

# Milestones™

October 2020 • Free

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# Be Your Healthiest You!

From food to the flu,  
our annual Health Care  
Issue provides a dose of  
healthful information





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Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) is a nonprofit agency dedicated to serving Philadelphia seniors. In addition to bringing you Milestones newspaper, PCA offers:

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- Protective services
- Senior centers
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- Employment and volunteer programs
- Legal services
- Transportation



- Ombudsman services
- Health education
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# Milestones

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## EDITOR'S COLUMN

By Alicia M. Colombo, Milestones editor

## Your voice is important: VOTE!



No matter what your political beliefs may be, November's presidential election is important to the future of our nation. I won't suggest who to vote for but I will tell you it's vital that you make your voice heard. We are a nation divided. However, one thing we all have in common is the power to decide our nation's future. With everything that's going on in our country right now, all eligible voters need to step up and cast their ballots.

Even if you've never voted before, now is the time to get started. Registering to vote is a quick and easy process, so do it today!

*"We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."*

~ Thomas Jefferson

### Why I vote

I vote because my grandfathers were World War II Navy veterans.

I vote for all the soldiers who fought, and especially the ones who died, so I could be free.

I vote for the women in this country who were denied a voice by their own government for far too long.

I vote for the millions of people worldwide who still cannot cast a ballot.

I vote because it's not just my right – it's my duty as a United States citizen.

Voting isn't a privilege. It's an obligation.

Whatever your reason(s), make sure you

participate in this pivotal election. For important election deadlines and information, see the article on page 5. 🌅

### Why do you vote?

Milestones encourages all seniors to vote in the next election. Tell us why you vote! Email [MilestonesNews@pcaCares.org](mailto:MilestonesNews@pcaCares.org) and include your name, age, address and phone number. We may share your submission on PCA's social media pages to help encourage others to vote as well.



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# Flu season may clash with COVID-19 this fall: Are you prepared?

By Jay Nachman

Get a flu shot is the mantra-like message being repeated by health care professionals throughout Philadelphia who are concerned about both the fall flu season and a second wave of COVID-19 in the city and the nation.

A flu shot is the only preventive measure someone can take to reduce the chance of getting the flu, advises Dr. Stephen Gluckman, medical director of Penn Global Medicine and professor of medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Flu vaccines, Gluckman says, save thousands of lives. But there's a dangerous complication that's sure to crop up this fall. Flu and COVID-19 are both contagious, respiratory diseases. The symptoms for both overlap, with

the exception of what Gluckman called the "unusual symptoms" of the loss of taste and smell.

This overlap will make it hard to distinguish between the two infections, so he

recommends that anyone feeling sick see their primary physician for a rapid flu test.

Flu shots are important, agrees Amber Tirmal, immunization program manager for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH), since "seniors are much more susceptible to the poorest outcomes of the flu," she says.

Fortunately, she says, the steps people take to prevent COVID-19 also will help prevent the transmission of the flu: social distancing, handwashing and wearing a mask.

Tirmal says the city is preparing in anticipation of the double-whammy that a normal flu season and a spike in COVID-19 could bring.

In a typical year, the city gets 2,500 flu vaccine doses from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which are only available to uninsured adults 19 and older. This year, the city is receiving 50,000 vaccines from the CDC, which will be made available to anybody.

The city has 57 COVID-19 testing sites and PDPH recommends that people who meet the following criteria get tested:

- Exposure to someone with COVID-19 (wait seven days to ensure test accuracy).
- Symptoms of COVID-19, including a cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and a loss of taste or smell.
- If you have traveled to a state where there are high numbers of recent transmission.

According to the CDC, the risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19 increases as you get older and eight out of 10 COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. have been among adults 65 and older.

Tirmal emphasizes that while flu vaccines are essential for an individual's health, it's especially important "this year, so our health care providers are not in over their heads, working around the clock to take care of patients."

Dr. William Schaffner, medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, says, "Vaccine research and development is well underway, but a COVID-19 vaccine likely will not be available to the public until 2021. In the meantime, everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against influenza. That's particularly important for adults 65 and older, who are at high risk for flu-related complications."

Scientists are also working on ways to improve COVID-19 testing by making it "easier, faster, more comfortable and cheaper, at the same time maintaining accuracy. One of the research goals is to create a self-test that could be done by persons at home. It is not yet ready for prime time, but it is getting closer."

Should there be a severe flu season along with a surge in COVID-19 cases, health care institutions in Philadelphia, including the Penn Medicine system, are prepared. "Based on experience, the hospital now knows how to quickly set up a COVID-19 isolation ward," he says. "I'm pretty confident we're in a situation where we can handle it because we've done it."

Gluckman points out a cause for optimism as flu season approaches. "It's possible it will turn out to be a mild flu season," he says. "If you are conscientiously isolating and wearing a mask, it should decrease the flu."

However, regarding COVID-19, Gluckman says, "This is going to be with us for quite a while and people are going to have to be emotionally prepared for that."

*Jay Nachman is a freelance writer in Philadelphia who tells stories for a variety of clients.*







## Important election info

**The 2020 General Election is Tuesday, Nov. 3.**

Any adult, 18 or older, who has been a U.S. citizen and a resident of Pennsylvania, in the current voting district, for at least 30 days is eligible to vote. The deadline to register to vote is Oct. 19. You can register online, where you can also look up the status of your voter registration and application. Paper voter registration applications can be sent to your county voter registration office, but must be received by Oct. 19.

The polls will be open on Tuesday, Nov. 3 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. To find your polling location, go to [PhiladelphiaVotes.com/en/voters](https://PhiladelphiaVotes.com/en/voters) and click on "Where is my polling place?"

