



Salem Mended Hearts Chapter Newsletter

The Mended Hearts, Inc.



Sleep and the senior years: what actually helps

If you are sleeping less than you used to, you are not alone and you are not necessarily doing anything wrong.

According to the National Institute on Aging, sleep changes with age in predictable, biological ways. The deep sleep phases that restore the body become shorter. The internal clock shifts earlier, so seniors tend to feel tired sooner in the evening and wake earlier in the morning. Sleep becomes lighter and more fragmented.

These are normal changes, not signs of disease. The challenge is that the body still needs roughly the same amount of sleep it always did, around seven to eight hours, according to the National Sleep Foundation. The need doesn't shrink, but the ability to get there does.

What helps may surprise you. Research published in Scientific Reports found that physical activity and social engagement each improve sleep quality in older adults. The key finding is that both are needed. High activity levels with low social contact, or a rich social life without physical movement, produced weaker results. The combination is what works.

According to research from the NIH, social isolation is one of the strongest predictors of fragmented, poor-quality sleep in seniors.

The practical takeaway is that seniors who sleep best tend to be those moving bodies, and staying connected. Worrying about sleep is among the least effective ways to get more of it.



Meme, Couch Potato turn 50 in 2026

"Couch potato" was coined on July 15, 1976, when Tom Lacino, a member of the tongue-in-cheek California group the Boob Tubers, called his friend, cartoonist Robert Armstrong, and asked Armstrong's girlfriend, "Hey, is the couch potato there?"

Then there's the word "meme" — not born on the internet, but in Richard Dawkins' 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, where he defined it as a unit of cultural transmission, like a gene but for ideas. Dawkins shortened it from the Greek mimeme, meaning "imitated thing." Fifty years later, it mostly means a cat with a caption. (Source: Mental Floss)



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JOIN MENDED HEARTS TODAY

Membership is about how you can help improve the lives of heart patients and their families, beginning with your own. To find out more reach out to one of our chapter officers or go to www.mendedhearts.org.

UPCOMING MEETING :

DATE: June 15, 2026

TIME: 2:00-3:30

PLACE: Salem Health, Building A, 6th floor, West Conference Room

TOPIC: Women’s Heart Health, Tina O’Guinn NP

NEXT MEETING: July 20, 2026

TOPIC: TBD



SAVE THE DATE

**Annual Summer Picnic
Date: August 17th**

Watch for more details coming soon!



EAT MORE COLOR

The best way to get all of the vitamins, minerals and nutrients you need is to eat a variety of colorful fruits and veggies. All forms of fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) can be part of a heart-healthy diet. Choose types without added salt and sugar.

BLUE & PURPLE

blackberries	grapes
blueberries	plums
black currants	prunes
dates	purple figs
eggplants	raisins

WHITE

bananas	mushrooms
cauliflower	onions
daikon	potatoes
garlic	parsnips
Jerusalem artichoke	shallots
jicama	taro
lotus root	tumips

ORANGE & YELLOW

acorn squash	nectarines	pumpkins
apricots	oranges	summer squash
butternut squash	orange peppers	sweet potatoes
cantaloupes	papayas	tangerines
carrots	passionfruit	yams
corn	peaches	yellow apples
lemons	pineapples	yellow grapefruits
mangoes	plantains	yellow peppers
		yellow squash



GREEN

artichokes	green cabbage	okra
asparagus	green grapes	pears
avocados	green onions	peas
bok choy	green peppers	romaine lettuce
broccoli	kale	snow peas
Brussels sprouts	kiwis	spinach
celery	leeks	sugar snap peas
collard greens	limes	tomatillo
cucumbers	mustard greens	watercress
green beans	napales	zucchini

RED & PINK

beets	red apples
cherries	red grapes
cranberries	red peppers
guava	red potatoes
pink grapefruit	rhubarbs
pomegranates	strawberries
radicchio	tomatoes
red radishes	watermelons

EAT SMART. LIVE MORE. BE WELL.

heart.org/HealthyForGood

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**Have a great idea for a meeting topic or something you would like to learn more about?
Please share with Mended Hearts officers as they are
planning for the upcoming year.**



For up to date information on Salem Mended Hearts Chapter 389 visit our chapter website!



A cure for sickle cell? Science says yes

For the estimated 100,000 Americans living with sickle cell disease, June's awareness month arrives with news that would have seemed like science fiction just a decade ago: a functional cure now exists.

Sickle cell disease is a hereditary blood disorder in which red blood cells take on an abnormal crescent shape, clumping together and blocking blood flow. The result is episodes of severe pain, organ damage, stroke, and a significantly shortened lifespan. Until recently, the only cure was a bone marrow transplant — a risky procedure that requires a matched donor and is unavailable to most patients.

That changed in late 2023 when the FDA approved two landmark gene therapies: Casgevy, developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals, and Lyfgenia from bluebird bio. Casgevy made history as the first treatment ever approved using CRISPR gene-editing technology — the molecular "scissors" that can precisely rewrite a patient's own DNA. Both therapies work by collecting a patient's stem cells, genetically correcting them in a laboratory, and reinfusing them. The repaired cells then produce healthy red blood cells.

