

# Stroke Club

A PUBLICATION FOR STROKE SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES



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# CANCELLED

## The May Stroke Club Meeting is Cancelled

In efforts to proactively address COVID-19 concerns, the **May 2020 Stroke Club meetings** have been cancelled. Thank you for your understanding in our efforts to protect the health and safety of our community members, volunteers and you.

We hope to reschedule the presentations that we had planned for this month and the previous meetings we had to cancel.

Please remember to follow the recommendations made by the CDC-Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you're sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

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 number is 515- 255-0366. My email address is [stktek1@gmail.com](mailto:stktek1@gmail.com)



UnityPoint Health  
Des Moines

# Caregiver Corner

## 9 Ways Caregivers Can Recharge

Seeking a break from caregiving is not selfish, says Donn Dexter, MD, FAAN, a neurologist with the Mayo Clinic Health System in Eau Claire, WI. "If you're exhausted, the person you're caring for may end up in a nursing home," he says. "Respite care for caregivers can help keep patients at home."

These tips may help you pay for someone to look after your loved one and allow you the time off you need.

### 1. TALK TO FAMILY MEMBERS.

Caregiving often falls to just one or two family members, no matter how many people are in the family, says Sherri Snelling, CEO of the Caregiving Club in Newport Beach, CA, a company that consults with corporations on caregiving and offers free resources for family caregivers. "If other family members can't take over the care temporarily, they may be able to help pay for someone else," says Snelling. "And if they don't see it as their responsibility, ask them if they'll consider chipping in as a birthday or holiday gift." If that fails, ask if they'll investigate resources that would help pay the costs. Be sure notes are taken, phone calls dated, contact information of those spoken to included, and letters and emails saved.

### 2. SIGN UP FOR LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE.

Insurance firms vary on how much they provide, says Jill Kagan, program director at the ARCH (Access to Respite Care and Help) National Respite Network and Resource Center in Chapel Hill, NC. Some may reimburse families; others may pay providers directly. Check the terms so you know what amounts and options you have.

### 3. RESEARCH HEALTH INSURANCE AND MEDICARE.

Private health insurance doesn't usually cover respite care for caregivers, but Medicare will provide some relief under certain circumstances. For example, it covers 95 percent of the Medicare-approved amount for five days at a hospital or skilled facility for a beneficiary with dementia who is also receiving hospice benefits such as a home visit from a nurse once a week. To be eligible, a doctor must determine that the patient has less than six months to live, although the benefit can be extended indefinitely.

### 4. INVESTIGATE STATE-BASED CARE.

Many states have home- and community-based Medicaid waiver funds that can be allocated to pay for all or some respite care for either home-based care or at an approved facility, with need based on the income, age, and condition of the patient, not the caregiver, says Kagan. Adequate funds are not always available to help everyone who qualifies, so you may be placed on a waiting list, says Kagan. For more information, go to [archrespite.org](http://archrespite.org) or [caregiver.org](http://caregiver.org) or contact your nearest Agency on Aging.



# SELF-CARE: FOOD AND DRINK

By Tara Tyler, RD

## 5. CHECK WITH THE VA.

Some programs may provide short-term care at home or in an approved facility such as a nursing home for veterans with dementia. In some cases, this benefit is available for caregivers who are veterans, even if the people for whom they are caring are not. Check the resource list maintained by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation at [elizabethdolefoundation.org](http://elizabethdolefoundation.org). For more details, visit the National Resource Directory's page for Family and Caregivers.

## 6. REACH OUT TO PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Most have collection plates or charity funds for community needs. Start with the place you attend, but inquire even if you're not a regular participant. Look for the minister or rabbi's email or direct phone line and let him or her know your needs. If they don't have funds, they may know area organizations that do. Some faith communities have volunteers who can assist caregivers.

## 7. JOIN A PATIENT ORGANIZATION.

Some patient organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association have information and sometimes even financial grants for respite care. Local offices of patient organizations may be able to provide more specific information or refer you to other funding resources.

