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Wednesday, May 6, 2020 » MEDIANEWS GROUP

SENIOR LIFE

Study: Seniors facing stay-home challenges

By Jack McCaffery

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Challenges associated with food availability are causing Pennsylvania adults over the age of 60 to leave their homes more often than anticipated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Such was the leading takeaway last week from a 32-page report on a survey of older Pennsylvanians released from the Pennsylvania Council on Aging, according to Robert Torres, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

For that, Torres stressed during a video press conference, the state will do what it can to help reverse that trend, including encouraging grocery stores to better assist older adults in curbside orders and home-delivery effectiveness.

"With some of the concerns that were raised about food access, I was surprised that older adults are going out more than I expected," said Torres, when asked about the most unexpected result of the study. "However with the shift to seniors not being able to go to senior centers or adult day centers, there's a lot of pressure being put on to make sure food is being made available to the seniors."

"I think the pressure being put on the supply chain as far as delivery and not having enough inventory is obviously pushing the seniors to go out."

The statewide online review was completed in one week by the Council on Aging and received 3,776 responses from older adults. The findings broken into three categories, reflecting the replies of citizens aged 60 to 70, 71 to 90 and 91 and older. With the



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A customer wears a face mask while shopping at the Aldi market in Brookhaven recently.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control reporting that 80 percent of coronavirus-connected deaths in the United States have been of adults 65 or older, the study sought findings specific to Pennsylvania.

The survey was distributed through an internet link to contacts of the Council on Aging, in both English and Spanish. Among those included in the study, the council said, were community-based organizations serving older Latino, African-American and LGBTQ adults. Of the responses, 3,692 were deemed suitable. The surveys were meant to identify how older adults are interacting in their communities during the

pandemic, included 14 questions and took approximately five minutes to complete.

While a statewide stay-at-home order was issued on April 1, the study found, among other things, that Pennsylvania's older adults are visiting grocery stores nearly twice a week and that they are going to pharmacies in "high numbers." Family and religious interests have also driven older adults to leave their homes during the emergency.

Older Pennsylvanians, the study showed, were also the most likely to visit post offices and banks and less likely to have their groceries delivered. They are also more in-

clined to feel the effects of social isolation.

"One of the comments that we saw frequently in the survey was that they're not getting their orders completely filled and delivery times were long," Torres said. "It's an opportunity to see who we can work with to see if there are opportunities to change some of the current procedures. In terms of social isolation, there's a lot of interest on that topic. We are working with universities that have expressed interest in working with the department to work with older adults on the issue."

To reduce that isolation, particularly among nursing-home

residents, Torres said his department has a "partnership" with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to provide more devices to patients to maintain better contact with family members. According to Torres, the AARP has "hundreds of volunteers" prepared to assist in that effort.

From the study, the Department of Aging recommended that grocery stores prioritize delivery or curbside pickup for older adults. Also, it encouraged stores to offer specific hours for seniors to shop on Sundays, the day they are most likely to leave their homes.

"We really hope these findings will lead to good decision-making and policies and procedures moving forward," said Faith Haussler, the executive director of the Council on Aging, during the cyber-briefing. "We wanted to be sure we were capturing real-time information from older adults."

The full "State of Older Adults COVID-19 Report," can be accessed at the Department of Aging's website, www.aging.pa.gov. Choose the "Organizations" option, then select the "Council on Aging" category.

"The (Tom) Wolf administration and the Department of Aging are keenly aware that food access, community connections and social isolation have and will continue to be issues affecting older adults' well-being and quality of life," said Torres, in a statement announcing the study results. "The responses drawn by this survey, in real time during this pandemic, present an opportunity for us to deepen our collective understanding of these major issues and engage with partners to develop thoughtful, creative and effective solutions."



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SENIOR LIFE

RSVP Awarded Grant from the PHL COVID-19 Fund

RSVP, headquartered at 901 E. 8th Ave., King of Prussia, announced the receipt of a \$46,600 grant from The PHL COVID-19 Fund, a partnership between the Philadelphia Foundation and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

In a release dated April 16, the partnership announced they were “granting 123 non-profit organizations providing vital services to individuals facing the wide-ranging and urgent consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.”

Michele Moll, RSVP’s Executive Director reports “This grant will allow us to respond to the emerging critical needs of our most vulnerable community members adversely affected by the COVID-19 health crisis.”

Since March 15, RSVP has recruited, screened and enrolled an additional 360 new volunteers to meet growing needs by delivering food and medications, staffing food pantries, referring Medical Reserve Corps volunteers and providing virtual educational assistance to students learn-

ing from home.

In the past month RSVP shifted focus from school and home-based programs in order to keep volunteers safe and practice social distancing. To continue to meet the needs of these groups, RSVP’s school-based programs now provide virtual learning and tutoring. STEM Career Presentations are viewed by students on their home computers to inspire them. Veterans continue to receive virtual math tutoring to prepare for college courses. In home assistance for low-income seniors now includes grocery and medication deliveries as well as friendly phone calls. Medicare counseling is conducted by phone sessions. Management professionals counsel nonprofits on best practices and more volunteers than ever are delivering warm meals and a smile to isolated low-income seniors.

By focusing on volunteer recruitment to meet emerging critical needs and adapting program delivery, RSVP is continuing to meet the needs of our



most vulnerable community members with the support of local foundations. Moll continues “We are very grateful to be awarded this grant from the PHL COVID-19 Fund.”

About Philadelphia Foundation: Founded in 1918, Philadelphia Foundation strengthens the economic, social and civic vitality of Greater Philadelphia. Philadelphia Foundation grows effective philanthropic investment, connects individuals and institutions across sectors and geography, and advances civic initiatives through partnerships and collab-

oration. A publicly supported foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation manages more than 1,000 charitable funds established by its donors and makes over 1,000 grants and scholarship awards each year. To learn more, visit philafound.org.

About United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey: United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, serving communities in Pennsylvania’s Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, and New Jersey’s Atlantic, Burlington, Cam-

den, Cape May, and Cumberland counties, is part of a national network of more than 1,300 locally governed organizations that work to create lasting positive changes in communities and in people’s lives. United Way fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community. In Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, United Way fights for youth success and family stability because we LIVE UNITED against intergenerational poverty. For more information about United Way of Greater Philadelphia

and Southern New Jersey visit www.UnitedForImpact.org.

About RSVP: RSVP is a multiservice nonprofit organization meeting the needs in the community through volunteerism. Volunteer impact programs focus on the needs of vulnerable populations (such as disadvantaged preschool children, at-risk youth, the elderly, those with low literacy skills and veterans) and by providing capacity building support to other nonprofits. To learn more visit www.rsvpmc.org.

SENIOR LIFE

RSVP Awarded Grant from the Montgomery County Foundation

RSVP, headquartered at 901 E. 8th Ave., King of Prussia, announced the receipt of a \$3,000 grant from The Montgomery County Foundation, Inc. to support their COVID-19 Emergency Response.

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VID-19 health crisis.”

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meeting the needs in the community through volunteerism. Volunteer impact programs focus on the needs of vulnerable populations (such as disadvantaged preschool children, at-risk youth, the elderly, those with low literacy skills and veterans) and by providing capacity building support to other nonprofits. To learn more visit www.rsvpmc.org.

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SENIOR LIFE

Spot of T - Pandemic Posse

By Terry Alburger
Life Engagement Coordinator,
Brittany Pointe Estates

Each of us experiences a different situation in facing our current global COVID-19 crisis. Some are quarantined, perhaps attempting to work from home while little ones clamor for their attention. The kids are home-schooled, taken suddenly from the world of their schools and their friends, and put into a home-isolation environment. Some people may be retired, home alone, missing friends and family and feeling sad. Still others are deemed "essential" and come to work each day, but "work" has become a totally different environment. While perhaps not in the medical field per se, they are still working every day to keep those around them safe. Then, of course, there are those on the front lines, those who risk their lives day in and day out, in an effort to help those affected by the virus and save lives. Each person listed above has been directly impacted by this pandemic on one level or another. No one is immune.

I believe we all have a "Pandemic Posse," those people to whom we are closest, the recipients of our texts, phone calls or emails, those who comfort us, make us smile and encourage us. If you are still in the work force, they might be your co-workers, undergoing the same experiences as you, dealing with the same fears. Or they might be your beloved family members, whom you can longer visit face to face. Perhaps it is your circle of friends, the circle now broken by distance. Think about who is in YOUR posse and be reminded that they are still with you, perhaps not



PETE BANNAN - MEDIANEWS GROUP

Area journalists are doing the right things to keep safe. 6ABC's Dann Cuellar disinfects his microphone after a recent interview.

physically, but certainly emotionally, all of the time. Remember to reach out to them whenever you need a boost. They love you just as much at a distance as they do in person.

I truly believe there are stages of Pandemic Life, just like the stages of grief. I think in the beginning, we were all in denial that such a thing could disrupt our daily lives. We thought that Americans could not possibly contract this virus, let alone die from it, within the borders of the United States. Once it invaded our boundaries, we were shocked at how fast it spread and how deadly it was. I truly believe this stage lasted awhile, and actually, some are still in it.

For most of us, however, I think we have moved on to the "anger and depression" stage. Many feel trapped in their own homes, unable to go to the places that they had taken for granted just a few short months ago. The gym, the movies, restaurants, stores... Resentment is apt to grow in this situation. This resentment could quickly turn to depression. Make sure to go easy on yourself. Self-judgment must go out the window. Once we're clear of this virus, we can go back to our rigid schedules. For now, though, anything comforting is welcome.

The next stage is acceptance. While I encourage working through to this

stage, I do NOT believe that it is synonymous with surrender. You and I are in this situation, one that we never fathomed could be possible. And yet, we are hanging in there. We have come to accept it, it's true. But we cannot give up. Feelings of doom and gloom are natural, given the circumstances, but we must work hard to combat them with feelings of hope, ingenuity, and confidence.

