

A special publication of the Pleasanton Weekly

# STAYING Healthy



## FOUR STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

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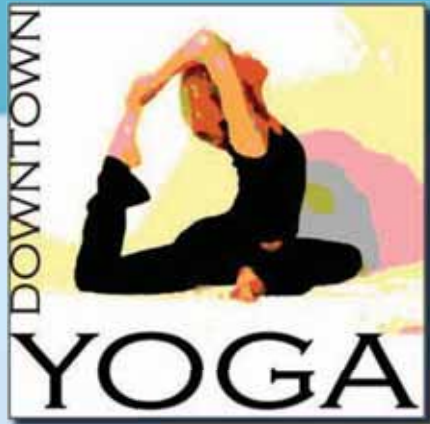
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## Four steps to a healthier you

*Pleasanton residents seem to buck national trend of obesity*

Pleasanton residents don't seem to reflect the growing obesity rates in the United States that have companies, health care workers and even the government discussing concerns about the physical and mental health effects and costs associated with weight gain. But according to a recent estimate, by 2030 — in less than 20 years — 65 million more American adults may be obese.

People seem to fight that trend in Pleasanton, as evidenced by walkers, runners and health clubs. If you still need to take responsibility for your own health and wellness, here are some steps to help you take charge of your weight loss, achieve your goal and become a healthier person:

1. Get moving. Being active can help weight loss and is critical to maintaining weight loss. Find an activity that you enjoy and include it in your daily activities. Also try exploring new activities that involve different muscle groups in your body. Pleasanton's Walk to Wellness group hosted weekly walks in 2011 at parks in Pleasanton. For information about upcoming events, call Ron Sutton at 580-5961 or email [walks@WorldWalkToWellness.org](mailto:walks@WorldWalkToWellness.org). The city offers water aerobics year-round at Dolores Bengtson Aquatics Center on Black Avenue. See the schedule at [www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation/aquatics](http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation/aquatics). If you prefer to stay indoors in the cold months, try yoga, a great exercise for body and mind.

2. Create a supportive environment. Talk with your family, friends and coworkers. Get people on your side to encourage and sup-

port you. Ask them to help you keep your goal a priority, and to provide constructive feedback when you meet difficult challenges that could potentially interfere with accomplishing your goal.

3. Talk with your doctor. Bring your doctor on board early on to help you set a goal and ensure you make healthy weight-loss decisions. Weight loss between 5 and 10 percent is shown to have significant health benefits and reduces the risks of diabetes and heart disease.

4. Re-evaluate regularly. As you go through your weight loss process, re-evaluate your personal motivation, and check in with your doctor, family and friends on a frequent basis to review how you are doing in accomplishing your goal. Continue to set small, attainable goals such as a 5 percent weight loss.

Being overweight is a condition that you can control. Getting support from others can help you successfully achieve your goals, lead to a healthier, happier you and start a new statistical trend for 2030.

—ARA content contributed to this story.

### ON THE COVER

PHOTO BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Gregory Crofton jogs on Junipero Street along Mission Hills Park in Pleasanton on Monday afternoon. Pleasanton residents in general are health-conscious, as evidenced by their frequent jogging, walking, biking and playing sports year-round.



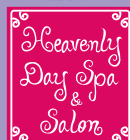
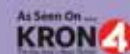
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# Watch out for those germ hotspots

*Best to be cautious during cough and cold season*

We're reminded time and again of the good health habits we should practice during the winter germ season — wash your hands, cover your cough and stay home when you're sick. While you likely know these basics, you might not be aware some of the most common places germs tend to congregate and spread.

Taking proper care to kill germs after you come into contact with these germ hotspots can be one of the keys to staying healthy this season. The tricky part is many of these hotspots are places you encounter when you're on the go and aren't necessarily close to a sink. That's where keeping a portable hand sanitizer handy can help.