## 8. CALL 211.

Operators at this state-based resource for information on health and human services can refer you to area organizations such as the United Way, the YWCA or YMCA, and Easter Seals, which may be able to provide some respite care for free or at a reduced cost.

## 9. SEEK OUT CHARITIES.

Hilarity for Charity, a nonprofit group started by actor Seth Rogen and his wife Lauren Miller (whose mother has early-onset Alzheimer's disease and whose grandparents both died of the disease), provides grants for respite care for people looking after loved ones with dementia. To apply, go to [helpforalzheimersfamilies.com](http://helpforalzheimersfamilies.com)

Reference: [www.brainandlife.org](http://www.brainandlife.org)

Sometimes we hear the word nutrition and think "diet," however the words are not synonymous. Nutrition means nourishment and self-care is nourishment by another name.

So, it seems, self-care and nutrition go hand in hand, but how we approach this can have a big impact in our health and wellbeing.

Here are a few ways to ensure that your approach to nutrition is an act of self-care:

**1. Aim for Balance and Variety.** We hear this a lot, but when it comes nutrition balance and variety are essential. Avoid subscribing to the idea of forbidden foods or unnecessarily restrictive eating patterns. Intuitive Eating is a movement that says no to the food police and yes to listening to and honoring both your needs and desires in a way that contributes to your health and well-being. Learn more about the movement here: [www.intuitiveeating.org](http://www.intuitiveeating.org). Regardless of whether breakfast is your most important meal of the day or you practice intermittent fasting, honor your body and fuel it with foods that nourish you physically and emotionally.

**2. Pay attention to your environment.** I'd be lying if I said I never eat lunch at my desk, but I would also be lying if I said that I enjoyed and felt satisfied by it. I'm not suggesting you need fine china, linen and candle light for a meal to be satisfying and nourishing, but limiting distractions like phone calls, televisions and computers can lead to a more rewarding experience. Try to find time each week to create an environment that feels as good as the food tastes.

**3. Take your time.** Putting a little time and attention into your nutrition choices is a form of self-care. Regardless of your approach, be it meal prepping, grocery shopping, cooking in bulk or swinging by your favorite quick serve on the way home, balancing the needs of your mind and body with the demands of your day is important.

Self-care is a simple concept, but it is not always easy; so, I leave with you this thought: treat yourself as well as you would someone in your care. After all, you are in your care. Take care, be well and nourish yourself!

Reference: *HealthyLife® Letter VA Employee Whole Health*

# 6 COVID-19 Safety Tips for Neurologic Patients

During this pandemic, it's crucial to avoid getting infected. These strategies can help.

People with some neurologic disorders who have a higher risk of complications and hospitalization from the flu and pneumonia would be considered in the high-risk category for COVID-19. Because the virus has spread so quickly already, we don't have more definitive data, but we do know that everyone—regardless of health status—must take this epidemic very seriously. We also know that the virus is more contagious, spreads more easily to others before symptoms appear, and is considered more dangerous and deadly than the flu.

High-risk groups, as defined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, include anyone age 60 and older, even if you are otherwise healthy; anyone with diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease; and anyone with a compromised immune system, including patients with multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, and other autoimmune disorders whose disorders and treatments impact the immune system.

Given that, here are recommendations everyone should follow.

1. **Stay home.** Social distancing is the thing to do, and it means avoiding any unnecessary trips outside of your home, steering clear of any large gatherings, working remotely if possible, and avoiding public transportation as much as possible. When going out in public, stay at least six feet from other people.
2. **Wash your hands.** You can't wash your hands too often during this time. Use soap and hot water and wash for at least 20 seconds—singing Happy Birthday twice is a popular way to ensure you take 20 seconds—as frequently as possible. Avoid touching your face. The virus enters the body through the eyes, nose, and mouth.