It's easy to fall into a schedule of inactivity when there is virtually nowhere to go. It's far easier to curl up on the couch under a warm blanket than to get up and stay busy. However, at the end of the day, you'll feel so much better if you have accomplished some-

thing. Anything, however small. Clean out a drawer, read a chapter of a book, reach out and Skype, Face-time, Zoom, House Party or make an old-fashioned phone call to someone that you are missing. There are many things you can do, it just takes that initial push to get started. Just remember, you're not alone.

One of the greatest things you can do for yourself is to take a walk, maintaining that all-important social distance from others. Walking is essential for so many reasons. The benefits are plentiful. Going on regular walks improves your heart-health and can aid in controlling your weight (in a time when most of us have put on the

"pandemic five"!)). Walking can help regulate your blood pressure, improve circulation and reduce the risk of diabetes. Walking can strengthen your bones, tone your muscles and also build up your immune system. Most importantly, in the fearful world of COVID-19, walking can reduce your stress and improve your mood; and distant interaction with your friends and neighbors, even if it's just a wave or a socially distant "Hello," can work wonders to boost morale.

Remember that being part of a posse works both ways. Reach out to your friends, your family members, elderly neighbors, just to say "hello" and make sure they are OK. Kindness matters and kindness is always returned. A kind word can completely uplift others from the depths of despair, sadness and loneliness.

We WILL get through this, as long as we work together.

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SENIOR LIFE

How can COVID-19 changed our lives?

By Ellen Cora
Political Liaison, Association of Mature American Citizens

America weathered the Great Depression, two World Wars, other conflicts and upheavals during the past centuries – all rife with uncertainties and personal sacrifice. Few lived through these trials unscathed. There were huge losses of life and fortunes. Many people were forever changed as a result, but as a people, Americans survived.

In recent decades, we have experienced organized, well-funded, efforts to destroy American government and culture as we know it and take down our Electoral College and current president. Our governments, media and neighbors are strongly polarized – from communists and progressive socialists, to moderate liberals and

conservatives, to right-wing zealots. Many aware citizens' daily lives – belief systems and emotions – are impacted to one degree or another by these forces of hate.

And now with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has virtually shut down America and other nations, except for essential services. Aside from the terrible death toll, widespread illness and economic devastation – people wonder when, how and if ever it will all end.

Widespread use of face masks and gloves, social distancing and sheltering-in-place are all part of 'the new normal' – which isn't normal at all. Loved ones are forbidden from visiting relatives in hospitals; large weddings and celebrations, plus live entertainment, just aren't happening and many poor lonely elderly persons

are suffering unusually harsh isolation.

Whether COVID-19 was a terrible accident or an engineered social experiment – America is, in large part, re-examining its traditions and culture. It can almost be guaranteed our nation will become less dependent on foreign countries for vital products and services. Less, if any, Rx medicines, will be manufactured overseas. Less of our foods will be processed or packaged in developing countries – and these industrial shifts will bring more American jobs and new praise for the phrase 'Made in America.'

Even the most avid sports fanatic has learned how to live without arena or televised sports – while at the same time people have growing awareness and respect for our true American heroes. These heroes include doctors, nurses, and

other healthcare providers; law enforcement, fire/rescue squads and all participants in our vital food chain – from the farmers, to warehouse and retail store workers – and front-line checkout clerks at the market. Many of us have learned the difference between what we truly need and what we merely want. One wonders if athletes and actors might be paid too much, and the folks who help us survive may be paid too little!

Our at-home dynamics have changed, with those living in small spaces often having a tougher time than those with larger abodes. But working and schooling at home has shown what's possible through technology – saving commuting time, gasoline and inordinately high tuition. 'Too much togetherness' requires new strategies and techniques, but really catching up with family members can be priceless. Cooking at home can mean less wasteful packaging and healthier ingredients.

We are spending and

buying less, cleaning and decluttering our homes and enjoying nature more on our fresh-air walks. Life can seem lonelier now for singles and couples whose families have left the nest – but we can all communicate by phone, e-mail or video, if we wish. We can also offer help to neighbors like never before.

Online purchases and delivery of food and medicine are essential for the ill and frail elderly, with shipping companies thriving. Increasing stress as the pandemic draws on will exacerbate pre-existing emotional instability or mental illness – leading to destructive behaviors, drug and alcohol. More assistance needs to be available to many.

Lastly, many of us have the time to peruse various news media and discern objective stories from fake news – and most of all – with our current abnormal restrictions – we are no doubt able to appreciate America's freedoms more – to cherish the small things in life and be grateful for our exceptional American

way of life.

The 2 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac

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SENIOR LIFE

Killion calls for testing of nursing home residents and staff

By Kathleen E. Carey
kcarey@21st-centurymedia.com
@dtbusiness on Twitter

As congregate care facilities bear the brunt of COVID-19, state Sen. Tom Killion, R-9 of Middletown, is calling for all residents and staff of such facilities to be tested for the virus responsible for the global pandemic.

“Our nursing homes and personal care homes have clearly become the epicenter of deaths related to the virus,” Killion wrote in a letter to Gov. Tom Wolf and Pennsylvania Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine in advocating for such testing to take place. “The number of lives lost in these facilities has been nothing less than horrific.”

Here in Delaware County, as of Saturday, 192 deaths of the 255

deaths related to coronavirus have occurred in long-term care or personal-care facilities, according to the state Department of Health. Also based on their statistics, 43 of Delaware County’s 62 long-term care facilities have positive coronavirus cases.

Of the county’s 4,053 positive cases, 894 are residents of long-term care facilities and 129 are attributed to employees.

Statewide, 8,827 residents and 1,148 employees in 478 long-term care facilities have tested positive. Of all of Pennsylvania’s 2,418 deaths linked to COVID-19, 1,614 have been in long-term care facilities.

In his letter, Killion wrote that less than 2 percent of residents living in these homes have been tested, according to the Pennsylvania Health Care As-

In his letter, Killion wrote that less than 2 percent of residents living in these homes have been tested, according to the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, the trade association representing the owners and operators of the state’s congregate care facilities.

sociation, the trade association representing the owners and operators of the state’s congregate care facilities.

“The fact that so few residents have been tested is shocking considering how much the data illustrates the disproportionately deadly nature of the virus for residents in these facilities,” the senator wrote.

He implored the governor to intervene.

“As COVID-19 continues its deadly proliferation in our nursing and

personal care homes, I ask the administration to immediately ensure the testing of all residents and workers in these facilities,” Killion wrote. “It is clear that this testing is urgently needed and long overdue.”

Zach Shamberg, president and CEO of the PHCA, called on the governor to establish a Long-Term Care Ambassador to focus solely on Pennsylvania’s nursing homes, personal care homes and assisted living residents.

“Residents in long-term care facilities are contracting the virus and falling ill at an alarming rate,” he said, describing these facilities as “ground zero for COVID-19 cases and fatalities.” “Front line staff are either testing positive – or not being tested at all. The number of positive cases and deaths in facilities has multiplied in recent days.”

He said what’s needed is critical emergency funding for providers, prioritizing supplies of personal protective equipment for workers, addressing staffing shortages, protecting residents and granting civil immunity to the long-term care continuum.

“We have asked for help daily,” Shamberg said. “Now, more than ever, long-term care providers, workers and residents need to know

they’re supported. Gov. Wolf: please appoint a leader who can help us mitigate and contain COVID-19.”

While acknowledging a lack of adequate testing, Killion said testing needs to be prioritized for those in these facilities.

“The data is chilling,” he said. “We must prioritize the protection of the most vulnerable. In the case of COVID-19, it’s inarguable that our seniors, and particularly residents of nursing and personal care homes are at a grave risk. Comprehensive testing is the first step in protecting them.”

In Pennsylvania, there are an estimated 700 nursing homes with more than 88,000 beds and more than 1,200 licensed personal care homes serving 46,500 residents.

SENIOR LIFE

SageLife Offers Move for Life Program, Produces Positive Results for Seniors

Staying physically active is a key component of leading a longer and healthier life. Studies show older adults who work on their physical wellness can reduce the risk of disease and decrease instances of injuries and falls. Plus physical activity helps combat feelings of depression and isolation — and improves general quality of life.

SageLife, which operates active lifestyle, retirement and supportive senior liv-

ing communities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey and Massachusetts, offers an innovative, holistic program from Move for Life Physical Therapy that helps seniors maintain and improve their physical wellness.

The Move for Life Physical Therapy program at SageLife communities is a mix of one-on-one physical therapy, therapeutic exercise classes, educational lectures, gait training,

neuromuscular re-education and adaptive equipment training — all aimed at improving the three main aspects of physical fitness: mobility, strength and balance. All aspects of the program are tailored to each individual’s abilities and goals.

More than two-thirds of residents participating in Move for Life maintained or improved their performance in three key mobility metrics: Up and Go

Test (71%), Sit to Stand test (73%) and Reach Test (67%).

While these numbers are impressive, the concrete ways seniors’ lives have improved through the program tell the true story of its success:

- “I went from using a walker to walking trails,” said a resident from SageLife’s community Plush Mills, in Wallingford, Pa.
- “I was taking medication for shoulder pain.

It eased it somewhat, but wasn’t complete solution,” said another Plush Mills resident. “After just 12 sessions (in the Move for Life program), no more pills and problem solved!”

“I walk with confidence and can go greater distances without getting tired,” said a resident at Daylesford Crossing in Paoli, Pa. “Everyday activities are easier and my balance has improved.”

A resident at The Maples

in Towson, Md., reported that his arms, shoulders and upper body are all stronger. “I’ve graduated from a wheelchair to a walker and I’m on my way to walking independently.”

The Move for Life Physical Therapy Program is available to residents at Kyffin Grove in North Wales, Pa., in addition to Plush Mills, Daylesford Crossing and The Maples of Towson.



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SENIOR LIFE

State Sen. Judith L. Schwank: We're still here to serve you

By Judy L. Schwank

I hope you are in good health as you read this article. I want you to know that I'm still doing my best to fairly and accurately represent your needs in Harrisburg, and my staff are still working to help you navigate state systems, like unemployment compensation.

