



Fall/Winter Issue

## Happy Holidays

Nov/Dec 2021

**Mended Hearts of Southern Oregon meets monthly on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. facilitated through ZOOM (on line) We invite heart patients, families and caregivers to attend and meet others who have had similar struggles and experiences. Our meetings offer peer-to-peer support and educational speakers of interest.**

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### Brain Gain

#### Steps to take to reduce or delay the risk of Alzheimer’s disease

Over 65 and can’t remember where you left your keys? There’s probably no need to fret. Occasional memory blips are common in older adults. On the other hand, “Memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging,” says Beth Kallmyer., Alzheimer’s Association vice president of care and support. “It may be a symptom of a form of dementia such as Alzheimer’s.”

#### Dementia and Alzheimer’s

Dementia is an umbrella term for brain conditions that impair cognitive ability. Alzheimer’s is a specific disease and the most common form of dementia. The progressive and irreversible disease wipes away memories and impairs thinking. Symptoms include getting lost, asking the same question over and over, and under-going personality changes.

As the disease progresses, someone suffering from dementia may get increasingly confused and have trouble recognizing family members and friends. The later stages may result in an inability to communicate, and it may be necessary to live with assistance.

#### There is hope

Thankfully, according to a study published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery Psychiatry*, there are a number of things you can do to lower your risk of Alzheimer’s. Researchers came up with the recommendations after reviewing data from close to 400 studies and uncovering “strong evidence” to support their findings. “Following the interventions could delay the onset of Alzheimer’s and other dementias by up to five years,” says Dr. Serge Gauthier, one of the study’s researchers and the director of the Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Research Unit at McGill University in Montreal.

#### Taking Steps—Here are some steps you can take to lower your risk of Alzheimer’s:

**Put on the pounds—**If you’re too skinny, talk to your health care provider about healthy ways to gain weight. Otherwise. Maintain what is determined to your healthy weight.

**Exercise your mind—**Keep your mind sharp by reading, playing chess or starting a hobby. Learning often encourages social contact and cognitive activity, both of which reduce the risk of dementia.

**Take charge of diabetes—**Make healthy food choices and exercise regularly to curd the risk of diabetes. If you already have diabetes, work with your provider to manage it.

**Protect your head—**Injuries or trauma to your head can wreak havoc on your brain. Shield yourself by using your seatbelt and driving safely. Wear a helmet when biking or skating.

**Control your blood pressure—**Guard against high blood pressure by eating well and exercising regularly. If your blood pressure drops when you sit up or stand up, it may be orthostatic hypotension (OH). Talk to your health care provider, as OH may affect brain health.

**Deal with depression—**Stay mentally healthy by preparing for major life transitions such as retiring or moving out of your home. Talk to a professional if you experience feelings of sadness or hopelessness for more than two weeks.

**Minimize stress—**Stress is another mental health issue that contributes to Alzheimer’s. Practice deep breathing and other relaxation strategies.

**Learn your homocysteine levels—**Get tested to see if you have hyperhomocysteinemia, a condition that damages arteries, triggers blood clots and increases your risk for Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

**These steps can help. The future of your brain’s health is in your hands.**

Ana Gascon Ivey—Costco Connection, September 2021

#### **Mended Hearts Dues**

National dues can be paid at [www.mendedhearts.org](http://www.mendedhearts.org). Look for the Renew Membership tab after logging into the member’s page

#### **Join Mended Hearts Today**

Membership is about how you can help improve the lives of heart patients and their families, beginning with your own. To find out more, contact **Darleen Walsh, (541) 295-5727**

#### **“You Are Not Alone”**

Hope and encouragement are just a phone call away. If you or your family would like to talk with one of our Mended Hearts Visitors, please call **Mike Gary, Visiting Chair (541) 582-8070.**

## A New Approach to Treating Migraines

Peter Goadsby, M.D., has spent 36 years researching a substance called calcitonin gene-related peptide. “CGRP is a chemical that nerves use to talk to each other. It gets released during a migraine attack,” explains Goadsby, a neurologist at the University of California Los Angeles. In March 2021, Goadsby, his research partner Lars Edvinsson, and two other scientists won the Brain Prize, the world’s biggest brain-research award, for uncovering this key cause of migraines, leading to several new painkilling drugs.

Darlene LeBlanc feels the benefits of the new drugs. Since age 27, she had endured up to five big headaches per month, each lasting up to three days. “You miss out on a lot,” she says. Head pain kept LeBlanc, 63, of Land of Lakes, Florida, in darkened hotel rooms on family vacations and caused her to miss her daughter’s gymnastics competitions.

