

# HealthOutreach®

## Newsletter

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### NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **New Year, New Look**
- **Recap of Our Most Recent Events**
- **Lifeline's New GoSafe Mobile System**
- **Healthy Aging by Dr. Brian Eiss**
- **"As Time Goes By" by Shirley Zussman**
- **Tips to Prevent Weight Gain**
- **Fostering Pets**

HealthOutreach®

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**Enrollment is free, so please refer a friend!**

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### New Year, New Look

By: Sandy Regenbogen-Weiss, LCSW Manager of HealthOutreach and Lifeline

We're well into 2015, and riding out another challenging winter. And with this new year we are introducing a new look for our HealthOutreach newsletter.

We know you look forward to receiving the newsletter. We want to get it out to you more frequently, and looked to find ways to produce it quicker, and at the same time reduce mailing costs and paper waste.

For members who have email, we can send an electronic version, and even post it on our website. We want to bring you the important information you need to make informed health and wellness decisions, and this new format should be a way to do that.

We want your feedback. Please tell us how you like our new format. Is the type large enough? Are the pictures easy to

see? What topics would you like to us to cover in the newsletter? We are open to your suggestions and with this new format, we can work together to come up with something we truly appreciate and will use.

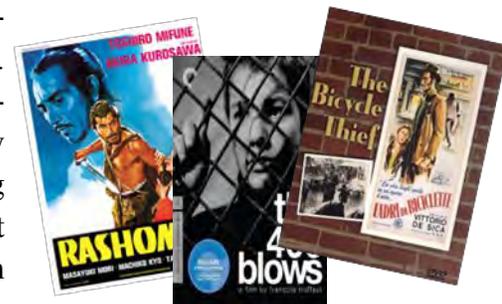


### Recap of our Most Recent Events

In November we offered two very popular lectures: one with Irving Sherwood Wright Center Nurse Practitioner Mary C. Ballin and Holly Warfel, Registered Dietitian, on Pre-Diabetes and

what you can do to reduce your risk. Later in November we heard from Eric Hausman, Medicare education consultant, about Open Enrollment and Medicare 2015 updates. We hosted our Second Annual Art Show with truly inspiring art from our Art Class. Foster Hirsch was back with a series

on the great foreign films of the late fifties, including the Bicycle Thief, The 400 Blows and Rashomon.





November 1, was the first Family Caregivers symposium hosted by HealthOutreach, with more than 150 people in attendance. Caregiver experts such as Dr. Ronald Adelman, Co-Chief of the Geriatric Service at NY Presbyterian/WeillCornell and Carol Levine of the United Hospital Fund shared their insights

and knowledge. In December, HealthOutreach Senior Social Worker, Sarah Waxse, LCSW, came to offer a session on Mindfulness and Stress Reduction. Jody Scopa Goldman, MS, RN, of the Ronald O. Perelman Heart Institute returned to teach a new group of our members about Hands-Only CPR. And we ended the year with a

very informative discussion on healthy fats, by NYPH Dietetic Interns.

We have many excellent health and wellness lectures planned for the coming year, so plan to be there!



## Now You Don't Have To Stay Home To Feel Safe

By: Melissa Pearson, Lifeline Technician

Lifeline's Personal emergency Response System has a new way to protect you even when you are not at home. It's the new *Go Safe Mobile System* and it lets you feel confident whether you're out walking the dog, strolling in the park, or even traveling to your daughter or son on the West Coast.

With the press of a button, your emergency call is sent to the Lifeline Response Center seven days a week, 24

hours a day. *Go Safe* has an automatic falls detector that alerts the Response Center even if you cannot press your button. And the advanced technology of *Go Safe* has 6 ways emergency services can pinpoint where you are to send help directly to you.

The *Go Safe* wireless system is particularly good for people who don't have a landline telephone in their home. To set it up, all you need is an electri-

cal outlet. And in case of a power failure, *Go Safe* has a backup battery system. It's even waterproof, so you can not only wear it taking a bath or in the shower, you can wear it while swimming. To find out more about all the ways the *Go Safe System* can help you, or to subscribe, call us at **212-746-6479**.



## What Does Healthy Aging Mean To You?

By: Brian Eiss, MD

Healthy aging might mean any of a number of things depending on your preferences and values, but for most people, it means trying to maintain your current level of health—physical, cognitive and emotional health—as long as possible as you get older. This will depend on how healthy you have been up until this point as well as a little bit of luck.

Here are some things you can do to maximize your health:

Control chronic medical problems: Whether it is coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol, it's important to learn the “lingo” and take ownership of any chronic medical problems you may have. For example, what are your systolic and diastolic blood pressure targets? How about your hemoglobin A1c? And what about the HDL and the LDL? Having this knowledge of which medications are for which med-

ical problems and understanding why your doctors recommend certain treatments helps most patients trust their doctors more and stay on track in between visits.