### The gas station and convenience store

When you're pumping gas, have you ever thought about how many other hands have touched the same pump since the last time it was wiped down? A recent study confirmed that gas pumps are one of the filthiest items we encounter



in everyday life. After you fill your tank, your next move should be to reach for that bottle of hand sanitizer in your car. And while cashiers typically work hard to keep their counters clean, it's never a bad idea to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after exchanging cash or touching other common areas in the store.

### The gym

Most health clubs go to

great lengths to keep equipment clean and make members feel comfortable. But if you're hopping on the treadmill right after someone else, it never hurts to use a sanitizing wipe, which many clubs keep readily available. Pay it forward by using another one when you are done.

### Grocery store

If you're a parent, you know that it's not just the driver's hands that are get-

ting all over the shopping cart, since kids tend to be obsessed with any moving object with wheels. Consider using a sanitizing wipe before touching a grocery cart. Once you're done shopping, cleansing your hands and any younger shopping companions' hands with sanitizer is a good way to stem the spread of germs that might have been picked up from frequently touched surfaces in the store.

### The mall

Escalator and stair railings, as well as drinking fountain controls and armrests on benches, see a lot of action throughout the day and collect germs quickly. Put those sanitizing stations in the shopping center's hallways to good use after touching these areas.

### At work

Frequently touching your desk, phone and keyboard means germs multiply at your work station. Keeping tissues and hand sanitizer at your desk can also be helpful for those emergencies when you can't leave your

seat immediately to get to the sink.

There's no way to avoid germs altogether during the winter germ season, but you

can take action by recognizing some of the most common areas where germs tend to congregate.

—ARA Content



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# Vital to call 911 at first symptoms of stroke

*East Bay system aims at care in critical first 4 hours*

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

If someone suddenly loses the ability to speak, move body parts or has trouble seeing, call 911.

These are the first symptoms of a stroke and it's imperative that a person receive immediate medical attention, said Sarah Kiyoi, Stroke Coordinator at San Ramon Regional Medical Center (see photo).

Every minute counts when someone is having a stroke, yet the average stroke patient waits more than 12 hours before going to an emergency room and many wait much longer, sometimes an entire day, she said.

An expanded Stroke System to reduce brain damage launched Jan. 9 in Contra Costa to join Alameda County to provide a coordinated 911 emergency response. It identifies stroke victims en route to stroke-certified hospitals to treat them within the critical four-hour window.

"It's really, really exciting because stroke has kind of ended up taking second fiddle to heart disease. People don't know there are things you can do to turn a stroke around," Kiyoi said. "The overwhelming majority of people, less than 5% of patients nationally, get to the hospital to be treated acutely. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States."

The leading two causes are heart disease and all types of cancer combined.

"The other thing to know is strokes are one of the leading causes of long-term disability in the U.S. — paralysis, blurred speech, they can't walk without assistance," Kiyoi added. "Twenty-six percent of patients end up in a nursing home."

"The story of the heart attack is if they can get to an ambulance or emergency room they're most likely going to live. They are not only going to live but they are going to walk away," she continued.

"With a stroke they're not necessarily going to walk away."

There are two types of stroke, she explained: dry or ischemic and hemorrhagic or bleeding stroke.

"The overwhelming majority, 87%, are dry or ischemic," she said. "This means there's a clot, usually the arteries become narrowed from plaque and cholesterol building up. The clot builds up or gets lodged in a blood vessel, and the area beyond that starts to die. The bigger the blood vessel, the bigger part of the brain affected."

"The scary part is, the brain is what controls everything else."

The good news, she said, is that usually only one side of the brain is affected, which controls just one side of the body, the opposite side.

Hemorrhagic or bleeding stroke is caused by a blood vessel in the brain breaking and bleeding into the brain.

"The symptoms are a severe, severe headache. It's a quick onset — boom! 'My head is going to explode,'" Kiyoi said. "This is 13% of all strokes and 30% of all stroke deaths. There is nowhere for the brain to go — it gets squished."

Rapid treatment is important for any kind of stroke, she emphasized.

