

An Anthology of  
Timely Tidbits, Personal Stories, and Fascinating Factoids for

## Savvy Jersey Seniors



Advice, Humor, and Miscellaneous Words of "Wisdom"  
For & About Seniors

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### Welcome!

In this latest edition of *Savvy Jersey Seniors* for July and August of 2025, *SJS* contributor Phyllis Weber spotlights some of our local Senior Centers.

And, of course, we have our usual potpourri of information that we feel might make a difference to our senior friends across South Jersey, including notes on:

- Eight ways to lower the risk of dementia
- Three top places to work in retirement,
- How one in five older adults experience elder abuse,
- Shampoo ingredients you might want to avoid, and
- How to recognize a ministroke.



By the way, please don't forget that we always welcome *your ideas* for any topic that you'd like to see us tackle. As we've noted previously, we're especially interested in the *avocations and hobbies* of our readers.

And, in that vein, remember that we especially want to hear about the *volunteer* efforts that seniors across South Jersey are making on behalf of the literally thousands of non-profit organizations that serve our region.

### Three Top Places for Seniors to Work in Retirement

"More than one in four Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 were working in 2023, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's a stark reminder that hitting traditional retirement age doesn't always mean the end of employment.

Some people might continue working in retirement because they need money, while others may find that a job is enjoyable a job and keeps them engaged. Older employees can be a boon for employers too.

"We're going to have a significant labor crunch, and there's a lot of expertise out there," says Neil Costa, founder and CEO of HireClix, a global recruitment marketing agency. Offering perks and benefits that appeal to older workers can help businesses attract that expertise. "For employers, there is a big opportunity to stand out," he says.

The best places for seniors to work in retirement are those that understand and embrace the value of a multigenerational workforce. The following are examples of companies doing just that.



- *CVS Health:* CVS Health has publicly said it values the contributions of older workers. MinuteClinic, one of its divisions, has signed the AARP Employer Pledge as well. CVS operates a chain of pharmacies and drugstores, and Williams-Lindo points to it as another example of a company that provides flexible employment opportunities for older workers.

Looking to the future, she says more companies would be smart to embrace senior employees. "Hiring seniors isn't just a feel-good move; it's a strategic one," Williams-Lindo says. "They bring reliability, institutional knowledge and often cost less in benefits due to Medicare eligibility."

- *Home Depot:* People working in retirement don't always want to work in the same field as they did during their earlier career. They may be looking for more flexibility and less responsibility. Retail jobs often provide that type of environment. "You can jump in and jump out," says Williams-Lindo. Retail stores often welcome part-time workers and provide flexibility in scheduling shifts.

Home Depot stands out to Williams-Lindo as one company with flexible hours and a multigenerational workforce model. The home improvement chain is also notable for being one of the first to actively recruit older workers in 2004 when it partnered with AARP to fill open positions.



- *Wyndham Hotels & Resorts:* Wyndham Hotels & Resorts is clear about its commitment to maintaining an inclusive, multigenerational workforce. "Of all the companies we researched, (it) really stuck out," Carter says. The company offers flexible work options that may include hybrid schedules and early dismissal on Fridays. It also provides numerous health benefits beyond insurance coverage. These include ongoing health education and preventive services such as blood pressure monitoring and access to immunizations.

### Is There a Senior Center Near You?

SJS contributor Phyllis Weber checked in with us recently about her experience at senior centers in Marlton and Medford in her home county of Burlington.

For those not familiar with the term, Phyllis reports that there are 77 Senior Centers in New Jersey that offer programs and services "to help Senior Citizens maintain their vitality and zest for living." And, she adds, if you're looking for one near you or near someone you care about, you can go to an online directory at [www.seniorcenterdirectory.com](http://www.seniorcenterdirectory.com).



In fact, by some accounts, there may be 15,000 Senior Centers in neighborhoods across America. Why does this matter? Well, the purely statistical answer is that the average age of New Jersey residents is 40...compared to a national average of 39.



So, we skew a little older here in the Garden State. In fact, out of the 21 counties in New Jersey, 10 have a higher percentage of their population who are Senior Citizens than the average. And five of those ten are in Southern New Jersey—including Cape May, Ocean, Atlantic, Salem, and Burlington.

Cape May's average age is 52 years and one out of three or 30 percent is 65 plus. In Ocean County 23 percent are 65 plus, Atlantic County has 20.6 percent,

Salem County has 19.5 percent, and Burlington County comes in at 18.8 percent with seniors age 65 plus.

Phyllis reports that Burlington County, where she lives, is divided into 6 cities, 6 boroughs and 31 townships or approximately 40 municipalities, including Moorestown, Mt. Laurel, Southampton, Medford, and Marlton.

