

Seniors Living Well

Inside:

- Keep moving
- Brain health
- Homeowner happiness
- Seniors out and about



Many seniors can only *dream* of a good night's sleep

Sleep patterns change as we age, but insomnia could signal health problems

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

We all know about wrinkles, gray hair and memory issues. But people may be surprised as the years go by to find changes in their sleep patterns. With aging, many folks begin to

have a harder time falling asleep, plus they wake up more often during the night and earlier in the morning, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

The amount of actual sleeping may stay the same or be slightly decreased,

to 6-1/2 to 7 hours each night, but add in some time spent tossing and turning, and a person might actually spend more time in bed.

Sleep needs don't change as we age but our sleep patterns do, which might result in sleep problems.

Younger people sleep in stages that include deep, dreamless sleep and light sleep. Older people spend less time in a deep, dreamless sleep. They might wake up three or four times each night — and they are more aware of it than they were at a younger age. Older people also may wake up more often because they need to urinate or due to pain from various ailments or medications.

Forty-four percent of older people in the United States experience insomnia at least a few nights a week, according to a 2003 poll by the National Sleep Foundation.

Insomnia is considered chronic if it lasts longer than a month; it is referred to as acute if it lasts a few days or weeks. If insomnia begins to make someone too tired to function during the day, it is

time to consult a physician.

"Some changes in sleep cycles come naturally with age. But if you're having regular trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, or if you feel drowsy all day, the cause probably goes beyond getting older," warns Pleasanton's Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare on its website, adding, "There's almost always an underlying cause and a treatment or lifestyle change that can help."

Medical problems that might interfere with sleep include arthritis, depression, heartburn, dementia, lung disease, heart disease, incontinence or osteoporosis. Lack of sleep can eventually cause confusion, depression or increase the chance of traffic accidents.

Snoring is the main cause of sleep disruption for about 37 million American adults on a regular basis, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Loud snoring can be a symptom of obstructive sleep apnea, a condi-

Sleep tips

- Go to sleep and get up at the same times every day, and limit daytime napping.
- Try to get out in sunlight every day.
- Exercise at regular times every day.
- Avoid caffeine late in the day.
- Skip the nightcap. Even a small amount of alcohol can make it harder to sleep through the night.
- Create a safe and comfortable sleeping space. A dark, quiet and well-ventilated room is best.
- Establish a routine. Listen to music, read a book, take a bath or do some other relaxing thing just before bed each night.
- Use your bedroom for sleeping. If you're not asleep or drowsy within 15 minutes of turning out the light and getting in bed, get up and do something else until you feel sleepy. Then go back to bed.
- A light bedtime snack may be helpful. Many people find that warm milk increases sleepiness because it contains a natural, sedative-like amino acid.

— Stanford Health Care-Valley Care/
National Institute on Aging



Sleep needs don't change as we age, but our sleep patterns can.

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Regular physical activity is vital for older adults

Keep moving to stay in shape — from fingers to toes



By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

“How often do you exercise?”

This question comes up every time a senior is face to face with a healthcare provider.

“Define exercise,” he or she might reply.

Does the heart rate have to rise? Does yoga qualify? Yes. Exercise goes beyond huffing and puffing.

Regular physical activity is one of the most important activities older adults can do for their health, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It recommends combining moderate-intensity activity, such as brisk walking, with muscle strengthening activities that work all the major muscle groups.

Each week, older adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, although if the activity is more intense, less time is needed. They also need muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days, which can include lifting weights, working with resistance bands, doing pushups, sit-ups and planks, or yoga.

Another help to staying in shape and burning extra calories is to keep moving around — tapping your fingers and toes and wriggling around in your seat, even though you may still hear your parents and teachers telling you to stop fidgeting. Play with a stress ball or rubber bands.

Studies at the Mayo Clinic found that people can burn up to 350 calories just by moving more during the day.

Don't conveniently place telephones, tissues and waste baskets near your chair —

make yourself get up for them. Standing burns more calories than sitting — about 60 calories an hour. Try standing or walking around while you are on the phone. On average, 20 steps burns off one calorie.

Physician James Levine of the Mayo Clinic came up with a solution for those who spend hours of each day working at a desk — he created the treadmill desk, and it is estimated that a person could lose 57 pounds a year using it. Treadmill desks are available commercially but can also be created on your own.

If your lifestyle entails a long stint in a chair each afternoon or evening, make it a rocking chair, which can burn up to 150 calories an hour, according to a website dedicated to natural healing. Rocking works the muscles in the thighs, and just 10 minutes of rocking can reduce one's blood pressure and improve circulation.