Take the Right Medications: Although there may be times where diseases can be treated by modifying your diet or increasing physical activity, there are some medical conditions for which medications are truly the best option to prevent short or long-term consequences. It is our job as providers to help you understand and balance the potential risks with the potential benefits of any given medication in order to together decide how to proceed. Do not be afraid to ask your on your own, as you could experience withdrawal or unexpected effects. Studies on vitamins have been mixed—one study showed that vitamin E and beta carotene supplements were actually harmful. Many studies show that vitamin D can be helpful for balance, gait and perhaps even mood. Up to 1200

mg calcium a day has been shown to be more helpful than harmful for bone health, particularly for women. However, most studies show that eating a well-balanced diet is a better way to maintain adequate nutrition than taking a multiple vitamin.

Stay physically active: Both basic physical activity and exercise are important components of



healthy aging. Regular walking does not technically count as exercise, but it would count as physical activity. If your doctor tells you that you are healthy enough for more vigorous exercise (where you would break a sweat and get the blood pumping), then starting slowly and building up your endurance is the best way to proceed with an exercise plan. Physical exercise (even more so than crossword puzzles or cognitive

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Acting on any information provided without first consulting a physician is solely at the reader's risk. We regret that we cannot respond to individual inquiries

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## Continued: What Does Healthy Aging Mean To You?

By: Brian Eiss, MD

exercise will help you preserve your independence, which almost all people identify as crucial to healthy aging. Our bodies are meant to move around, and as you get older it can be very difficult to get moving again if you spend even just a day or two in bed.

Socialize: Having a strong social network not only helps people live longer, but most people say it helps them enjoy life



even more. Just like physical exercise, studies show that having a strong social network can also protect against cognitive decline. If you are able to, volunteering or giving back to the community can be a great way to grow your social network as you get older.

Practice self-care and stay safe:

Healthy aging often requires attention to aspects of your health that may not typically be discussed at a doctor's visit, like mood, anxiety, problems with sleep and dental care. It is also crucial to do everything possible to avoid falling down, as falls can lead to a cascade of fractured bones, hospitalizations, complications and sometimes long periods of time in a rehabilitation home. Having an area rug that you might catch your foot on or very slippery waxed floors add to your risk of falling, as would having bags or boxes scattered around the apartment. Healthy aging often means making a difficult decision like choosing to walk with a cane or a walker in order to maintain your independence in the community and avoid falls.

Eat Well: For

most people, healthy aging includes a well-balanced diet that includes lean protein, bright colored fresh fruits and vegetables and a limited amount of whole grains. It is important to discuss with your doctor whether you need to lose or even gain weight in order to improve your health, and whether or not any of your chronic medical problems may require a specific diet. As you get older, decreasing portion size and eating smaller but more frequent meals is usually helpful, but you should always leave at least three hours between your last meal or snack and bedtime in order to improve digestion and decrease the chance of acid reflux. Consider using Mrs. Dash, spices or lemon juice instead of salt. Ask your doctor if you should see a nutritionist. And be careful with lingering leftovers in the refrigerator.

Have a good support system. Even for people who are still independent, having a backup plan in case you unexpectedly need help one day is always a good idea, whether it be from a family member, a friend, a social worker or a religious counselor. Identify who you would call if you needed help ahead of time, and make sure that person or people know that you might call on them one day.

Speak with your doctors and with your loved ones about advance directives and health care proxies so that if you have strong wishes about your medical care, they will be able to implement them if there is ever a time when you are not able to make decisions yourself. Having a medical alert system can help too—HealthOutreach offers the Lifeline system and can provide you with more information if you are interested.

Disease prevention: Speak with your doctors about whether or not preventative screening like bone density testing,

mammography and colonoscopies are appropriate for you. As you get older, the risk/benefit ratio may shift and your doctor may recommend against certain things as opposed to when you were younger. Recommendations on vaccines to prevent diseases like pneumonia, influenza and shingles are constantly changing, so ask your doctors if you are up to date with these.

Make your doctors' visits count: Healthy aging means communicating openly and honestly with your doctor, who can hopefully serve as a trusted source of advice. If you are worried about having too many questions or not asking the right questions, then bring a family member with you who can help remember (and even write down) what you discuss. Writing down your questions ahead of time and bringing an updated list or medications and supplements is always helpful.

Lastly, having a sense of purpose is often the most important part of

healthy aging. Volunteering or working part-time after retirement helps people maintain a positive outlook and keeps many older people going even in the face of medical problems and the stress of daily life. Many of our oldest, happiest patients tell us that the ability to “bounce back” in the face of misfortune is the secret to healthy aging and a long happy life.



