



Winter Issue

HAPPY NEW YEAR

January/February 2024

Mended Hearts of Southern Oregon meets monthly on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center Carpenter Room and through on-line with Zoom. 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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Seasons Greetings to all Chapter 137 Mended Hearts members. I hope that your holidays are filled with joyous hearts, surrounded by loving family members, and treasured memories of those no longer with us.

This brief message is a simple reminder of why we have joined together as part of the Mended Hearts nationwide community: to give thanks for the blessings given us as mended hearts survivors, and to give back to those in need of mended hearts by sharing our common experiences; and to give hope to those in need of support for what they and their families are going through. It is indeed the hopeful time of year.

For those of you who might be interested, there is information and resources to be found at the Mended Hearts International website, under the "Share your Heart" tab in those portals. And we will have more info to share at our upcoming in-person Chapter meeting on Tuesday, the 16th of January, at 3:00 p.m., in the Carpenter Room, ground floor, of Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center. This is our same, ongoing meeting place, with the only change being the meeting starting time: earlier in the day so that we will have time for a brief tour of the new hospital building, and hopefully finish before dark. I do hope that many of you will be able to attend.

Thank you again for being Mended Hearts members and for sharing your experiences with the rest of us.

I wish for you all and your families and loved ones the Happiest and Healthiest and most Fulfilling New Year!!

Sincerely,

Bob Goldberg

MONTHLY MEETING UPDATE

For the months of January & February 2024 our monthly meetings will be held at 3:00 p.m. We will be meeting in the same location, Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in the Carpenter Room on the ground floor. Meeting for March 2024 will return to 5:30 p.m

Mended Hearts Dues

National dues can be paid at 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 **Marlyn Taylor, Treasurer** (602) 568-8095

"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.

Health insurance perks you may be Missing

Did you know that your health insurance might cover more than just clinic visits and medical procedures? Many health insurance plans offer a variety of convenient virtual care options and additional wellness benefits that can save you money and help you establish healthy habits for a lifetime.

* Virtual care. Your plan may include access to virtual primary and specialty care to assist with a variety of common health conditions, along with virtual urgent care that can help you avoid expensive emergency room trips.

* Tobacco cessation. Federal law mandates that almost all health insurance plans cover some treatment for tobacco cessation. Quitting tobacco could also save you serious money on health insurance premiums -- most states permit hefty surcharges for tobacco users that increase premiums as much as 50 percent compared to tobacco-free customers on the same plan.

* Chronic disease apps. If you have a chronic condition like hypertension or diabetes, your health plan may include access to mobile apps and monitoring devices that automatically track your condition, remind you to take prescribed medications, and notify you when you should contact your doctor.

* Fitness and nutrition. Your health plan may offer partial or full reimbursement for gym memberships, trial subscriptions for digital fitness programs, wearable fitness trackers, and nutrition support from registered dietitians. Some plans also partner with third-party mobile apps to help users stay on track with their fitness and nutrition goals.

Health insurance plans vary widely, so check your plan information or talk to your plan administrator to learn about your specific benefits and coverage.

National Mended Hearts newsletter—December 2023

I've used sugar substitutes in my coffee for years, but there's been a lot of confusing news about them recently.

Are sugar substitutes healthier than sugar or not?

It's true that there's been some less-than-sweet news about sweeteners lately. Studies have linked the no- and low-calorie options to everything from heart attacks to gastrointestinal issues. In July, the World Health Organization named the artificial sweetener aspartame a possible cause of cancer.

The Food and Drug Administration, which approved aspartame in the 70's, maintains that it and others like it are safe, so long as you're not overdoing them. (According to the FDA, a person can consume 75 packets of aspartame each day and still be within the safe limits).

