

Home+Health SENSE

a quarterly newsletter from THE MEDICAL TEAM

THE MEDICAL TEAM is committed to providing quality home care services in private homes and senior communities. We hope the information in this newsletter offers practical information about healthcare issues affecting seniors and helps illustrate why home healthcare makes sense. ❖



Helping Seniors Age Well

THE MEDICAL TEAM is dedicated to helping seniors age well. As part of our wellness services, our branches offer flu shot programs, medication reviews, safety screenings, upbeat wellness programs on topics of interest to seniors, such as fall prevention, and more. These are offered to groups at no charge.

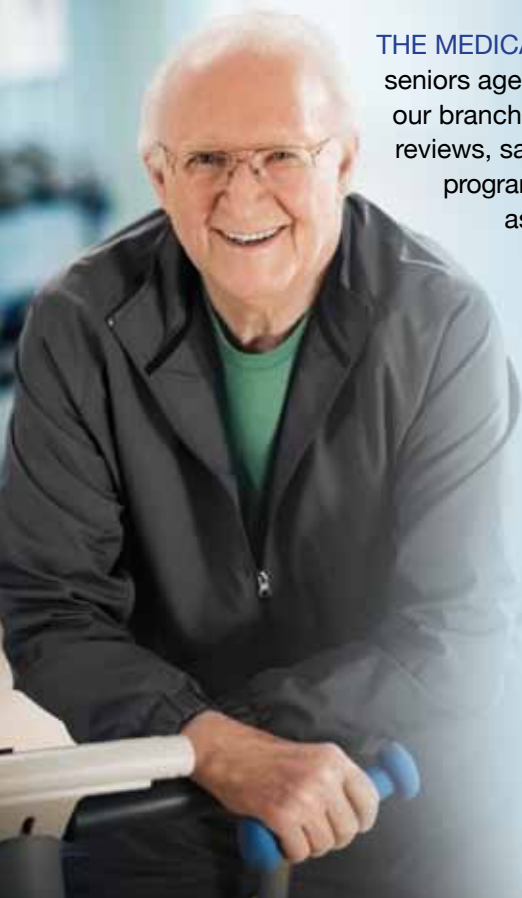
The company has been recognized by the State of Texas for providing Texercise to hundreds of seniors in senior centers across the state. Texercise is a new fitness campaign which helps older Texans enjoy and live life to the fullest. Participants are educated and involved in physical activity, nutrition and good health practices during the 12 week-long program.

The program's activities help to promote healthy muscles, bones and joints, and improve balance. ❖

Seniors who follow these guidelines are more likely to age healthily.

- **Stay heart healthy** by keeping blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels under control.
- **Be vigilant about creeping weight gain** to avoid serious chronic diseases such as diabetes.
- **Exercise regularly** to strengthen the back, protect the knees and hips and reduce the risk of falling.
- **Avoid risks to eyesight and hearing** and be sure to have vision and hearing tested regularly.
- **Maintain healthy sleep habits.**
- **Exercise the brain**, especially after retirement, with activities such as reading, writing and doing puzzles.
- **Maintain strong social ties** through volunteering and maintaining connections with family and friends.

Source: "How to Make the Most of Old Age," The Washington Post, March 30, 2010.



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Diabetes and Aging

According to the American Federation for Aging, the incidence of diabetes increases progressively with age. Weight control, diet, exercise and positive mental outlook are factors that can be beneficial for both diabetes and aging.

THE MEDICAL TEAM offers a Diabetes Self-Management and Education Program to help patients with diabetes maintain normal blood glucose levels

and to prevent complications from their diabetes. Developed by staff Certified Diabetes Educators and Registered Dietitians, this program is based on the latest standards of the American Diabetes Association. Teaching incorporates proven educational protocols and emphasizes the development of self-care management skills.

We also offer outpatient diabetes education centers at our Houma, LA and



San Antonio, TX locations. These centers have been granted recognition from the American Diabetes Association and our programs meet National Standards for Excellence in Diabetes Self-Management and Education. For more information go to www.medicalteam.com/diabetes. ❖



“We emphasize to our patients that having diabetes does not mean they must have poor health. It is poorly controlled diabetes that leads to serious health conditions. Most complications are preventable with positive lifestyle changes. With proper diet, exercise, medical follow-up, and medication when needed, persons can be healthier and feel better than they have in years.” ❖

—Catherine Guilbeau, RN, Certified Diabetic Educator, THE MEDICAL TEAM

Diabetes Nutrition: The Importance of Healthier ‘Carbs’

Proper nutrition helps to ensure effective diabetes management. Our registered dietitians help patients to improve their nutrition. Eating healthy carbohydrates (carbs) is a step in the right direction since carbs are the fuel source for the body’s cells.

To reap the benefits of carbs, choose whole grain carbohydrates over refined carbohydrates and natural sugars over added sugars. Natural sugars are present in fruits, milk, and non-starchy vegetables. Added sugars are commonly found in sweets, desserts, and sugary beverages, which provide empty and often unwanted calories.