A third type of "mini-stroke" gives people a sign that an ischemic stroke is on the way. These transient ischemic attacks — called TIAs — happen when blood flow to the brain is temporarily blocked. They may cause blurry vision or loss of vision, tingling or numbness of the mouth or the inability to speak clearly, and your body produces a drug to deal with it.

"Your body breaks the clot up," Kiyoi said. "They are usually mild and last for 15-20 minutes."

They should not be ignored because it is estimated that 15% of TIA sufferers have a stroke within a year.

When stroke victims arrive at San Ramon Regional, the stroke team reaffirms the diagnosis, then treats the patient with the same clot-busting drug.

"We treat when appropriate with a drug that

works in the same way as your body does to break up a clot, and return blood flow to the brain," Kiyoi said. "There is only one FDA-approved drug, and it takes an hour to give it."

"It returns blood supply to that part of the brain, and it's pretty miraculous when we see it work," she continued. "The signs and symptoms will turn around in the first hour or so."

"We do very, very close monitoring for first 24 hours after medication. We do lots of follow up screening and testing," she said. "We have a stroke team and we treat a stroke with the same level of urgency as someone not breathing. We page throughout the hospital, just like a code blue. We have a whole team that pops into action, 24 hours a day."

San Ramon Regional is affiliated with the neurology department at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco.

"So we are basically able to get a stroke neurological consultation very quickly and at a super high level," Kiyoi said.

San Ramon Regional received its certification as a stroke center in December after a year of fine-tuning its procedures.

"We definitely have 'owned' being a stroke hospital," Kiyoi said. "It was a culture change to feel like it's something we do and we do well. It's multidisciplinary, involving five different departments."

Radiology performs the CT head scan; the laboratory runs three tests to help determine the treatment plan; the pharmacy provides the drug; and critical care doctors and nurses are stroke specialists.

Stroke victims can be seen in the emergency room or they may have been admitted for other reasons then have a stroke while in hospital, Kiyoi noted.

When suspecting a stroke, the team performs standard tests. One is to show a picture of a feather to see if the patient can find the word to identify it, which shows whether the person can take in an image, understand it, organize a response and deliver it.

"People think strokes are more of an 'elderly' thing," Kiyoi said, "but I'm seeing lots more people in their 40s, 50s and 60s."

"A lot has to do with same old, same old — diet and exercise," she added. "Some is hereditary. I have seen some patients look very healthy on the outside and feel healthy but they still have a stroke."

"High blood pressure is big risk factor and it's silent. Until they have to, people don't pay attention to it. High cholesterol is also silent. It builds up on your artery walls and makes it easier for a clot to lodge."

High blood pressure is 140/90 or above; 120-139/80-89 is the pre-hypertension stage, or at risk. Normal is less than 120/80, according to guidelines of the National Institutes of Health.

Eighty percent of strokes are preventable with proper eating and exercise, Kiyoi said.

"The cool thing is it's a twofer — you reduce the risk of stroke and you also reduce the risk of

heart disease."

A danger is that a person won't recognize they are having a stroke, and they may lie down hoping they'll feel better.

"There's lots of denial," Kiyoi said, which is why it's important for spouses and friends to be aware of symptoms and insist on medical treatment. "If you let a stroke patient tell you they don't want to come in, well, their brain is broken, the thing making decisions is broken."

Of stroke victims, 60% are women while 40% are men.

"We don't know why. We're looking at hormones," Kiyoi said. "Heart disease is 50-50."

We're trying to figure out why we're seeing those differences; there's a lot of research going on."

"Women handle so much and are really good at that denial thing," she added.

They may think they can handle the symptoms without stopping their other activities.

Women think of breast cancer as their biggest health threat although stroke kills twice as many women than breast cancer a year, according to the National Stroke Association.

"A huge, huge part of whether they come in or not is that awareness," Kiyoi said.

Countywide stroke systems and hospital certification to treat strokes have been gaining momentum in the last five years, Kiyoi said.

"It definitely takes an institutional commitment, from the administration down," she said.

The standard is tough, she pointed out, and she's proud that the medical center is holding itself to it.