3. **Reschedule appointments.** All nonessential, nonurgent appointments—including doctor's visits, therapy appointments, routine dental or eye care, hair appointments, and nail salon visits—should be postponed. Ask your doctor about telemedicine visits if necessary. This will limit your exposure to the virus and will lessen the impact on a health care system that is already under a lot of strain, which will only increase as we try to care for the sickest patients.
4. **Get medications and groceries delivered.** CVS, Walgreens, and many other pharmacies can deliver prescriptions. You can also order 90-day supplies of medications to minimize the number of trips and bottles. You can order groceries from many local stores online through services like instacart.com and have them delivered. If you are uncomfortable using a computer, ask family members to order food for you as a way of helping you while still staying safe.
5. **Disinfect regularly.** After accepting a delivery of either groceries or takeout food, keep all bags and boxes on the floor rather than countertops, if possible. Wash your hands and all surfaces after putting items away. Transfer takeout food from store containers to your own dishes.
6. **Ask for help.** Many hospitals across the country are temporarily closing their outpatient clinics, but all are equipped to communicate with you, if needed, via telephone, video, and messages sent through the electronic medical record or other online portals. Please use them for any questions you may have.

Dr. Fleisher is assistant professor of neurology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Dr. Savica is professor of neurology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Both are members of the Brain & Life editorial board.



# Good Sleep is Good for the Brain and Body

People know that sleep is vital for well-being, fitness and productivity, but many do not prioritize it. The new year is the perfect time to set new sleep goals.

Good sleep is necessary for good health. It's good for your brain and body.

A new review of more than 130 studies published in the January issue of *Physiology*

found that getting enough sleep allows the brain to store and recall memories for future use. Adequate sleep is needed so the brain can learn new information, store it long-term and then remember it later when needed. "It's important to keep in mind that

sleep affects the whole body, as the brain is not isolated from the body," said Lisa Marshall, professor of behavioral neurobiology at the University of Lübeck,

Germany, and one of the researchers who reviewed the studies. During normal sleep, hormones are released that affect the organs and cells of the body, studies showed.

**"For instance, it has been found that chronic sleep deprivation leads to weight gain. A night of sleep loss after a vaccination**

**leads to the vaccination being less efficient,"** Marshall said.

The studies uncovered amazing insights into the way the brain works. Have you ever wondered about waking up right before the alarm clock rings? "This does reflect the brain keeping track of time while you sleep," Marshall said. "For instance, when subjects sleeping in the laboratory were told on one night that they would be awakened at a specific time in the morning, certain hormone concentrations commenced about an hour before awakening as compared to when the subjects were told they could sleep out."

Let's get back to the brain and how it affects memory consolidation. Both animal and human studies indicate that the brain is cleared of waste products during sleep, especially deep slow-wave sleep, which could contribute to neurodegenerative

diseases, Marshall said. Gadgets that claim to help people get better sleep are widespread, but may not work for everyone, Marshall said. "Not only do brain rhythms reveal large differences from person to person, but there are still many, in part unknown

factors, presently under investigation, which contribute to efficacy of such memory enhancements," she said. Dedicating yourself to new sleep

solutions can help improve the quantity and quality of your sleep. Here are a few tips from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine:

- Adults should sleep seven or more hours every night.
- Ages 1 to 2 should sleep 11 to 14 hours (including naps).
- Ages 3 to 5 should sleep 10 to 13 hours (including naps).
- Ages 6 to 12 should sleep 9 to 12 hours.
- Ages 13 to 18 should sleep 8 to 10 hours.
- Disrupted sleep isn't as restorative as quality sleep, so get rid of electronic distractions in the bedroom by silencing or turning off your cell phone and TV.

Power down devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. Eating a large meal or exercising before bed might also make it more difficult to sleep.
- Maintain a comfortable setting for sleep by keeping your bedroom dark and at a cool temperature conducive to sleep. Dedicating yourself to new sleep solutions can help improve the quantity and quality of your sleep.

*Reference: The Des Moines Register*

## Aphasia Group

The Aphasia group meets the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month from 1 - 2 p.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.

## Mother's Day

On May 19th we will celebrate Mother's Day. I hope you take time to wish your mom or other mother-like figures in your lives a very Happy Mother's Day.

I wish I could give my mom a big hug and wish her a happy day but she is no longer with us.

But I do have wonderful memories of her to always have in my heart. So for those of you whose mom

is no longer with you I hope you too have wonderful memories to always have in your heart and mind.