For this election, all registered voters in Pennsylvania have the option to vote by mail. Applications for a mail-in ballot must be received by the county office by 5 p.m. on Oct. 27. The deadline to return completed absentee and mail-in ballots is 8 p.m. on Nov. 3. It has been suggested that mail-in voters allow at least two weeks for delivery of their completed ballots.

At time of publication, all City of Philadelphia Offices remained closed to the public due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. For up-to-date information about voting and elections, including voter registration and voting by mail, go to [PhiladelphiaVotes.com/en/voters](https://PhiladelphiaVotes.com/en/voters) or [VotesPA.com](https://VotesPA.com). You may also call 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

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## Recipe Box

# Foods to help you sleep

Having trouble sleeping? Almost half of older adults exhibit signs of insomnia, according to the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine. Although common, insomnia can lead to some adverse health effects, including a higher risk for diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. For those experiencing dementia and sundown syndrome, insomnia can also exacerbate confusion, depression and anger, according to the National Institutes of Health.

There are several foods that you can incorporate into your diet that help aid in a good night's sleep:

- **Fruits to calm your nervous system** – Cherries, peaches and apples contain high levels of magnesium, which calms your nervous system. Cherries also deliver a healthy dose of melatonin, a hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle. Bananas contain tryptophan, which aides in the body's production of sleep-inducing serotonin.
- **Complex carbs to regulate blood sugar** – Brown rice, popcorn and oatmeal contain high levels of tryptophan, while potatoes and beans also contain amino acids that can aid in sleep and counteract the effects of caffeine in the body.
- **Unsaturated fats** – Avocado and nuts are high in serotonin, making them great pre-sleep snacks. Pistachios, in particular, are a great option, since they are also high in melatonin.
- **Protein** – Fish, lean meats and eggs all help with sleep thanks to high levels of glycine that help to lower body temperature.

These foods are perfect to eat on their own, or you can reap the benefits of a couple sleep-supporting ingredients in the recipes below.



## Peanut Butter Oatmeal

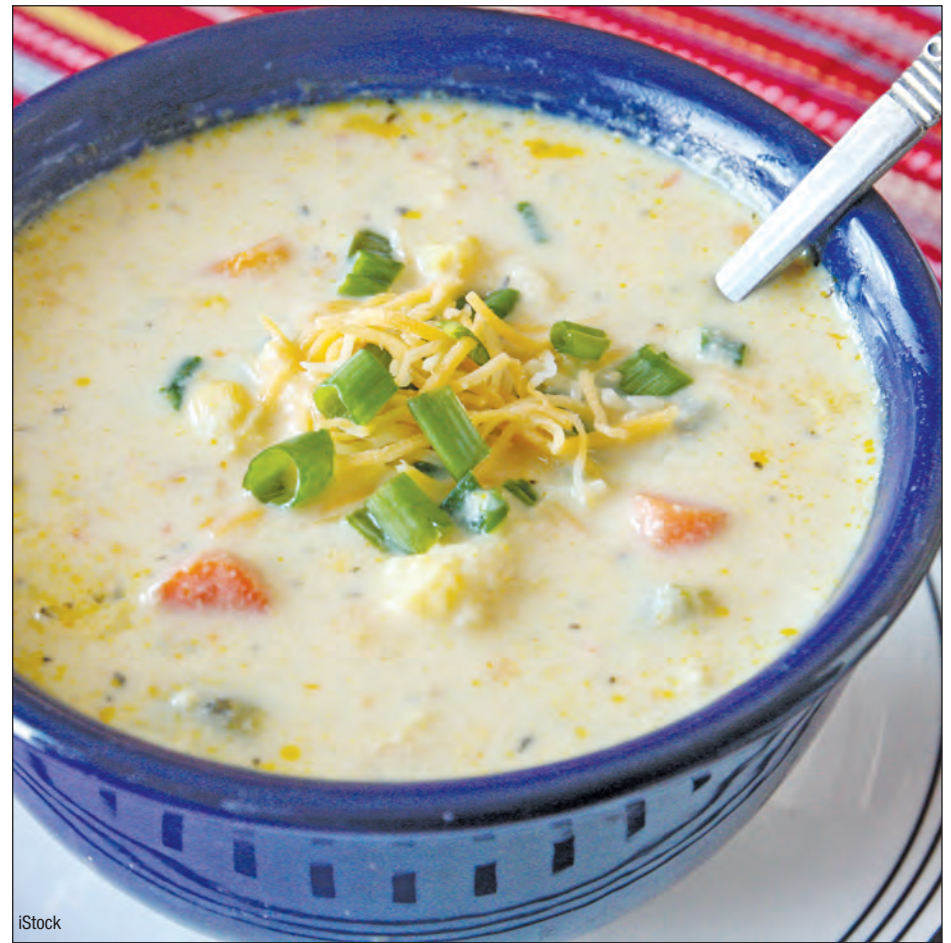
### Ingredients:

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups water  
 $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. salt  
 1 cup old-fashioned oats  
 2 tbsp. creamy peanut butter  
 2 tbsp. honey  
 2 tsp. ground flaxseed  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 Chopped apple (optional)

### Directions:

In a small saucepan, bring water and salt to a boil. Stir in oats; cook 5 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally.

Transfer oatmeal to 2 bowls; in each bowl, stir half each of the peanut butter, honey, flaxseed, cinnamon and apple (if desired).