Over the last month, my office has received literally thousands of emails and phone calls from constituents who need help. We do our best to answer them in a timely manner and will continue to do so.

We have participated in phone conferences and monitored press releases from different state government agencies so we can provide you with the latest and most accurate information.

I have attended session

remotely — and legislation we have passed has moved the primary election to June 2. If you'd like to receive a mail-in ballot to vote remotely, visit votespa.com for information on how to apply.

I hope you're faring well despite the many challenges we are all facing. Whether it's illness, the loss of your income or too much together time, I know this is tough on everyone, and that you all are deeply concerned about what the future will bring.

I'm concerned, too. It's difficult to even comprehend the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

I've learned that more than 1.6 million unemployment claims have been filed with the Department of Labor since the pandemic took hold in the commonwealth.

If you or a loved one find yourself in need of unemployment compensation benefits, visit www.uc.pa.gov. I have been assured that the department is processing these applications as quickly as they can.

I ask you to please be as patient as possible. We may be practicing social distancing for the foreseeable future, but we will get through this.

As older adults with significant life experience, we can lead the way to recovery!

As always, if my office can be of assistance in helping you to apply for property tax rebate or any other state-related program or service, please leave a message at 610-929-2151 or use the contact form at www.senatorschwank.com/contact. We're here to help!



Judy Schwank

SENIOR LIFE

How to understand indexed annuities and life insurance

By Howard S. Blanck

The amount of misinformation and misunderstanding in these two important areas of finance is truly mind-boggling. However, if you are looking for a great and safe investment without worrying about stock market loss and economic chaos, an indexed annuity might be the answer.

In order to understand the annuity concept, just think of the lottery. For example, let's say someone won \$50 million and he/she can get a lump sum of \$30 million after taxes. Another option to get the full \$50 million would be by stretching the payments out over several years. This is the principle of how annuities work.

The really good news is indexed annuities can not only avoid market risk, but all fees provided you follow the basics which can include waiting one year to begin withdrawing your money. Add on to this no current taxes, no probate (a legal process of validating a will for estate purposes) and outperforming the market itself over time and the picture is bright indeed. There are even companies that will credit up to a 10% bonus in your account up front, but it should be understood that this generally means keeping the account open for a longer period of time. All that said, there is simply no other investment like them.

With the recent sharp



Howard S. Blanck

decline in the stock market/economy and the awful events with the current coronavirus, you might want to ask what happens if you have no money to invest? It's still possible you might have some, and a good place to begin looking could be in your life insurance policy/policies.

All too often people buy one of the various forms of cash-value

life insurance (universal, variable, whole life, etc.), not because they need such policies, but because some agent or "friend" sold it to them.

The key point here is never to mix your life insurance with investing (just think of oil and water: they don't mix well either). If and when you need life insurance, the right kind is a low-cost term plan, and be sure to invest outside the policy.

Here's an example to help illustrate this:

Suppose Walmart is selling a refrigerator (cash-value insurance) for \$1,000 and Best Buy has the exact same one for \$200 (term insurance). If you purchase the \$200 one, you saved \$800, which can also be used to invest.

With standard whole-life, if there is a death on the policyholder, the company will pay the face amount. But what happens to the cash value? Buying term and investing elsewhere allows you the maximum value of both.

To summarize:

- Never mix your insurance with investing. If and when you need life insurance, buy a low-cost term plan.

- If you need money for investing or even living expenses, be sure to get an accurate reading of the cash value in your life insurance policies. It is generally not a good idea to borrow money against it because you are paying interest to borrow your own money. The dividends in your policy have also been de-

finied as an overpayment of premium.

- If you like the stock market but are inexperienced or cannot afford losses (who likes losing money?) look to indexed annuities.

- Even if you never heard of the company, it could be because they don't advertise much and they may still be well-rated.

- Knowledge is power, and we fear things we don't know or understand. If you use simple logic and math with all your financial decisions, you can be a winner.

Howard S. Blanck is an independent senior financial adviser in Reading. His website is www.seniorresourcesfinancial.com.

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SENIOR LIFE

For dementia patients, music is magical

By Wendy Kerschner

Music has a magical power. It lifts spirits, recalls memories and often encourages people to sing and move along.

Far more amazing is that musical memories are often preserved by those with dementia because key areas of the brain linked to musical memory are relatively untouched by the disease.

The film, "Alive Inside," as described on its website, is a "joyous cinematic exploration of music's capacity to reawaken our souls." Watch a clip of it on YouTube and you'll quickly agree with this theory: www.bit.ly/AliveMusic.

One of the featured dementia patients is a man who is mostly unresponsive until he is fitted with a headset, an iPod and music of his era, and then he truly comes alive. His eyes widen, he recalls the words to the song and he taps his hands. Even after the music is over, the

magical qualities of recall from the music now permit him to carry on a conversation that he seemingly was incapable of having prior to his musical experience. It's simply mind-blowing!

The facility where my grandmother lives recently had a special event with musical entertainment. Family members were invited to attend, so I went. When I arrived, I found my grandmother in her room, in bed nearly asleep, far from where the action was taking place. I roused her and said: "Mom Mom, they're having a party with music; let's go!"

On the way there she was still a bit dazed from her earlier slumber, but a root beer float and a few songs later she was transformed. She had new energy. She sang along and tapped her feet. Mom Mom raised her eyebrows to the beat. The music completely changed her mood. It lifted her spirits and mine. It was a glorious moment that put life back in

her! Music has this power.

According to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, music can "shift mood, manage stress-induced agitation, stimulate positive interactions, facilitate cognitive function and coordinate motor movements." Music is medicine.

Consider how you can build your loved one's musical library. Whether it is cassette tapes, CDs or digital music loaded onto an iPod or other device, choose music that they will enjoy. Religious hymns, big-band songs, show tunes, old-school country and western music: it doesn't matter, whatever the musical genre, start a library of their favorites. Often yard sales, secondhand stores or local library sales have troves of musical CDs for sale at a very reasonable cost, or you can purchase songs online from iTunes. You can even borrow CDs from your local library at no cost.

If your loved one lives in a facility, be sure to ask

for a schedule of activities. Make the time to visit when live musical entertainment is planned, and attend the event with the resident. The experience will be as powerful for you to witness as it is for your loved one to participate.

Everyone has the opportunity to bring their loved ones to life with music. Even if you don't play an instrument, you can play a smartphone. Simply search for music that is familiar. Choose a favorite song or one that will elicit a memory, such as a song from their youth or their wedding. Some universal favorites are "You are My Sunshine" and "Amazing Grace." Play them and prepare to be amazed!

"Where words fail, music speaks."

□ Hans Christian Andersen

Wendy Kerschner is territory manager for West Lawn-based Comfort Keepers In-Home Senior Care, www.westlawn-206.



Wendy Kerschner

SENIOR LIFE

Engaging with elderly loved ones: More important now than ever

By Wendy Kerschner — Comfort Keepers

During this time of social distancing, we are all getting a reality check on how seniors might feel when they are isolated. If you're anything like the family members in my household, at any given moment you might be bored, irritated, ready to take a nap, still in your pajamas, constantly eating comfort foods, lacking a routine and feel stuck in a rut. Can you relate? For some seniors, this is their life, not just now but every day.

Feeling isolated affects mental and physical well-being. The geriatric population is especially vulnera-

ble, due to their delicate medical situations and multiple chronic conditions.

According to the National Institute on Aging, "Social isolation and loneliness are linked to increased risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, weakened immune system, anxiety, depression and cognitive decline."

What folks need for their well-being is positive daily interactions.

One easy way to connect with a loved one is an old-fashioned phone call. The sound of a familiar voice will be welcomed and appreciated. To keep the conversation engaging, consider asking your loved one to share a family story or memory from their child-

hood. They can also give them a newspaper or magazine article. Even singing together on the phone can be a fun and memorable experience. At the end of the call be sure to mention when you'll be calling again. It will give them something to look forward to.

For isolated seniors who may not have loved ones to connect and call them, the AARP can help. The AARP offers a free program called Friendly Voices through their Community Connections program. Friendly Voices are trained AARP volunteers who will provide a call to say hello. Enroll through their website at <https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/friendly-voices/> or call 888-281-0145

and 5 p.m. Re-occurring calls can be scheduled, too.

Another tried-and-true method to connect is through the mail. Mail a letter or greeting card. Consider enclosing an old photo, a magazine article, a cartoon or a comical picture you know they will enjoy. Scratch-off lottery tickets are a welcome surprise to include too! Even a page colored by a grandchild or great-grandchild will be appreciated. Mail items as often as feasible. Ask friends, family and neighbors to join in by sharing your loved one's address with them. The constant flow of mail will be a highlight to their day.

Consider mailing an occasional care package in

cluded items could include playing cards, an adult coloring book, a magazine, pocket sized tissues, posters or notions that remind them of their interests and hobbies.


For seniors with the capability to engage on social media and electronic devices, there are many options. A Facetime or Skype conversation makes your call more personal since they can see your face (and as a bonus, you can include your pet). There are also applications like Zoom and Houseparty that allow video conferencing with multiple callers at once.

Get creative with technology. Consider sharing a "virtual" meal together, playing "virtual" bingo or

favorite movie or TV show. "Virtual" exercise is an interactive option, too. These activities will provide engagement and conversation points.

Creating a sense of connection takes a little time and creativity. Always be on the lookout for a reason to connect and celebrate. Google "National Day Calendar" for a comprehensive list of reasons to celebrate every single calendar day!

Continue to encourage your loved ones to maintain a routine, exercise daily or go for a walk, eat as healthy as possible and hydrate. Positive interactions will influence your loved ones' well-being and give them a mood boost, which is so important during times like


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SENIOR LIFE

Don't put 'yoga pants' on your finances

By Ryan Daniels

The mind is a powerful. We can convince ourselves of just about anything and create habits that take our life in a direction far different than we intended. While childhood experiences, role models and life's twists and turns influence our life, a decision followed by action is all it takes to change our circumstances and create the life we desire.

