Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Keep the Music Going!

Maricela Narvaez, PHN, MA

Music has been in my life for as long as I can remember. I recall my Mother would sing and play the piano daily. She came from a musical background where most of her siblings played some type of musical instrument and were all singers. My Grandfather was a music teacher and played the violin. So needless to say, music is in my blood.

As a young child I listened to oldies but goodies, Mexican, Country, Folk, Rock and International music. I particularly enjoyed learning a song in English and then exploring the same song in different languages. I have always embraced music as a communicator of life, regardless of background.

So, at this point you might ask what does this all have to do with aging. Well, over the years, I have come to have a greater appreciation of the healing powers of music. Now, as I am aging and experiencing unexpected physical challenges, music has been an essential part of my self-care regime, both emotionally and physically.

The latest scientific studies show that music is good for your health it improves memory, concentration and reasoning skills. Music also boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure, relaxes muscle tensions, regulates stress hormones, elevates mood, and increases physical endurance. Music is also a motivator to move our bodies and enjoy the rhythm it evokes within us. I believe, as hopefully you do, that these are good benefits to obtain without medication or much expenditure.

So, keep the music going in 2022! Embark upon another of life’s greatest adventures, exploring new music and expanding your horizons. Enjoy your favorite music through the internet with easy access. Five modern ways include the following applications: (1) You Tube, (2) Spotify, (3) Sirius XM, (4) Alexa, and (5) Pandora. You can go to Google access and download music for sleeping, relaxing, dancing, and exercising. You can also listen and find your favorite songs and recording artists you love. It can be endless….so enjoy!
Free Rapid Covid-19 Tests

You can now order free at-home rapid Covid-19 tests through a new government website.

The website is COVIDTests.gov, which then directs people to a U.S. Postal Service site, special.usps.com.

Limit 1 order for residential address for 4 individual rapid antigen COVID-19 tests.

Fill out form with your contact and shipping information to order your tests.

Senior Nutrition Tips

Eating nutritious foods is important at any age. But as we age, our bodies require more of certain nutrients to stay healthy and fight disease and illness. Some power foods for older adults are especially beneficial to aging well. Healthy eating is an important part of staying active and independent as we age. Vitality and quality of life are often dependent on giving our bodies the right nutrients. By eating healthy, we can spend less time and money at the doctor’s office and are able to better manage a chronic disease. By incorporating “superfoods” for seniors into you or your loved one’s diet, you may feel healthier and stronger. Try these power foods for older adults for maintaining an active and independent life. Here are five of some of the “power foods”:

1. Sweet Potatoes: Sweet potatoes are full of both flavor and nutrients. They contain dis-folic acid-ficult preventing, cancer fighting, and immune boosting benefits. Since they are a good source of anti-inflammatory nutrients, they are a great choice for people with arthritis and asthma.

2. Bell Peppers: Bell peppers come in a variety of colors and can be used in many different dishes. They are low in calories and a full cup of them contains a senior’s daily allowance of Vitamin A and C. These vitamins help keep the immune system stay healthy and nourish skin. The nutrients in bell peppers are full of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits.

3. Whole Grain Cereal: Did you know that many seniors have a folate deficiency? One way to combat this is to eat whole grain cereal. Eating whole grains lowers the risk of many chronic diseases, such as a stroke, type-2 diabetes, and heart disease. Plus, whole-grain cereals come in a variety of flavors for every taste!

4. Salmon: Salmon can slow mental degeneration. The fish contains high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, which have been linked to helping mental function performance and lowering the risk of heart disease. Salmon is also a great source of protein and help the body absorb calcium.

5. Eggs: Older adults require more protein to avoid muscle loss that commonly happens as we age. Eggs are rich in protein, easy to make, and inexpensive. Eggs also contain vitamins that positively impact the immune and nervous systems, help absorb calcium, and prevent memory loss.
Meet the County of Alameda Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioner: Eric Eisenberg

Commissioner Eric Eisenberg joined the County of Alameda Advisory Commission on Aging in January 2019.

He spent nearly 40 years working in the banking industry and worked for several large banks. He moved his family between Los Angeles, the Bay Area and Boston to pursue new opportunities and career challenges.

In 2017 he decided to leave his banking career behind. His reasons for leaving were complicated, but to sum it up, he no longer felt that his personal goals were aligned with his employer. As he was getting close to his 60th birthday, he felt that he wanted to embark on one more adventure that would involve health care. He was eager to get started and move forward.

He always had the goal of running his own small business and figuring out how to make that happen. From a business perspective, he was looking for an industry where demand would be strong in both a growing economy or a recession. He also wanted to steer clear of industries where someone could invent an application, like Uber, and disrupt his business. From a personal perspective, he wanted to find a business he was passionate about so he decided to embark on the home health care industry. He was involved in his grandmother’s care late in her life as well as the care for both of his parents.