Whole grain carbs are digested at a slower rate, which may assist with weight management due to an increase in satiety level (fullness). Whole grains may also contribute to better blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels. Look for foods that are labeled as 100% whole grain to help you identify healthy whole grain food sources. ❖

Use this chart to help choose healthier carbs	
HEALTHIER CARBS: Whole Grain Carbs/Natural Sugars	CARBS TO AVOID: Refined Carbs/Added Sugars
Products with first ingredient listed as whole wheat, whole grain, whole oats, whole rye	Products with ingredients unbleached wheat flour, enriched wheat flour, honey wheat, multigrain
Whole wheat bread	White bread
Brown rice	White rice
Whole wheat or whole grain pasta	White pasta
Whole wheat rolls or buns	White rolls or buns
Whole wheat cereals	Sugar coated cereals or enriched cereals (corn flakes)
Popcorn (plain)	Pretzels
Fresh fruit	Sweets/desserts
Canned fruit, water or juice packed	Canned fruit, syrup packed
Milk	Ice cream, frozen yogurt, or sherbet

Coping with Grief and Loss

Seniors today face many losses such as retiring from a longtime job, experiencing the passing of loved ones, or eventually losing their independence. Grief is a common and natural response to loss and can be exhibited with both physical and behavioral responses, including crying, appetite loss, anger, anxiety and difficulty focusing.

Acknowledging grief promotes the healing process, but in some instances grief may persist to the point where it might be labeled clinical depression. Clinical depression is a medical problem that is treatable with medication, therapy and support. Many seniors do not seek treatment or feel comfortable discussing depression and loss with their physicians.

“Untreated depression can lead to stroke, heart attack and other medical problems. Getting treated helps minimize the chances of other medical problems worsening.”

- Dr. Page Fletcher, Geriatric Psychiatrist

When depression is treated, studies show that seniors respond very well. A Pittsburgh Medical Center study found that 80% of seniors treated over a three-year period didn't suffer recurrent bouts. Fortunately, there are programs that can provide solutions and treatment for a variety of behavioral health issues such as depression.

THE MEDICAL TEAM's Journey Behavioral Home Health Program provides patients, families and caregivers with specific services and support to “journey” towards recovery. For more information, go to www.medicalteam.com/journey. ❖

*Reprinted with permission from
Guide to Retirement Living Sourcebook*



Fall Prevention

One out of three adults over 65 fall each year. These falls can result in fractures, loss of mobility, traumatic brain injury and even death. Seniors are especially prone to falling due to slowed reflexes, making it difficult to regain balance. Seniors also suffer more seriously from the effects of a fall because, with aging, bones are more likely to break after a fall.

Seniors who follow these tips can reduce the risk of falls:

- **Take steps to ensure physical health** by maintaining a daily exercise program, preventing weak bones, protecting vision and being aware of medications that may increase the risk of falls.
- **Make the home environment safer** by avoiding the dark, avoiding hazardous objects, dressing appropriately, being aware of bathroom dangers and taking time getting up or out of bed. Remove or secure loose rugs and clear pathways.
- **Be safe when leaving home** by wearing proper footwear, being alert to changes in floor surfaces and relying on others for help when needed.

In the event of a fall, attempt to land safely.

Falling sideways or straight down is more risky than falling backward. Grabbing onto an object while falling or landing on the hands can prevent a hip fracture. ❖



Older Adults Make Doctors Happy

A recent study of more than 6,500 doctors by the University of California at Davis Center for Healthcare Policy and Research shows that doctors who practice geriatrics are satisfied with their jobs. In fact, those doctors who work with older patients and children have the highest satisfaction levels compared with doctors who practice in other specialties. ❖

To Your Health: Summer Hydration Tips

Did you know?

- The best time to consume fluids is before you are thirsty since by the time you are thirsty you are already dehydrated.
- It's best to drink on a schedule when it is hot outside.
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine or alcohol while in the sun or heat because these drinks stimulate the production of urine and promote dehydration.
- The best drinks are water, or flavored sports drinks.

Signs and symptoms of dehydration include dry lips and tongue, headache, weakness, dizziness, or extreme fatigue, concentrated urine that appears darker than normal, nausea or muscle cramps. ❖

Source: "How Much Fluid do you Need to Prevent Dehydration," www.about.com.

How to Perk Up Your Water

Are you bored of drinking plain water? Unscramble these words for affordable and healthy ways to perk up your water.

- 1) If you like spices, _____ (rggnie) is a great way to add a "zing" to your water. When added to boiling water it also helps clear your throat and sinuses during a cold.
- 2) Fill a pitcher half full with _____ (mucureb) slices, and add water to the other half.
- 3) Infuse your water with Vitamin C by freezing slices of _____ (trisu) fruits in ice cube trays and then add the ice cubes to water for flavor.
- 4) Summer _____ (reisrbe) have distinct flavors that can be soaked up by water. All you have to do is cut or crush a few into your water.
- 5) Mint, lemongrass, and _____ (rasyelp) are great for adding aroma and a hint of green to your water. To release the flavor, crush the plants a little bit before putting them into your water.
- 6) Add a little diet _____ (nrrbcarye) juice (not "light," but "diet" — the light kind has more sugar) to your water.

Sources: "Homemade Flavored Water and other Sugar-free Beverages," www.about.com and "Eight Natural Ways to Make Water More Flavorful," www.wisebread.com.

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