"There are two Senior Centers near me and I spend some time at both of them," says Phyllis. "Since I do not live in a 55 plus development, I am looking for ways to connect with people in my age group with similar interests. This is a great way to do it!



"In Evesham Township they offer a variety of activities and you can find them on the municipal website. In the summer there are concerts (indoors) which are more comfortable and avoid the prospect of having members of the audience attacked by mosquitoes.

"Another activity which I enjoy is the card game of pinochle which I resurrected from my youth.



Other offerings include yoga, casino bus trips to Atlantic City, line dancing, and quilting. There is also a public golf course (with dining), a driving range, and for those who enjoy art classes a Center for the Arts.

"Meanwhile in Medford I have found an art class which I really enjoy. And additional activities there include a book group, card and board games, investment club, and more.

"So, I say thank goodness for these clubs! They've enabled me to get involved in social activities, meet new people, and enjoy new friendships!"

To find a local senior center, check the National Council on Aging (NCOA) directory, contact your local Department of Aging or county services, or visit the AARP website. You can also reach out to your state's Department of Health and Human Services or use online resources from organizations like the National Council on Aging to find services and programs near you.

### **Eight Ways to Lower Your Risk of Dementia**

Your chance of developing dementia at some point is uncomfortably high. Forty-two percent of Americans older than 55 will develop the condition during their lifetime, a recent Nature Medicine study estimates. It's also on the rise: More than 500,000 had it in 2020; by 2060, that's expected to double.

But research increasingly suggests that dementia is not an inevitable part of aging. Here are eight evidence-based strategies to reduce your risk:



- *Manage chronic diseases.* For years, scientists have known that chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes are associated with the two most common causes of dementia, Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia (such as strokes). Fortunately, keeping blood pressure and glucose under control can guard against cognitive decline.



- *Exercise.* Even a little bit helps. A recent study tracking nearly 90,000 British adults found that people who engaged in 35 to 70 minutes of physical activity a week had a 60 percent lower risk of developing dementia compared with those who didn't exercise at all. Engaging in 140 or more weekly minutes lower risk even further.

- *Reduce ultra-processed foods.* When it comes to healthful eating, the single most important change you can make is reducing your consumption of highly processed products, which are laden with chemicals such as emulsifiers, preservatives and thickeners.

- *Avoid heavy drinking.* In a study earlier this year, scientists found that heavy drinkers (eight or more drinks per week) had a 133 percent higher chance of having hyaline arteriosclerosis lesions, which are associated with memory and cognitive problems compared to nondrinkers. Former drinkers had a 89 percent increased risk.

- *Lay off the cannabis.* Dozens of studies have demonstrated marijuana's harm on the developing brain. It can also negatively affect middle-aged and older adults, a 2024 JAMA Neurology study shows.
- *Protect your head.* Research increasingly shows that a history of traumatic brain injury is linked to dementia risk. That's especially true of certain athletes, such as football players and boxers. Many traumatic brain injuries in the elderly are as the result of a fall. Protect against possible brain damage by removing tripping hazards at home, undergoing regular vision checks and engaging in balance and strength exercises.
- *Wear hearing aids.* The link between hearing loss and dementia is well established. A pivotal 2011 JAMA Neurology article concluded that people with severe hearing loss faced a nearly fivefold higher risk of developing dementia. Even mild hearing loss nearly doubled the risk.
- *Keep your friends and family close.* A 2024 Nature Mental Health analysis, which included more than 600,000 people worldwide, found that feelings of loneliness elevated dementia risk by more than 30 percent.



### What Does a Ministroke Feel Like? Six Early Warning Signs

Ministrokes (transient ischemic attacks) are caused by blocked blood flow to a specific area of the brain, explains Dr. Amy Walsh, writing for *Good Rx*. Early warning signs of a ministroke include one-sided weakness, speech problems, vision loss, and balance problems. And, as you might expect, Dr. Walsh advises anyone who even suspects they are experiencing symptoms of a ministroke to seek medical care immediately.

Ministrokes are brief episodes of low blood flow to the brain that resolve on their own. They're also called transient ischemic attacks (TIAs). TIAs resolve on their own

within 5 to 10 minutes. But they can also last as long as 24 hours.