Kyle Idelman in his book "Don't Give Up" discusses good intentions and how intention alone will not get you your desired results — only action will. Yet, people often convince themselves they are making progress simply because of their good intentions. Consider fitness or weight loss. Having an intention to go to the gym does not create a healthier you, only the actions of exercise and healthy eating produce the desired result.

Kyle discusses the billion-dollar industry of "athleisure" clothing, such as yoga pants and other athletic apparel. People wear "athleisure" clothing daily but may

never exercise — they simply get dressed! This isn't to criticize anyone's wardrobe choices; I think everyone has experienced the new "business-casual" consisting of a dress-shirt and sweatpants while on a video-conference for work during the quarantine. This observation is simply to bring awareness that our intentions, if not followed by action, will NOT help us reach our desired outcome.

In regards to finances, most people have good intentions to payoff debt, save for their kid's college and of course invest for retirement. However, how many people are taking actionable steps to make good on those intentions? Surprisingly, very few. It is our daily decisions and disciplines that determine our destiny.

The action of packing a lunch and investing \$10 per day in a 401(k) rather than ordering the No. 6 in the drive-thru seems trivial at the time, but the long-term impact is huge. The action of watching Netflix and paying \$20 towards debt rather than going to the movie theater can save you hundreds

or more on interest. Big results and our desired lifestyle come from these daily decisions and disciplines.

We all have good intentions; we just need to take action by taking the first step.

Take time to make a list of your financial intentions. What do you want to accomplish? How will you feel when you achieve your goals? Who else will benefit? What are you willing to give up in the short-term to reach those goals?

Do you feel confused or lack confidence in your finances? Take a night off from Netflix and watch a free "Simple Steps" webinar at www.rfinances.com/steps to learn the three decisions and three Simple Steps to take control of your finances. Remember, it's OK to wear yoga pants, but it's time to take the first Simple Step and make good on your intentions and take action — you deserve it!

Ryan Daniels is an independent financial coach. He is a U.S. Army Veteran who enjoys continuing to serve, "Supporting communities by building financially strong families."



Ryan Daniels

SENIOR LIFE

Need help with everyday tasks? Home care could be the solution

By Sherry Kutz

Not too long ago, there was an article written about how to plan for getting older. This probably seems like a silly thing to be thinking about. Everyone knows what to look at, 401(k), insurances and the like, right? But there is more — much more! I like to think about it as a best-kept secret: home care.

Home care is having an agency come to your home to assist with everyday tasks you may be having

some trouble completing. These are things you do not typically think about until you start to have trouble with them. They may sneak up on you slowly or perhaps one day you can complete the task and the next you cannot. Things like getting the fresh clean linens onto the bed, bending down to get clothes into or out of the washer/dryer, putting your shoes on (your feet can be further away than you can imagine) or you can't see to safely drive. These tasks, and many more, can be

completed by a home care agency.

A typical agency will assist with running errands, light housework, laundry, meal preparation, grooming and hygiene assistance, shopping/groceries and providing companionship with could consist of mental stimulation exercises. These tasks can be completed anywhere you call home. It doesn't matter where you live. It could be in your home, an apartment or in a community. These services are available to

you. The idea of home care is to keep you as independent as possible, no matter where you are.

These tasks could also be more difficult when you are recovering from a change in life status. Perhaps you were in an accident, had surgery or suffered a health crisis. Oh, and by the way, it is not simply for people who are getting older. Anyone who is recovering from a major life change might be able to use this help.

Many people feel they have a great network of

friends to rely on to help in situations like this. And you may be right, but do they want to help every day? Do you want to rely on the favors of friends for personal care? Every person is different in how they want to handle this.

Unfortunately, most people don't know these services exist until they are in a situation where they need it desperately, or it is too late. These services can help ease stressful situations, thus making life more enjoyable. It can be a

service that is available for only periods of time that it is needed. This flexibility is important when part of your recovery is taking on more everyday tasks.

When it comes to planning for the golden years, there are many best-kept secrets. You may want to investigate what other secrets you might be missing out on.

Sherry Kutz is Client Relations Manager for Assured Assistance.

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As we all know, the 2020 Graduating classes are devastated. No Spring sports, Prom, Formal Graduation, no last 'hurrah' to say good-bye to schoolmates and teachers. A void of everything these kids worked so hard to accomplish.

I am organizing an "Adopt A Senior" Program for the Twin Valley Class of 2020.



Heatherwood will be putting together a gift basket at a value of \$100 of items for one student.

My goal is to have families and businesses take part of this and if you need a drop-off point, Heatherwood is it!!!

It makes my heart happy to be able to do this for this group of kids.

Please share with your contact list — and note to those folks: KEEP THIS A SECRET to make the surprise and the look on their faces priceless.

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SENIOR LIFE

Volunteers shop for seniors amid coronavirus crisis

By Bill Rettew

brettew@21st-century-media.com
@wcdailylocal on Twitter

WEST CHESTER » Susan Johnstone has been food shopping more than usual during the coronavirus pandemic.

The former proprietor of the Lincoln Room, and wife of Business Improvement District Executive Director Malcolm Johnstone, has been busy shopping for seniors as part of the newly created West Chester Shopping Service.

The all-volunteer food service spearheaded by Mayor Dianne Herrin kicked off Friday and serves those who can't make it to a grocery store.

"People are very humble," Johnstone said. "I don't want anybody to go hungry. When I ask people for their list, they only give me the bare necessities."

"Nobody has asked for snack foods or desserts."

Since it was Easter week, Johnstone included something special - jelly beans - in the three orders she shopped for and delivered. She also asked the seniors if they would like her to buy cookies. She said that everyone loves Oreos.

Johnstone said that each of three households has asked for spaghetti, noodles and tomato sauce.

"Everybody likes spaghetti and they can stretch it," she said. "Everybody knows they can fix it themselves and it's not expensive."

"It's a staple."

Johnstone also suggests purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables, including bananas, if they aren't already on the list, since they are healthy.

She is a bargain hunter and shops at several stores.

"I want them to be comfortable with my purchases," she said.

The volunteers, led by Mayor Herrin, and Emily Pisano, administrative assistant to the mayor and Chief of Police, have served six residents as of Monday, with a team of seven volunteers.

"It feels great to protect our seniors who cannot or should not be grocery shopping during the pandemic," Herrin said. "This service is proving especially helpful right now because grocery store delivery services are backed up with an overwhelming quantity of orders, and deliveries are sometimes significantly de-

layed. These seniors need their groceries.

"Quite a few citizens have volunteered to shop for our seniors in need, and when I thank them, they instead thank me for giving them an opportunity to be of service. This is just one more example of how caring and selfless the people who live here are. With a community like this, I have no doubt we will pull through this crisis together, and we will be even stronger as a result."

Kate Shaw is a West Chester resident and West Chester Area School Board member.

She shopped for bananas, ground meat and pie filling during Easter Week.

"It makes me happy to do something," Shaw said.

Shaw is inspired by "all the amazing things" teachers, parents and students are doing during the pandemic.

"Students are still engaged," she said. "At least I can do something little like deliver groceries."

"We are letting the elderly people stay in their homes so they don't get exposed to the virus. I hope more people do it."

Participants are asked to prepare a list, a budget or order groceries for pick-up.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lisa Shaw grocery shops for seniors.

A volunteer will drop off the groceries outside and collect cash for the purchases. If the senior orders with the grocery store for

pick-up they may pay with a credit card. For those in need, a volunteer will visit the West Chester Food Cup-

board. To volunteer, or have someone shop for you, call Emily Pisano at 610-696-1930 or email at episano@west-chester.com.

SENIOR LIFE

6 ways to prevent falls around the house

Despite all of the potential hazards around a house from electrical issues to fire hazards to carbon monoxide, the National Home Security Alliance says that falls are the leading cause of death due to home accidents.

Falls are responsible for one-third of all home-related fatalities. Although seniors are the group most affected by falls, these types of accidents can af-

fect anyone.

A broken bone may be a minor inconvenience for young people, but fractures are more serious for the elderly. As a result, seniors must take measures to protect themselves against falls. These steps can minimize risk at home.

1. Remove tripping hazards. Examine rooms and hallways for potential hazards, such as slippery

throw rugs, floorboards that stick up, loose carpeting, or furniture that blocks walking paths. Remedy these hazards as soon as possible. Address loose floorboards and/or place nonslip materials beneath rugs.

2. Install grab bars or railings. Install grab bars in certain locations for extra stability or where someone may need leverage getting up from a

seated position. They are particularly helpful near toilets and bathtubs and in stairways and hallways.

3. Stick to sensible shoes. Sensible shoes fit properly and have sturdy, non-skid soles. Avoid walking around in slippers or even in stocking feet, which are much more slippery.

4. Store items within reach. Store items that are used frequently, such as dishes, in easily acces-

sible cabinets and other locations. This prevents having to climb or reach for them.

5. Install more lighting. Poor visibility can contribute to falls. Lighting in hallways, stairways, bathrooms, and bedrooms - even if it is a small night light can be enough to light the way.

6. Reinforce your home's exterior. Falls do not only occur inside. Inspect the

perimeter of a property for uneven turf, holes or cracked or uneven patches of walkways. Make sure lighting is working at entryways, and check that exterior handrails are secure.

Falls can cause serious injury or death, particularly for aging men and women. Simple fixes around the house can make things more secure and reduce the risk for falls.



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SENIOR LIFE

Woman marks 100th birthday with drive-by parade

By Bill Rettew
brettew@21st-centurymedia.com
@wcdailylocal on Twitter

WEST CHESTER » Although it happened during the coronavirus pandemic, it was still a party 100 years in the making.

More than 100 car loads of well-wishers, Oscar Lasko YMCA members, the mayor, police, family and friends helped celebrate West Marshall Street resident Mary Atkins' 100th birthday recently.

