping and stimulate your metabolic rate, as you age you should perform strength-training and weight-bearing exercises as well. Muscle mass naturally diminishes with age, and according to the Mayo Clinic if you avoid strength exercises you can eventually lose muscle and increase the percentage of fat in your body. Strength training also helps you develop stronger bones, which can help prevent fractures. In addition, as you gain muscle, your body

will begin to burn calories more efficiently, making your time in and out of the gym more productive. Apart from diet and exercise, aging adults may need to consult with their doctors about nutritional supplements. Your body may produce less stomach acid as you get older, making it more difficult to absorb vitamins from food, including vitamin B12 and vitamin D. Aging skin is less able to transform sunlight into the vitamin, which can affect the body’s ability to absorb calcium. Deficiencies in vitamins D and B12 and calcium can result in a number of health conditions. Routine blood work can help pinpoint whether you are deficient in key nutrients. The body’s nutritional and fitness needs change as a person ages. Those uncertain about the lifestyle changes they will need to make should speak with their physicians.

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DENTAL HEALTH: Is It Time For Your Appointment?

BY ANGIE SIMINO
Mountain View Dental

Whether you are 80 or 8, your oral health is important. Did you know that 100 million Americans fail to see a dentist each year, even though regular dental examinations and good oral hygiene can prevent most dental disease?

Why do regular dental visits matter?

Regular dental visits can help spot dental health problems early on when treatment is likely to be simpler and more affordable. They also help prevent many problems from developing in the first place.

What are some signs I should see a dentist?

- Your teeth are sensitive to hot or cold
- Your gums are puffy and/or they bleed when you brush or floss
- You have fillings, crowns, dental implants, dentures, etc.
- You don't like the way your smile or teeth look
- You have persistent bad breath or bad taste in your mouth
- You are pregnant

- You have pain or swelling in your mouth, face, or neck
- You have difficulty chewing or swallowing, or dry mouth
- You have a family history of gum disease or tooth decay
- You have a medical condition such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or eating disorders
- You smoke or use other tobacco products
- You are undergoing medical treatment such as radiation, chemotherapy, or hormone replacement therapy
- Your jaw sometimes pops or is painful when opening and closing, chewing or when you first wake up; you have an uneven bite
- You have a spot or sore that doesn't look or feel right in your mouth and it isn't going away

I'm not having any symptoms.

Do I still need to see a dentist?

Yes. Even if you don't have any symptoms, you can still have dental health problems that only a dentist can diagnose. Continuity of care is an important part of any health plan and dental health is no exception! Keeping your mouth healthy is an essential piece of your overall health. It's also important to keep your dentist informed of any changes in your overall health



since many medical conditions can affect your dental health too.

How can I maintain a healthy smile with my dentist's help?

Here are some tips to help you take care of your smile:

- Healthy habits. Brushing twice a day for two minutes (each time) and flossing daily are essential for everyone with teeth, no matter how unique your mouth is. It's the best way to fight tooth decay and gum disease.
- Build a relationship. When your dentist sees you regularly, he or she is in a good position to catch oral problems early. For instance, treating gum disease when it's still reversible, or cavities when they are small and are more easily restored.
- Talk about it! Only your dentist can determine what the best treatment plan is for you. Have questions about your oral health or certain dental procedures? Start a conversation. Ask your dental professional to explain step-by-step. We love having satisfied, healthy patients!

(Sources: Mouthhealthy.org and the American Dental Association)



Angie Simino, RDH is the Practice Manager of Mountain View Dental in Whitefield, NH. She has practiced as a dental hygienist for over 17 years and has been with Mountain View Dental since 2004.

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- VT SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol)



How Women Can Protect Against Osteoporosis

A bone disease that occurs when the body loses too much bone, makes too little bone or both, osteoporosis can be debilitating. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, osteoporosis is responsible for two million broken bones each year, a figure that experts predict will rise to three million by 2025.

While anyone can suffer from osteoporosis, women are more likely than men to develop the disease. Studies suggest that while up to one in four men age 50 and older will break a bone due to osteoporosis, one in two women age 50 and older are likely to suffer such a fate.

The NOF notes that osteoporosis is often referred to as a silent disease, with many people not even realizing they have it until they suffer a fracture. Because of the silent nature of osteoporosis and their increased vulnerability to it, women may want to take the following measures to protect themselves against this potentially debilitating disease.

— Include ample calcium and vitamin D in your diet. The NOF notes that calcium and vitamin D are both vital to building strong, dense bones when you're young, and both calcium and vitamin D keep bones strong and healthy as the body ages. Women age 50 and younger need 1,000 milligrams of calcium each day, while those 51 and older need

1,200 milligrams each day. Calcium-rich foods include dairy products like low- or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese. Women age 50 and younger need between 400 and 800 international units (IU) of vitamin D each day, while those age 50 and older need between 800 and 1,000 IU each day. The body can get vitamin D from sunlight and supplements or multivitamins. Vitamin D is naturally available in just a few foods, such as fatty fish like wild-caught salmon or tuna.

— Include weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises in your workout routine. Weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises help women build and maintain bone density. Weight-bearing exercises include dancing, high-impact aerobics, jogging/running, and tennis, among others. Muscle-strengthening activities include weightlifting and elastic band exercises. The NOF notes that certain positions in exercises such as yoga and pilates may not be safe for people with osteoporosis or those at increased risk of broken bones. Speak to a physical therapist about which positions or exercises to avoid.