Rocking can also release endorphins to raise your mood and reduce anxiety. The motion of a rocking chair makes a body maintain its momentum, helping its balance. And of course everyone of a certain age remembers President John F. Kennedy having a rocking chair in the Oval Office to strengthen his back.

Any physical activity is better than none at all, the CDC says, and health benefits increase with the amount of physical activity done.

Also — don't forget to laugh: A hearty chuckle can raise your heart rate by 10-20% and burn up to 40 calories. ■

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Early detection key to surviving prostate cancer

Highly treatable when caught early

By Dr. Stephen Taylor, Urologist, John Muir Health

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis and the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States for men.

John Muir Medical Center, like other top medical facilities in the country, is committed to placing the odds in favor of men by providing comprehensive screening and early detection options, accurate diagnosis, innovative treatment options, and a swift and highly effective recovery process to return patients to the same quality of life they enjoyed before receiving treatment.

One of the most effective methods for getting the upper hand on prostate cancer is early detection. When and how often you should get a screening test depends on various risks.

I encourage patients to begin having discussions with their physician about a prostate cancer screening test when they reach 40 years of age. If you are African-American or have a relative who's had prostate cancer, you are at a higher risk and should consult with your doctor to determine your personal screening frequency.

With most forms of urologic cancer, there are oftentimes no obvious symptoms, making early detection even more critical. However, those experiencing urinary pain, discomfort or change in frequency should see a doctor immediately.

There are two primary diagnostic tests for prostate cancer. Doctors often perform a digital rectal examination to feel for any abnormalities in the prostate gland that could be an indicator of cancer. If the prostate is normal, it will be soft like a sponge. An abnormal prostate on the other

hand, will be hard like a marble and require further testing.

The second test is a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test, which tests the levels of PSA in your blood. Having an elevated PSA level does not necessarily indicate you will develop prostate cancer. However, it may lead to further diagnostic tests or a more regular screening schedule.

Just a few years ago, if a PSA test was elevated and/or a nodule was present on the prostate, doctors would immediately proceed to a biopsy. Such is not the case in this era of advanced innovation in medicine.

Today, elevated PSA levels or the presence of nodules may result in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the prostate which is highly reliable (90% accurate) and eliminates roughly 60% of unnecessary biopsies. John Muir Medical Center Walnut Creek employs a state-of-the-art Siemens Magnetom Skyra 3 Tesla MRI scanner, capable of performing an exam without endorectal coil placement, resulting in improved patient comfort and excellent image quality.

When caught early, prostate cancer is highly treatable. Because prostate cancer is often a slow-growing cancer, doctors may discuss the possibility of putting you on "active surveillance" in which they clinically follow the cancer with routine PSA tests and, if necessary, biopsies, before committing to any treatment options.

If treatment is necessary, such highly innovative procedures as the Robotic Assisted Radical Prostatectomy using the Da Vinci robot — with robotic arms — are available, entering through the patient's belly button and removing the prostate from the abdomen. This remarkable

SLEEP

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tion in which the sleeper can actually stop breathing for as long as 10-60 seconds, which makes the amount of oxygen in the blood drop, possibly leading to heart disease and other serious health problems.

Other sleep disorders include restless legs syndrome, periodic limb movements disorder and advanced sleep phase disorder. This last condition is when people get the right amount of sleep but not necessarily at the best times. They may have an overwhelming drive to sleep at 8-9 p.m. and get up around 4-5 a.m., which can be a problem if it limits their interactions with family or friends in the evening hours, or if they force themselves to stay awake, resulting in sleep deprivation.

Delayed sleep phase disorder is when people go to bed late, between 1-6 a.m., and then wake up at 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Older people often experience sleep problems due to lifestyle changes, Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare points out. These changes can be less physical and mental activity, less exposure to sunlight or more frequent naps. Other factors may be the feeling of stress, sadness or anxiety that can come with retirement, losing loved ones, or medical or financial concerns.

Insomnia can take its toll if a sufferer is excessively sleepy during the day and has trouble concentrating. A variety of factors needs to be weighed by a doctor to work with the patient on possible treatments.

