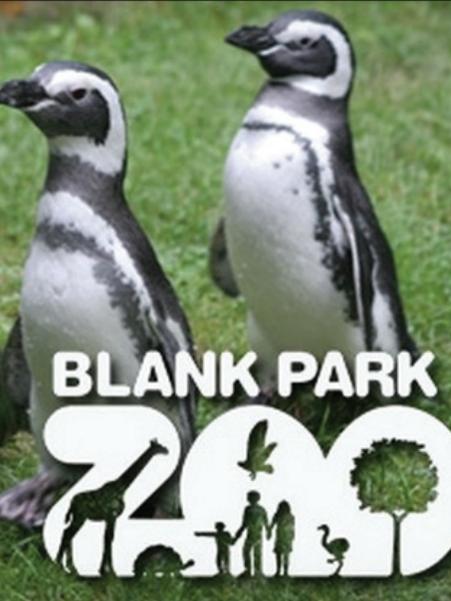


# Stroke Club

A publication for stroke survivors and their families



UnityPoint Health  
Des Moines



## A Visit from the Blank Park Zoo!!

**The next Stroke Club Meeting is Tuesday October 18th, at 7:00p.m. at New Hope United Methodist Church at 4525 Beaver Ave., Des Moines. The church is accessible. I would like to remind you this is the last meeting of 2016.**

This month our presentation will be an exciting one and we will have a fun last meeting for this year! “Your curiosity will come alive with a visit from the Blank Park Zoo.”

Join one of the zoo educators for a 45 min-1 hour interactive presentation during which live animals will be shared. During the program, you will learn interesting facts and have the opportunity to ask questions about the animals. Stick around and have the chance to get

up close and personal and touch one of the animals. This is a wild program you won't want to miss!”

3 years ago we also had a visit from the zoo and it was a great evening. We hope you can join us again!

As a reminder if you have something special you would like to see in the newsletter please don't hesitate to let me know.

My phone # is (515) 241-8139.  
My email address is [sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org](mailto:sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org)

Thanks, your Newsletter Editor,  
Sue Toale Knapp.

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## NEED A LIFT



Need a ride to Stroke Club Meeting?

**Call Amy Johnson at 263-5166 to arrange a ride.**

Please call her rather than the person who may be your “usual driver”. This will allow Amy to know how to plan for rides and drivers.

If you are afraid you will forget to call, do it now!! Please call no later than 9:00am the day before the meeting and preferably the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. This will allow Amy enough time to schedule a ride for you.

You will receive a call before the meeting regarding who will pick you up the night of meeting. We have several volunteers who are willing to provide you a ride to Stroke Club.

# AHA President calls on the Food Industry to Support Voluntary Sodium Targets



## **Why is too much sodium a big deal?**

It contributes to high blood pressure, and high blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Heart disease and stroke remain the leading causes of death worldwide, yet healthy lifestyle choices can help reduce the risk of both of these killers.

Unfortunately, simply avoiding the salt shaker does not solve the sodium problem. Even the most well-meaning and motivated consumers have a hard time reducing sodium in their diets, because it's so pervasive in our food supply. More than 75 percent of the sodium we eat comes from processed, prepackaged, and restaurant foods.

Most Americans consume more than 3,400 milligrams of sodium each day — the equivalent to the amount of salt in about 34 servings of potato chips or about five slices of cheese pizza. That's almost 2,000 milligrams above the American Heart Association's daily recommendation for ideal cardiovascular health. I've observed substantial improvement in my patients' high blood pressure when they avoid those foods that are loaded with sodium. Often, when patients avoid foods high in sodium, we can reduce the dose of a blood pressure medication or even eliminate it.

As a practicing cardiologist for the past 35 years, I've consistently recommended sodium reduction to those who have already had a cardiac event, or are managing high blood pressure. Studies have estimated that 90 percent of people will have high blood pressure at some point in their lifetime, and the problem can occur even in very young children.

So what exactly will the FDA recommendations accomplish?

Because the targets are voluntary, the goal is to provide guidance to the food industry on what reasonable sodium levels look like – without actually issuing a mandate that they comply.