— Pay attention to the beverages you drink. It's not just the foods you eat that can help or hurt you in the fight against osteoporosis. Heavy consumption of alcohol can contribute to bone loss, while drinks that contain caffeine, including coffee, tea



Certain types of exercise, including dancing, may help women protect their bones against osteoporosis.

and sodas, can decrease calcium absorption and contribute to bone loss as well. Drink alcohol and caffeinated beverages in moderation.

Women are more vulnerable to osteoporosis than men. Learn more about the disease at www.nof.org.

SEXUAL HEALTH As ONE AGES

Aging brings about many changes in a person's body. Some of these changes, such as hair becoming gray and/or white, are widely known, while others may come as a surprise to people who have only begun to experience them. It is normal for sexual desire and other issues affecting intimacy to change as a person ages. However, that doesn't mean that seniors' sex lives need to cease or change dramatically. Remaining open to ideas and continuing to communicate with one's partner can keep couples' relationships going strong well into their golden years. The National Institute on Aging offers that certain normal physical changes can impact intimacy. These bodily changes may be hormonal. Women who have gone through menopause may discover physical changes to their vaginas, including a shortening and narrowing of this part of the body. Stiffness and less lubrication also may occur in this area, impacting their comfort and enjoyment. As men get older, their ability to have and keep an erection may diminish. Sexual issues are sometimes a byproduct of illness or certain

prescription medications. Chronic pain, arthritis, surgery, and even incontinence also can impede intimacy. These are largely treatable conditions, but patients must be willing to first open a dialogue with their physicians. Communication Couples are urged to talk about their intimacy goals. One person may not be fully aware of a partner's desires. Other issues can be addressed as well. Discuss any discomfort or sexual problems that can affect the relationship. Couples can bring situations to light so they can manage their issues together. This can bring about a mutually acceptable solution that benefits both partners and prevents one from suffering in silence. Overall health Paying attention to overall health can positively impact sexual intimacy. Exercising regularly, eating a healthy diet, drinking plenty of fluids, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption, and managing stress in your life can help in your daily life and in the bedroom. Speak with a doctor if a particular medication is impacting your health in a negative way. There may be another, less invasive option you and your physician can explore. Think creatively Intimacy is more than

just intercourse. Intimacy may include touching, closeness, fantasies, role playing, and much more. The Mayo Clinic says people can help their partners understand what they want from them. Discuss something that seems exciting and find a way to include it in your sex life if both partners are willing. Play it safe Seniors who are single can broaden their horizons and resolve to get out and meet new people. However, when the time comes to engage in sexual activity, seniors should be smart about it, regardless of their age. People age 55 years or older account for one-quarter of all Americans living with HIV, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2013, people age 50 and over constituted more than 27 percent of new AIDS diagnoses. Older adults are also at risk of other sexually transmitted infections. Condoms may seem like something for younger people to worry about, but they're a necessity for older adults as well. Sexual health is something seniors think about as the years pass. Remaining healthy, engaged and communicative with a spouse or partner can ensure couples enjoy sexual intimacy for as long as possible.

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THE BENEFITS OF AN ON HOSPITAL CAMPUS PHARMACY

BY ROBERT NUTTER
North Country Pharmacy

Patient outcomes and quality improve with an on-site pharmacy. One of the top reasons patients are readmitted to the hospital is because they do not take medications prescribed upon discharge. An onsite pharmacy allows patients to have their discharge medications in-hand before leaving the hospital.

This program is called “Meds to Beds” for in-patients. An on-site pharmacy plays an important role in this process. Integrating the on-site pharmacy with care at the hospital allows pharmacists to identify at-risk patients.

They will then work with the outpatient care coordinators to make sure patients understand how to take their medications correctly.

“Meds to Beds” Programs

Growing across the US

According to a survey by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists, about 35 percent of U.S. hospitals offer pharmacy services like the “Meds to Beds” program.

Many hospitals begin the meds-to-beds program with a single department and see how well it works, and then add more. The number

of hospitals offering the “Meds to Beds” program is on the rise because of the 2012 Medicare rule that penalizes hospitals if patients are readmitted within 30 days of discharge.

Programs like the “Meds to Beds” program at hospitals can target patients as they transition from one setting to another, which can help avoid return visits to the emergency department, and ultimately leads to better patient care and patient satisfaction.

Patients who use physician practices will also benefit from this program. Studies show that patients with chronic disease (e.g. arthritis, diabetes) who are managed well have lower readmission rates.

Taking medications the right way is a big part of chronic disease management. Healthcare visits can be stressful. Easy access to an onsite pharmacy means patients no longer need to stop at a pharmacy on the way home.

Another advantage is having knowledgeable pharmacists available to both in-patients, out-patients and patients visiting their physician.

Consultation with a pharmacist before a patient leaves increases understanding of what is being prescribed and how to take their medication, which leads to better outcomes.



Robert Nutter is President of North Country Pharmacy. “We believe that our onsite pharmacy will enhance the care received at Littleton Regional Healthcare. We are also hopeful that community members who receive care anywhere in Littleton and surrounding towns will feel free to fill their prescriptions at LRH.” North Country Pharmacy is conveniently located on the ground floor of the LRH Medical Office Building.

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ANNIKA MCCANN, RN
CERTIFIED HEALTH COACH

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2017 AWARDS

FUNCTIONAL FITNESS: TAKING BACK YOUR LIFE

BY MATT GOLDEN AND JOSH LAWTON
Mt. Washington CrossFit

Functional fitness trains your muscles to correctly and efficiently prepare for the movements of everyday life. As we age, get busy, play less, and work more, we tend to lose functional efficiency while performing the daily tasks that life presents us.