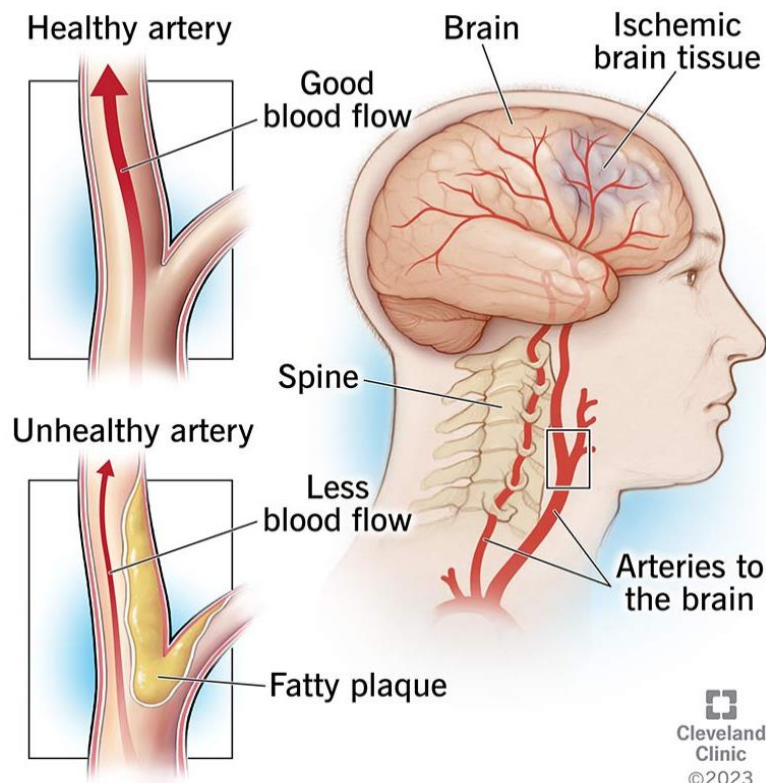
Ministrokes don't cause lasting damage to the brain. But they're an important warning that you're at high risk of developing a stroke in the near future. The symptoms of a stroke and ministroke are often the same, writes Dr. Walsh. So, it's important to get care right away if you're experiencing ministroke symptoms. That's because you could actually be having a stroke.

Here are six early warning signs of a ministroke you don't want to miss:

**1. One-sided weakness:** Low blood flow to the brain causes weakness on one side of the face and/or body (like the arm or leg). You may notice weakness in just your face, arm, or leg—or all three. You may also notice numbness on one side of your body. This can feel like pins and needles along one side of your body. You may also feel completely numb.

**2. Speech changes:** You can experience speech changes if you develop a blockage in one of the blood vessels that goes to the speech center of your brain. Speech changes vary from person to person and may include slurred speech, difficulty finding words, saying words that don't make sense in the situation, and making sounds that others can't understand as words. Some people are unable to speak at all or form any sounds when they experience a ministroke.

## Transient Ischemic Attack



**3. Confusion:** You can also experience confusion if you have a blockage in a blood vessel that leads to your speech center. This affects your ability to understand language. People experiencing a ministroke may have trouble understanding what others are saying to them. This can make them seem confused and disoriented. Keep in mind, says Dr. Walsh, that people may not be able to describe what they're experiencing because of confusion. If you notice that a loved one suddenly seems disoriented, it could be a sign of a ministroke.

**4. Vision changes:** People can develop vision changes because of a ministroke. This happens when a blood vessel that leads to the vision center of the brain gets blocked. People might also develop double vision if there's less blood flow to the part of the brain that coordinates eye movement. Common vision changes that can develop with a ministroke

include double vision, blurred vision, and even complete vision loss. These vision changes can develop in one or both eyes. They usually start all of a sudden and aren't painful.

**5. Dizziness or balance problems:** Dizziness and balance problems can develop when there's less blood flow to the coordination center of the brain. As a result, people can't sense where they are or how their body is moving through space. People describe feeling dizzy or like the room is spinning around them. They may also walk into walls or doorways. Many people have trouble walking in a straight line or standing up straight. Some people aren't able to hold their trunk steady when they're sitting down.

**6. Headache:** Up to one in three people experiencing a TIA develop headaches. But keep in mind that headaches are very common and can be triggered by many different things. A headache on its own is unlikely to be from a ministroke. Most people with TIAs will have other symptoms along with a headache.

Some medical conditions increase the risk of developing a ministroke, including atrial fibrillation, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Smoking can also increase your risk of developing a ministroke because smoking injures blood vessels.



### Seniors Adapting Rapidly to TeleHealth

If you think older adults and health technology don't mix, think again. "A lot of older adults are actually rapidly adapting," Samuel Salgado, MD, says. "Without even realizing that this is telehealth, they are using smartphones, apps, and wearable devices to help them maintain their health."