It's important to note that it's not just the FDA or the American Heart Association or other health-focused organizations pushing for this change. Consumers are asking for it, too. In my role as president of the association I have witnessed tremendous grassroots efforts among concerned Americans who have written letters and reached out on social media to food companies, asking for healthier food options. Parents have also reached out to providers of school lunches –urging them to lower the sodium to reasonable amounts in meals served their children.

Fortunately, some of the major food companies are listening and are already working to reduce sodium in many of their products. But much more needs to be done. Moderate levels of sodium must become the norm for the entire food industry, or many Americans will likely continue to consume too much sodium simply by default.

Still not convinced?

Some studies predict that reaching more moderate levels of sodium in the food supply could save over a half million lives and billions of dollars in healthcare costs in the United States over the next decade. To us, that's convincing enough. Now the food industry must be convinced too, and begin to see themselves as stakeholders in the health of their customers.

Mark A. Creager is president of the American Heart Association and director of the Heart and Vascular Center at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

*Reference: [strokeassociation.org](http://strokeassociation.org)*

# Banish a Bad Mood

## *Six research-backed ways to help you go from sullen to sunny.*

*By Jodi Helmer*



**No one is immune to bad moods.** Whether a minor inconvenience like a traffic jam ruins an upbeat mood or major worries cause a serious case of the blues, a bad mood feels, well, bad. When you sense a bad mood brewing, these techniques may help, even if you're dealing with chronic stress or depression.

**1. Take a walk.** Moderate exercise helped ease feelings of sadness after a distressing event, according to a study published this year in *Cognition and Emotion*. Research also has shown that moderate aerobic exercise may alleviate depression. "Exercise may help people be more emotionally flexible, meaning they can bounce back more easily from stressful situations," explains Emily Bernstein, a Harvard University graduate student in psychology and lead author of the study.

**2. Turn up the tunes.** Whether you sing along to show tunes or practice air guitar to heavy metal, music can make you happier. A recent study in *Scientific Reports* found that listening to music reduced stress, lowered levels of inflammation and improved mood.

**3. Step away from the screen.** Research published in *BMC Psychiatry* linked computer use to increased stress and depressive mood. "The time spent on the computer may be taken from activities that are important for health such as sleep, physical activity and social relations, explains study author Sara Thomee, PhD, psychologist at University of Gothenburg in Sweden. If you're in a bad mood, log off the computer.

**4. Hang out with upbeat people.** You can catch a bad mood just as you can catch a cold, according to research in *Clinical Psychological Science*. If another person's bad mood is infecting you, seek out positive people to spend time with.

**5. Hit the sack.** When you have chronic pain, poor sleep is common, and disrupted sleep is linked to negative mood, according to recent research in the journal *Sleep*. Talk to your doctor about pain treatments, and practice good sleep habits, like keeping a regular bedtime; sleeping in a cool, dark room; and avoiding caffeine, TV or other stimulants before bed.

**6. Get some sunshine.** Channeling a sunny disposition could be as simple as seeking out the sun. "Depressive symptoms could be closely associated with low vitamin D levels," notes researcher Fatme Al Anouti, PhD, a biochemist at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. Al Anouti says spending just 60 minutes outdoors per week can boost vitamin D levels and may ease depression.

*Reference: Arthritis Today September/October 2016*



# Caregiver CORNER

## *Tips and Techniques for Dealing with Stress - By Dr. Rita Nachen Gugel*

Change is an expected part of our daily lives today. Dealing with it so that YOU control IT rather than vice versa is an important and positive force in controlling your life. Try a few of these tips.