Three years ago, LeBlanc signed up for clinical trial for the CGRP blocker Rimegepant. “It was like I never had a migraine at all,” she says.

But the new drugs don’t work for everyone. “A third of people think they’re rubbish, a middle third can see a difference, and a third of people think they’re just incredible,” Goadsby says. LeBlanc, meanwhile, is enjoying life without head pain.

AARP The Magazine—October/November 2021

### This cure for boredom also perks up the brain

You've got 900 channels and nothing to watch. Tired of watching YouTube videos?

What do you do with those precious leisure hours? You could visit ancient China, discover secrets of the Czars, delve into a secret romance. All of that is at the tip of your fingers in a book, and what you get in return is more than a good story.

According to the Pew Research Center, about a quarter of Americans didn't read a single book in 2018. Not a print copy, e-book or audiobook.

Scientists say that they missed out -- according to Healthline, reading is a great way to give your brain a workout. It stimulates a complex series of circuits and signals in your brain, and the more you engage with a text, the busier your brain gets. Fiction lovers are often better at understanding others, which can help build and maintain strong relationships and lead to better emotional health. Reading is also a great way to preserve brain health as you age -- according to the National Institute on Aging, it's one of several activities that can help preserve cognitive function. And it's a great stress reliever, too. Thirty minutes of reading has been found to lower blood pressure, heart rate and negative feelings, according to Healthline.

One easy way to fit in a few extra pages is to read in the morning instead of at night. Instead of hitting the snooze button, grab your book, dive in for a few extra minutes and then roll out of bed to start the day. If you want to add in some extra time at night, that's fine, but morning reading means you won't fall asleep before you even crack your book.

Smartphones and e-readers also make it easier to read whenever, wherever. You can slip your e-reader into your pocket or download an e-reader app on your phone. That way, you can take in a couple of pages while in line at the coffee shop or during your lunch break.

And lastly, if you don't like a particular book, stop reading it and pick up something else. If you read what you enjoy, you might find that it isn't very hard to get those pages in after all.

October National Mended Hearts

**Board Members**

Jack Hafner  
 Bill Newell  
 Carolyn Callahan  
 Jeff Roberts  
 Michelle Christensen

**Chairpersons**

**Visiting:** Mike Gary

**Community Outreach:**

Bill Newell

**Follow UP Calls:** Vacant

**Membership:** Vacant

**Social Media:** Vacant

**Social Events:**

Michelle Christensen

**Web/ZOOM Coordinator:**

Jeff Roberts

**Fundraising:** Vacant

**Chapter Newsletter**

Editor: Debbie Gary/  
 Marlyn Taylor

**Slow Cooker Ham**

1 cup of honey  
 1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed  
 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted  
 1/4 cup Dijon mustard  
 2 Tbsp whole-grain mustard  
 2 Tbsp fresh thyme, finely chopped  
 1 (10 lb) Spiral Sliced Ham

Mix all ingredients, except ham, in a small bowl. Move 1/3 of the glaze to a separate smaller bowl, set aside. Brush the remaining glaze onto the ham and in between the spiral-cut slices. Place ham in a large slow cooker flat/face down. Cover (for large ham, you might need to fold down the slices so the lid fits) and cook on high for 2 to 3 hours or on low for 4 to 5 hours, or to a recommended internal temperature of 140 F.

Turn on oven to broil. Remove the ham from the slow cooker and place in an oven-safe baking dish. Brush the reserved glaze over the ham. Broil in the oven, several inches from the heat element, for 3 to 4 minutes. (Do not allow the ham to burn). Remove and Serve

Coscto Connection—November 2021

**Pumpkin Cheesecake**

2 packages (8 oz each) cream cheese, softened  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1/2 cup canned pumpkin  
 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon  
 1/2 tsp vanilla  
 Dash each—ground cloves & nutmeg  
 2 eggs  
 1 ready to use graham crumb crust

Mix cream cheese, sugar, pumpkin, cinnamon, vanilla, cloves and nutmeg with electric mixer until well blended. Add eggs and mix until blended.

Pour into crust. Bake at 350 F for 40 minutes or until center is almost set. Cool—Refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving.