## Halibut & Potato Chowder

### Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter, cubed  
 4 celery ribs, chopped  
 3 medium carrots, chopped  
 1 large onion, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. white pepper  
 2 cups 2% milk  
 1 can (14.5 ozs.) chicken broth  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water  
 1 tbsp. chicken soup base (highly concentrated chicken stock)  
 3 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped  
 1 can (15.25 ozs.) whole-kernel corn, drained  
 3 bay leaves  
 2 cups half-and-half  
 2 tbsp. lemon juice  
 1 lb. halibut or other whitefish fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 cup salad croutons  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup minced chives

### Directions:

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add celery, carrots and onion. Cook and stir until tender. Stir in flour and pepper until blended. Gradually add milk, broth, water and chicken base. Bring to a boil. Cook and stir until thickened, about 2 minutes.

Add potatoes, corn and bay leaves. Return to a boil. Reduce heat, then cover and simmer until potatoes are tender, 15-20 minutes.

Stir in half-and-half and lemon juice; return to a boil. Add halibut. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until fish flakes easily with a fork, 7-11 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Serve with remaining ingredients.

(Source: Taste of Home) 🌞



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# The benefits, drawbacks of telehealth for seniors

By Mary Anna Rodabaugh

John Marshall Isenhower, 67, of South Philadelphia, used to walk just a few steps from his home to his doctor's office on South Street. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it changed everything, including how Isenhower would obtain medical care.

After receiving an email from his doctor's office in April, Isenhower's regularly scheduled appointment with his primary care physician was converted to a telehealth visit by phone.

According to FAIR Health's Monthly Telehealth Regional Tracker, the number of telehealth claim lines for individual services and procedures has grown exponentially since the pandemic began. In February, the volume of nationwide telehealth claim lines was a mere 0.38%. By March, it skyrocketed to 7.52%. The data is not surprising, since health care providers have mimicked other industries by promoting remote workspaces in an effort to limit COVID-19 spread.

Isenhower says his telehealth appointment was a pleasant experience, noting his physician's concern for not just his physical well-being, but also his mental and emotional well-being during these unprecedented times. The appointment lasted around 20-25 minutes, and he says he did not feel rushed.

"She asked some questions which gave her clues as to how I was doing and how well my current medications were working," Isenhower says. "Even though she couldn't check my blood pressure in person, I was thrilled our thorough discussion led her to make a shift in my medication to make it more effective."

## Telehealth drawbacks

Telehealth is convenient and can be very effective for follow-up appointments and consultations, but it comes with various

drawbacks. For starters, physicians might ask if you have a blood pressure monitor available, or a glucometer for diabetics to measure blood sugar levels. "Sometimes they need to listen to your heart and take your temperature. I don't trust myself to do that," Isenhower says.

Another drawback is a loss of personal connection. You can't receive that gentle pat on the shoulder or reassuring smile over the phone. As Isenhower puts it, "You don't get to see the empathy."

The method for the telehealth appointment needs to be clearly explained to patients. Some patients may not feel comfortable using video conferencing for an appointment. Others may prefer a phone call, but their physician is expecting a video chat.

"It is very easy, as a senior, to get a little confused," Isenhower says. "Make sure you have all the instructions written down before your appointment."

## Tips for a successful appointment

The best way to have a successful telehealth appointment is to make sure you're prepared.

Prior to the appointment, write down anything your physician should know, including current prescriptions and dosages and any new symptoms you have been experiencing.

Make a list of additional questions you want to ask your health care provider.

If you have a scheduled video telehealth appointment, make sure you are in a well-lit room and have a stable internet connection.

At the start of the appointment, ask your physician what to do in case you get disconnected from the telehealth call or video.

For privacy in the household, consider using headphones.

• continued on page 18



The PA Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program's mission is to help you protect against, detect, and report Medicare fraud. Health care fraud damages Medicare's financial viability and has a direct impact on the health

care YOU receive. Fraud can increase out-of-pocket costs and can impact your health by decreasing quality of care - you could receive unnecessary or harmful care or be denied necessary treatment or equipment.

Scammers are now using the Covid-19 pandemic to defraud Medicare and Medicaid. They might contact you by phone, by email, or a knock on your door. The aim is always the same: to get personal information like your credit card information, or your Medicare ID number and use it to defraud Medicare. Scammers are exploiting the fear surrounding the pandemic to peddle fake Covid-19 tests and supplies, and unproven and potentially harmful cures or vaccines. Some are even impersonating contact tracers! So, what can you do? The following practices will go a long way to keeping yourself safe from these criminals:

1. **Protect and treat your Medicare ID number and card like a credit card.**
2. **NEVER provide your Medicare or credit card number to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.**
3. **If you need a test or a treatment, call your personal doctor first.**

If you have questions about or suspect Medicare fraud, or would like to volunteer with the SMP program, please call toll-free: 1-800-356-3606 or visit [www.carie.org](http://www.carie.org).

*Help is always free and confidential.*



# There's no reason to deal with mental health problems alone in Philadelphia

October is Mental Health Awareness Month and comes at the perfect time for us all to do a personal checkup on how good we're feeling – mentally and emotionally.

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned much of our world completely on its head, especially for Philadelphia's older residents. When social isolation, boredom, frustration and anxiety coincide, depression can be the result. If left untreated, depression can have severe adverse effects on older adults.

However, Philadelphia also has great resources for seniors who are looking to speak with someone about mental health concerns. The following are a few resources that offer services and supports.