Research backs Salgado up. A small survey in *JMIR Aging* found that many older adults are already using fitness trackers and other devices to manage their well-being. A larger survey of 208 older adults, published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, found that those who used telehealth for primary care appointments during the pandemic were satisfied with their experience. They also wanted the option to be available after the pandemic.

Salgado says patients often tell her they felt their doctor was more present and attentive during the video conference than at an in-person appointment. This could be because doctors are in their offices for video appointments, says Salgado, rather than walking in and out of exam rooms in a crowded clinic.

Even for the youngest and healthiest adults, an annual checkup can take half a day once you factor in travel and wait times. Older adults typically see the doctor far more than once a year.



And getting to the clinic can take a lot longer and require the help of others.

"One of the most important ways that telehealth can help older adults is just by not allowing their health care to consume so much of their life," says Dr. Walter Biese, a board member at West Health, a non-profit focused on improving care for older adults. Telehealth can save older adults even more time when they live in a rural area and need specialty care.

### Shampoos That May Cause Hair Loss: What You Might Want to Avoid

Shampoos contain many different ingredients that do more than just clean hair, cautions Dr. Maria Robinson.

Some ingredients, like formaldehyde, have been linked to hair loss. But there isn't definitive evidence proving this. But, writes Dr. Robinson for *Good Rx*, there are steps you can take to lower your risk of hair loss and get healthy hair.

Can shampoo ingredients actually cause hair loss? It's possible, writes Dr. Robinson. The amount will depend on the type of shampoo you use.

Shampoos are mainly used to clean your scalp and hair, but they also do other important things, like:

- Provide cosmetic benefits (pleasing smell and feel)
- Remove previous products from your hair
- Avoid skin irritation
- Address hair or scalp conditions (like oily hair or dandruff)

To accomplish all of this, some shampoos can have up to 30 different ingredients, including various chemicals that help with the stability and presentability of the shampoo.

Each of these ingredients has a specific purpose. But, over time, some of them may lead to different problems and health concerns. If research reveals more about certain ingredients and their negative health effects, they may be removed from cosmetic products.



Here are some basic ingredients you may find in your shampoo:



- **Detergents:** These are the primary cleansers (usually surfactants) that help remove dirt and oil. Common ones include different sulfates, like sodium lauryl sulfate and sodium laureth sulfate.

- **Conditioners:** These help make hair manageable and glossy with decreased static. Examples in shampoo include propylene glycol and dimethicone.

- **Thickeners and opacifiers:** These make the shampoo feel thicker and look more appealing, but they don't have an effect on cleansing. Examples include glycol distearate

and sodium chloride.

- **Sequestering agents:** These help prevent soap scum from forming. Ethylenediaminetetra-acetic acid is an example.

- **Preservatives:** These keep germs from growing and help the shampoo last. Common ones include parabens and formaldehyde releasers like 1,3-dimethylol-5, 5-dimethyl (DMDM) hydantoin, and quaternium-15.



- *Special additives:* These include things like chemical sunscreens and vitamins.
- *Formaldehyde:* Formaldehyde or formaldehyde releasers can be found in some keratin hair-smoothing treatments, like the "Brazilian blowout." These ingredients are not safe for your hair and scalp.

There have been many complaints about certain ingredients or products causing hair loss, but these associations haven't been proven definitively. Here's a list of some shampoos that have caused hair loss lawsuits:

1. Unilever TRESemmé keratin shampoo and conditioners
2. Johnson & Johnson OGX shampoo
3. Straight Arrow Products Mane 'n Tail shampoo and conditioners
4. WEN hair products
5. DevaCurl hair products
6. Brazilian blowouts

Class-action lawsuits have been filed against products with DMDM hydantoin for possible hair loss and scalp irritation. The bottom line is that if you're losing hair—for any reason—it's important to see a dermatologist to find out the cause and possibly start treatment, advises Dr. Robinson.

### **Dog Aging Project May Help Humans**

In late 2019, a team of researchers launched The Dog Aging Project, a long-term survey on the health and lifestyles of dogs in the United States. Their launch goal: Enroll 10,000 dogs. When a global pandemic hit soon after, it was suddenly a daunting task.

But it turned out that people were eager to sign up, since many of them were spending lots of time at home with their dogs. Today, The Dog Aging Project has more than 50,000 companion dogs enrolled. Project scientists collect all sorts of data about them: their diet, exercise level, medications, demographics and environmental exposures.



# **Dog Aging Project**

**Longer, healthier lives. Together.**

Through the project, scientists like Virginia Tech veterinarian and data analyst Audrey Rupple hope to better understand what contributes to dog aging, how to ameliorate its effects and how to leverage the knowledge they gain into insights about human health and aging.