**Social Security increase for 2022**

Social Security recipients will get a cost of living increase for 2022. Cost of Living (COLA) increases are based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. The official calculation was released in October and is based on data from July, August and September data. The COLA for 2022 will be 5.9 percent. In 2021, the COLA was 1.3 percent.

Social Security increases mean inflation is increasing the cost of goods. Gasoline has risen 41.8 percent in 12 months.

## Avoiding a fall

With proper balance work, falling does not have to be a part of aging

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than one in four seniors fall each year—that's a million of people over the age of 65. And, one out of every five falls causes a broken bone or head injury. By every measure, falling down is serious and costly.

It's also preventable. The National Council on Aging states falling is not a normal part of aging. Loss of balance in later life may be common, but it is not inevitable.

I am 71 years old and have studied tai chi as a martial art for over 40 years. I am more stable than ever. My first teacher taught into his 80's. My second teacher and my classmates are my age. In the Adirondacks, close to where I live, some of the best backcountry skiing and hiking guides are seniors. These activities all require balance.

### **Balance and imbalance**

What exactly is balance? It is the rapid and automatic response by your postural or "balance" muscles to the sensation of imbalance. In short, balance is something you have, not something you do. Common imbalance begins in midlife. For many active and otherwise healthy middle-aged individuals, their largest muscle groups—the quadriceps (thighs) and the gluteus (buttocks)—noticeably shrink from disuse. Over time, and with too much sitting, diminished balance muscles forget how to balance.

### **Focused exercises**

Maintaining or restoring balance requires physical effort. Fortunately, balance-focused exercises and sports can be fun, and what's more, they work.

Balance sports are characterized by a sustained bent knee and ankle position. When you stand with bent knees and ankles, the postural muscles, not the bones, hold the body erect. Holding a weight-bearing posture teaches your postural muscles how to balance your body. So, some exercises and sports have less impact on balance than others.

For example, walking on an even surface, while a wonderful and healthy lifetime activity, is not a balance exercise any more than standing is. Hiking on an uneven surface, on the other hand, with knees and ankles bent, is weight-bearing and does improve balance.

Other balance activities include ice-skating, roller skating, skateboarding, snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing, wave surfing, stand-up paddleboarding, tai chi as a martial art and qi gong standing exercises such as Zhan Zhuang.

### **Carry that weight**

Weight-bearing sports bring other unanticipated health benefits. Older women especially are at risk of bone density loss, leading to osteoporosis and its consequences. When the bones are mildly stressed, they produce cells and become denser. Exercise also stimulates the bones to produce a range of hormones that help to regulate memory, appetite, muscle health, fertility, metabolism and other body functions in men and women.

It is never too early to work on your balance. Find a weight-bearing exercise or sport that you like. Practice every day for 30 minutes as if your future balance depends on it. Because it does.

And, if you are a senior with balance issues, do weight-bearing exercise twice a day for a total of 60 minutes. Balance improves with effort. Got for It!

### **Getting started**

To improve balance, slowly implement exercises, from beginning to advanced. Try this to start, timing how long you can stand on each leg and increasing the time each day. 1) Stand perpendicular to and at arm's length from a wall with your legs comfortably spread apart. 2) Move the foot farthest from the wall to touch the foot closest to the wall, Continue to support your weight equally on each leg when your feet touch. 3) Bend the knee of the inner leg and press the ball of your foot into the ground. Slowly lift the heel of the foot farther from the wall until only the big toe is touching the ground for balance. Feel how all your body weight is now supported by your bent inner leg. 4) Hold this position for as long as you can. 5) Do this on both sides.

**Mended Hearts of  
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**It's Great to Be Alive and Help  
Others**



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**Chapter Meetings**

In person meetings and patient visiting have been suspended until further notice. due to COVID 19.

The health and safety of our members, heart patients, families and caregivers is important to our local chapter..

We are now facilitating our monthly meetings virtually via ZOOM. Meeting log in information is sent through emails. Due to security we are unable to post log in information for monthly meetings on any public forum.

If you have an email address not on record, please email to Debbie Gary. at preschoolteach345@yahoo.com

**Future Meetings/Education**

**November: Amy Eaton, ARRCM**  
**Topic: Holiday Eating & Your Heart**

**December: TBA**

**Visiting Report**

Due to Covid 19 we have not been able to visit patients in the hospital since March 2020.

We are currently calling heart surgery patients. During the months of September & October no referrals were made by the Cardiac Educators to the visiting chair.

We will continue with this system in 2021 until accredited visitors have been given the okay to return to the hospital to visit with patients in person.