With a big grin, Atkins waved and even danced a little from her porch as the caravan passed by, with police lights flashing and car horns tooting.

Dozens of fellow YMCA members saluted Atkins, who moved her workouts to her basement after the pandemic closed the uptown workout facility.

During hour-long YMCA workouts, Atkins spends 20 minutes on the treadmill and exercises on 10 machines. She started her workouts before exercise machines became popular.

During the pandemic, she works out from home for 20 minutes at a time, four times a day, and seven days per week. There is no bathroom on the ground floor of her home and she bounds up or down the stairs like she is working out on a stair master to do the laundry or powder her nose.

Atkins is most always the center of attention. Her daughter, Dallas Atkins, said that her mother has an incredible attitude.

"She'll talk to anybody like she's known them for 20 years," Dallas said during a phone call from her home in Santa Barbara. "She treats them all like a new friend or an old friend."

"It's interesting to see how complete strangers react to her."

The birthday girl was matter of fact after reaching the milestone.

"It's just 100," Atkins said. "I never really gave it much thought."

"It's just a number. I'm very



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100-year-old Mary Atkins waves at a caravan of more than 100 vehicles of well-wishers on her birthday.

healthy. I'm very fortunate."

Atkins said that the ongoing pandemic does not compare to the severity of the Great Depression which occurred when she was 10 years old. Her father and his twin brother invented the rolling cement mixer truck that spins.

Banks failed and there was no federal insurance like there is today.

Her father had invested in the stock market and lost much in the crash of 1929.

"You didn't have a nickel," she said. "You couldn't even buy a loaf of bread."

"Everyone was out of work. There was nothing ever like the Great Depression."

Her mother died just after giving birth to her, possibly of the last pandemic, the Spanish Flu. She then moved in with her grandmother Graham who had 11 children. The family was known as "The Kissing Grahams."

Dallas said that her mother was an athlete since high school, where at just over five feet tall she broad jumped.

Mom loves to dance, golf, garden, do yard work and is still an avid swimmer. As a child in Hampton, Virginia

she rowed across a lake every day to go to the post office and collect the mail. At 100, she still drives.

Atkins was employed by the Werner and Wood law firm in the borough until she was almost 99. She worked on computer billing and book-keeping.

Daughter Dallas attributed several habits to her mother's longevity.

The hundred-year old gets up very early and goes to bed at 7 or 8 p.m. She gets plenty of sleep. Atkins eats a normal diet: oatmeal with blueberries, an orange and a cup of coffee for breakfast; and usually milk, a banana and a hardboiled egg for lunch. At night it's meat, potatoes and

veggies, and to top it off, she always has butter pecan ice cream.

Atkins said she still drinks a single vodka and tonic every day before dinner and she never smoked.

She is now single and had three kids. She has subscribed to the Daily Local News for more than 50 years and watches Judge Judy.

Atkins collects antiques, Buddha's, turquoise jewelry, silver and illustrated books, including N.C. Wyeth illustrated books.

"Her house is like a fine antiques store," Dallas said. "And she likes to polish silver."

Dallas said her mother looks 20 years younger than her age.

"People respond to her because she is an extrovert with so much energy, and she is so much fun," Dallas said. "She's infectious."

"She lifts people up." Mayor Dianne Herrin rode with Police Chief Jim Morehead.

"I think we all have great admiration and respect for anyone who achieves this milestone," Herrin said. "Turning 100 years old is truly an amazing accomplishment. The elderly in our community have so much to offer, so many stories to tell, and so much wisdom to share."

"Happy, happy birthday Mary, on behalf of everyone in West Chester!"

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mary Atkins celebrated her 100th birthday. She regularly exercises at the Oscar Lasko YMCA.

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SENIOR LIFE

Common warning signs of arthritis

Arthritis has name recognition, even among people who are not suffering from it. But despite that recognition, arthritis is not as well understood as one might think.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, arthritis is not a single disease, but rather an informal way of referring to joint pain or joint disease. In fact, the term arthritis so wide-ranging that it actually re-

fers to more than 100 types of conditions.

Despite that complexity, arthritis often produces four important warning signs, regardless of which type of arthritis a person may have.

1. Pain - The Arthritis Foundation notes that arthritis-related pain may be constant or intermittent. One common misconception about arthritis pain is that it only occurs dur-

ing or shortly after a body is at rest. However, arthritis-related pain can occur while the body is at rest and is not always triggered by an activity that incorporates a part of the body affected by arthritis. In addition, pain from arthritis can be isolated to one area of the body or affect various parts of the body.

2. Swelling - Skin over the joints affected by arthritis may become red

and swollen. This skin also may feel warm to the touch. The Arthritis Foundation advises anyone who experiences this swelling for three days or longer or more than three times per month to contact a physician.

3. Stiffness - This warning sign is, along with pain, the one that is most often associated with arthritis, even by people who don't suffer from the

condition. Stiffness when waking up in the morning or after long periods of being sedentary, such as sitting at a desk during the workday or taking a long car ride, can be symptomatic of arthritis, especially if the stiffness lasts an hour or longer.

4. Difficulty moving a joint - The Arthritis Foundation notes that people should not experience difficulty moving, such as

when getting out of bed. People who experience such difficulty may have arthritis. People who recognize any of these warning signs should report them to their physicians immediately. Be as specific as possible when describing these symptoms, as specificity can help physicians design the most effective course of treatment.

SENIOR LIFE

5 essential steps for managing blood sugar

Brandpoint

In the U.S. alone, 28.1 million people are living with diabetes, and an added 7.2 million are living with undiagnosed diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Additionally, the American Diabetes Association reports that 84 million American adults have prediabetes, but nearly 90 percent of them don't even know it.

If you are experiencing symptoms such as frequent urination (often more than ten times a day), persistent thirst or chronic fatigue, it's possible that you are living with diabetes - and it's crucial to get tested so you can get the treatment your body needs. That's particularly important now, because, according to the CDC, diabetes sufferers are among those at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

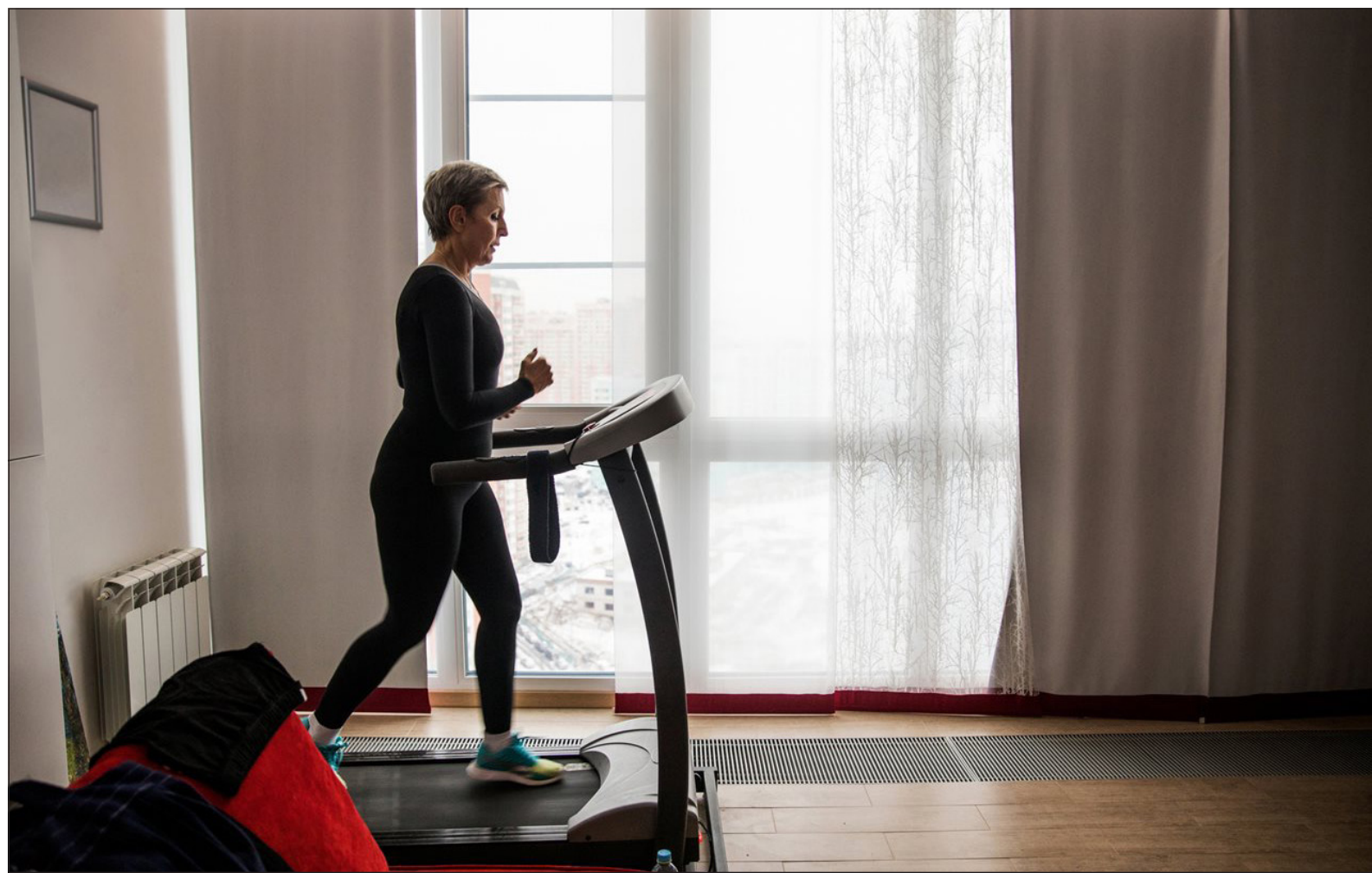
Although the current pandemic and social distancing measures make things more challenging, the following tips can help you manage your blood sugar and prioritize your health if you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, a family history of diabetes or are experiencing diabetes symptoms:

1. Get tested

The only way to be sure about your blood sugar health is to get tested. It's easier than ever to determine your risk for diabetes, even when spending more time at home. LetsGetChecked offers an at-home HbA1c test that measures your blood sugar over the previous three months to help identify prediabetes or check how well you are controlling the disease following diagnosis. After you receive your results, a team of physicians and nurses are available to help you navigate them and answer your questions. You can find the LetsGetChecked diabetes test online.