So what's one to do? There's no doubt that cutting down on the amount of sugar you consume can be a boon for your health. But that doesn't mean simply swapping sweeteners for sugar, says Dariush Mozaffarian, M.D., a cardiologist and professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science at Tufts University. The real goal should be to wean yourself off sweet foods and drinks altogether. Think of sweeteners as a bridge to better health, rather than as a destination. "If you're going to have a 20-ounce soda, it's probably better to have a diet (soda). But, you know, better to have neither," Mozaffarian says.

AARP Bulletin—December 2023 by Rachel Nania

Board Members

Carolyn Callahan

Jeff Roberts

Michelle Christensen

Chairpersons**Visiting:** Mike Gary**Community Outreach:**

Vacant

Follow UP Calls: Vacant**Membership:** Vacant**Social Media:** Michelle Christensen**Social Events:** Carolyn Callahan**Web/ZOOM Coordinator:** Jeff Roberts**Fundraising:** Vacant**Chapter Newsletter**Editor: Debbie Gary/
Bob Goldberg**Overcoming the burden**

Exploring effective stress-management techniques to find what works for you

Stress is an inevitable part of life, but when it goes beyond a certain level, it can negatively affect our mental and physical well-being. Therefore, it is important to recognize when stress becomes too much so that we can take the necessary steps to manage it.

Chronic stress, caused by prolonged exposure to stressful situations, differs from short-lived acute stress, which is caused by a one-time event. Chronic stress can often be difficult to identify because it can manifest in so many ways. According to May Clinic, it can lead to:

1. Both physical & emotional symptoms (headaches, fatigue, depression and anxiety)
2. Changes in behavior (lack of motivation and focus, irritability and anger)
3. Changes in eating habits (overeating, undereating or eating unhealthy foods)
4. Changes in sleep patterns (insomnia, sleeping too much)
5. Substance abuse and other unhealthy behaviors (smoking or drinking alcohol)

"I often use the analogy of a gazelle being chased by a lion to help my clients understand the fight-or-flight response," says Dr. Vanessa Peters, a family medicine physician in Escondido, California. "While we may not have to worry about being eaten by lions in modern times, our daily stressors can mimic this response. Social media and the 24/7 mentality of society can exacerbate these issues, leading to increased chronic stress."

Luckily, there are many effective ways to reduce stress and gain control of our lives. Here are some evidence-based strategies, backed by Mayo Clinic and Harvard Medical School, to successfully accomplish this objective.

Exercise—Regular exercise can help improve your mood, reduce anxiety and boost your self-confidence. Exercise releases endorphins, which are hormones that make us feel good. Regular movement can also help build resilience and increase our ability to cope with stress.

Get quality sleep—When we are sleep-deprived, we are more likely to become stressed and overwhelmed. Ideally, we want to aim for seven to eight hours of sleep each night. If you have difficulty sleeping, try calming activities such as yoga or deep-breathing exercises before bed.

Practice mindfulness—Mindfulness is a form of meditation that focuses on being present in the moment. It can help us to become aware of our thoughts and feelings without judgment. "Taking just 10 minutes each day to sit quietly in the meditation can reset your nervous system to its natural, relaxed state and improve ability to manage the stress that is present in our everyday lives," Peters says.

Create meaningful connections—Spending time with loved ones reduces stress, improves well-being and promotes support. "Research shows that individuals who spend quality time with loved ones have better mental health, increased longevity and greater resilience in the face of life's challenges.

Take regular relaxation breaks—To reduce stress, prioritizing relaxation breaks is essential. Try deep breathing, journaling, visualization techniques, meditation or yoga. Engaging in activities such as reading, listening to music, taking a bath or going for a walk can also be beneficial.

Eat a balanced diet—Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein reduces stress hormones and stabilizes blood sugar levels, keeping the body energized while lowering stress. Monitoring your diet in this way also helps ensure that the body is getting the essential nutrients it needs to function optimally.

Seek professional guidance—Seeking help from a professional such as a therapist, counselor or life coach, as well as seeking advice from a holistic or medical doctor, can be effective in managing stress and developing coping strategies. By implementing these strategies, you may decrease chronic stress and enhance your overall well-being, allowing you to unlock your full potential and live a happier, healthier life.