A mother is:

AMAZING  
LOVING  
BEAUTIFUL  
TEACHER  
SELFLSS  
STRONG



# APPRECIATION OF NEW HOPE METHODIST CHURCH



Paulette Wood recently shared this with me about her nomination of New Hope Methodist Church and we thought it would be a wonderful article to share with our members:

I wish to nominate New Hope United Methodist Church as a "Difference Maker" because for about 23 years this church has welcomed Stroke Club to meet here, in this building, once a month. Those 23 years changed my life and I want to tell you the story.

In 1997, I was the sponsor of Stroke Club and a speech-language pathologist working at Iowa Methodist Medical center. Stroke Club was/and still is, an organization providing education and support to stroke survivors, their families and friends. Since the Club's beginning, monthly meeting attendance had grown from 20 attendees to 60; we had outgrown the space we used at the Easter Seal Center.

A small committee of club members was formed to search for a new meeting place. The needs of the group were numerous:

1. Wheelchair accessibility entering the building and into the meeting room.
2. Wheelchair accessible restrooms
3. Well-lit parking lot close to the building
4. Meeting room available for an evening meeting once a month
5. Free!

The committee visited senior centers and churches; two possibilities were identified and I made visits to each of the sites. Both of the places were unfamiliar to me but one of my patients, Warren Hinman, his wife Donnafred, and his daughter Carrie, were members. So my first visit was to New Hope United Methodist Church...and what a visit it was!

I made an appointment with the minister, Rev. Bob Cook. I told him about our club and he took me on a tour of the building. After we talked for about 30 minutes, I thanked him for his time, put on my coat, and said that we wouldn't be able to use the church because the bathrooms were not wheelchair accessible.

Rev. Cook looked alarmed and said something about the "two of us trying to make this work." I clearly remember being surprised by his reaction and I asked, "Why is this important to you?" He said, "Opening our church to everyone who inquires is what churches are supposed to do!" He asked how he could contact me and I gave him my card at Iowa Methodist Medical Center. I did not expect to see him again.

About two weeks later, Rev. Cook called me at work to say that plans were underway to create accessible restrooms in the church. The current restrooms could not be modified and new locations had been identified. During the conversation that followed, he told me that my initial visit and inquiry was the impetus that was needed to make the church accessible to all.

About two-three months later, Stroke Club began meeting at New Hope United Methodist Church and for the last 23 years have been meeting here once a month.

## Important Addendum:

Myself and my family were members of St. Mark Lutheran Church in WDM. I was the chair of the Christian Action Committee. My church could not commit to providing meeting space to Stroke Club.

I marveled at the warm and welcoming experience I had at New Hope and decided to visit a worship service or two.....or more! I signed up for a membership class. My husband, Larry, kept worshipping at St. Mark Lutheran Church after I became a member here. He helped me a lot with Stroke Club and became familiar with this church. Now we worship here together. New Hope United Methodist Church is a "Difference Maker

# Smart Ways to Guard Against Dementia

**Treat your heart right.** The same habits that are good for your heart are also good for your brain, says David S. Knopman, MD, FAAN, professor of neurology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, and a specialist in studying and treating dementia. That means exercising regularly and eating a balanced diet, he says. Although exercise and a healthy diet won't prevent your brain from growing the neurofibrillary plaques and tangles characteristic of Alzheimer's disease, if you do get them, your brain will tolerate them better and you'll develop symptoms later, Dr. Knopman says. The effects are also cumulative, so a lifetime of exercise and healthy eating is key, he adds.