Next, it was important for him to find a brand that stood out for the highest standard of care. BrightStar was a brand that stood out in the industry. It is required that all BrightStars be accredited by the Joint Commission which is the same organization that does hospital accreditations. This is unusually high standard for home health care. They are also known for their “Nurse Led Care” which requires a client to do an assessment at the start of their care but also every 60 days. They strive to care for every client like they are caring for their own parents.

He also feels strongly about how they care for their employees. Particularly, since the health care industry isn’t known for treating caregivers well. They are not only very competitive with compensation, they offer benefits that aren’t normally associated with the industry such as healthcare, annual bonuses, paid training and paid time off, among others.

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Commissioner Eisenberg emphasized that their business is about caring. Caring for clients, caring for their families, and caring for their employees. It’s all connected. “You can’t care for one if you don’t care for them all.” It’s what drives him, his team and what connects them to the community.
Change Your Behavior

Understand what’s right for you first. In 2021, your goal was hopefully just to get through it, and that’s more than okay. For 2022, let’s think about what we did accomplish or wanted to accomplish but just didn’t quite make it, and bring it to 2022 to really nail it. Be realistic with yourself, because setting yourself up for failure won’t help your year at all. Be ambitious without going too far. You want to have something to work toward, goal-wise, but it should be something you know you can do with a little bit of effort.

That being said, don’t get discouraged. Part of your positive attitude in 2022 is giving yourself time and grace to accomplish what you can. Not all goals will be achieved quickly and not everything will be easy. Set up a game plan to get there and chip away every day. Remember: You have all year for this. Here are some tips to get you going.

- Make goals that are obtainable and quickly achievable. Who doesn’t love knocking out a goal? Come up with a list of goals for the year that run the gamut. Aim for some easy ones that you know you can do quickly and easily so you start the year strong. If you set all your goals as huge, long-term goals that will take months, you might get discouraged with your lack of achievement. Set some goals that you can get done in January, then maybe some that are quarterly, and more that will take all year.

- Don’t doubt what you can do, and make steps to get there. Have faith in yourself. There are plenty of sayings about being able to do whatever you put your mind to – for good reason. If you really want to achieve something, you can do it. It might mean you modify your goal to fit your lifestyle and abilities better, but there’s nothing wrong with that. Whether you want to learn to play an instrument, buy a new house, or run a mile, it can all be done. Maybe it won’t be done quickly, but you can do it. Set up a plan and outline the steps it’ll take you to achieve it and start at the beginning.

Change Your Behavior (cont.)

- Write a list in order to keep yourself honest. Write all of this down. Accountability is huge when it comes to just about anything you’re working toward. Write down your 2022 goals now and keep them in a place that you’ll always see. Don’t hide them! This way they’ll always be in your head as something to work toward. You can also incentivize your goals (if the actual achievement isn’t enough). Write your rewards down with your goals so you know what you’re working towards.

- Try new things that aren’t in your wheelhouse. Trying something new can be scary, but it can also be incredibly rewarding. After you’ve set your standard goals for the year, try to come up with something that feels like a real stretch because it’s not something you’d ever considered. It can be something really simple like teaching yourself how to make a layup or it could be something really ambitious like learning how to ride a motorcycle. The options are endless!

How to Properly Wear a Face Mask

- Don’t wear your mask below or low on your nose.
- Don’t leave your chin exposed or let your mask hang loosely with gaps around your face.
- Don’t wear your mask under your chin or temporarily remove it in public.
- Do wear your mask up to the top of your nose and under your chin; snug and without gaps.
Proud Core Partner of the:

The Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, along with The Center for Independent Living and Community Resources for Independent Living working to be a reemerging ADRC to promote and provide easy, uniform, and streamlined access to a broad array of services, support, and advocacy for individuals seeking long-term supports and services (LTSS) and information about LTSS.

Family Caregiving Resources: Family Caregiver Programs

- Alzheimer’s Association
  (925) 284-7942, Website: www.alz.org

- Alzheimer’s Services—East Bay
  (510) 644-8922, x325  Website: www.aseb.org

- City of Berkeley— Support for Caregivers
  North: (510) 981-5190, South: (510) 981-5170
  Website: www.cityofberkeley.info

- City of Fremont— Family Caregiver Support Prgm
  (510) 574-2041, Website: www.fremont.gov

- Family Caregiver Alliance
  (800) 445-8106, Website: www.caregiver.org

- Daybreak Adult Care Centers
  (510) 834-8314,  Website: www.daybreakcenters.org

- J-Sei, Inc.
  (510) 654-4000, Website: www.j-sei.org

- Family Support Program of the Tri-Valley
  (925) 931-5378, Website: www.ssptv.org

Upcoming Meetings:

Advisory Commission on Aging
- Monday, February 14, 2022, 9:30 AM
- Monday, March 14, 2022, 9:30 AM

Information & Assistance Roundtable
- Friday, January 28, 2022, 10:00 AM
- Friday, March 25, 2022, 10:00 AM

Email aaa@acgov.org for a Zoom link to the meetings.