Alternative path to wellness—Consider measures beyond traditional strategies to reduce stress. Naturopathic medicine, for example, takes a holistic approach that not only complements those strategies, but also identifies the underlying physiological factors that contribute to stress, explains Kate Wharton, a naturopathic doctor. "By addressing issues such as hormone imbalances, nutrient deficiencies and organ dysfunction, naturopathic medicine can strengthen the body's stress regulators, including the adrenal glands," she says. "Incorporating naturopathic medicine into your stress management routine can lead to a more comprehensive approach and ultimately, a healthier, happier you."

Mediterranean Turkey Meatloaf

2/3 cup onion, finely diced	2 tsp garlic, minced	1 package (1.67 lbs) ground turkey
1 Tbsp oil	2 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning	1 Tbsp balsamic glaze
8 oz canned tomato sauce, divided	1 1/2 tsp fine sea salt	1 tsp sugar
2 eggs, beaten	1/4 tsp black pepper	1/3 cup shredded Italian blend cheese
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce	1/4 tsp crushed red pepper	
2 Tbsp fresh basil, finely chopped	2/3 cup panko	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a small pan, cook onion in oil until soft. Cool slightly and drain.

In a large bowl, add 4 oz tomato sauce, eggs, Worcestershire sauce, basil, garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, black pepper, red pepper and panko. Mix thoroughly. Gently mix in ground turkey.

Spray a 9 x 5 inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Transfer the meat mixture to the loaf pan, rounding the top of the mixture. Bake 45 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the remaining tomato sauce, balsamic glaze and sugar whisk.

Remove pan from oven. Spread tomato glaze evenly on top. Add cheese. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees F. Cool 10 minutes before slicing. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Farm to Table—Costco Connection November 2023

Everyone obsesses over getting 10,000 steps a day. Do I really need to hit that goal?

When it comes to moving your body, more is better. But research published this year in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology* found walking just shy of 4,000 steps a day—3,867, to be precise, or roughly 2 miles— can reduce your risk of dying from any cause.

Researchers found that the risk of dying decreases the more you walk. An increase of 1,000 steps a day—that's about 10 minutes of walking—was associated with a 15 percent reduction in dying from any causes; an increase in 500 steps was linked to a 7 percent reduction in dying from cardiovascular disease.

"I think it's important for people to realize that they're not failing if they don't get to 10,000 steps," says Ciaran Friel, an expert in physical activity and exercise behaviors at Northwell Health's Institute of Health System Science.

The average walking pace is about 20 minutes per mile, according to the CDC. So walking for about 40 minutes should get you close to 4,000 steps. Can't walk for that long? Pointing to the study's findings, Friel says walking 10 minutes more today than you did yesterday is a win.

AARP Bulletin—December 2023 by Rachel Nania

Not A Member Yet?

Consider joining today and becoming involved in the mission and vision of Mended Hearts.

Mission: To inspire hope and improve the quality of life of heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support, education, and advocacy. ©

Vision: To be the premier nationwide resource and peer-to-peer support network for all heart patients and their families affected by Heart Disease across the lifespan. ©

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Chapter #137**

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**It's Great to Be Alive and Help
Others**



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Chapter Meetings

In person meetings have begun again. We are meeting at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in the Carpenter room located on the ground floor.

We will also be providing the monthly meeting through Zoom for those who would like to attend the meeting while at home.

If you wish to continue attending our monthly meetings on line please make sure your email address is on file by emailing Debbie Gary at preschoolteach345@yahoo.com

Future Meetings/Education

January: Jeffrey Cool—Director ARRCM Foundation
Topic: Update and Tour of Pavilion

February: TBA

March: Carson Myers, Supervisor— ARRCM Rehab
Topic: Updated Guidelines for Exercise

Visiting Report

During the months of November and December there were 95 in person visits made with patients of heart surgery and their family members at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center