**Penn Geriatric Psychiatry** uses some of the most advanced treatments in mental health work today and prides itself on strategies that keep older adults from falling back into a vicious cycle. 3615 Chestnut St. | 215-662-4508 | PennMedicine.org

**Jefferson Hospital Geriatric Psychiatry Program** offers both inpatient and outpatient care focusing on psychological and neurological disorders in older adults. 1020 S. 21st St. | 1-800-533-3669 | hospitals.jefferson.edu

**Philadelphia Area Older Adult Hoarding Task Force** offers assistance for older Philadelphians who suffer from hoarding and provides a host of additional resources for consideration. Adults 60-plus: 215-545-5728 | PhiladelphiaHoarding.org

**SAGE National LGBT Elder Hotline** delivers a host of advocacy connections, tools and supports locally and specifically for Philadelphia's LGBTQ older adults. 1-888-234-SAGE | sageusa.org

**Horizon House** helps reduce isolation by utilizing peer support groups and provides activities and additional resources for people of all ages, including seniors, with mental health needs. 610-918-4907 | hhinc.org



To see a more detailed list that caters to older adults, visit Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's website at [pcaCares.org/mental-health](https://pcaCares.org/mental-health) or contact PCA's Helpline at 215-765-9040 for resources. 🌻



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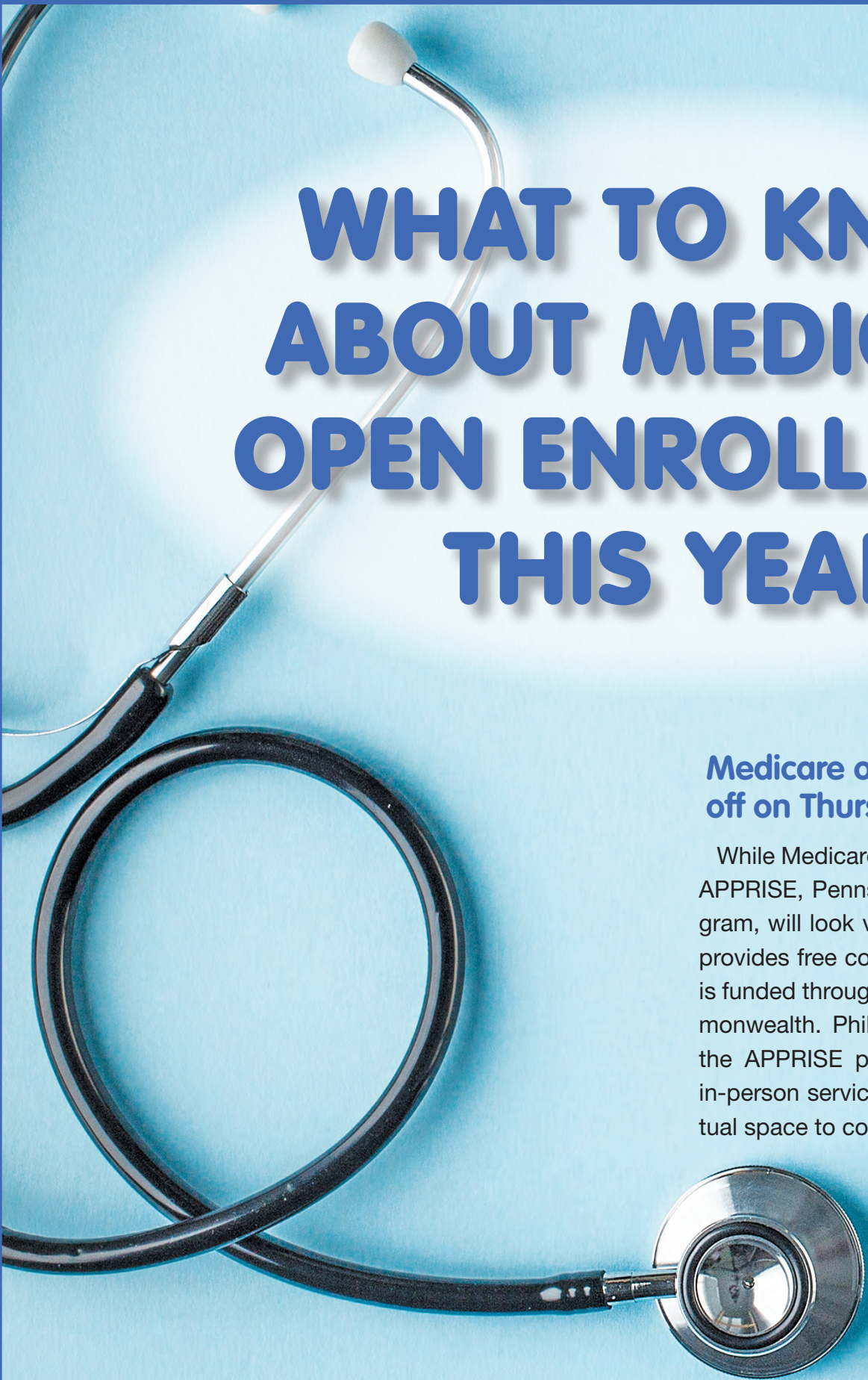
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# WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT THIS YEAR

## Medicare open enrollment for 2020 will kick off on Thursday, Oct. 15.

While Medicare as a whole may look pretty similar to past years, APPRISE, Pennsylvania's state health insurance assistance program, will look very different this year for Philadelphia. APPRISE provides free counseling to people who qualify for Medicare and is funded through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) within the commonwealth. Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) oversees the APPRISE program for Philadelphia County. As with many in-person services, APPRISE in Philadelphia had to shift to a virtual space to comply with social distancing guidelines.

"As of now, we are conducting all counseling services through phone or video chat," says Lynda Pickett, PCA's assistant director of In-Home Support Program and Volunteer Services. "That may change down the line, but for now we are scheduling calls only."

Each year, APPRISE in Philadelphia assists close to 1,000 individuals during the annual Medicare open enrollment period, which runs Oct. 15 through Dec. 7.

APPRISE counselors are available to answer questions about Medicare, as well as Medigap and Medicare Advantage Plans. Counselors also assist with evaluating and comparing plans and offer guidance on which plans will best fit the participant's needs.

"They have the ability to cross-compare to make sure you are getting the most bang for your buck," says Pickett.