*Dr. Brian Eiss is Assistant Attending Physician at NewYork Presbyterian Hospital, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.*

## As Time Goes By By: Shirley Zussman

You have to be a cock-eyed optimist not to believe that at an advanced age your time on this earth is limited. You can wonder why you've been allotted so many years, but after awhile you take it pretty much for granted that Lady Luck is on your side, and maybe you still have some days, months, even years ahead.

So... how to use whatever time may lie ahead? Grandiose ideas emerge that involve places that you have never seen, but al-

ways wanted to, projects you still want to develop, the foreign language you want to learn, maybe Mandarin. There seems no end to the dreams. You tell yourself that you have the time, the energy, the resources, the support. So why not?

But what really happens? You live each new day almost like a copy of the days recently gone by. You don't go to Easter Island. You don't go to California anymore but continue to say you're go-

ing. You don't write *the* book. You just keep doing what you've been doing. And to your surprise, you ask yourself, "Could anything be better?"

*Dr. Shirley Zussman is a member of HealthOutreach's Friday Writing group. She recently celebrated her 100th birthday, and is a practicing sex therapist in New York City.*



Cold weather tends to mean more staying at home, watching television and indulging in comfort foods. We move less and eat more! Winter (and early spring) can make it more difficult to be active outside or even get to the gym, especially when it's freezing. The ice on the

## Quick Tips to Prevent Winter Weight Gain

By: Debra Katz-Feigenbaum, MPH, RD

streets can make walking dangerous and many of us have a fear of falling. To further complicate managing ones health during the winter and early spring, some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD causes people to become depressed during the winter season. Experts aren't sure what causes SAD, but they

think it may be due to a lack of sunlight. People with SAD may selectively eat more carbohydrates, particularly sweets, for comfort, which can increase weight gain.

Overall, winter poses some unique challenges in watching your weight, controlling your blood glucose and just being healthy.

*Tips to prevent winter weight gain*

1. Get all the tempting unhealthy snacks out of the house—out of sight, out of mind. If they are not there you cannot eat them. Instead, stock up on healthy snack foods like fruit, yogurt, hummus, nuts, whole grain crackers, vegetables, and light popcorn. Find healthy comfort foods such as a vegetable soup, turkey chili or roasted vegetables. If you are buying processed foods, like canned soup, remember to read the label for sodium content! Buy low sodium versions or better yet, make your own soups, stews and chili. Make a large batch—you can freeze individual portions for healthy meals to last throughout the winter.
2. If you usually walk outside for exercise,



bundle up and walk—as long as it's not icy or dangerously cold. If unable to go out consider a month (or two) membership at a local gym until the weather is warmer. Walking will burn calories, lower blood sugar and triglycerides, and overall make you feel better.

3. Indoor activities, such as going to the movies, can be a nice way to get out during a cold winter. Take along your own healthy snacks to avoid movie theater calorie 'bombs' like candy and buttery popcorn. This will save you extra calories (and \$\$).

4. Keep a food record of what, when and how much you eat. This will make you think twice before snacking or taking a second serving.

**If you do need help with an eating plan for heart health, to control your weight or help manage your blood glucose call New York-Presbyterian Outpatient Nutrition Practice at 212-746-0838. Our Registered Dietitians can help provide you with practical advice and individually tailored meal guidelines.**

Note: a referral including diagnosis (ICD-9) is required. Insurance coverage varies by plan and diagnosis.

*Debra Katz –Feigenbaum MPH, RD is the Manager of Ambulatory Nutrition at NY-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell*

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## Want A Pet But Aren't Sure? By: Jane Warshaw, HealthOutreach Volunteer and Animal Welfare Advocate

You don't have to adopt a cat or dog to have the comfort and companionship of a warm furry friend. You can **foster** a pet. Fostering means you can have a great pet without the expense or making a long-term commitment. (Typically one weekend to 5 or 6 weeks). And most rescue organizations cover medical bills, if any, and even provide food if necessary.

But providing a safe haven for a pet in need isn't just good for the cat or dog. It's really good for you too. The companionship of a pet has been proven to lower blood pressure, reduce stress and give a sense of purpose. And petting or cuddling up with a cat or dog is like a natural anti-depressant, reducing a sense of loneliness and taking your mind off yourself.

"A potential danger for any foster parent is the love factor. It may be hard for some of us to give love to a little one and then give it up." Says Dr. Mike Marder, DVM, at The Village Veterinarian.

No shelter or rescue organization has enough room or homes for all the pets they try to help. For cats, smaller rescuers like **Tavi & Friends** and **Frankie's Feline Fund** are especially in need of foster homes. Mary Bruce, President and Executive Director of Tavi & Friends advises people interested in fostering, to email them at [volunteer@tavi&friends.org](mailto:volunteer@tavi&friends.org) or call her at 646-872-1533. You can reach Bunny Hofberg at [frankiefelinefund.org](http://frankiefelinefund.org) or call her at 917-514-0228.