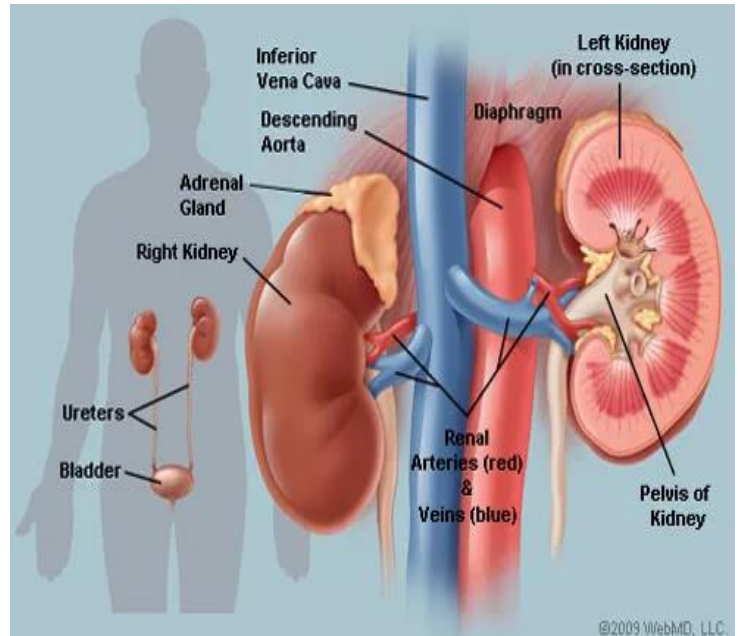
"Ultimately, I would really like to know what the right recipe is for a long, healthy life for our dog companions," says Rupple. "What are the things that we can do to optimize health within that species? I do think that learning those keys in the dog population will help us in terms of figuring out what's the right combination of things for the human population as well." For more information about signing your pup up for the Dog Aging Project visit their website at [www.dogagingproject.org](http://www.dogagingproject.org).

## Medications That May Raise Your Risk of Kidney Damage

Certain medications, called nephrotoxic medications, can damage your kidneys. This makes it harder for your kidneys to filter waste and other substances from your bloodstream.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), diuretics, and angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors have all been linked to kidney problems. Certain medications given in hospital settings, such as iodinated radiocontrast, vancomycin, and aminoglycoside antibiotics, can also hurt the kidneys. These aren't the only medications that are potentially harmful to your kidneys, cautions Hindu Rao, PharmD, APh, BCACP.

Your kidneys are part of a well-designed filtering system in your body. They remove toxins, waste, and extra fluids from your blood through urine. But if your kidneys get injured or damaged, they can't filter out waste like they're supposed to.



Certain health conditions—such as diabetes and high blood pressure—and several medications can cause this type of damage, Rao explains in a commentary authored for *Good Rx*.

Medications that are harmful to the kidneys are called nephrotoxic medications. Some of these medications only slightly worsen kidney function, while others could cause more serious injury. Your risk for kidney damage depends on your individual health conditions and the medication(s) you're taking.

Listed below are some drugs that have been linked to kidney damage. But this doesn't include everything, so talk to your healthcare professional (HCP) about your full medication list, says Ro. They can tell you how each medicine might affect your kidney health.



1. NSAIDs, like ibuprofen
2. Diuretics, like hydrochlorothiazide
3. ACE inhibitors, like lisinopril
4. Iodinated radiocontrast
5. Vancomycin
6. Aminoglycoside antibiotics, like gentamicin
7. HIV medications, like Truvada
8. Other antiviral medications, such as acyclovir (Zovirax) and ganciclovir
9. Zoledronic acid

If you notice any of these symptoms, Ro says you should talk to your HCP right away: blood or foam in the urine, dark-colored urine, a noticeable change in urinary frequency, lower back or flank pain, or decreased or difficulty urinating

## **Vaccines Are Not Just for Kids Anymore**

"For older adults who express more confidence in vaccine safety than younger groups, the past few months have brought welcome research. Studies have found important benefits from a newer vaccine and enhanced versions of older ones, and one vaccine may confer a major bonus that nobody foresaw.



The phrase "Vaccines are not just for kids anymore" has become a favorite for William Schaffner, an infectious diseases specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "The

population over 65, which often suffers the worst impact of respiratory viruses and others, now has the benefit of vaccines that can prevent much of that serious illness," he said.

Take influenza, which annually sends from 140,000 to 710,000 people to hospitals, most of them seniors, and is fatal to 10 percent of hospitalized older adults.

