

# Ageless

SUMMER 2021

*Ageless is our annual publication published in the Curry Coastal Pilot and Del Norte Triplicate; focusing on health, lifestyle, entertainment and advice for the active 50-plus community.*



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## Blood bank continues to save lives

The Northern California Community Blood Bank is a small nonprofit blood center providing blood products and services to hospitals and patients, primarily in Humboldt and Del Norte counties. The organization operates a fixed blood center in the city of Eureka, and four bloodmobiles that travel throughout Humboldt and Del Norte counties.

The Blood Bank was founded in 1951, at which time local hospitals had no way to store blood. Before a patient went into surgery, the hospital would have to search for local donors with the same blood type as the patient. Those donors would then have to wait by a telephone during the surgery in case they were needed. And if their blood wasn't used, it had to be thrown away. Recognizing that this was not a reliable process, area physicians decided a local blood bank was needed.


A number of local organizations have been involved in the founding and leadership of the Blood Bank. The Humboldt Del-Norte Medical Society helped oversee the blood bank, the Eureka Elks Lodge raised the money to start the Blood Bank and the Brizard-Matthews Machinery Company donated the first blood refrigerator.

The Blood Bank provides a vital service to the patients of local hospitals, who otherwise would be many hours away from the closest blood provider. Having a local blood bank in a rural area is important, and unfortunately more and more uncommon. Residents in many rural regions don't have the same access to quality trauma care as others. Having access to a safe and reliable blood supply collected and stored locally means Humboldt and Del Norte patients can receive a transfusion without delay, and regional hospitals are better supported in achieving higher trauma designations.




People can find out more about the Blood Bank and blood donation or make an appointment to donate at NCCBB's website, [www.nccbb.org](http://www.nccbb.org). They are also available to arrange tours for local school groups or clubs and are always available to talk to people who have questions about eligibility, the donation process or who are interested in sponsoring a blood drive with their business or other group at their location or at the blood bank. Please, drop by a blood mobile or give them a call at (707) 443-8004 if there is anything they can help you with.

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# Some benefits of growing older

Many people are quick to think of growing older in a negative light. Although there certainly are some side effects of aging that one may wish to avoid, people may find that the benefits of growing older outweigh the negatives.

Seniors are a rapidly growing segment of the population. With so many people living longer, it's time to celebrate the perks of getting older rather than the drawbacks.

*Here are some great benefits to growing old.*

- **Higher self-esteem:** The insecurities of youth give way as one ages, and older people have less negativity and higher self-esteem. A University of Basel study of people ranging in ages from 18 to 89 found that regardless of demographic and social status, the older one gets the higher self-esteem climbs. Qualities like self-control and altruism can contribute to happiness.
- **Financial perks:** Seniors are entitled to discounts on meals, museum entry fees, movies, and other entertainment if they're willing to disclose their ages. Discounts are available through an array of venues if one speaks up. Seniors also can enjoy travel perks, with slashed prices on resorts, plane tickets and more.

- **Reasoning and problem-solving skills:**

Brain scans reveal that older adults are more likely to use both hemispheres of their brains simultaneously — something called bilateralization. This can sharpen reasoning skills. For example, in a University of Illinois study, older air traffic controllers excelled at their cognitively taxing jobs, despite some losses in short-term memory and visual spatial processing. Older controllers proved to be experts at navigating, juggling multiple aircrafts simultaneously and avoiding collisions.

- **Less stress:**

As people grow older, they are able to differentiate their needs from wants and focus on more important goals. This can alleviate worry over things that are beyond one's control. Seniors may realize how little the opinions of others truly mean in the larger picture, thereby feeling less stress about what others think of them.

Growing older may involve gray hair or wrinkling skin, but there are many positive things associated with aging.

# Natural solutions for going gray with style

Gray hair is a natural side effect of aging. The rate at which hair will turn to gray differs based on genetics and other factors. Some people may go gray seemingly overnight, while others may gray at the temples first before the rest of their hair gradually changes color.

Aging women often wonder if they should cover up their gray hair or embrace the silver. Going gray is no longer something that has women running to their stylists at the sight of the first gray strand. Some actually opt for silver even before their own gray sets in. According to a survey of hair trends by L'Oréal Professional, 28 percent of women embraced or

considered opting for silver hair. The trend has continued to gain steam. Celebrities like Jamie Lee Curtis and Helen Mirren were some of the first to embrace their grays. Younger celebrities like Kendall Jenner, Pink and Lady Gaga have opted for silver tresses to make a statement.