Daniel Louis, an APPRISE counselor through the Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE), recently helped Medicare participants save about \$2,000 by comparing his current Medicare coverage with other viable options.

"It's important to consistently evaluate your Medicare plan. Not only do health care and prescription drug needs change over time, but also premiums change over time," Louis says. "If you don't keep an eye on them, your premiums could be going up every year without you knowing." Before becoming an APPRISE volunteer, he served as managing director of the Asano-Gonnella Center for Research in Medical Education & Health Care at Sydney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University for 32 years.

Counselors can also evaluate whether individuals can qualify for the Medicare Savings Plan, which helps pay some costs associated with Medicare Part B, or for Extra Help, which allows income-eligible participants to reduce Medicare prescription drug costs.

## What's new to Medicare in 2020?

As with almost all federal programs, Medicare has evolved slightly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Louis explains

that coverage for telehealth "visits" has expanded through Medicare since the onset of the pandemic as telehealth appointments have rose in popularity because they do not require patients to go into the doctor's office and are an alternative to face-to-face visits.

While Medicare has "loosened their restrictions" on telehealth visits, Louis cautions that it is not certain whether that will continue post COVID-19.

## How to make an APPRISE appointment

Medicare beneficiaries can schedule an appointment for APPRISE counseling by calling:

- **CARIE:** 215-545-5728 (South, West and North Central Philadelphia)
- **Einstein Medical Center:** 215-456-7600 (Northeast and Northwest Philadelphia)
- **Statewide APPRISE Helpline:** 800-783-7067 (Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia)

Prior to each scheduled appointment, Medicare participants should have their Medicare card on hand. New Medicare cards, which no longer include a social security number, were issued to all beneficiaries in 2018 and 2019. Pickett suggests that individuals also have a list of their current health care providers and prescriptions, so counselors can identify plans to meet their current and possibly future health care needs.

According to Louis, one of the most beneficial steps a Medicare recipient can do, especially those new to Medicare, is to set up an online account at **MyMedicare.gov**. You don't need an account to access the Medicare Plan Finder tool, where you can shop and compare plans. But having a MyMedicare.gov account is beneficial in other ways. It saves a record of past prescriptions and claims, sends alerts if a participant is eligible for Extra Help, and even allows participants to enroll in plans online.



# Milestones<sup>™</sup>

## Virtual Events

### October 2020

**OCT. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**

### MorningsOut Virtual Book Club

A gay, bisexual and transgender senior men's social with weekly discussion topics, speaker presentations, travel logs and more. 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. For info on book selections and access to Zoom, email [libroparaladro@gmail.com](mailto:libroparaladro@gmail.com).

**OCT. 7**

### Nightmares Before Bedtime

Librarian Ned reads selected spooky stories from the Free Library of Philadelphia's collection. 8 p.m. Wednesdays. Stream: [Facebook.com/PhilbrickHall](https://www.facebook.com/PhilbrickHall)

**OCT. 7**

### Non-Partisan Election Discussion

Presented by the League of Women Voters of Philadelphia and the Committee of Seventy. 7 p.m. [ShaareShamayim.org](https://www.ShaareShamayim.org). For more information: 215-677-1600.

**OCT. 15**

### Art of Activism: Activism is a Choir, Not a Solo

Learn how to leverage one's artistic voice in the chorus of social justice progress in this virtual discussion presented by The Mural Arts Institute. 5:30-6:30 p.m. Register: [MuralArts.org/events/art-of-activism-activism-is-a-choir-not-a-solo](https://www.MuralArts.org/events/art-of-activism-activism-is-a-choir-not-a-solo)

**OCT. 15**

### 'The Incident at Parkside' Book Signing Party

In Philadelphia author Ted Fink's latest novel, 77-year-old Melvin Kappernick moves back to the neighborhood of his youth in an attempt to recapture the

mystery and magic he knew as a boy. But the area has completely changed, and Kappernick finds himself embroiled in a drama that turns violent. 7:30 p.m. Register: [TedFink.com](https://www.TedFink.com).

**OCT. 21**

### Opening Meeting & Virtual Concert

Inaugural virtual opening meeting for The Sisterhood of Congregations of Shaare Shamayim, featuring world-renowned violinist Claudia Pellegrini. 1 p.m. Information and tickets: 215-677-1600. \$



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**OCT. 20-22**

### PCA's Regional Conference on Aging

Local and national gerontology experts provide 12 sessions focusing on various aspects of aging. Register & information: [pcaCares.org](https://www.pcaCares.org)

**OCT. 22**

### A Holistic Approach to Managing Chronic Pain

Interactive health and wellness chat. 5 p.m. [local.aarp.org/philadelphia-pa/aarp-events](https://www.local.aarp.org/philadelphia-pa/aarp-events)

**OCT. 24**

### BeerFest2U: Pennsylvania's Virtual Craft Beer Festival

Festival participants will receive a BeerFest Box delivered right to their door, featuring 24 limited-edition, select craft beers to sample during this live-streamed, interactive event. 4-6 p.m. Tickets: [Beverages2u.com/beerfest2u](https://www.Beverages2u.com/beerfest2u) \$



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Steve Weinik for Mural Arts Philadelphia

"Peace Is a Haiku Song" by Josh Sarantitis and Parris Stancell, located at Christ Church, 2nd and Market streets in Old City.

# Tour Philadelphia's murals

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

If enthusiasm adds sparkle to all it touches, Caroll Drazen's tours of Philly's murals produce a million watts. Drazen, 76, of Queen Village, adds even more dazzle to her tours since she's an art historian and professional painter. "Mural Arts has painted more than 4,000 murals and about 2,500 still exist," Drazen said. "It's the mural arts capital of the world."