- 1. Accept what you cannot change.**  
Take a tip from AA. Change what you can, if it bothers you. But, if you cannot change it, learn to live with it.
- 2. Face up to your problems.**  
Sort them out, and see which ones are real and which are simply imagined. Deal with them as they are, and not what you think they are.
- 3. Deal with one problem at a time.**  
Sort out your priorities, and deal with them in the order of their importance to you.
- 4. Be flexible.**  
Give in once and a while. If you do, others will too.
- 5. Don't hold all of your worries inside yourself—talk it out.**  
Frequently we swallow our unhappiness (along with candy, cake, ice cream, etc.) because we can't let the problems out. Talk to someone. A burden shared is much less of a burden.
- 6. Work off Stress.**  
Physical outlets for stress help your body to fight off many of the negative results of stress.
- 7. Get enough rest/relaxation/sleep.**  
Give your body a chance to recover from day to day. Lack of sleep and rest will only make matters worse for you.
- 8. Avoid “self medication.”**  
A “spoonful of sugar” may make the “medicine go down,” but it does your body no good. Sugar, alcohol, nicotine, and ice cream may all feel good going down, but they make matters worse—from the inside. They add to your body's physical stresses, thus making dealing with external stresses much harder.
- 9. “Take time to smell the roses.”**  
Have some fun. Relax.
- 10. Think about and do something for others.**  
A little altruism never hurt. It even makes people feel better about themselves.
- 11. Be the “captain of your ship.”**  
If you are not happy with your life, think about what's wrong or missing, and then plan the necessary actions to change it to coincide with your needs and desires for your life.
- 12. Work on your relationships with those who share your life.**  
Don't hold back your feelings. Share them with your family and friends and co-workers. It can help to decrease tensions.

Reference: [Caregiver.com](http://Caregiver.com)

# TIPS FOR THE Upcoming Holidays

*I know it is only October but I hate to remind you the Holidays will soon be here. I usually try to put an article in the October newsletter about tips to make the holidays less stressful for us all.*

*I often find great articles in the Arthritis Today magazine. This article is from 2014 and had 45 tips. To conserve space I compiled a highlight of suggestions you might find helpful! Happy Holidays!! You can refer to the magazine for the entire list.*

Parties, gifts, friends and family: What's not to love about the holiday season? Plenty, when you end up stressed out, exhausted and in pain from overdoing it. It can be hard to keep the extra chores and expectations from spinning out control.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Here are 45 tips to make tasks easier, keep stress and pain in check – and keep the merry in your merrymaking this holiday season, from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.

- **Make to-do lists.** Keep track of tasks – and feel the joy as you check off the items.
- **Say good-bye to burdensome traditions.** Replace or drop a tradition that causes too much difficulty. It's OK to start new ones that are in line with your abilities.
- **Don't drop your fitness routine.** It helps to keep those calories in check and boosts your endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.
- **Stifle your inner Grinch with gratitude.** Feeling grumpy? Stop what you're doing and write down five things you're grateful for. It will help lower stress and boost your oxytocin, a feel-good hormone, according to research published in Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience.
- **Just breathe.** When you're feeling overwhelmed, stop and take slow, deep breaths for a few minutes. It's a form of meditation that can relax you and lower blood pressure, according to Harvard Medical School.



- **Smile.** Even if you're ticked off at a rude clerk, take a few deep breaths, and then smile. It can reduce stress, according to a study in the May 2013 Psychological Science, and it might be contagious.
- **Get enough shut-eye.** Poor sleep, which affects about two-thirds of people with chronic pain, can increase pain, inflammation, anxiety and weight gain risk. Skip the late-night baking and decorating.

## TRIMMING TIPS:

1. **Decorate just a few focal areas.** Spruce up spots for the biggest pop, such as the front door or entryway, dining table and hearth.
2. **Use greenery.** Wreaths, poinsettias, a small rosemary tree and other live plants make easy attractive holiday décor, and studies show ornamental plants and flowers can boost energy and happiness and reduce stress and depression.
3. **Choose elegant over elaborate.** A wreath on the door and electric candles in the windows can be as attractive as those icicle lights around the roofline – and no ladder is required. Another simple option: net lights that drape over shrubs.
4. **Make lights automatic.** Use remote-controlled power strips or outlet adapters, or go with classics like the Clapper or light timers to control holiday lights.
5. **Keep perspective.** All the perfectly wrapped gifts in the world can't replace good times with people you love. That joy is a gift in itself.

*Reference: Arthritis Today magazine November/December 2014*

# Iowa Methodist Medical Center Certified as a Primary Stroke Center

Since 2010, Iowa Methodist Medical Center has been accredited by Det Norske Veritas (DNV) as a Primary Stroke Center. For this designation, our stroke program has demonstrated the ability and resources to provide high-quality stroke care. Iowa Methodist Medical Center is in compliance with national standards and effectively utilizes clinical practice guidelines to manage and optimize care.