For about 15 years, the CDC has approved several enhanced flu vaccines for people 65 and older. More effective than the standard formulation, they either contain higher levels of the antigen that builds protection against the virus or incorporate an adjuvant that creates a stronger immune response. Or they're recombinant vaccines, developed through a different method, with higher antigen levels.



Compared with the standard flu shot, the enhanced vaccines reduced the risk of hospitalization from the flu in older adults, by at least 11 percent and up to 18 percent. The CDC advises adults 65 and over to receive the enhanced vaccines, advises as many already do.

More good news: Vaccines to prevent respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in people 60 and older are performing admirably.

Researchers found the vaccines to be 75 percent effective against acute infection, meaning illness that was serious enough to send a patient to a health care provider.

## **Tips for Recovering at Home After a Hospitalization**

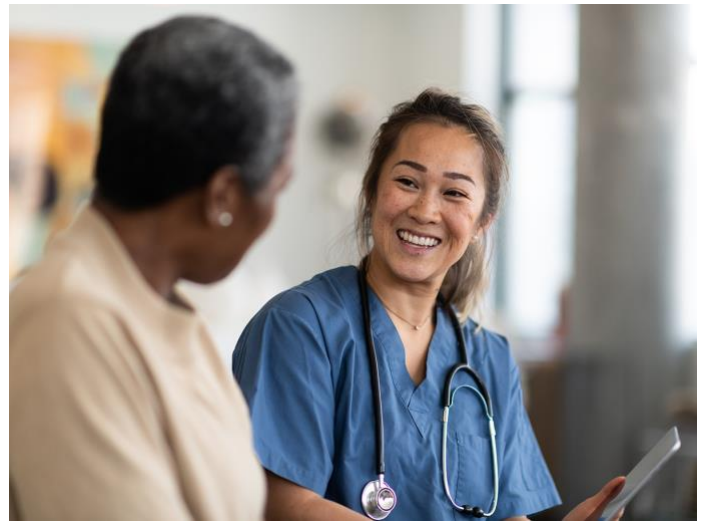
Leaving the hospital is usually a relief, but going home doesn't mean the recovery process is over. In fact, the days and weeks following a hospital stay are often the most critical. Whether you are returning home after surgery, illness, or injury, the proper preparation and assistance can support a timely recovery and even help prevent rehospitalization.

If you're going into the hospital for a planned procedure, you have time to prepare for recovery.



"Ask your health care provider, nurses, or physical therapist about getting your home ready for your return," advises the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Your preparation may include:

- Moving your bed, stocking up on recommended foods and beverages, and making sure your daily needs (phone, books, medications, etc.) are within easy reach.
- Getting medical equipment, such as a hospital bed, raised toilet seat, walker, or shower stool.
- Addressing anything that may be a safety or fall hazard, such as throw rugs, cords, and dim lighting.



"If your hospital stay was unplanned, have family or friends prepare your home for you," the NIH suggests.

Before leaving the hospital, you should receive a written discharge plan. This typically includes medication instructions, wound care guidance, physical activity recommendations, dietary guidelines, and follow-up appointments. Make sure you understand everything. Don't hesitate to ask questions before heading home. Having a friend or loved one review the plan with you can be helpful.

Recovery often involves a complex medication schedule. One missed dose—or one dose too many—can derail progress or even lead to a trip back to the hospital. If your medications were changed during your hospital stay, be sure to set aside any outdated prescriptions at home (or dispose of them, if the doctor advises).



Right at Home caregivers can provide gentle medication reminders and alert families or care teams if a client is experiencing side effects or confusion.

Many people don't realize how common it is to end up back in the hospital shortly after being discharged. Follow-up care is important—don't skip those post-hospital doctor visits. And follow any routines in your care plan, such as monitoring blood pressure or doing prescribed exercises.

Above all, keep an eye out for early warning signs of trouble, such as shortness of breath, swelling, confusion, or increasing pain. Quick action can prevent a small problem from becoming a serious setback. Healing isn't just physical. After a hospital stay, people often feel tired, anxious, or even isolated—especially if they live alone. If your loved one was hospitalized, encourage them to talk about how they're feeling, and ask them if they want to work with a counselor or support group.

Having a compassionate Right at Home caregiver nearby offers reassurance, companionship, and consistency. Just having someone to talk to or share a meal with can lift spirits and speed recovery.

A body that's healing needs fuel. Nutritious meals and adequate hydration are essential during recovery, but it's not always easy to shop, cook, or remember to eat when you're not feeling your best. Right at Home caregivers can help with grocery runs, meal preparation, or encouraging healthy snacks and water throughout the day.