Home Buying Key

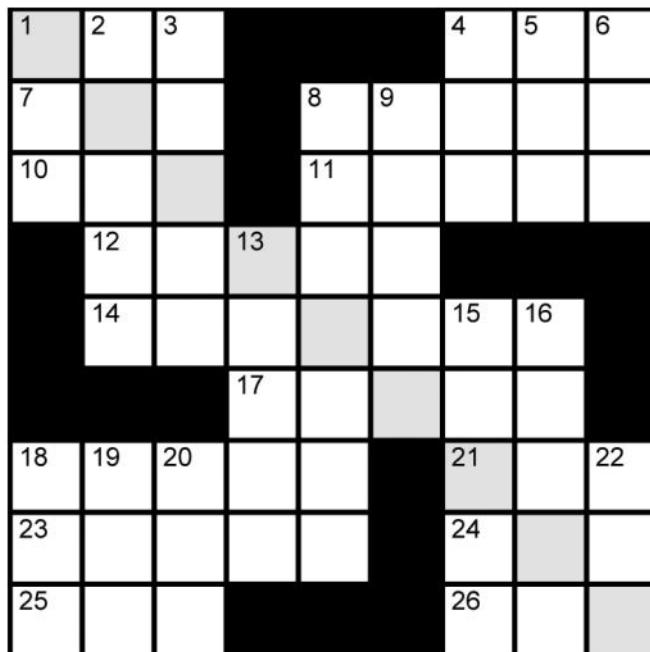
The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Across

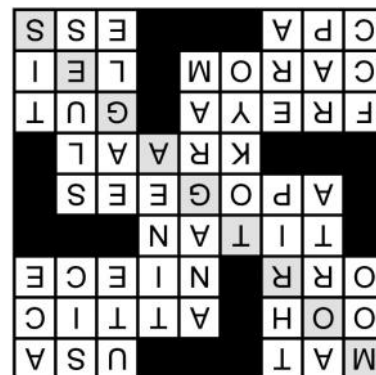
- 1. "Welcome" site
- 4. ___ Today
- 7. "___ la la!"
- 8. Heirloom location
- 10. Bruin legend Bobby
- 11. Bridget Fonda, to Jane
- 12. Colossus
- 14. Highest points
- 17. A pen for livestock in southern Africa
- 18. Norse goddess of love
- 21. Kind of feeling
- 23. Billiards bounce
- 24. "Fantasy Island" prop
- 25. Number cruncher, for short
- 26. Feminine suffix

Down

- 1. Jersey call
- 2. Blood carrier
- 3. Thunderflies
- 4. Colorado Indian
- 5. As written
- 6. Trick taker, often
- 8. Type of word play
- 9. Skin problem
- 13. ___ Rose



- 15. American symbol
- 16. Veers
- 18. TV monitor?
- 19. Bad-mouth
- 20. Baseball stat
- 22. "___ the season ..."



Clinical results have been striking. In trials, the majority of patients treated with Casgevy experienced no severe pain crises for at least a year after treatment. Vertex recently announced the therapy is showing equally promising results in children as young as five.

Now for the gasp: Casgevy carries a list price of \$2.2 million for a single course of treatment. Lyfgenia comes in at \$3.1 million.

The federal government is working on it. In 2025, CMS launched a program in 33 states to make gene therapy accessible through Medicaid via outcomes-based payment agreements. Progress — but for now, the cure exists in a place where only a few can reach. That may change.



"When the recording says, 'Your call is important to us,' are you supposed to hear giggling in the background?"

Why drills, training saves lives

It is easy to roll your eyes at another fire drill. The alarm goes off, you file outside, you stand around, you go back in. What is the point?



Ask the 2,700 employees of Morgan Stanley who walked out of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Rick Rescorla, the company's security director, had studied the building's vulnerabilities after the 1993 bombing and concluded that another attack was likely. Starting in 1997, he ran mandatory evacuation drills every quarter. Employees practiced descending the stairwells two by two, leaving room for first responders, and gathering at designated meeting points. Some grumbled. Rescorla did not care.

On the morning of September 11, when the second plane hit the South Tower, Morgan Stanley's employees already knew exactly what to do. Nearly all 2,700 made it out alive. Only 13 did not — most of them people who stayed behind to help others, including Rescorla himself.

That is the purpose of every drill you have ever done. Emergency situations create confusion, noise, and panic. Training replaces panic with procedure. Research confirms this: the National Fire Protection Association reports that building occupants who have practiced evacuations move significantly faster and make fewer critical errors than those who have not.

The five minutes you spend on a drill could be the five minutes that save your life. Take them seriously.

If you see something, say something

Here is a number worth remembering: for every serious workplace injury, there are roughly 300 near-misses that came before it. That is the finding behind what safety researchers call the Safety Triangle, first described by H.W. Heinrich and later expanded by Frank Bird. The pattern is consistent across industries — small hazards that go unaddressed eventually become big ones.