2. Keep track of your symptoms

Identifying your symptoms will help you tackle your health issues head on. Keep an eye out for symptoms of high blood sugar, including feeling thirsty all the time, feeling tired all the time or weak, frequent headaches, concentration issues and a



Diabetes sufferers are among those at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

fasting blood sugar level of 100mg/dl or more. If you experience these symptoms, it's important to get tested for diabetes right away.

3. Choose foods with a Low Glycemic Index

The Glycemic Index (GI) is a ranking of how quickly certain foods make your blood glucose levels rise after eating them. Carbohydrates with a low GI, such as porridge, brown pasta, noodles and multiseed/grainy breads, are the best type of carbohydrates to eat for pre-diabetes or diabetes. 'Pulses' such as chickpeas, garden peas, butter beans, kidney beans, black beans and lentils are high in fiber and protein, which will also help slow down the breakdown of carbohydrates into glucose in the blood. This means that they don't give that sharp rise in your blood sugar levels.

4. Stay active

Physical activity is one of the best things you can do for

your overall health and will help keep your blood sugar levels within normal limits. As a rule of thumb, aim to get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise into your day 5 times per week. Many free classes are available online, for all fitness levels, to help you start or continue your exercise routine.

5. Prioritize sleep

Sleep affects blood sugar, and your current blood sugar affects your sleep. Studies show that those who sleep for six hours or less will have significantly higher blood sugar, and a lack of sleep leads to slower fat metabolism and slower glucose processing - so aim to get at least seven to eight hours of quality sleep each night.

While staying active, eating the right foods and keeping track of your symptoms can all help manage your blood sugar, the most important way to make sure you are managing your health is to get tested.

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with Faith C. Woodward
Director of Admission and Marketing

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"What's on your bucket list?" is a phrase often heard. A bucket list, or a list of things you want to do before you "kick the bucket," is really about living. What do you want to accomplish, experience, or explore in the future? When you make these kinds of creative, thought-provoking lists, you benefit from the simple fact that it brings your ideas into focus. You can talk about and reflect on the list. Planning is required for some experiences, such as saving money for a trip or learning some French for that trip. Suddenly, you find yourself achieving much more than you thought possible. Writing these goals down and focusing on them brings them to life.

With Faith Woodward, Director of Admissions and Marketing at Barclay Friends—to learn more, please call 610-696-5211 or visit our website, <http://bf.kendal.org/>.

SENIOR LIFE

UNSUNG HEROES

Seniors support one another despite breakdown of 'normal' American society

By Jen Samuel
jsamuel@dailylocal.com
@jenpoetess on Twitter

MALVERN » Companionship is a virtue. Cherished friends and beloved family inspire; love.

As said Shakespeare: "Words are easy, like the wind; Faithful friends are hard to find."

Kindness. Care. Charitable work includes providing care to the elderly.

Nationwide and elsewhere, Seniors Helping Seniors provides a service of empowerment to both clients and staff. The vast majority of staff members, known as caregivers, are senior citizens who want to make a difference. And do.

In-home caregivers are the unsung heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing consistent, safe care for seniors in the comfort of their homes, said Kayla Bodel, Seniors Helping Seniors spokeswoman.

Thus, despite the crisis, many senior caregivers aren't backing down. They continue to provide in-home care to clients. And friendships form along the way.

Regionally, Pat Hennigan runs the Philadelphia regional franchise of Seniors Helping Seniors with 130 caregivers and a management operational staff.

Based in Malvern, the business serves 80 clients in Chester, Montgomery, upper Bucks counties.

Three veterans receive assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, he said.

Seniors support one another despite breakdown of 'normal' American society



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Caregiver Eleanor Buczala and Chester County resident Cora Barry became friends thanks to Seniors Helping Seniors. Barry passed away in early 2019. Ruled the most "vulnerable" during the onset of the coronavirus crisis, senior citizens are in isolation at home or elsewhere.

Ruled the most "vulnerable" during the onset of the coronavirus crisis, senior citizens remain in isolation at home or elsewhere.

"We're being even more cautious than usual." Adding, the service of caregiving is offered to people who really need the help, Hennigan said.

"A lot of these seniors are

isolated," Hennigan said. "We might be the only person who they are seeing during the week."

He said a lot has changed since the crisis began.

Six weeks ago, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency on March 13 at the White House. That same day in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Gov. Tom Wolf closed all schools statewide.

Five days later, March 18, Wolf officially ordered the shutdown of all businesses his administration declared "non-essential" and "non-life-sustaining."

Enforcement actions by the Pennsylvania State Police for non-compliant businesses began on March 21. Wolf issued a stay-at-home order for all residents living in the greater Philadelphia region including the residents of Chester County on March 23.

By April 1, the governor extended the stay-at-home order to the entire state, impacting life in all 67 counties.

"We've had a pullback in business," he said. Not only are some caregivers staying at home, many family members are now able to care for their loved ones themselves.

Last week, the governors of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York said citizens should expect a "new normal."

"A lot of people aren't going into work. They're spending more time with their seniors," Hennigan said. "Family support has really increased."

Yet many seniors still need caregivers; in fact, now more than ever, given the statewide stay-at-home order.

Hennigan encouraged folks — from church friends

to relatives — to reach out to seniors in isolation.

"In addition to phone calls, send a handwritten letter or card," said caregiver Eleanor Buczala, "and better yet, a drawing from grandchildren, friends or others in the community. Seniors enjoy reading and rereading these handwritten notes."

She said many seniors under care are not un-equipped for computer or cell phone management.

Seniors Helping Seniors tips to connect with elderly loved ones under quarantine:

- Making care packages of handwritten notes with words of encouragement, Vitamin-C, paper products, cleaning products and comfort foods, the more nutritious, the better;

- Organize window walks with your local community to stop by seniors' homes and wave or hold up signs outside;

- Hold regular video calls on Zoom/FaceTime/Skype, but send an easy-to-follow instruction guide ahead of the call or talk through how to use the software over the phone since unfortunately not all seniors are tech savvy;

- Work a video call lesson into your daily schedule of learning with your chil-

dren. Seniors have plenty of great insights and lessons to share;

- Offer to run errands including for groceries, remedies and other necessities.

Founded in 1998, there are more than 130 Seniors Helping Seniors franchises worldwide.

When seniors realize they can help other seniors as caregivers, it is an inspirational moment, said Howard Algeo, Seniors Helping Seniors director of business development and training for the greater Philadelphia region.

"The greatest challenge seniors face is isolation and loneliness," Algeo said. "Those are things that really are pretty easy to resolve with a telephone call or a FaceTime."

Of missing his own loved ones: "I haven't seen my grandchildren in at least a couple of weeks, longer, right? But my daughter and son-in-law drive by our place and we wave at them," he said.

"Drive by, honk the horn, wave out the window," Algeo said. "Stay in touch. Call them."

He said, "The human voice is such a great comfort in this time. It's really important."

Hennigan concurred. "Seniors really appreciate any interaction," Hennigan said. "It can really make their day or their week."

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left, team members Jennie Schmallenberger, Vonnay Chambers, Monique Belisle and Amber Yellowtail. The ladies work together for a regional franchise of Seniors Helping Seniors which serves 80 clients and oversees 130 caregivers in the regional community from Landenberg to Lahaska.

FOCUS | HUMOR

FINE RHYMES

The limerick contest was a delight
Poems came to me in morning and night
Here are just a few
For which I thank you
If you feel robbed, you're probably right.

By KURT SNIBBE | Southern California News Group

There were thousands of submissions and I tried my best to keep on top of them. I got letters and emails from all over the country, a few from overseas and from inmates. I am so grateful for your humor and creativity.

Many great ideas and poems were about being self-isolated and COVID-19, but the competition rules were for humorous poems about pets or animals because April was Humor, Poetry and Pet month wrapped into one.

I wish we had a book filled with all your great work to sell, with the proceeds going to first responders during this mess. But, my time and duties for this news organization keep me busy with many other endeavors. I think we all win a little when we take time to be creative. I know it was a pleasure to read and laugh along with your submissions. Thanks again.

There's only so much space on a print page. Remember, if your poem is not listed and you think you were robbed, you're probably right! There could have been a hundred times more winners.

National Limerick Day is May 12!