Art seems to be part of Drazen's family. "An uncle by marriage was an illustrator who did covers for publications like Look

magazine," she said, "but he discouraged anyone in the family from choosing a career in fine art because it's hard to earn a living."

Yet, Drazen found ways to stay close to beauty. She spent her junior year in college studying art history in Paris and later earned a master's degree in art history from Columbia University. She also studied at the London College of Printing, earning a certificate in book design.

Over the years, Drazen applied her skill to scores of projects. She's worked as a museum docent and graphic designer,

taught at the Community College of Philadelphia, and designed books and co-designed signage for the New Jersey Transit system.

"At one point I was a single mother with two daughters. I juggled jobs, projects and home responsibilities, as so many single parents do," said Drazen, who has since remarried and now has two grandchildren.

When Drazen lived in Houston, she painted works in oil, including still-life and portraits. "Now I have less studio space, so I do smaller works," said Dra-

zen, who began selling her paintings 20 years ago. "Since COVID-19, I do sketches of the neighborhood."

In 2009, after retiring and relocating to Philadelphia, Drazen found herself fascinated by the scale and impact of the city's murals. "As a tour guide with Mural Arts [Philadelphia], I knew I could use my skills," she said. "After several months of training, we [trainees] shadowed seasoned guides on tours. Finally, we gave a tour ourselves while our boss rode along."

Before COVID-19, Drazen led tours on

• continued on page 18



# What to do in an emergency – if you are alone

By Mary Anna Rodabaugh

Unpredictable events can strike at any moment. So, you should always be prepared to handle an emergent situation – on your own. Here are a few common situations and suggestions for how to handle them.

## Choking

You’re enjoying a meal, when suddenly you feel food stuck in your throat. If you can, dial 911 and leave the phone off the hook. The dispatchers can trace your location and send paramedics to your home.

The National Institutes of Health recommends the self-Heimlich maneuver. Make a fist with one hand and place it below your ribcage, above your belly button. Your thumb should be pressed against your abdomen. Grasp your fist with your other hand and quickly thrust your fists into your abdomen and upward several times in quick succession. If this does not dislodge the object, you can also lean over the back of a chair, against the edge of a counter or alongside a sturdy table. Thrust your upper abdomen (between your belly button and rib cage) against the edge of the surface. Repeat this maneuver until the blockage dislodges. The self-Heimlich maneuver can sometimes cause internal damage, so you must seek medical attention even if you were able to clear the food/object from your throat and restore breathing.

## Water leak

A crack in your plumbing or a broken pipe can cause serious water damage in a matter of minutes. If you have a leaking pipe in your home, the Philadelphia Water Department advises you to turn off your main water shutoff valve. This valve is usually located in the basement by the water meter, near the water heater, or outside the



property. If you don’t know the location of your home’s main water shutoff valve, now is the time to find it – before a leak occurs.

If the main shutoff valve is inaccessible or located near a large amount of flooding, do not attempt to shut off the valve as doing so could pose a safety risk. Instead, evacuate the area and call a plumber.

Once the water is turned off, do not enter any flooded area unless it is clear of electrical outlets, appliances and wires. You’ll need to have a plumber to fix the source of the leak. If the leak was severe, you may also need to contact a water damage restoration and/or mold remediation service.

## Scams and deception

According to the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, the top three scams reported are the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) impersonation scams, unsolicited phone calls and sweepstakes/lottery scams. If you believe you have been the target or victim of a scam, contact the Philadelphia Police Victims Services Unit at 215-

685-1158 for assistance. To prevent phone scams, do not answer your phone unless you recognize the caller or number. Never give out your bank account, credit card, Social Security or Medicare numbers unless you can verify the caller is legitimate.

## Dog bite

If you are out for a walk alone and are bitten by a dog, stay as calm as possible. Take a photo of the animal with your smartphone, if it is safe to do so. As soon as you can safely navigate away from the animal, wash the wound with plenty of soap and water. Then go to your family doctor or the nearest emergency room.

If the dog owner is nearby, request the owner’s name, address and phone number. Ask if the dog has a current rabies vaccination and write down the rabies tag number. According to Phila.gov, animal bites in Philadelphia must be reported to the Department of Public Health. Medical professionals are mandated to report these events, but you can also report the bite

yourself by calling 215-685-6748. You will need to give a description of the animal, the owner’s information, how the bite occurred and how the animal behaved.

During an emergency, the key is to remain calm, maintain awareness of your surroundings and act quickly.

Mary Anna Rodabaugh is a writer, editor and writing coach.

## Crossword puzzle solution

(See page 19 for clues.)

S	K	E	Y	R	E	L	E	E	S
W	E	D	S	V	T	V	R	E	B
L	A	T	E	S	N	A	I	S	L
L	A	T	E	S	N	A	I	S	L
A	I	D	A	I	O	H	S	I	O
A	I	D	A	I	O	H	S	I	O
L	E	S	L	O	S	G	R	S	M
L	E	S	L	O	S	G	R	S	M
S	I	O	N	R	E	B	R	E	S
S	I	O	N	R	E	B	R	E	S
E	R	E	S	I	R	E	O	R	E
E	R	E	S	I	R	E	O	R	E
A	G	O	R	A	W	E	E	A	G
A	G	O	R	A	W	E	E	A	G
M	O	P	I	R	E	I	V	A	M
M	O	P	I	R	E	I	V	A	M
L	A	M	S	R	A	G	V	A	S
L	A	M	S	R	A	G	V	A	S
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	I	C
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	I	C
N	O	E	N	G	S	T	I	N	G
N	O	E	N	G	S	T	I	N	G
O	B	O	E	N	A	U	D	E	N
O	B	O	E	N	A	U	D	E	N
W	A	R	D	S	E	L	O	S	E
W	A	R	D	S	E	L	O	S	E





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## Keeping an eye on your esophagus

By Constance Garcia-Barrio

"Many of us might have gastroesophageal reflux, or heartburn, after a spicy Italian meal," said Anthony Infantolino, M.D., professor of medicine at the Sydney Kimmel Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, "but if you have heartburn two or three times a week, you may be diagnosed with GERD, or gastroesophageal reflux disease." With GERD, acid from the stomach rises into the lower esophagus, the muscular tube that goes from the throat (pharynx) to the stomach.