The catch is that most of those 300 near-misses never get reported. A 2025 National Safety Council survey found that 78 percent of serious incidents were preceded by warning signs that nobody flagged. That is not because workers do not notice problems. It is because they wonder whether reporting is worth the trouble, or worry about how it will be received.



Here is what the law says: under Section 11(c) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, every worker has the right to report unsafe conditions without fear of retaliation. You do not have to prove that a hazard will definitely cause harm. You just have to report it in good faith.

And it works. The aviation industry's confidential near-miss reporting system has helped reduce fatal commercial accidents by 65 percent since 1976. When people speak up early, problems get fixed before anyone gets hurt.

If a railing is loose, a chemical label is missing, or a walkway is blocked — say something. You are not being difficult. You are doing exactly what a strong safety culture depends on catching the small problems before they become the big ones.

Treating cataracts: The good news keeps getting better

June is Cataract Awareness Month, which makes it a good time to know where things stand — and the news is largely encouraging.

Cataracts, the clouding of the eye's natural lens, affect more than 20 million Americans over the age of 40, and that number is expected to surpass 30 million by 2028. Most people develop them gradually, with symptoms becoming significant after age 60. The most common signs are blurry or foggy vision, difficulty driving at night, and colors that seem faded or yellowed.

The treatment — cataract surgery — has become one of the safest and most effective procedures in medicine. Success rates consistently exceed 97 percent, most patients notice improved vision within 24 to 48 hours, and severe complications occur in fewer than one percent of cases. Newer lens options, including light-adjustable lenses that can be fine-tuned after surgery and extended depth-of-focus lenses that reduce the need for reading glasses, are giving patients great outcomes. What does not yet exist, despite some promising headlines, is an eye drop that dissolves cataracts. Research on compounds like lanosterol has shown results in animal models but has not translated to humans. Surgery remains the only proven treatment.

Prevention still matters. UV-blocking sunglasses, a diet rich in vitamins C and E and leafy greens, not smoking, and limiting alcohol all reduce cataract risk. Regular eye exams — every two to four years after 40, every one to two years after 65 — catch them early, when treatment is most straightforward.

Progress on organ transplant offers hope

More than 100,000 Americans are currently waiting for an organ transplant. Thirteen of them will die today. The math has never worked: there are simply not enough donors to meet the need, and that gap has persisted for decades.

Two different technologies are now attacking the problem from different directions.

The first is xenotransplantation — transplanting organs from animals, specifically pigs, whose organs have been genetically modified to be more compatible with the human body.

In November 2024, Towana Looney became one of the first patients to receive a gene-edited pig kidney in a formal clinical trial at NYU Langone Health. She lived with the organ for 130 days — longer than any pig kidney transplant recipient in history — before an infection forced her to reduce her anti-rejection medication, triggering rejection. The kidney was surgically removed and she returned to dialysis, but she recovered quickly and went home to Alabama. It was a setback, but also proof that a pig kidney can function inside a human being for months. Trials are continuing at multiple hospitals.

The second approach is growing organs in the laboratory entirely from human cells. In June 2025, Stanford researchers achieved a breakthrough in growing heart and liver organoids — miniature organ structures with functional blood vessels — overcoming a key barrier that had limited earlier attempts. A fully transplantable lab-grown organ is likely still a decade away. The pig kidney is not.

Neither technology is ready to solve the transplant crisis today. Both are closer than they have ever been.



Turkey Chili

Calories

347 Per Serving

Protein

34g Per Serving

Fiber

10g Per Serving

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tablespoons canola or corn oil
- 1 medium or large onion, chopped
- 20 ounces ground skinless turkey breast
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced OR 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 3/4 cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup frozen whole-kernel corn
- 1 6-ounce can no-salt-added tomato paste
- 4 medium green onions (green part only), sliced

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the chopped onion for 3 minutes, or until soft, stirring occasionally.
2. Reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the turkey. Cook for 5 minutes, or until browned, stirring frequently to turn and break up the turkey.
3. Stir in the garlic, chili powder, pepper, and cumin. Stir in the remaining ingredients except the green onions. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, or until heated through, stirring frequently. Just before serving, sprinkle with the green onions.



Recipe borrowed <https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/turkey-chili>



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DATE _____

NEW MENDED HEARTS® NEW MENDED *LITTLE* HEARTS® NEW YOUNG MENDED HEARTS® RENEWAL

Name (Mr. /Mrs./Ms.) _____ Chapter/Group _____ National Member _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City / ST / Zip _____ I want to be a support volunteer: Yes No

Email address _____ I am interested in CHD Parent Matching: Yes No

(Please check all that apply) I am a Heart Patient Caregiver CHD Parent Physician RN Healthcare Employee

OPTIONAL INFORMATION: Race: _____ Gender: _____

Membership Levels: All membership levels are for ONE YEAR, renewed annually, except for Heart of Gold Lifetime Sponsorship. Please choose your membership level and complete any appropriate payment information below.

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Membership Level _____ \$ _____ Chapter/Group Name: _____

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