Finally, know when to reach out to your doctor. Any signs of infection, difficulty breathing, new or worsening pain, confusion, or unexpected symptoms should be taken seriously. Having a trusted point of contact—and knowing when to use it—can make all the difference.

Sometimes, the best path to healing involves a little extra help. One example is Right at Home's Hospital-to-Home Program, called RightTransitions. It's designed to help seniors and adults with disabilities get home safely and prevent further hospitalizations with regular visits by trained caregivers.

You should also consider respite care so family or friends who are helping can take a much-needed break.

Right at Home's web site includes helpful PDF documents, including a discharge checklist, a medication log form, and tips for your hospital stay.



### **Middle-Aged Adults Can Reverse Heart Muscle Decline**

A study published 7 years ago is going somewhat viral on the internet thanks to the profile of a popular health influencer, Dr. Rhonda Patrick. The study found middle-aged adults could reverse 20 years of age-related decline in their heart muscles through a 2-year exercise program, and that it effectively turned sedentary 55-year-olds into 30-year-olds when viewed through heart activity monitoring equipment.

Since heart disease is the leading cause of death for most people in the United States, and cardiac strength is inversely correlated with heart disease, it's probably one of the most significant studies on exercise ever carried out.

The training program started light and gradually grew in intensity and duration, with months 6-10 representing peak output. The second year was characterized by a "maintenance period."



A key point the authors made is that a measurement of fitness in middle age is the strongest predictor of future heart failure, and men and women of middle age who have had a lifetime of exercise behind them enjoy heart health closer to that of a 30 year old. But their study showed this could still be achieved in middle age even without a lifetime of exercise—in fact, just 2 years were required.

The study also points out, however, that there are limits to exercise's abilities of age reversal and the heart's capacity to forgive a lifetime of sedentary behavior. If moderate-intensity training programs are started age 65 or later, they do not appear to be able to overcome the damage—specifically the heart stiffening and shrinkage—from past sedentary periods.



### **You Can Jump Start Your Brain with Unfamiliar Music**

Millions of seniors grew up with vinyl, lived through cassettes and compact discs, and now enjoy creating streaming playlists for smart phones and their home stereo.

For many, music is not just entertainment. It can play an important role in maintaining our physical and mental health. According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, preliminary research “suggests that music-based interventions may be helpful for anxiety, depressive symptoms, and pain associated with a

variety of health conditions, as well as for some other symptoms associated with dementia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, and other conditions.”

And experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine note that if you really want to jump-start your brain, ask your kids or grandkids to share their playlists. We tend to stick to the music we grew up with. But by forcing ourselves to open up to new genres of music and performers, we give our brains an extra powerful workout by processing unfamiliar melodies, structures and rhythms. So as we reach retirement, it seems not just fitting but smart to create new mixes for our playlists.

### **One in Five Older Adults Experience Elder Abuse**

A 2021 study found that one in five older adults experienced elder abuse during the pandemic. This was an increase from previous data that found that 1 in 10 adults over the age of 60 experienced elder abuse.

The World Health Organization now estimates that 1 in 6 adults over the age of 60 have experienced elder abuse.

**Spotting the Signs of Elder Abuse**

Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are abused, neglected, or financially exploited.

Here are signs that an older adult in your life may be experiencing abuse:

Physical	Emotional	Neglect	Abandonment	Sexual	Financial
Unexplained injuries or physical signs of punishment or restraint, such as bruises, sores, or burns	Depression, anxiety, or changes in behavior	Preventable health problems such as bedsores or unsafe living conditions	Leaving an older adult who needs help alone without planning for their care	Changes in mood, becoming withdrawn, or other physical signs	Changes in banking or spending patterns

If you suspect an older adult is being abused, talk with them and report what you see to an authority.

Learn more at [www.nia.nih.gov/elder-abuse](http://www.nia.nih.gov/elder-abuse).

NIH National Institute on Aging



Lawyers, senior advocates and health care professionals know the signs and symptoms of physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse.

Those 65 and older are at particular risk for various types of abuse as they navigate dementia, chronic health conditions, accessibility issues and other challenges.



One of the most recent studies conducted on elder abuse in nursing homes found that 64.2 percent of staff in elder care facilities admitted to elder abuse within the past year. The highest form of abuse was psychological abuse (33.4 percent), followed by physical (14.1 percent) and financial (13.8 percent).

"Factors contributing to the highest prevalence of senior abuse include isolation, debilitating medical conditions, relationships with intense interpersonal violence between the senior and caretakers or staff, and mental disability or dementia," says Dr. Mayra Mendez, a licensed psychotherapist. "The highest rates of abuse are reported in populations, of all ages, diagnosed with disabilities."