But there are still many women who prefer to transition gradually or avoid the harsh chemicals in some hair products. More than 5,000 different chemicals are used in hair dye products, some of which are reported to be carcinogenic in animals. There are many natural ingredients that can add tint to hair to make gray less visible. Coffee, for

example, can cover grays and add dimension to dark tresses. Chamomile tea is recommended for blonds to add natural highlights and perhaps camouflage their grays. Calendula, marigold, rosehips, and hibiscus can deepen red shades or add some subtle red highlights. Henna also is a popular natural method to add a red-orange color to hair. Creating highlights to offset gray hair can work as well. Spraying lemon juice on hair and sitting in the sun can produce lightening effects.

Many women are seeking natural options to look their best. Embracing grays or creating subtle tints with natural ingredients can help women feel confident and beautiful.



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### Independent Living

When you choose to make our Brookings Independent Living community your new home, you maintain your freedom and independence while also gaining the benefits of a lively community setting. Low-maintenance living means you can take advantage of the amenities, connections, and safety of living in a community while also maintaining your lifestyle and personal space with options like a full kitchen and extra bedrooms.

### Assisted Living

Let our friendly care providers help manage the tasks of daily living, so you or your loved one can use your time and energy to enjoy the many perks and amenities available in our Brookings Assisted Living community. Ask us about social clubs and events, outings, and more!

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Our intentionally crafted Brookings Memory Care community provides specialized assistance and support in a soothing, secured environment designed to allow independent exploration. Our dedicated staff will be on hand 24 hours a day to give the right blend of support, encouragement, and care.

### Respite Care

If you are searching for short-term senior care in Brookings, our Respite program is an ideal solution. It's perfect for when a caregiver needs time away or while additional support is needed after an illness or injury.

### Hospice Care

Our dedicated teams are here to help you and your whole family with professional Hospice Care in Brookings. We work with our trusted community partners to provide quality palliative care with dignity to ensure the utmost comfort and support during this time.

*Contact us today to schedule a personalized tour to learn more about our community and meet our care providers.*





# 3 money-saving travel tips for retirees

Though a transient lifestyle is something few people aspire to during much of their lives, come retirement, the idea of staying in a place for only a short time has more appeal.

According to a study from the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, 36 percent of baby boomers want to spend their retirements traveling. Many are succeeding in doing just that, as a study from the luxury travel network Virtuoso found that today's seniors spent an average of just over \$11,000 per year on travel. That was more than any other generation, highlighting just how much older adults like to get out and explore the world.

Retirees who fear they cannot afford to travel can explore the various ways for seniors to cut costs and still satisfy their wanderlust during retirement.

**1. Take advantage of age-related discounts.** Some adults prefer to hide their ages, but when it comes time

to travel during retirement, honesty is the best policy. Many businesses that cater to travelers offer discounts to seniors. Car rental agencies, hotels, travel agencies, and cruise lines may offer direct discounts to customers 65 and older, while membership in organizations such as AAA and AARP may make seniors eligible for additional discounts. Discounts on lodging and airfare might net the biggest savings, but even discounts on various smaller expenses can add up to big savings.

## 2. Don't overlook travel agencies.

While many prospective travelers' first instincts are now to visit various travel websites in an effort to find the most affordable trips, it's important that travelers not overlook travel agencies when planning trips. Travel websites, though a valuable resource, only list the hotels and airlines that agree to be included on their sites. While many participate, some

do not, and those that do not may instead work independent of travel websites or partner with travel agencies. Travel agencies have access to the latest information, and many specialize in certain countries, knowing all the attractions visitors to their countries want to see. Travel agencies may offer packages that include admissions to popular attractions, which can be more affordable than planning a trip a la carte.

## 3. Travel as part of a group.

Group travel may not appeal to everyone, but it should appeal to older, budget-conscious travelers. Retirees who are uncomfortable driving at home will likely be even less comfortable driving in foreign countries where the rules of the road are not the same. Traveling in groups, whether it's with a retirement community, religious organization or another program, can save travelers substantial amounts of money. Many hotels and tourist attractions offer steep

discounts for group tours, which can even be arranged through travel agencies. A hidden benefit of signing up for a group tour is the chance to meet new people and develop new relationships with fellow globetrotters.

Many working professionals hope to spend the bulk of their retirement traveling the globe. While such a goal is potentially costly, there are various ways to save and still see the world.



# Why routine checkups are vital to overall health

Regular visits with a medical professional are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Too often people visit the doctor only when they are ill, as they may not realize just how essential well visits and physical exams are.