If you're troubled with GERD, you have lots of company. This disorder affects up to 1-in-5 adults in the U.S., according to the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Diseases (IFGD).

Even though the condition may be prevalent, you should alert your doctor of the problem. "Some people take [antacids] or other over-the-counter remedies, but they don't divulge the situation to their physician," Infantolino said. "It's important to raise the issue so that your doctor can consider further evaluation."

GERD is highly treatable, according to Infantolino. But, if ignored, it can lead to Barrett's Esophagus (BE). In people with BE, the flat grayish-pink lining of esophagus becomes damaged from long-term acid reflux and thickens, turning a bright salmon-like hue.

"BE has a genetic component, and more men than women develop it, especially obese white males over the age of 50," Infantolino said. "In some cases, BE progresses to dysplasia, or pre-cancerous cells. It's critical to find patients when they have BE without dysplasia, before it becomes pre-cancerous or cancerous."

Once the condition develops into cancer, patients have a poor prognosis. "The 5-year survival rate for patients with esophageal cancer is less than 20%," Infantolino said. Moreover, the incidence of cancer of the esophagus has jumped four-to-six-fold since the 1970s, possibly because junk food introduced into the American diet

around that time spurred obesity. "The key ... is finding patients in the earliest stages of BE," Infantolino said.

The current screening for conditions of the esophagus is endoscopy, where a tiny camera on the end of a flexible tube is passed through the mouth while the patient sleeps. This camera allows doctors to view the esophagus and obtain tissue samples if BE is suspected. "When you undergo endoscopy, you have to take a day off from work [and other activities], receive intravenous sedation and arrange for someone to drive you home afterwards."

Infantolino is the first doctor in Pennsylvania to implement an innovative new esophageal screening technology. EsoCheck, cleared by the FDA, lets doctors collect cells from the esophagus in a quick office procedure. Patients swallow EsoCheck, which is about the size of a vitamin pill and has a thin flexible silicone tube attached. As the doctor gently pulls the device out, a tiny balloon with ridges collects cells from the esophagus, which are sent to a lab for a test to detect potential abnormalities. "EsoCheck screening, now available at Jefferson University Hospital, has a 90% accuracy rate," Infantolino said. "It doesn't require intravenous sedation. I've had the procedure myself."

There are steps seniors can take to keep their esophagus healthy:

- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity is a risk factor of several illnesses, including GERD.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. They've been shown to help prevent many cancers.
- Allow two or three hours between your last meal and going to bed.
- Limit foods that tend to cause heartburn, such as those containing alcohol, caffeine and high amounts of fat.
- Quit smoking. It is a risk factor for many conditions, including cancer of the esophagus.

*Native Philadelphian Constance Garcia-Barrio writes about many topics, including black history.*



# The eyes have it: See that you take care of yours

By Barbara Sherf

Ophthalmologist Christina McGowan of Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia encourages her patients to keep a close eye on their eye care appointments.

"The big message for people is: We are here and ready to take care of you," McGowan said. "During this time of COVID, we are taking extra precautionary measures so people feel safe coming in for eye exams and do not risk losing their sight. I cannot stress the importance of good eye care."

Many eye conditions affecting older adults are not reversible, according to McGowan. So it's important to be diagnosed and treated as soon as possible to prevent further damage to your eyes and sight. Some of the most common eye conditions for seniors are described below.

## Glaucoma

It is estimated that only half of the people with glaucoma even know they have it. The disease damages the optic nerve, which collects visual information from the retina and transmits it to the brain. Early in the disease process, patients experience loss of peripheral vision, but it may go unnoticed until it becomes more advanced and affects central vision. Glaucoma causes irreversible damage, which can lead to blindness, so it is vital to catch the disease early.

McGowan recommends a dilated eye exam, which is the best way to detect glaucoma, starting at age 50. If you have a family history of glaucoma, you should get tested sooner. "The goal of treatment is to reduce eye pressure," said McGowan. "That can be done with medicated eye drops or a laser procedure, but may require additional surgical interventions as it progresses."

## Cataracts

Cataracts develop when you get older, and there is nothing you can do to prevent them. However, quitting smoking, eating a

healthy Mediterranean diet, controlling your blood sugar and blood pressure, and exercising can help to minimize cataracts.

"People typically complain about blurry vision and glare from car headlights at night," McGowan said. "Treatment is cataract surgery in which the old lens is removed and a new lens is inserted into the eye. This is a constantly evolving field and cataract surgery can now incorporate the use of lasers and new 3D technology."

## Age-related macular degeneration

A serious eye issue facing seniors is age-related macular degeneration (AMD). This progressive disease causes damage to the macula, the part of your eye responsible for central vision. It's the leading cause of vision loss in people over 50.

Dry AMD, which can cause blindness, involves a thinning of the macula or the center of the retina. The dry form comes in different stages: early, intermediate and advanced/late stage.

"Often, a patient experiences blurred vision, and it can progress to devastating central vision loss," McGowan said.