In the stress of watching an elderly family member or friend age, battle health conditions and navigate financial or other issues, it can be easy to overlook a key sign of abuse of any type.

Pay attention to your gut instinct, but also gather more information to see if your feelings might be correct.

Though there's a culture of shame and secrecy around reporting abuse, you can directly ask your loved one how well they are being taken care of by their caregivers. You can be specific and ask if they are getting all of their physical needs met, if they are ever yelled at or if they ever feel scared or threatened. Sometimes, a trusted person asking is enough to get the information across to help intervene.

"Communicate openly with seniors/dependent adults and encourage sharing about their experiences and interactions with others," Mendez says. Report abuse concerns immediately to Adult Protective Services. You can also report to the leader of the care facility and gather more evidence. But don't stop there. Note that specific counties and states might have different reporting processes.

## Doctors Are Excited About Benefits of AI

These days, Alexa Mises Malchuk, MD, a family doctor in Cary, NC, uses AI (artificial intelligence) to record and transcribe her talks with patients. Instead of typing as fast as she can on her laptop, "I can focus more on my patient," says Malchuk. "I can really listen and capture all the important information, both mentally and more easily in my notes."



That's especially useful when someone has a long medical history or communicates differently.

Drafting doctors' notes is just the start of what AI can do. From reading X-rays to making sure you know how to take a new medicine, "AI has tremendous potential to improve health care in a lot of different ways," says Marshall Runge, MD, PhD, author of *The Great Healthcare Disruption: Big Tech, Bold Policy, and the Future of American Medicine*.

AI-powered tools can remind you to take your medicine, call for help if you fall, and keep track of your insurance.

Today, AI is powerful enough to be used behind the scenes at doctors' offices and hospitals. It also powers many items you may already use, like health care apps, home medical devices, and chatbots that answer your health questions.

Thanks to all these advances, "AI is going to change, in a very positive way, our own personal health," says Runge.

There's a reason doctors are excited about AI. For instance, so far it can:

- Process lab results faster than humans
- Check if you're at higher risk for certain conditions, like a heart attack or stroke
- Analyze data to predict disease or infection outbreaks in certain areas
- Help researchers make new medicines
- Let surgeons get real-time advice from other surgeons during surgery
- Spot early signs of health issues, like skin cancer.



AI can also help:

- Detect some infections, like COVID, in your blood
- Find tumors, fractures, and other problems on imaging results
- Help emergency rooms decide who needs care first
- Personalize some cancer treatments based on your genes
- Alert your doctor if a new drug might clash with another one you take
- Offer online tools to help you quit smoking or using drugs
- Help you manage mental problems like depression and anxiety.



AI's superpower: Being able to quickly digest and understand vast amounts of information, and in a very short time. "It can analyze amounts of data that no human or giant computer can analyze," says Runge. Before meeting a new patient, Runge, a cardiologist, looks over their medical record. AI can, too – and can produce a one-page summary in two minutes. "It would take me two hours to do that for very complicated charts," says Runge.

Doctors can also use AI to comb through medical journals and scientific papers, then provide the highlights. That way, they can stay up-to-date on the latest findings.

### **The Best Things About Growing Old**

Growing older is inevitable—and a privilege for those who survive their youth. But accepting the changes in your body and lifestyle can be a hard pill to swallow for some.

But what are the positives of aging? Is anybody shouting about them? As more people reach their 'Silver Senior' years, it's time to celebrate aging and the benefits it brings.

A recent survey of 2,000 adults over the age of 50 sought to uncover their perceptions of aging. Most importantly, it aimed to discover the things they liked about being older—the benefits we all have to look forward to.

The respondents were given a set of questions and a list of aspects of aging to choose from. Overall, 25 percent of respondents felt very positively about aging. Nearly half of the women (47 percent) either agreed, or somewhat agreed, that their self-confidence has grown with age. And 41 percent also felt their sense of fulfillment has increased, too.



Meanwhile, 43 percent of men also believed their self-confidence had increased, and 40% believed their sense of fulfillment has developed, too.

What are the best things about growing old? Responses include:

- Life experience
- Being comfortable in your own skin
- Having a greater sense of gratitude for the smaller things in life
- Independence and freedom (perhaps related to not being tied down to job or family)
- Ability to let things go





"Ooo, I just felt the good cholesterol kick the bad cholesterol."



"I haven't taken a day off since old media was new media."



"In my day, Virginia was for people who were just friends."



"Before you take me away, I just want to update my profile picture."

### Contact Us:

Remember that if you have story ideas, comments, or criticisms, you can e-mail us at [savvyjerseyseniorts.com](mailto:savvyjerseyseniorts.com).

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