"It's really neat that part of the requirements is that you do community outreach," she said. "That's one of my favorite parts, talking with people at wellness events."

In 2011, Kiyoi educated almost 800 people through seminars, classes and community events and is on the speakers bureau for the American Heart/American Stroke Association. Contact her at 275-8886.

"I'm always shopping around for more opportunities," she said. "It's free, an hour-long lecture. I answer questions and give out literature."

Kiyoi said she emphasizes the importance of being engaged in your own health, which leads to knowing why you should live healthy.

People also need to understand their medications and keep them up to date.

"Sometimes your body becomes less responsive or you pack on 10 pounds and it is not working. Things change," Kiyoi said. "Also, are people taking their medications regularly? Do you know why you are taking them?"

Someone might stop taking the aspirin the doctor prescribed because it is over the counter, or they can't afford it. "There are a lot of reasons. If you understand that aspirin makes blood not clot as easily then you're going to take it every day," she said.

The American Heart/American Stroke Association has a "Life's Simple 7" list to help reduce heart disease and strokes by 20% by the year 2020.

"If we all make small changes it comes out to a huge impact," Kiyoi said. "Looking at the entire population, if we can reduce overall blood pressure by 10 points then the death rate goes down dramatically."

The Stroke System in Alameda and Contra Costa counties also promotes the "Act in Time" campaign of the National Institute of Health. This means that everyone will recognize the signs of stroke and not wait to call 911.

"Those who do wait risk permanent brain damage or death," said Mia Fairbanks, Contra Costa Stroke Program Coordinator. ■



## Signs of a stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.
- Blurred or double vision, drowsiness, and nausea or vomiting.

Source: Sarah Kiyoi, R.N., MSN, Stroke Coordinator, San Ramon Regional Medical Center



## Act FAST

If you suspect someone is having a stroke, remember the following:

- Face — does one side not move as well or droop?
- Arm — have them put their arms out in front of them. Is there numbness on one side?
- Speech — is it slurred? Is it appropriate? Can they answer simple questions?
- Time — call 911. The faster medical help arrives, the more brain they can save.



## 'Life's Simple 7'

1. Get active
2. Eat better
3. Lose weight
4. Stop smoking
5. Control cholesterol
6. Manage blood pressure
7. Reduce blood sugar

—American Heart/American Stroke Association

# Water equals wellness

Hydration leads to less fat, better skin and increased energy

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Cool, clean water. It's cheap, it's plentiful and it's very, very good for us. Yet two-thirds of Americans don't drink enough of it.

"Our bodies are 70% water and even a 2% deficiency can be life-threatening," said Tim Massie, owner of Iron Horse Nutrition in Pleasanton. "It serves as a lubricant, it helps regulate your metabolism, and it's really important for people involved in weight loss."

Proper hydration also leads to clearer skin, a lower risk of disease, more energy and better concentration.

Breaking the body down by vital organs, the brain is approximately 90% water; blood, 80%; and lungs, 90%.

"So it's not a small part of us," Massie said. "It's huge."

When customers come to him for weight-loss advice, he puts drinking more water on the top of the list.

"The body is actually pretty smart," he explained. "If you don't have enough water, your body will tend to store extra water."

"It's quite common for people that begin to work out to work with a trainer and they always push them to drink more water. They can lose 5 to 10 pounds in the first couple of weeks."

"A lot of that is water weight — it looks like fat on the body," Massie added. "When you drink more water it can help you to lose weight and lose fat. Lot of times toxins are stored in fat."

Pleasanton tap water will do the trick, Massie said, although his family's water goes through a filter in the refrigerator.

"Coffee, black tea and soda actually work against the body's water total," he said. "If you drink a cup of coffee, you will need to drink 1-1/2 cups of water."

There are extreme cases where people have died from drinking too much water, and going overboard in drinking water is common in endurance athletes, according to a 2007 article in Scientific American.

When working out, weigh yourself before and after, and drink 20-24 ounces of water for every pound lost. It is also important to hydrate several hours before exercise and to drink 8-10 ounces every 15 minutes during exercise.