Flamingos are pink, as you know
They like to put on quite a show
While the crowd ahs and ohs
They return to their pose
And continue to preen, head to toe.
— Joanne Clem

A penguin, all dressed in his suit
Lacks some things to look astute
A bow tie and spats
One of those top hats
Would make him look thoroughly cute.
— Penny Beaulieu

I have a small doggy named Ted
Who sleeps at the head of my bed
But since he's been told
That my feet get real cold
Now he sleeps at the bottom instead.
— Amie Montgomery

Coco's the cat that used to be chunky
Other cats still thought he was hunky
I put him on a diet
Now he can't keep quiet
He obsessively meows like a food junkie.
— Hannah Lake

The perfect pet must be the flea
I love to bounce mine on my knee
Oh! He squeals with glee
But is "he" a "she"?
I must admit, it's hard to see.
— Craig Wheeler

There once was a tabby named Caesar
Never much of a people pleaser
He'd sleep on his tail
Then wake up with a wail
That his tail blamed him as the squeezer.
— Lauren Clark

I always wanted to own a pet dragon
So I started beggin', pleading and naggin'
Mama resisted
Even though I persisted
But yay! There's a new dog in my wagon!
— Sue Welfringer

A canine pet sure does the trick
They cuddle, they play and they lick
A good walk by the bay
With "social distance" they say
The whole point is not to get sick.
— Cathy Jensen (part of a longer poem)

There once was a fellow named Lou
Who worked at a big city zoo
When feeding the lion
He thought was just sighing
Now they're looking for somebody new.
— Earl Thomas

My pet is Spot The Giraffe
Her super-sized neck makes me laugh
I don't worry about trees
She trims all of these
And reduces my yard work by half!
— Patricia Dewald

Of our fish — of all five — we are fond
At each feeding, we strengthen the bond
They don't panic at flu
But they're glad that we do
And now know what it's like in a pond.
— Portly Bard

Here I wait avoiding the plague
My BFF Rover drooling on my leg
I'm trying not to shout
We just want out
huddled by the door we beg.
— Nancy Spencer



Two eagles on YouTube are free
They've built a huge nest we can see
They bring up large sticks
If they stick to their tricks
They're liable to topple the tree.
— Alan Cook

There once was a dragon named Cyrus
He was most afraid of the virus
He puffed and he roared
Through the sky he soared
His jewel-adorned mask was priceless.
— Debby Johnson

Kitty likes her coat all clean
But, I am under quarantine
So, upon her couch I lie
Her chairs I occupy
It's my hair, Kitty must preen.
— Joann Adams

A girl from Long Island was bitter
Her birdy on Facebook had quit her
But said her canary
"Social media's scary —
I'm just sticking to my own twitter."
— Bob Niccum

My poor puppy is lately confused
For his training is going unused
I taught him to shake
That was a mistake
Because handshakes must now be refused.
— Craig D. Hardwick

A piglet named Sven was quite pink
'Cause each day he got a bath in the sink
He'd soak off the mud
And all other crud
All the while he was sipping a drink
— Kelly Beuth

Stuck in this COVID disaster
Tried to make the time move faster
Found a small kitten
And I was smitten
But this cat thinks he's MY master!
— Maureen de Koff

I talk to my fish but he is not keen
Listening to me complain of my routine
He would rather swim
Than hear me talk to him
Welcome to life with COVID-19!
— Daryn Desai

Our home has four furry rescues
From two species we got to choose
When the dogs get a treat
The cats come to eat
After eating they all take a snooze.
— Vicki Reese

He's just a neighborhood cat
Home is where food is at
He's friendly enough
If you're serving good stuff
But after he's done, that's that.
— Toni Donart

I once had my social scene
Then along came COVID-19
Now I'm in a rural dump
And I feel like a chump
But at least my cats are serene.
— Art Hirst

Tabby bites when she's feeling crabby
Twenty pounds of furry and flabby
She curls on your lap
For a warm purring nap
You're soon passed out with Dear Abby.
— Diane Dorman

A bat for a pet is obscene
It carries a critter unseen
A dog or a cat
Is better than that
They all have had a vaccine.
— W. Clyde Barton

As we shelter inside from this virus
Our dogs pad around to admire us
They're in a good mood
(As long as there's food)
Their spirit should really inspire us.
— David Crohn (part of a longer limerick)

I dream of owning a hedgehog
Who'd eat grubs from under a log
But alas he'd have spikes
I'd touch him and say, yikes!
Instead I'll just get a pet dog.
— Katie Clark

There once was a dog named Marty
His appetite was quite hearty
He sure liked to schmooze
And chew on some shoes
He was the life of the party.
— Joan Bergeron

Our beagle is from Tennessee
A puppy mill rescue was he
From chicken coop living
To beds quite forgiving
Orange County's where he'd rather be!
— Lynn Mickadeit (from a longer poem)

FOCUS | HEALTH CARE

INVISIBLE ENEMY

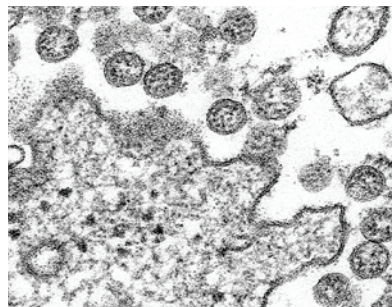
Here's what the SARS-CoV-2 virus looks like in a microscope and how it attacks us.

By KURT SNIBBE | Southern California News Group

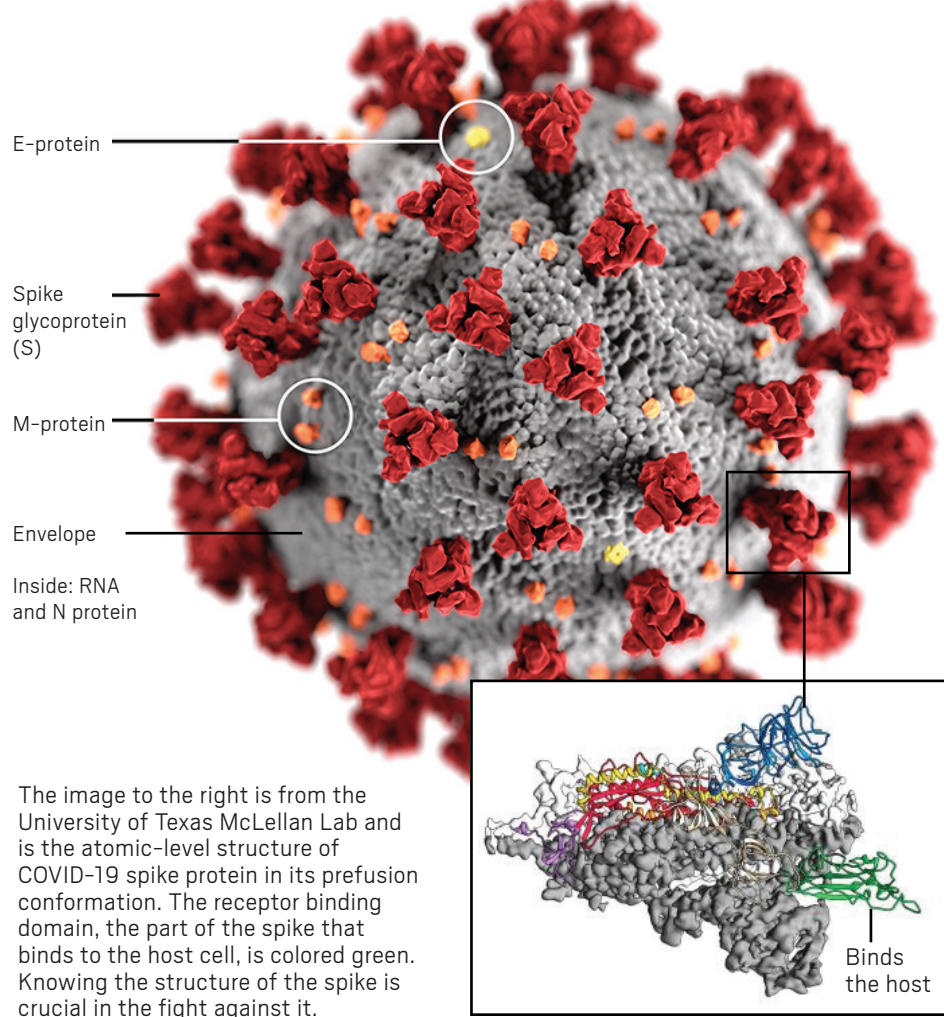
FACE OF COVID-19

This famous image on the right illustrates scientists' best guess of what the virus actually looks like. It was created at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to show SARS-CoV-2's fine structure. Coronaviruses appear different from other viruses due to their prominent surface spikes.

The name "coronavirus" is derived from Latin "corona," meaning crown or wreath. The spikes adorning the virus's outer surface gave its original images the look of a corona like that surrounding our sun.



The image above is a more accurate view of the internal structure of SARS-CoV-2. A cell is shown at bottom left. Spherical extracellular viral particles that have budded from the cell contain cross-sections through the virus's RNA genome, seen as black dots.



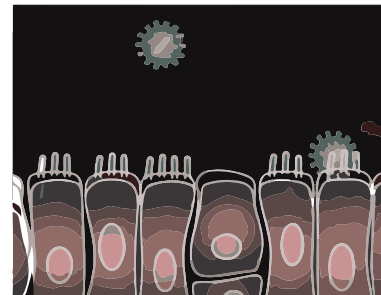
The image to the right is from the University of Texas McLellan Lab and is the atomic-level structure of COVID-19 spike protein in its prefusion conformation. The receptor binding domain, the part of the spike that binds to the host cell, is colored green. Knowing the structure of the spike is crucial in the fight against it.

HOW COVID-19 ATTACKS

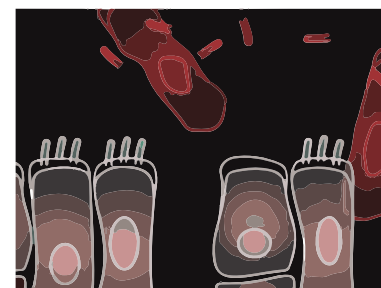
On average, a person who develops symptoms will feel ill for about seven days after their onset.



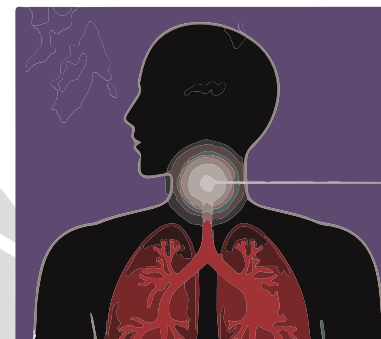
Typically, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is most harmful to the lungs. The virus enters the body through the nose, mouth or eyes, then invades the lungs.



SARS-CoV-2 can damage cilia, the hairlike projections on cells that move the protective mucus layer containing debris and microbes upward from the lungs to be expelled through the mouth and nose.



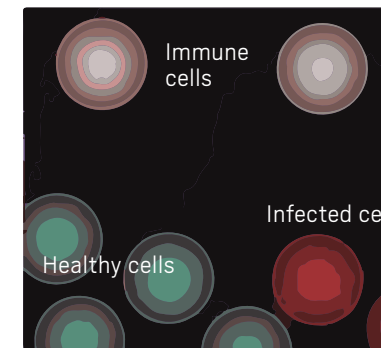
When the cells' lining in the respiratory tract gets infected, that lining can be breached by bacteria that cause pneumonia. In addition, that breach can alert the immune system to overreact, causing inflammatory responses that damage the lungs further.