Routine checkups are the smartest way for people in all age groups to stay on top of their health, but they can be especially valuable for those age 50 and older. Regular checkups enable physicians to check current health against past visits, ensuring that any anomalies can be investigated and treated efficiently and promptly. This can make the difference in slowing down the progression of a disease that has already developed or prevent something from becoming a full-fledged issue.

The Mayo Clinic says there are no hard and fast rules about how often seniors

should visit health care providers. Those who are in generally good health may only require one medical checkup a year. At this point vital signs will be checked, medications reviewed and lifestyle topics discussed. Doctors may even recommend or discuss tests. Patients also can bring up any issues they may be experiencing, however insignificant they may seem. Anything from sleep disturbances to memory loss to unexplained fatigue or pain can be addressed. Sometimes getting everything out in the open and being reassured that there's nothing to worry about can be helpful.

General care and geriatric doctors also are adept at asking questions to get a sense of how patients are faring in the world. This may include topics that seemingly have no relevance to health but can be quite important. A provider may ask

about topics such as bathing or dressing. Questions about social interaction or typical routines can paint a better picture of both physical and mental health.

The recommended frequency of doctor visits may change as health issues arise or if follow-up is needed after a treatment plan or injury, according to the caregiver company Home Care Assistance. Some seniors may have to visit a provider once a week or once a month. Doctors, nurses and therapists will design a regimen based on a patient's current health needs.

The following are some compelling reasons to be diligent with provider visits.

- Frequently health issues can be silent and not noticed early on by a patient, according to Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore.

- Patients will be less likely to forget about important screenings, like mammography, prostate tests, cholesterol tests, and more.

- Vaccines can be administered, as even adults need certain immunizations to stay healthy.

- Patients can discuss potential lifestyle changes, like going on a diet or taking up a new fitness regimen.

It is essential to follow through with health care provider visits, even if they seem redundant.

Physicians may detect issues that warrant close observation. Patients are urged to have an open dialogue with their doctors so they understand the reason behind health care visits and expectations in the future.

# THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE



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## Schedule your Medicare Wellness Visit at Curry Health Network.

It's free, easy and the perfect way to get your health back on track!

If there's anything we've learned this past year and a half, it's the value and importance of good health. Even so, many older Americans are skipping the routine healthcare appointments that are critical to maintain good health or detect concerns before they develop into something more serious. At Curry Health Network, we encourage everyone to get—or keep—your health on track with important preventative care. And for patients with Medicare benefits, take advantage of your free annual wellness visit. This no co-pay appointment can go a long way to help safeguard your health.

In 2011, the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) was made available to those enrolled in Medicare for at least a year. These free and easy visits are an opportunity for patients to receive basic screenings, ask questions, get referrals and learn information to help them maintain their health and independence. Visits are often more conversational than clinical and a chance to receive personalized health advice and information. Even better, people can receive Annual Wellness Visits at Curry Health Network where it's closer and more convenient for them and their families.

The Medicare Wellness Visit is conducted under the guidance of a physician by outpatient nurses at Curry Health Network. The AWV is an opportunity for patients to ask questions, discuss concerns and set health goals. While the appointments are not as extensive as an annual physical exam, they are an important tool to help patients manage their health, access any needs and are especially beneficial to those who haven't seen a healthcare provider recently.

During wellness visits, patients fill out a health risk assessment form so providers

can review health changes, medical history, medications and allergies. This evaluation also helps make sure files are updated for any current or future medical needs. Providers also review immunizations to see if boosters are needed, identify outdated lab work to see if new tests are needed and send referrals within the healthcare team for preventative screenings.

Patients also receive basic screenings for a better understanding of their overall health. Evaluations include basic hearing and vision tests, a balance check, a three-minute cognitive evaluation and basic vital sign screenings of heart rate, blood pressure, respiration and temperature. These screenings can provide valuable insight and help patients work with providers to establish health goals, minimize potential risks and continue living their healthiest lives.

Mental health is often over-looked, particularly in older populations. According to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), one in six people over the age of 65 struggles with depression. Understanding the risk is the first important step. During the Medicare Wellness Visit, CHN nurses conduct a depression screening that provides information needed for patients to get the care they need if they are dealing with mental health concerns.

After the screenings, Curry Health Network providers can also provide materials and discuss advance directive care and planning – an important topic that persons of all ages should consider. Having someone to answer questions can make the subject easier to understand, so patients are able to make the decisions that are best for them and their loved ones.