Most people will tell you it's natural as you get older to experience decreased mobility and flexibility. In fact, that is not natural at all. Well, at least not at the rate that we do today. We are natural squatters, deadlifters, cleaners, jumpers, runners and pressers but modern technologies and routines have effectively removed those movements from our adult lives.

Think of a young child playing on the floor, likely in a squat, up and down as they pick up toys and blocks, lifting from the legs, driving through the heels, pressing over their head to the shelf just out of reach. As adults, we find it difficult to sit down into a chair and stand back up easily. Or, do a squat. We struggle to bend over to lift the laundry basket, essentially a deadlift, and then load that laundry into the stacked washer/dryer, which is simply a strict press. As we age, WE DO NOT HAVE TO lose mobility and flexibility. We can effortlessly stand up from a seated position, bend over to pick something up, place an object over our head, and so much more with just a little commitment to training in functional movements.

We are confident that training and practicing functional movements through exercise will greatly improve the quality of your life and free you from impending decrepitude. This has

“Today’s functional fitness industry is helping more people look good, feel good, and perform the task of life with ease as they age! “

By Matt Golden and Josh Lawton
Mt. Washington CrossFit

been tested and proven true in countless controlled environments. It is the reason why functional training programs, such as CrossFit, are the fastest growing programs in the fitness industry.

Today’s functional fitness industry is helping more people look good, feel good, and perform the task of life with ease as they age! There are mechanics to every movement and with practice and some good coaching you can learn to master these movements again. We believe that every single person has the ability to take back control of their lives, to make themselves useless to the healthcare industry, and to live active and healthy lives long into old age.



Matt and Josh are both CrossFit Level One Trainers at Mt. Washington CrossFit in Lisbon, N.H.

MWCF can provide you the guidance and coaching needed to improve the quality of your life. Our training staff challenges themselves daily to increase their knowledge and to better serve you.

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ADVICE FROM THE WELLNESS CENTER – SWEAT LOCAL

BY MARY HOADLEY

The Wellness Center at
North Country Hospital

National guidelines suggest that most people get 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week. That's the kind of activity that gets you breathing and your heart rate up. In addition, National Guidelines suggest you do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. This is the type of activity where you might think of lifting weights, using resistance bands, etc. With these suggestions you may feel overwhelmed as to where to start- how do you fit in all the minutes? Do you have to do it all at once, how do you know you are doing it right?

The Wellness Center at North Country Hospital offers health and wellness needs. Regardless of your income, age or fitness abilities, this non-profit community resource supports anyone on their journey toward their health and wellness needs. Whether you are just starting out or looking to take your fitness to the next level, at The Wellness Center you can trust that this isn't something you have to do on your own. Their staff is certified, eager to see new faces, refreshed to see those who have

been committed for a long time and all those who fall in-between.

For your aerobic activity you need to get your heart rate up and move your body. It is suggested that you do 150 minutes of moderate activity and that can be broken up over the week. Many people struggle to get themselves to do this on their own. If you are looking to take a fitness class to help you fit in your aerobic activity minutes, you should consider taking: Spinning®, Zumba®, FitMix, Zumba® Zumba® Gold, Cardio and Core, Seniorcize, All Star Workout, Work It Circuit, Hit Fit, Step Aerobics, Tabata, Drums Alive® or even one of our all ages Karate Classes. Most classes run 45-60 minutes which means you can meet your aerobic activity requirements in just 3 classes a week.

Maybe you can do aerobic activity on your own, but you are looking for a class to help you get in your suggested strength training twice a week. We recommend: Power Pilates, Tonetastic, Work It Circuit, All Star Workout, Tabata, Seniorcize, Yogalates, Piyo® Live, Cardio and Core or even one of our many yoga classes that help build strength using your own body weight. Strength training is important, but so is your safety. The perk of doing this in a Wellness Center Class has the added advantage of

a fitness professional being there to make sure you are doing it properly.

Flexibility is something that many people forget about until it's time to tie their shoes or to reach for something far away. Flexibility is what helps us to remain able to keep our range of motion and prevent pain and stiffness. Many classes that focus on flexibility also have the added benefit of stress reduction. We would suggest: Tranquil Yoga, Gentle Yoga, Tai Chi Easy®, Yogalates, Pilates, Yoga with Pat/Cristina, Piyo® Live, A Matter of Balance and Cardio/Core/Stretch. All of our classes include stretching at the end of each session to help ensure a proper cool down for participants. This is a great way to help keep our muscles healthy and strong as well.

Exercise isn't meant to be a punishment and it can actually be a really great key to success for many people in their wellness journey toward better health. Regardless of your goal, be it weight loss, stress management, wanting to increase your endurance or strength, you can find it all in North Country Hospital's very own fitness facility- The Wellness Center.

For over 36 years The Wellness Center has been an innovator in keeping health and wellness programs alive and affordable in the Northeast Kingdom. Even if you are only

a bit curious we welcome you to come try a class free of charge and see just how much fun taking care of you can really be. Did we mention it's also a great way to make friends too? We hope you will make the quality investment in your own health to keep moving and stay strong. With the added advantage of our non-profit fitness facility, we feel strongly it gives everyone a chance to sweat local.



Mary Hoadley is the director of The Wellness Center at North Country Hospital in Newport.



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THE NATURE OF SIDE EFFECTS

BY JEFFREY REEL
Natural Provisions

In 2010, about 225,000 pharmacists in 56,000 retail drug stores dispensed almost four billion outpatient prescriptions to more than 260 million Americans. These prescriptions covered 50 billion pills, at a cost to the public of more than \$300 billion. This represented about 8.5% of total U.S. health care costs that year, which came to whopping \$2.5 trillion. The projections released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services calculate the nation's health care tab will exceed \$3.5 trillion by 2018, or nearly 1/5th of the entire U.S. economy.