Inflammation causes fluid buildup that impedes the movement of oxygen to the bloodstream. Troubled breathing can occur around five days after infection. Moderate to severe cases can involve pneumonia; recovery can take weeks. Hospital ventilators can provide oxygen under pressure, which helps push it through to the bloodstream.



Severe cases can advance to acute respiratory distress syndrome, or ARDS, characterized by fluid buildup in the lungs that prevents oxygen from reaching the blood.



The inflammation driving ARDS also triggers a flood of immune cells that start killing healthy tissue, leading to scar formation in the lungs that further impedes oxygen's movements to the blood.



Thus, the cause of most COVID-19 deaths is ARDS, in which the lungs become so fluid-filled, stiff and scarred that they can no longer provide oxygen to the bloodstream.

Nano test answer: about 11.6 days

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

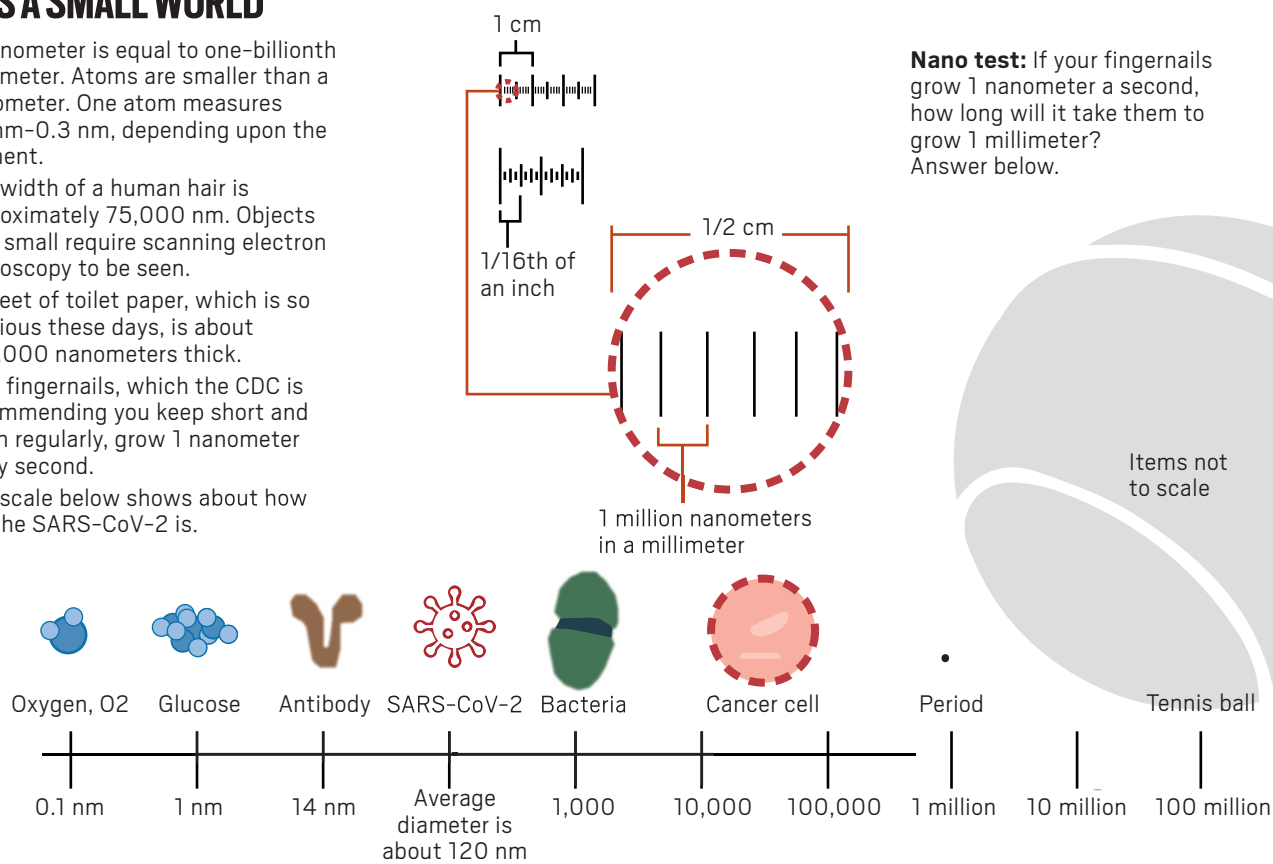
A nanometer is equal to one-billionth of a meter. Atoms are smaller than a nanometer. One atom measures 0.1 nm-0.3 nm, depending upon the element.

The width of a human hair is approximately 75,000 nm. Objects that small require scanning electron microscopy to be seen.

A sheet of toilet paper, which is so precious these days, is about 100,000 nanometers thick.

Your fingernails, which the CDC is recommending you keep short and wash regularly, grow 1 nanometer every second.

The scale below shows about how big the SARS-CoV-2 is.



THE VACCINES AND ANTIBODIES

Scientists at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease's Vaccine Research Center and labs around the world are racing to develop and test vaccines. Unfortunately, even if the current vaccines under study are successful, they could take many months before hitting the clinics. One vaccine in development is called mRNA-1273 and is based on prior studies on coronaviruses such as the original SARS and MERS.

As with most vaccines, mRNA-1273's job is to stimulate a person's body to produce antibodies that will neutralize SARS-CoV-2 by attacking its surface spikes. The spikes bind the virus to human

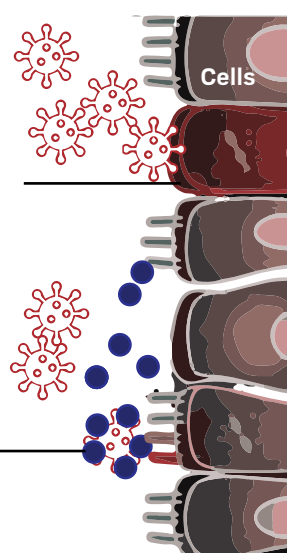
cells, allowing the virus to gain entry. Neutralizing antibodies block that interaction. The hope is that by eliciting neutralizing antibodies, mRNA-1273 will prevent the virus from latching on to cells.

Another fight against COVID-19 is underway using plasma (blood with its cells removed) from patients who have recovered. The theory is that antibodies against the virus in a recovered person's blood may help those with severe cases. While this type of "passive immunization" originated more than 100 years ago, the type of transfusion for COVID-19 has only been studied in a very small sample around the world.

Vaccine basics

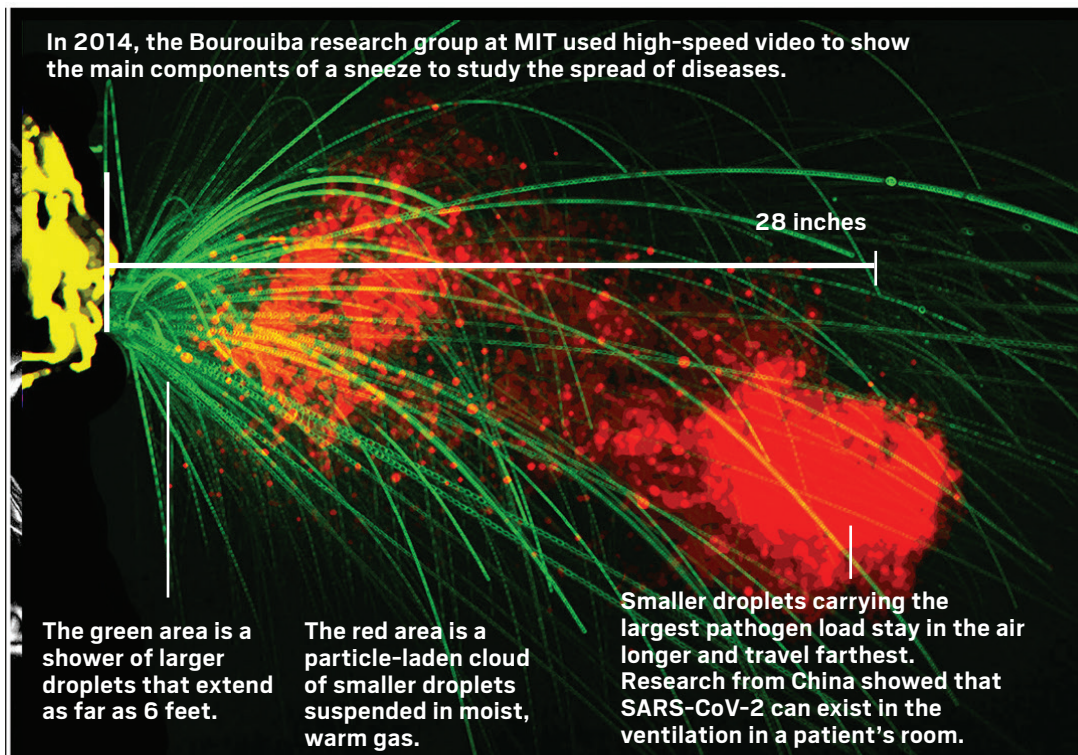
Here, SARS-CoV-2 attaches to cells via its spike proteins, causing cellular infection and destruction.

The aim is for the body to produce antibodies (dark balls) that will bind to the virus's surface spikes and prevent them from latching on to healthy cells. Bound antibodies also mark the virus for destruction by the body's immune system.



ONE SNEEZE

It's worth repeating: Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because SARS-Cov-2 spreads through these entry sites. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Infectious droplets from a cough or sneeze can easily travel as far as 6 feet. In fact, even talking can spew out infectious droplets. That's why the CDC recommends that everyone wear a face mask while out and about. It's to keep people who are infected but have no symptoms yet from spreading the virus.





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