"I spent 11 years active duty in the military, in Naval Special Operations, and we used to actually, as a leader, force our teams to drink," Massie said. "Sometimes you don't recognize that your body is getting dehydrated."

Urine is a good indicator of proper hydration: A high volume of light-colored urine means you're probably hydrated; and dark-colored, concentrated urine means you're dehydrated, as does cramping, low energy or fatigue, brain fog or dizziness.



"If you're out in sun not getting enough water sometimes you're not really focusing on what you're saying, moving into some dizziness, heat exhaustion or even heat stroke," Massie said.

"I was playing golf a couple of years ago with some friends in Las Vegas. We went to a morning golf school and it was nice outside. Then we had lunch, then got a free 18 holes of golf."

"There was nobody out playing golf, the temperature on the course was about 114 degrees," he continued. "There was like a little golf cart with drinks and stuff — we only played 9 holes — and I drank a bottle of Gatorade at every hole."

Despite all this hydration, no bathroom break was necessary.

"It was so arid there," Massie said.

Sodas are bad hydration because they contain so much sugar, he noted, or artificial sweeteners. The same is true with juices, which can contain even more sugar.

Although we get a certain amount of

hydration from many of the foods we eat, drinking water allows your system to have an abundance of water and to work properly, Massie said.

"It's a pretty easy fix," he said.

For people trying to lose weight, the recommended formula is to divide the body weight in half and drink that many ounces of water. For instance, a 200-pound person should drink 100 ounces of water per day.

If drinking water becomes a chore, water flavorings such as MiO are on the market to give it a slight taste without adding calories, sodium or sugar. Massie brings a half-gallon jug to work everyday and uses enhancers for variety.

"There's not anything bad in them," he said. "It doesn't take much, a couple of drops in a bottle of water."

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water," Benjamin Franklin wrote in his Poor Richard's Almanac in 1746.

Now, in 2012, we always know its worth: Drink up! ■


## What water does for your body

- Serves as a lubricant
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## ARE YOU OVER 40?

From around age forty onward, our hormones start to decline, and energy and libido decline with them, along with frequent increases in aches and pains, low mood, irritability and forgetfulness. Fortunately, you don't have to just accept this part of getting older. You can replace your hormones back to optimal, youthful levels and get back to feeling like yourself. Dr. Mielke only uses Bioidentical Hormones, which are chemically identical to the ones your body produced when you were younger - after all, Mother Nature knows best!

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\*Some restrictions apply. \$59 initiation fee on a new 12-month membership. Monthly dues apply. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Must be a local resident and first-time guest—21 years or older—to receive free guest pass. One per household. Call or come in from 9am-7pm to redeem this coupon. Identification is required. Offer expires 1/31/12.

# Daily Wear... or Extended Wear?

The Lyric is an extended wear hearing device that is used around the clock. The Lyric extended wear is removed and replaced every 4 months in a simple office visit.