"Sleep problems can lead to more than drowsiness. According to the National Sleep Foundation, inadequate rest can lead to reduced energy, difficulty concentrating, a lousy mood, a higher risk for accidents and a lower tolerance for pain," states Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare. "Getting older is no excuse for not sleeping well. If you have sleep problems, talk to your doctor." ■

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See **PROSTATE** on Page 20

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Seniors Living Well

3 factors that impact homeowner happiness

Survey shows empty nesters have high happy home scores

It is said that as you get older you become wiser, but as homeowners grow older, do they become happier? According to a nationwide homeowner happiness survey conducted by HomeAdvisor, the answer is yes. This was the case of Bob and Joanie Johnson, who dropped their youngest child off at college in August 2015.

Although they needed time to adjust to their children no longer living at home, they soon realized they had extra time and money to devote to home projects. Many parents who become empty nesters have this revelation and start focusing on projects that have been placed on the back-burner while kids were in the house.

"It makes sense that empty nesters have the highest happy home scores," said Karen Ruskin, HomeAdvisor's happiness adviser. "They have likely settled in a community they enjoy and plan to stay. This group also generally has the most economic stability and time to make their house a happy home."

The survey shows that individuals in the empty-nester stage have higher happy home scores across the board compared to all other stages of life. The main factors that contribute to their happiness are their communities, loca-

tion and features of their homes.

Compared to other stages of life, empty nesters feel the safest in their communities, most connected to their neighbors and are also the happiest with the condition of their homes.

Overall homeowner happiness boils down to a combination of three important factors: accessibility to attractions and services,

community and dwelling. Interestingly, research shows that accessibility and community play a far bigger role in happiness than dwelling.

"A homeowner's identity and quality of life is much more likely to depend on aspects like weather, for example, as that influences activities accessed

in one's community and affordability over how many bedrooms and bathrooms they have," Ruskin said. "Homeowner happiness is really about location, location, location."

This rings true for the Johnsons, who are far happier with the accessibility of services in their community and their neighbors than other life-stage groups, according to Ruskin.

She offered these four tips to make your home a happier place:

See **HOMEOWNERS** on Page 21

'Homeowner happiness is really about location, location, location.'

Karen Ruskin,
HomeAdvisor

Seniors Out and about

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION: MELT METHOD Come learn how to move freely and stay pain free with The MELT Method at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at the Pleasanton Senior Center. The MELT method is a simple, unique self-treatment system that you can use everyday at home to help prevent pain, heal injury, and erase the negative effects of aging and daily living in your body. Call 931-5365 or go to www.pleasantonseniorcenter.com.

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY USER GROUP The PT Users Group meets at 10 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Pleasanton Senior Center. The usual format is 2-3 presentations by various presenters. Topics include internet use, email, photos, security, help with Windows 7/8/10, smartphones, tablets. Cost is \$2-\$2.50. Call 931-5365.

PLEASANTON SOLE MATES Join this weekly walking group at 8:45 a.m. on Wednesday mornings departing from the Pleasanton Senior Center. Participants must be able to walk 2.5-3 miles and keep a moderate pace with the group. Stop by the Senior Center to pick a monthly walk schedule or call 925-931-5365 for more information.

PEDDLER SHOPPE AT THE SENIOR CENTER The Peddler Shoppe in the lobby of the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., offers the handmade wares of talented local senior artisans. It's a great place to buy gifts. The Shoppe is staffed by volunteers and is open to the public 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Go to www.pleasantonpeddlershoppe.com.

SENIOR MENS SOCIAL CLUB Sons In Retirement (SIR) is a social club for senior men. In addition to friendships, members can participate in interest groups like golf, bridge, travel, photography, etc. They meet for lunch the first Thursday of the month at San Ramon Golf Club. Open to retirees in the Tri-Valley. Contact Rich Osborne at 785-3549 or tri-valleysir@gmail.com. Go to branch34.sirinc2.org.

EYE GLASS ADJUSTMENTS AND CLEANING Stop by the Pleasanton Senior Center from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month to have your eye glasses and sunglasses cleaned and adjusted by a representative from Sears Optical. For more information call 931-5365.

PHOTO CLUB The photo club is open to any senior who enjoys the hobby of photography at any level. It is suggested that you have some form of a digital camera. The group shares photos and makes suggestions how the photos might be improved. Meetings include occasional speakers and field trips, and are from 2-4 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at the Pleasanton Senior Center. Cost is \$2 for residents, \$2.50 for non-residents. Call 931-5365.

MEN OF BREAKFAST Join the Men of Breakfast or MOB at 8:30 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday of the month for a cup of coffee and friendly discussion at the Pleasanton Senior Center. Bring a newspaper and whatever topics pique your interest. Call 931-5369.