Forty years ago, television ads about medicine were limited to cough syrup and aspirin (the iconic *Speedy Alka Seltzer* character was an advertising coup.). Today, the airwaves are dominated by commercials for prescription medications, most with potentially serious, even deadly, side effects.

Conventional medical theory posits that there are "main" effects and "side" effects of medications. In truth, "side effects" are found nowhere in Nature. All effects are main effects, and all effects of a drug should be considered its main effects as well – exerting major influences on the body and impacting our health. Pulling the *Physicians Desk Reference* from the shelf and randomly picking one drug listed among the thousands listed in that book discloses the following side effects: pulmonary embolism, liver dysfunction, partial or complete loss of vision, migraines, depression, edema, rash, jaundice, nausea, thrombophlebitis, changes in appetite, nervousness, fatigue, lower back pain (most likely kidneys), loss of scalp hair, itching, dizziness and a warning not to use the drug during pregnancy. In addition, there are those symptoms that arise when this one medication interacts with others. These are all commonly described as "side effects." The side effects are almost always treated with drugs, which exerts side effects of their own. In short order, a host of symptoms appear as drugs interact. Physical problems multiply and spiral out of control. Eventually people lose the ability to clearly recognize the causes behind their original symptoms, relegating themselves to passive participants in their own recovery or, often, life-long disease management.

Most of us have been raised in a culture that encourages the worst eating and lifestyle habits. From the earliest years onward, our immune systems are compromised through the accumulation of antibiotics and hormones that we have taken in through the consumption of chicken, beef and dairy products; in general, our symptoms are suppressed rather than addressed; we eat poor-quality food; we eat too much food; we consume chlorinated water, air and ground pollutants, artificial colors and preservatives, herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and ingest numerous carcinogens that are spun off as "side effects" of our food and industrial manufacturing processes... the list is familiar and uncommonly long. From the moment of conception onward, the body does its best to walk through life under these gale-force winds of adversity. And as the body begins to falter, as it eventually must, it then becomes subject to still further chemical and medical interventions:

"No one size fits all when it comes to dietary needs, but we do share a common heritage. We have evolved over millions of years under conditions of natural light, pure water, and whole, unadulterated foods."

from routine x-rays and antibiotics, progressing to invasive surgeries, radiation, chemotherapy, organ removal and the artificial replacements for living tissue.

This isn't to say that we should not avail ourselves to antibiotics and other medications and surgical procedures. We have all been beneficiaries of their use. And there is that aspect of technology that performs miracles re-attaching limbs and reestablishing sight and sound, and the pace of technological changes quickens and delights. But for the first time in history, lifestyle diseases like diabetes, heart disease, obesity and some cancers kill more people than communicable ones, and the cost in managing them (as opposed to curing them) is crippling – financially, physically and emotionally.

People often begin practicing a holistic diet and lifestyle after having been diagnosed with one specific, often serious, illness. But rarely are they experiencing just that one physical difficulty. They might also be suffering with such symptoms as low back pain, skin rashes, fitful sleep, poor appetite, inflammation, depression.... Most people then adapt themselves to living with these symptoms, believing them to be either simply part of the aging process or of minor consequence compared to their more serious diagnosis. The beauty of holistic lifestyle practices is that, as we change our diet and lifestyle, many symptoms can begin to diminish across the board, simultaneously. The whole body responds favorably to the same corrective measures: rashes diminish, sleep deepens, appetite returns, back pain subsides, energy levels increase. Such are the "side effects" of holistic lifestyle and dietary practices.

No one size fits all when it comes to dietary needs, but we do share a common heritage. We have evolved over millions of years under conditions of natural light, pure water, and whole, unadulterated foods. Environmental influences that range over such a vast span of time have fashioned the human body like the hands of a sculptor, and we can safely assume that the very essence of who we are has been defined by that relationship. Any deviation at all from this natural order will invite a measure of stress and, eventually, disease.

Many of us, by necessity, have set for ourselves the goal of regaining our health. But a healthy body should not be an end in itself. After all, health is our birthright, and we are meant to use our health to pursue our goals.

Jeffrey Reel serves as General Manager of Natural Provisions in St. Johnsbury Vermont. He previously served as the Sustainability Manager at the Omega Institute where he was involved in the creation and operation of the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, the world's first LEED Platinum/

Living Building, including a constructed wetlands that purified Omega's wastewater without chemical intervention, including the removal of pharmaceuticals. He is a writer and lecturer living in Lyndon Center, VT.



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FINANCIAL STEPS AFTER THE LOSS OF A SPOUSE

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The loss of a spouse is a devastating, life-changing event. There's the emotional loss of a spouse, but also the task of handling the finances.

Steps To Take

Locate documents. Locate important documents: spouse's will, estate planning documents, insurance policies, bank/brokerage statements, stock and bond certificates, deeds, Social Security number, birth and marriage certificates, and certified copies of the death certificate.

Tracking & filing system. Keep track of the details, set up a system to record incoming and outgoing calls/mail. Make a list of the names/phone numbers of the people and organizations you're dealing with and post it in a central location. Create a filing system for important documents and correspondence with separate folders for different topics--government benefits, tax information, bank records, etc.

Estate. Seek help from an attorney, accountant, and/or financial and tax professional. Bring someone with you to help process information. An attorney can review your spouse's will, es-

tate planning documents, start estate settlement procedures, etc. If you're named executor in the will, you're responsible for carrying out the terms of the will and settling the estate, which means following legal and administrative procedures to make sure that all debts of the estate are paid and that all assets are distributed correctly. A tax professional can help file tax returns. A financial professional can help by reviewing your financial situation and identifying any retirement and survivor's benefits that may be available.