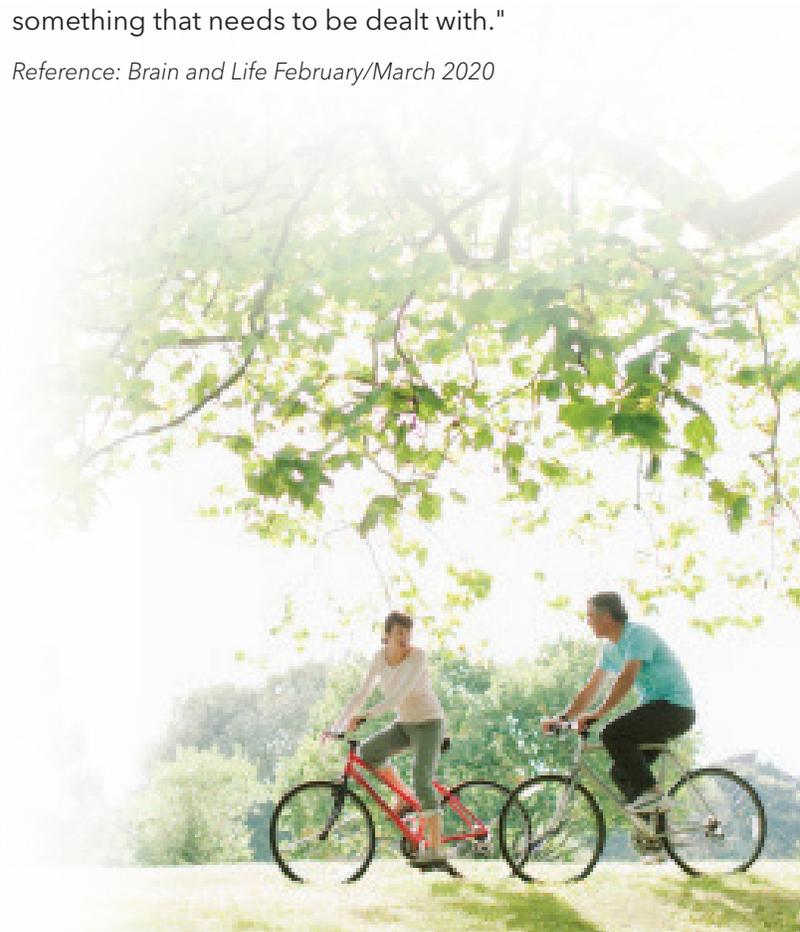
**Learn another language.** "If you're bilingual, keep using both languages," urges neuropsychologist Sid O'Bryant, PhD, executive director of the Institute for Translational Research at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. Among people with dementia, those who are bilingual develop symptoms four and a half years later than those who speak only one language, according to a 2017 meta-analysis of studies about bilingualism in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*. Moreover, middle-aged and older adults who are bilingual performed better on cognitive tests, particularly those involving visual-spatial functions, and had fewer Alzheimer's disease biomarkers in their cerebrospinal fluid than those who spoke just one language, according to a 2017 study in *Neurobiology of Aging*.

**Engage your mind.** Intellectual stimulation is another brain-healthy habit that is cumulative, says Dr. Knopman, who recommends mental activities that are also socially engaging. "Participate in a musical, join a book group or a bible study class, volunteer, or do homework with your kids or grandkids," he says.

**Stay socially active.** "You don't need to have a big social network, but if you maintain social support and you're happy with the social support you're getting, you're likely to fare better cognitively," says neuropsychologist Jennifer J. Manly, PhD, professor of neurology at Columbia University in New York.

**Manage chronic health conditions.** If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol, have them consistently monitored and controlled, Dr. O'Bryant advises. Dr. Knopman adds sleep apnea to that list. Talk to your doctor about whether you need to be tested for sleep apnea. If you have it, treat and control it, he says. The same goes for depression, says Dr. O'Bryant. "Depression is not a weakness; it's something that needs to be dealt with."

*Reference: Brain and Life February/March 2020*



## 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.

## Kids in Church

A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."



A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because a lot of people are sleeping."



A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

## Words of Wisdom

"When this is over, May we never take for granted a handshake with a stranger, Full shelves at the store, Conversations with neighbors, A crowded theater, a Friday night out. The taste of communion, a routine check-up. A school rush each morning, coffee with a friend. A stadium roaring, each deep breath. A boring Tuesday, life itself. When this ends may be find that we have become more like the people we wanted to be, we were called to be. And may we stay that way-better for each other because of the worst."

-Laura Kelly Fanucci