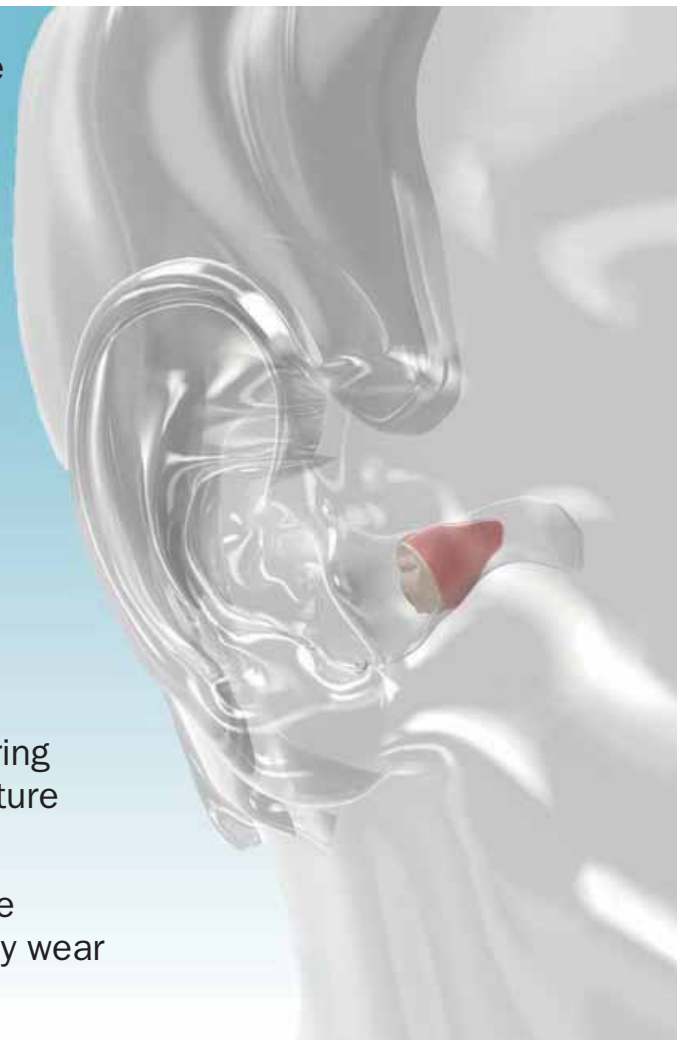
The recently introduced Phonak Nano is a small hearing device that is removed daily. The sound quality of both devices is outstanding... the question is daily wear or extended wear?

- No Charge Consultation
- Complimentary Cleaning of your existing hearing devices\*

\* with mention of this ad

We are offering a 45 day trial with the Phonak Nano or the Lyric hearing device. This will allow you to experience the sound quality of a miniature hearing device. This offer expires January 24.

Call our office for a consultation appointment. We will tell you if these devices are appropriate for your hearing loss...then you decide...daily wear or extended wear.



*Your local professionals, providing high quality hearing health care to the Tri-Valley since 1986.*

## HEARING SERVICES



**Kenneth D. Billheimer, Au.D.**

**Sierra Brower, Au.D.**

Audiologists

Licensed Hearing Aid Specialists

**Jacque Pedraza**

Licensed Hearing Aid Specialist

4460 Black Avenue, Suite F  
Pleasanton, CA 94566  
(925) 484-3507

1530 Holmes Street, Bldg. D  
Livermore, CA 94550  
(925) 960-0391

# Check out your new San Ramon ER

We're proud to introduce a new era in emergency care and a sparkling new facility for treating everything from cuts and breaks to life-threatening illnesses. The hospital is licensed with Contra Costa and Alameda counties to receive ambulances. Now, we're designated as a Primary Stroke Center and a STEMI Receiving Center – which means we have the protocols to treat strokes and high-risk heart attacks. While we hope you never have to visit us for an emergency, it's reassuring to know our experienced emergency physicians and nurses are here, close to home and around the clock.



## InQuickER

A NEW SOLUTION  
TO WAITING FOR  
EMERGENCY ROOM CARE

If you have a non-life-threatening emergency, you can skip the wait in the ER and hold your place online by logging on to: [www.OurSanRamonHospital.com](http://www.OurSanRamonHospital.com). Click on the InQuickER banner, complete a quick form and pay a \$9.99 registration fee. When you arrive at your projected treatment time, our healthcare staff will see you within 15 minutes – or your InQuickER fee will be refunded.

For emergency care that requires immediate treatment, please call 911 or go directly to the nearest hospital emergency department.

## New Emergency Department

- 8,900 square feet
- Expanded from 9 to 16 beds
- Private treatment rooms
- Negative-pressure isolation room
- Large, comfortable waiting room
- Dedicated X-ray suite



**SAN RAMON**  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

[www.OurSanRamonHospital.com](http://www.OurSanRamonHospital.com)

*Our ER staff is ready to  
serve you 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week.*

Like us on Facebook.  
Download our free App.



6001 Norris Canyon Road, San Ramon | 925.275.9200 | Physician Referral: 800.284.2878