Apply For Benefits

- **Life insurance** – Benefits aren't automatic; you have to file a claim for them. This should be one of the first things you do. (Contact your insurance agent or company directly)

- **Social Security Administration** – Contact to see if you and/or your dependent children are eligible to file a claim for retirement, survivor, or death benefits.

- **Employers** – Contact your spouse's most recent and past employers to find out if you are eligible for any company benefits. If your spouse was a federal, state, or local employee or in the military, you may be eligible for government-sponsored survivor's benefits.

Update account names. Contact financial in-



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Lyn Tober



Mike Worden

stitutions to change account names and/or update contact information.

Short-term expenses. You have immediate expenses to take care of, such as funeral costs or debts. If you're waiting for insurance proceeds or estate settlement money, you can use credit cards for certain expenses or you can negotiate with creditors to allow you to postpone payment. Make sure you have a credit card in your name. Order a free copy of your credit report and review it for accuracy.

Avoid hasty decisions. Find out where you stand financially before you make any large purchases, sell property, or loan money to others.

Moving Ahead

After the initial legal and financial matters are taken care of, work with a financial professional who can help you by:

- Suggesting ways to invest any life insurance proceeds or estate settlement money you receive
- Calculating your net worth by identifying your assets and liabilities, giving you an understanding of how you'll meet your short- and long-term spending needs
- Establishing a budget by looking at your monthly income and routine living expenses
- Helping you update beneficiary designations on your life insurance, retirement plan, IRA, employee benefits, annuity, etc
- Reviewing your investment portfolio at least

annually

- **Updating your estate planning documents** (will, trust, power of attorney) to reflect your circumstances and your wishes for disposition of the marital estate (gifts to children, charities)

- **Updating your insurance coverage** to reflect your new circumstances

Make sure the financial professional is responsive to what you say you need, not what they think you want. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Make sure you understand all your options before making important decisions.

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Dirk Elston, Inflex Financial Consultant, member of the Passumpsic Financial Advisors team, has over 21 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Lyn Tober, Inflex Financial Consultant, Member of the Passumpsic Financial Advisors team, brings over 16 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Michael Worden, Inflex Financial Consultant, Member of the Passumpsic Financial Advisors team, brings over 2 years of experience in the financial services industry.

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When To Use The Emergency Room?

BY JEFF JOHNSON, MD
Weeks Medical Center

The ER isn't always the best choice when you have an illness? Take time to think about where you get medical treatment.

When you're not feeling well or you're hurt, it's important to decide where you should seek medical treatment. Should I call my healthcare provider or should I go to the emergency room? Thinking about where you go can save you time and money — and get you the best care.

When is an "emergency" really an "emergency"?

How quickly do you need care? If your illness or injury is life threatening, you should call 911 immediately. If someone has stopped breathing, is choking, has a severe burn, head or neck injury, or is bleeding a lot, call 911 for medical assistance. An ambulance will come to you to provide on-site help or take you to the emergency room.

When should I go to the emergency room?

If your illness is serious and you can't wait to see your PCP, go to the emergency room. Conditions that should be treated at an ER include:

- Deep cut or wound
- Broken bones
- Chest pain or heart palpitations

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe stomach or belly pain
- Severe headache
- Vision loss or eye injury
- Sudden weakness, paralysis, or slurred speech
- Bad confusion, changed mental state, or thoughts of hurting oneself
- Smoke inhalation or poison exposure
- Seizures or loss of consciousness
- Drug overdose

When should I go see my primary care provider (PCP)?

For any illness or minor injury, call your PCP. Your PCP will determine how serious the condition is and if you can arrange a same-day appointment. Your PCP office is available by phone 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. (Weeks also now offers walk-in care on Saturday morning.) Seeing your PCP also provides you with continuity of care that can be overlooked in the ER. Your PCP knows your medical history and is familiar with your health concerns and medications. Contact your PCP, and not the ER, for the following:

- Common illnesses such as cold, flu, ear infection, sore throat, migraine, low-grade fever, minor rash, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Minor injuries such as sprain, back pain, minor cuts and burns, minor broken bones, or minor eye injuries

Isn't it easier to just go to the ER?

No. The ER should be reserved for serious medi-



cal concerns and life-threatening conditions. Minor illnesses can clog up the ER and create longer waiting times. Visits to the ER are also very expensive. You will pay two to three times more by going to the ER rather than your PCP. Many insurance companies also have special restrictions about ER use. However, it is always your choice to go to the ER.

What if I'm not sure where to go?

Calling your PCP will help you make the best choice on where to go and possibly save you money. If your illness is not life threatening, call your primary care provider. You'll be asked about the symptoms and your PCP can then advise you to go to the ER or not. You may also receive information on how to self treat the illness. If there is any serious doubt, always call 911. The ER cannot help you over the phone.

Jeff Johnson is an emergency room physician at Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster, NH.

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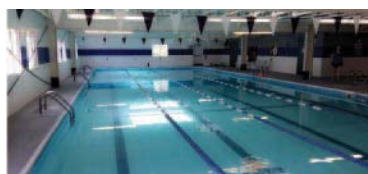
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BEING EMPATHIC

BY SALICROW
Psychic Medium

We are living in changing times, in which the world around us is under a great deal of distress. As the planet shifts, so must we. One of the major ways we are changing is in our ability to perceive the world around us. Many of us are finding that along with our five accepted senses we are also developing a 6th sense, an inner-knowing. For most people this inner knowing is most obvious in the form of empathy. Empathy is the ability to perceive the feelings and emotions of others. For many this growth in perception is a bit overwhelming, leaving them feeling tired and emotionally drained after interacting with others. This is particularly noticeable in people who work in the health professions (medicine, social services & education), as they are often working with people in distress. For many, the biggest problem is not knowing how to separate their emotions from those of others. Here is a quick exercise you can do everyday to help you differentiate between the two.