At the end of July, Methodist had its annual review by DNV to continue as a Primary Stroke Center. The surveyor had many positive remarks, including how proud the hospital should be to have such a collaborative team involved in caring for the stroke patient. The surveyor took a day and a half to review data, interview staff, and view hospital policies.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

When a patient is having a stroke, on average every minute a large vessel is blocked a patient loses:

- Nearly 2 million neurons
- 13.8 billion synapses
- 7 miles of axonal fibers

Every hour not treated, the brain loses as many neurons as it takes for 3.6 years of aging.

## **TIME IS BRAIN**

When a patient has stroke-like symptoms that began less than 4.5 hours or less, a stroke alert is activated per ambulance personnel or per the emergency department. There is a drug called Alteplase or tPA that can be given if a patient meets certain criteria - this medication can help break up the clot if there is one present.

There is a protocol that is in place at Primary Stroke Centers that allows the acute stroke team to be notified when a person calls 911 and paramedics assessment indicates stroke-like symptoms within 4.5 hours. Time is Brain – help spread the word the importance of calling 911!

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STROKE:**

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

*Submitted by Lyndsey Schwanz, BSN, RN Stroke Coordinator*



## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!

***Stroke Club would like to acknowledge and thank several people for their work this past year.***

First we would like to thank our dear club member, Marilyn Wirtz, for once again taking our pictures and providing them to us at no cost. She is always so generous with her talent, time and money.

We would like to say thank you to all those who have donated door prizes that we love to give out at the meetings!

I know several members have made donations as well as many of our wonderful volunteers. Again Thanks!

I would like to thank my wonderful co-workers and co-volunteers who provide rides to many of our members each month. Amy Johnson deserves a round of applause as she organizes the drivers for those requesting a ride, which I think can be a challenging task! These are the lovely drivers who help provide rides to Stroke Club: Denise Behrends, Cheryl Suvic, Kris Miller, Lyndsey Schwanz, Helen Christakos, Sandy Allen, Karen McGregor, Peggy Scott, Cindy Bowen, Bridgette Lockman, Amy Johnson, Angela Elbert, Karen Moss and Sue Toale Knapp.

Thanks to all the volunteers who help at the meetings, inform others of the group and encourage new members to attend.

We need to thank Cheryl Suvic who organizes our wonderful door prizes at each meeting and has made sure we have a speaker or presentation at each meeting.

Thank you to Karen Moss, for continuing to be our Lending Librarian and adding fun and interesting material.

Also thanks to Kathy Brakke who welcomes everyone as they arrive at the meetings and makes the meetings enjoyable and entertaining!! Also thank you to Denise Behrends who has filled in for Kathy as necessary.

*Sue - Your newsletter editor*

## Friendly Reminder

The October Stroke Club meeting is the last meeting for this year. This newsletter is also the last one for the year. We do not meet during November, December or January. The next Stroke Club meeting will be February 21st, 2017.

I hope you all have a safe and wonderful holiday season with family and friends. We will look forward to seeing you all at the February meeting and look forward to a great New Year. If you have any suggestions regarding the newsletter please let me know. I am always interested in what you would like to see in the newsletter. You can call me at 515-241-8139 and leave a message. You can drop me a note at Younker Rehab Center, OP Therapy Y-3 1200 Pleasant St, Des Moines, Ia. 50309 or email me at [sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org](mailto:sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org)

Also if you have any ideas regarding topics or presenters for next years meetings please let me know and I will relay that information.

If for some reason you no longer want to be on the newsletter mailing list or know someone who would like to be added please let me know.

Thanks, Sue Toale Knapp

## Aphasia Group

The Aphasia group will now meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month from 1:00-2:00p.m.

The group meets at Mercy Riverside, which is located to 501 SW 7th St. Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309. Sue Fagg, Speech Language Pathologist for Mercy Medical Center is the group leader. Interested persons can call Sue at 515-643-9818 for more information or directions to the facility.

## Online Support Group

For those of you looking for an online support group here is a website for you: <http://www.strokenetwork.org/>.

It is a very active group. You have to join like a listserv and you post a question or issue and the group will email you back suggestions. Everyone in the group has survived a stroke and has great ideas they are willing to share.

## A Bit of Humor

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm

disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

Love the Dad's reply!

"Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?"