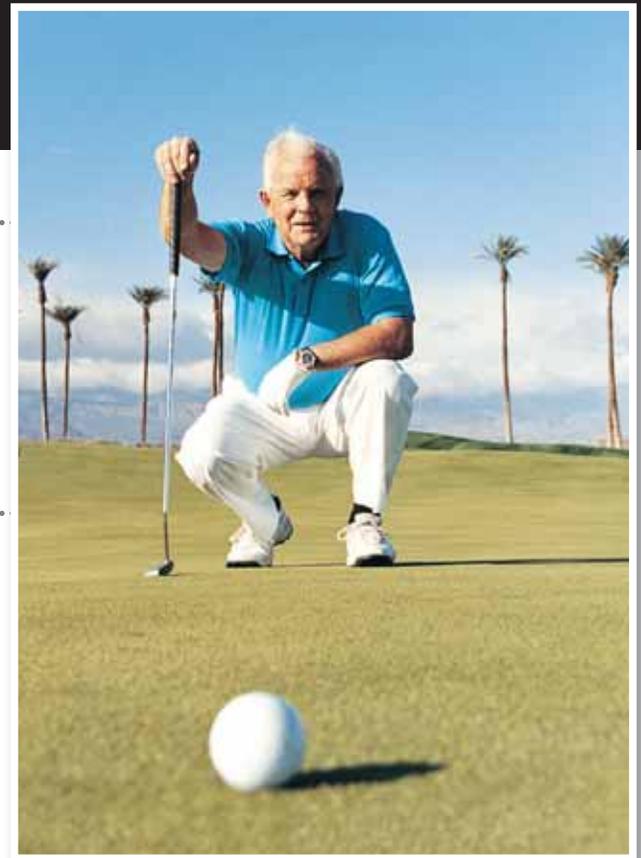
CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP Caring for a loved one is challenging physically and emotionally. Join this support group to explore resources and generate problem solving ideas from 1-3 p.m., on the second Monday of every month at 5353 Sunol Blvd. Get the support you deserve at the Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley. Call 931-5389. ■

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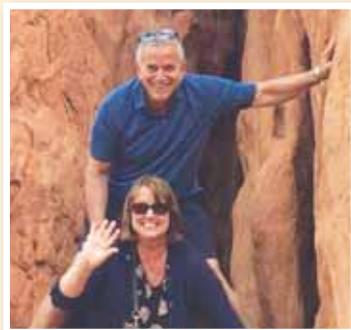
Whether buying, selling, relocating or refinancing, you can be confident that she will **guide you every step of the way.**



Excellent Service from Cindy and Gene

Gene and Cindy are a team you will want to work with when selling or buying a home. The level of knowledge of the market and the process of selling our home exceeded our expectations. Gene was always thorough with the presentation of important information. Cindy expertly helped us prepare our home to sell. They have excellent follow-through and communication skills. My husband and I felt comfortable with Gene and Cindy from the first time we met them. They are friendly and professional, and we would work with them again.

Benny & Linda Boveda
Livermore – 04/20/2016



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Roger & Carmen Rapp
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8 ways to keep your brain sharp

Keeping brain healthy is critical as you age

The brain is the body's most complex organ. It's also the most important one. That's why keeping it healthy is critical, especially as you age.

Every day, scientists are discovering how closely our minds and bodies are connected. As it turns out, the things that you do to keep your body and heart healthy may also be good for your brain.

Incorporate these eight healthy habits and activities into your daily life to help you optimize brain health and stay sharp in the years ahead.

Get moving

Physical activity is good for your health at every age. Studies show being active is associated with a lower risk of brain issues. Whether it's nightly walks, playing with the grandkids, or taking your favorite yoga class, find an activity that meets your needs and gets your heart pumping for at least 30 minutes every day.

Eat to thrive

The antioxidants in nutrient-dense foods like berries, broccoli and legumes, including some fats such as olive oil, may lower some risks to your brain. Try eating a healthy, low-

fat, low-cholesterol diet with lots of vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains such as oatmeal and brown rice.

Know your blood pressure

High blood pressure can have serious effects on your brain health. If your blood pressure is high, get it under control. It may help reduce some risks to your brain.

Drink moderately

How the body handles alcohol can change with age. Some older adults can feel "high" without increasing the amount of alcohol they drink. This can make them more likely to become confused or have accidents. So limit the amount of alcohol you drink — or don't drink it at all.