Before getting out of bed in the morning do 2 quick scans of your body. This is done by closing your eyes, and bringing your awareness to your body. The first scan is for physical sensation. Starting at your toes, slowly move your attention up the back of your body, over your head and down the front of your body. Pay close attention to any discomforts you feel. When done, begin again at the toes, only this time you are paying close attention to any emotions that surface as your mind runs over your body. The sensations and emotions felt during these scans are yours.

Repeat the same exercises again 15 minutes after being in a room with others. If you find your emotions or physical sensations to be different after being around people, take a moment and see if you can locate who you think the feelings belong to. *Please note-it is not OK to turn this into an announcement, but if you are looking for confirmation, try asking the person how they are doing. Most importantly, when we see that the emotion or physical sensation does not belong to us, make a mental declaration "These feelings do not belong to me".

It is important to realize that developing a deeper sense of empathy can make us better people, for when we understand where another is coming from we are often more understanding, and this makes the world a better place. Practicing the above exercise daily will help

develop your empathic perception and release unnecessary burden. Self-care and down time; particularly in nature are balm for the empathic soul, so make sure you are getting quiet time outside!
Spreading love-Salicrow

Salicrow is a Psychic Medium living in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. She has been aware of her gifts since childhood, and has over 25 years of professional experience. She is the author of 'Jump Girl, the initiation and art of a spirit speaker', and the co-owner of the Grindstone Café & Wellness Center in Lyndonville, VT, where she sees clients and teaches classes regularly. Salicrow can be reached through her website Salicrow.com.



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Andrew Wyeth's World

Katie Wood Kirchhoff, PhD; Associate Curator, Shelburne Museum

Join Shelburne Museum curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff for an exploration of twelve paintings by Andrew Wyeth chosen for the United States Postal Service's 2017 Forever Stamp series. Selected to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the painter's birth, these iconic scenes from Pennsylvania and Maine include favorites like *Wind from the Sea* (1947), *Christina's World* (1948), and *Shelburne Museum's Soaring* (1942-1950).

September 27, 2018

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October 4, 2018

Brantview: An Architectural and Social History

Allen Hodgdon, Architectural Historian

Brantview has long been a boy's dormitory at St. Johnsbury Academy, but was the home of William Paddock & Rebecca Pike Fairbanks. Their son, Col. Joseph Fairbanks, gifted Brantview to St. Johnsbury Academy in 1931. Mr. Hodgdon will tell us about Brantview's contribution to the broader patterns of 19th century American Architecture.

October 11, 2018

Count Basie and the Trajectory of Swing

Phil Brown, Music Director, Swing North Big Band

A history of Big Band Swing as told through the life and music of William "Count" Basie.

October 18, 2018

The History of Spices

Hank Kaestner, Director Spice Procurement, McCormick & Co. (retired)

From the dawn of history, the spice trade has driven man's sense of exploration. Columbus, da Gama, Magellan were all looking for spice origins as they "discovered" the world.

October 25, 2018

Werewolves, Vampires & Zombies or The Biomedical Origins of Our Most Frightful Monsters

Bobby Farlice-Rubio, Science Educator

Although there are no supernatural monsters in this lecture, we will explore the ways in which real parasites have taken over their hosts, and how they may have inspired monster myths! Have you ever wondered what happens to a person who contracts rabies? Could parasites be responsible for some people's reckless and dangerous behavior? Could toxins and poisons in nature cause people to behave like monsters themselves? Come find out, if you dare!

Mwa-hah-hah!

November 1, 2018

Snakes of Vermont

Mr. Kiley Briggs

While not everyone is a fan of snakes, Vermont has more than 10 native species ranging from the Common Garter Snakes most people are familiar with to rarer species such as the Eastern Ribbon Snake and, yes, even Rattle Snakes. Join local herpetologist, Kiley Briggs, to learn about all of Vermont's snake species, their habits, and habitats.

November 8, 2018

Accessible Trails in Vermont

Maggie Burke, Managing Director, Vermont Adaptive

Vermont is known for its abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities. Thanks to the hard work of a variety of non-profits, trail systems and outdoor providers, these opportunities are available to individuals with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities. Come learn what opportunities are available to Vermonters and visitors with disabilities for outdoor recreation in Vermont.



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INCORPORATING EXERCISE AS WE AGE

BY SHANNON LYNCH
Summit By Morrison

Staying physically fit during every stage of life is vital to enjoying your golden years. When you stay at a healthy weight, maintain good balance and limit the medications you need, you can stay independent longer.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can also help avoid the feelings of depression some seniors experience when they age and stop moving regularly. Keep moving!

As you age, however, you have to be careful how you exercise. You may experience some pain, stiffness or swelling after exercise due to conditions such as arthritis. High-impact exercises, like running and jumping, put extra strain on the joints, so talk with your doctor or healthcare provider before beginning any new routine.

Always remember to gently stretch, and don't overdo it as you find an exercise routine that works for you. And now that summer is here, it's a great time to take advantage of the warm weather and move your routine outside.

Here are five ways you can get active outside without putting too much strain on your joints:

Walking: A walk around the neighborhood with a friend or partner can provide you with fresh air and new energy to get your day on track. You should aim for about 8-10,000 steps per day.