Get a good night's sleep

Poor sleep, or inadequate sleep, due to issues such as insomnia or sleep apnea, doesn't just leave you feeling tired. It can have serious physical effects and can impact memory and thinking, too. Get comfy and go to bed. Seven to eight hours is a good night's rest.

Discover a new talent

When you learn new things, you engage your brain. Try something you haven't done



before — learning French, ballroom dancing or carpentry, for example. Challenging your brain on a regular basis is fun and beneficial.

Stay connected

Science has shown that regular engagement in social activities can help reduce some risks to your brain. Stay connected and invite family or friends over for a healthy meal, go on a hike together or just hang out.

Talk to your doctor

As you age, some changes in brain function, including short-term memory, happen more frequently than when you were younger. If you have questions or are concerned, ask your doctor at your next appointment.

For more tips on keeping your brain healthy and thriving, visit BrainHealth.gov. ■

—Family Features

PROSTATE

Continued from Page 17

procedure carries a host of benefits including minimal pain, early hospital dismissal, and little bleeding/scarring.

Radiation therapy has also made great strides in the fight against prostate cancer. The Calypso

Beacon System, which utilizes transponders to identify tumors, is an example of one system that offers exceptional outcomes through highly targeted, high dose therapy.

Prostate cancer is by no means a death sentence, especially in this age of advanced medicine. Thanks to effective, minimally invasive treatment options, men with prostate cancer are

living longer, healthier lives with fewer treatment-related side effects to either their urinary or sexual functionality.

What's imperative however, is to diagnose prostate cancer in its earliest stages. This can be done with screening and early detection, especially for those that have a history or predisposition to the same.

Consult with your doctor, get the facts, and make the most informed decision about your personal course of action. ■

Editor's note: Dr. Stephen Taylor is certified by the American Board of Urology and is a member of the Impotence Institute of America. He has practiced in the area since 1980.

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Breast imaging accreditation for Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare

Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare in Pleasanton has been designated a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

The designation is given to breast imaging centers that have earned accreditation in mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy and breast ultrasound (including ultrasound-guided breast biopsy).

"We are very proud to have the Breast Imaging Center of Excellence Gold Seal for our Women's Imaging Center," said Denise Estrada, manager of the hospital's cancer services.

"We have amazing staff who provide excellent patient care. This award recognizes our dedication to patient safety and delivering the highest level of imaging quality," she added.

Peer-review evaluations, conducted in each breast imaging modality by board-certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in the field, have determined that Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare has achieved high practice standards in image quality, personnel qualifications, facility equipment, quality control procedures and quality assurance programs.

The ACR is a national professional organization serving more than 36,000 diagnostic/interventional radiologists, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine physicians and medical physicists with programs focusing on the practice of medical imaging and radiation oncology and the delivery of comprehensive health care services. ■

—Pleasanton Weekly staff

HOMEOWNERS

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1. Upgrade and remodel your home. Update the landscaping or change out cabinet hardware. These modest to moderate changes can transform your home into a place that fits your needs.
2. Make sure you have adequate gathering space. Family rooms, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens and patios are great areas to focus on to create an entertainment experience for you and your guests.

3. Get to know your neighbors. Research shows that the happiest homeowners enjoy and feel comfortable, as well as safe, with their neighbors and community. To reach this comfortability, try organizing a neighborhood event.

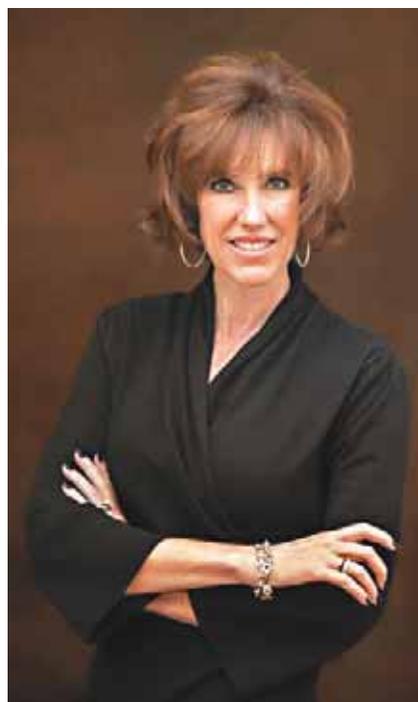
4. Make your home a place you want to stay. The happiest homeowners feel their home is their favorite place and somewhere they want to stay long term. Get comfortable, hang art, put up those family pictures that are sitting in a box, paint the walls or plant a garden. ■

—Family Features

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