If you can't get outside, try an elliptical machine, which allows users to adjust the level of intensity without lifting their feet off the machine.

Yoga: Yoga is a relaxing activity that can be done in a class or on your own. Yoga focuses on flexibility, breathing and strength training in order to promote full mind and body health. This is ideal for the outdoors, so grab your mat and head down to the park on a sunny day. Chair yoga is great for people with less mobility.

Swimming: Being in the water eliminates the impact on our bodies. Water aerobics are a great way to increase your cardiovascular health while strengthening your muscles.

Biking: Biking has many positive aspects since it can be done both inside and outside. If you are limited to indoors, cycling on a stationary bike allows you to adjust the resistance levels.

Strength Training: The best exercises for minimal strain on the joints come from using exercise bands and your own body weight for resistance training. You can pack light, easy to carry bands in your bag and take them to the park or even use them in your own backyard!

While summer is a great time to be outside, it is important to recognize the signs of overheating to avoid cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Stay hydrated and avoid being in direct sunlight when the sun is high. If you are experiencing muscle cramps, dizziness, move to a cool, shady or air-conditioned area and consume hydrating



liquids.

With proper precautions and the right exercise routine, you can improve your cardiovascular health, bone and muscle strength, and immune health, as well as better manage diseases like diabetes. For more information, check out this great resource from the National Library of Medicine: medlineplus.gov/exerciseforseniors.html.

Shannon Lynch is the Executive Director of

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How SENIORS CAN SIMPLIFY EVERYDAY TASKS

The ability to perform everyday tasks is something many people take for granted. But as men and women approach or exceed retirement age, many may start to struggle with chores and tasks they have performed for decades. Physical limitations are a common side effect of aging. But such limitations do not have to prove too big a hurdle for seniors to clear. In fact, there are many ways for seniors to simplify everyday tasks while maintaining their independence.

— Embrace technology. Even the proudest Luddites cannot deny technology's potential to make seniors' lives easier. Seemingly simple tasks like shopping for groceries and vacuuming a home can be difficult for seniors with dwindling or limited mobility. But seniors with Internet access in their homes can order their groceries online and then pick them up in-store or have them delivered, saving them the trouble of walking around the store. With regard to vacuuming, autonomous vacuum cleaners have removed the need to use traditional vacuum cleaners. Certain autonomous vacuums employ sensors to detect dirty spots on the floor, and these vacuums can even be programmed to clean the home while residents are out of the house.

— Upgrade bathrooms. Tasks associated with personal hygiene also tend to be taken for granted until they become difficult. But a few simple

bathroom alterations can help seniors safely navigate the bathrooms in their homes so they can maintain their personal hygiene without fear of injury. Grab bars can be installed on shower walls so seniors can safely get in and out of their showers and bathtubs. Such bars are both effective and inexpensive, and some do not even require any drilling to install. Specialty grab bars, tub grips and tub transfer benches are just a few additional products that can make bathing easier for seniors who have lost or are starting to lose some of their physical strength.

— Get "smart" on the road. Seniors who are experiencing mild difficulty driving can make getting about town that much easier by plugging their smartphones into their vehicles or making use of the various apps that have become standard in modern vehicles. For example, the maps app on a smartphone can be connected to a car and direct seniors to their destinations, saving them the trouble of remembering all the ins and outs of how to get a particular destination. Seniors also can employ apps to help them find their vehicles should they forget exactly where they parked in crowded parking lots. Such apps can increase seniors' comfort levels on the road while helping them maintain their independence.

— Downsize. Whether downsizing to a smaller home or simply downsizing a lifestyle, seniors may find that living smaller is akin to living

simpler. Empty nesters may find they no longer need several bedrooms in their homes, and moving into smaller homes can reduce their daily workloads while also clearing out clutter that can make performing everyday chores more difficult. Men and women accustomed to hustle and bustle may also find that cutting back on professional

and/or personal commitments gives them more energy for everyday activities while enriching the commitments they continue to maintain. Aging men and women can employ various strategies to simplify their lives and maintain their independence well into their golden years.

SLEEP LOSS CAN AFFECT MEMORY IN SENIORS

Poor sleep can leave people feeling groggy, disoriented, depressed, and not up for facing the day. And now there's new evidence that insomnia can contribute to memory loss and forgetfulness among the elderly.

A study – the first of its kind – unveiled a new link between lack of sleep and memory loss. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley found that during sleep important brain waves are produced that play key roles in storing memories. These waves transfer the memories from the hippocampus to the prefrontal cortex, a portion of the brain where long-term information is stored. Sleep loss can cause the memories to remain in the hippocampus and not reach the long-term storage area, found researchers. This can contribute to forgetfulness and difficulty remembering simple details, such as names.

Seniors are frequently plagued with deteriorated sleeping patterns that lead to shallow sleep and more awakenings, says those at the University of California. This can contribute to the prevention of memories being saved by the brain each evening.

This is not the first time sleep and brain health have been measured. A 2008 University of California, Los Angeles study discovered that people with sleep apnea showed tissue loss in brain regions that help store memories.

WebMD says imaging and behavioral studies show the role sleep plays in learning and memory and that lack of sleep can impair a person's ability to focus and learn efficiently. Combine this with the necessity of sleep to make those brain wave connections for memories to be stored, and the importance of deep sleep is apparent.

Another study, published in

the journal *Brain*, conducted by doctors at Washington University in St. Louis, linked poor sleep with early onset of dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease. Although poor sleep does not cause Alzheimer's, it may increase brain amyloid proteins believed to be intrinsic to the disease. When slow-wave deep sleep is disrupted, levels of amyloid can grow and clog the brain. This is corroborated by data published in the journal *Neurology*. Getting deep sleep is important for reducing these proteins.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recognizes the difficulties elderly people may have in regard to sleep. The quality of deep sleep among older adults is often 75 percent lower than it is in younger people. Doctors can be cognizant of how sleep impacts memory and the onset of dementias and discuss insomnia treatment options with their patients.

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VISION CHANGES AS YOU AGE

As a person gets older certain bodily changes are to be expected. For example, muscle tone may diminish and bones can become more fragile as we age. Exercise and healthy eating may be able to stave off some of the effects of aging, but avoiding vision problems may require some additional effort.

Vision naturally diminishes as we age, but not all vision changes are related to aging. Many natural changes are not severe and may

only require a minor adjustment in prescription glasses or contact lenses. Improved lighting or bigger print may help remedy other issues, including blurry text.

However, certain conditions that people blame on getting older really may be hereditary or a byproduct of an illness. There's a difference between changes that are the result of aging and those that are not. Recognizing the differences can help individuals get the treatment necessary to prevent permanent eye damage.

Age-related changes

Difficulty seeing clearly for reading and close work is one of the most common age-related vision issues. This condition can begin as early as age 40 and worsen as a person gets older. Variation in the eyes' ability to focus properly is called presbyopia, and it will worsen over time.

Other normal signs of aging include problems with glare from headlights or the sun. Lens changes in the eye can cause light to be scattered rather than focused on the retina. This leads to more glare. In dim conditions, a person may find he or she needs more light to see well. That's because muscles that control pupil size and reaction to light lose some strength.

Changes in color perception also may begin. The normally clear lens of the eye can discolor, making it difficult to distinguish between certain hues.

Conditions not directly tied to aging

Certain eye disorders may become more prevalent as a person gets older, but that does not mean they are a byproduct of aging. Macular degeneration, which causes spotty loss of detail or sudden and severe loss of central vision, may occur. This condition is a result of damage to the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for detail, color and daylight vision.

Risk factors for macular degeneration include high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, and untreated high blood pressure. Poor circulation to the retina is the most common cause of macular degeneration.

Glaucoma is another condition linked to aging. Glaucoma is caused by damage to the optic nerve by fluid pressure inside the eye. Patients with glaucoma typically do not exhibit early symptoms. Glaucoma is only detectable through routine vision examinations.

According to the Mayo Clinic, about half of all 65-year-old Americans have some degree of cataract formation in their eyes. People who have cataracts may think they're an unavoidable part of getting older. While aging may increase the risk of getting cataracts, according to Lighthouse International its true cause is unknown. Other risks include long-term exposure to the sun's rays, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, and eye injury.

Illnesses like diabetes can affect eyesight in many different ways. Proper treatment for diabetes and management of the condition can prevent a number of eye disorders. Adults should not assume all vision changes are a direct result of getting older. Annual vision examinations by qualified eye doctors can pinpoint the cause of problems and find treatment options that are successful.

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Adults should speak with their eye doctors about any problems they may be having.

Pool Noodles And Other Tales Of The MRC

BY DEREK PITTS

Vermont Department of Health

Jerry Senturia and his fellow volunteers of Northeast Kingdom Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) have spent their summer attending community events throughout the kingdom, including the Peacham, the Danville Fair and the Canaan Sugar on Snow Festival. At each event they share their experiences as MRC volunteers, and provide health information and first aid training on subjects ranging from administering naloxone to reverse an overdose, to the proper way to apply a tourniquet.

Vermont's Medical Reserve Corps units are community-based groups of medical and non-medical volunteers who supplement local emergency and public health resources. MRC volunteers are utilized both for public health outreach activities and emergency events, such as helping overwhelmed medical facilities or assisting the state in mass vaccination or antibiotic distribution efforts.

As part of the National Stop the Bleed Campaign, Jerry and his team use pool noodles to simulate limbs. The colorful "arms" and "legs" provide the opportunity for folks to get hands-on, practical instruction from the volunteers

about how to respond to an uncontrolled bleeding situation – possible saving a life. Community members learn when and how to apply direct pressure to a wound and how to correctly apply a tourniquet to an injured limb to control the bleeding. After a round of instruction, one attendee thanked the MRC volunteers, "I came to the fair for the maple cotton candy, and leave knowing how to save a life." One teen at the Canaan Sugar on Snow Festival had fun repeatedly applying the tourniquet and perhaps he was inspired to consider becoming a doctor or Emergency Medical Technician.

Jerry's wife Diana is also an MRC volunteer. She and others offered information about summer safety. The volunteers passed out sunscreen and discussed the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as well as practical solutions to avoid heat stroke and exhaustion. They discussed how to prevent mosquito and tick bites, and the best way to remove a tick. They also helped people to know the symptoms of Lyme disease (from tick bites) and West Nile virus (from mosquitos). Folks who stop by the MRC tent could also receive one-on-one training for how to use naloxone (Narcan) to restore normal breathing for a person who is overdosing.

The Northeast Kingdom MRC basic first aid training was of particular value at the Annual



Stars and Stripes Festival in Lyndonville, where they treated an individual for heat exhaustion.

Jerry, Diana and all the community MRC members generously donate their time to the program, often spending many hours outside during these dog days of summer. And they make it very clear that it is worth it if the knowledge they teach can save one life, prevent an injury, or help

even just one person know how to avoid getting Lyme disease.

Northeast Kingdom MRC is just one of hundreds of MRC volunteer groups across the nation.

Learn more about joining Jerry and Diane, visit oncallforvt.org



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