For dry AMD, McGowan recommends lifestyle changes, including quitting smoking; regular exercise; controlling blood pressure; and eating a diet rich in Omega 3s, such as fish and green leafy vegetables. For intermediate or advanced stages, the dietary supplement called AREDS 2 contains a specific mix of nutrients that has been shown in randomized trials by the National Eye Institute to slow the progression of AMD.

"AREDS 2 vitamins should not be used as a preventive measure, but taken only when you are advised to start them by your eye care specialist," said McGowan.

Wet AMD occurs when abnormal blood vessels growing under the retina leak and cause scarring. There are drugs that are injected into the eye to help stop the bleeding.

"Patients tolerate [the injections] really well," McGowan said. "Mentally, they have to get over the fact that a needle is inserted into the eye. The eye is numbed up very well, and patients experience minimal discomfort. Patients typically start out with injections once a month and are

followed closely by a retina specialist to track their progress."

## Diabetic retinopathy

Uncontrolled, elevated blood sugar damages blood vessels in the retina, causing a leakage of fluid into the tissue. Diabetic retinopathy can be controlled by lifestyle changes.

"It's important to stay on top of it, as it can be very devastating," McGowan said. "This week, I saw someone who presented for his first eye exam with advanced disease that, left untreated, could have resulted in blindness."

Diabetics should monitor their blood hemoglobin A1c level, which determines how well-controlled their diabetes is. "You really need to know this value and tell your eye care specialist at each visit," McGowan recommends.

## Dry eyes

Dry eyes are a common complaint with aging patients, according to McGowan. "Initially, this condition can be treated with over-the-counter eye drops and ointments, warm compresses, and lid hygiene. The compresses help unclog blocked oil glands and improve the oil component of your natural tears," she said.

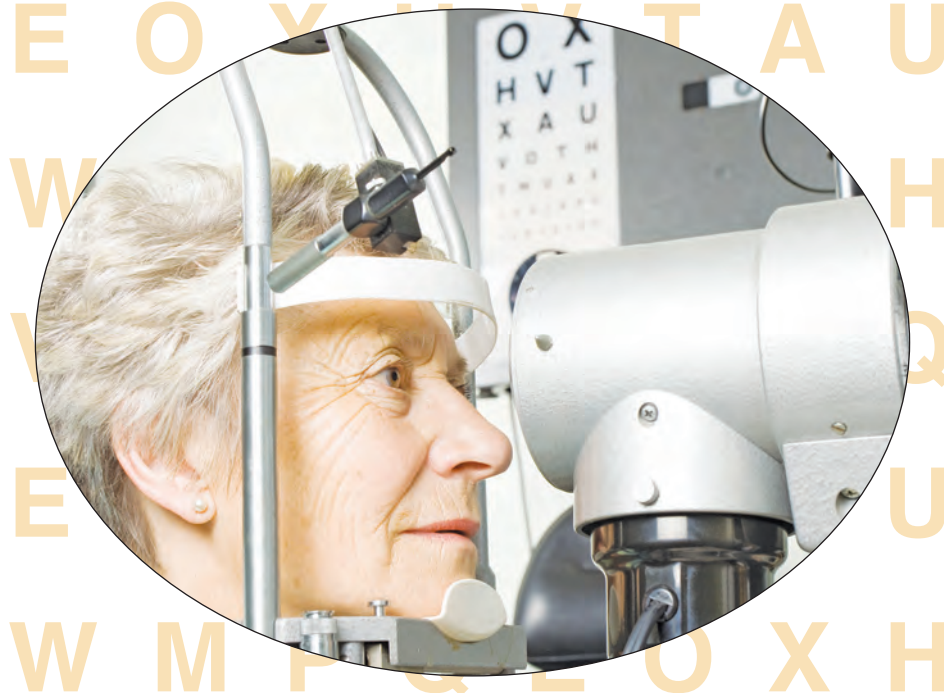
You should not try to self-diagnose or self-treat any eye condition. In order to maintain your eye health, visiting an eye care professional is vital.

"The outcomes of eye conditions are typically better the earlier they are found, and lifestyle changes can be very important to prevent further decline," stressed McGowan. "It is so important to get eye exams at least annually, which are covered by Medicare."

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For more information, visit [WillsEye.org](http://WillsEye.org).

*Author and speaker Barbara Sherf captures the stories of businesses and individuals..*





## Murals

• continued from page 14



recently began again and will continue through November.

"Usually, I have about half tourists and half Philadelphians," Drazen said.

Brimming with color and imagination, murals can also express values, Drazen noted. "In the mural of Dr. J [Julius Erving] at 1234 Ridge Avenue, the artist, Kent Twitchell, shows [Dr. J] in a business suit, not his Sixers uniform. Twitchell wanted viewers, especially young people, to think about what happens once your days as an athlete end, and how you move on in life."

Drazen likes belonging to Mural Arts Philadelphia (MAP), which was started by painter Jane Golden in 1984 as the Anti-Graffiti Network, because this non-profit brings healing and possibilities to often-overlooked sectors of society. Be-

foot, trolleys, and the El from whose windows riders can see "Love Letters," a series of text message murals painted on walls. Guided walking tours

sides a robust art-education program for youth, MAP has a re-entry program that provides jobs and teaches skills to people leaving incarceration. MAP also partners with Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disabilities Services. In the Porch Light Program, people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities work to create murals as a healing activity.

**"I receive more than I give as a guide. I learn from guests on our tours and from neighbors in communities where murals are located."**

— Caroll Drazen, 76, artist and Philadelphia Mural Arts tour guide

One of Drazen's favorite murals stretches along two walls of the northeast of corner of 13th and Pine streets. That site, Dirty Frank's Bar, has no sign, but people know the spot by the mural. Called "Famous Franks," it includes Aretha Franklin, Frank Sinatra, Frankenstein's monster, Pope Francis and other Franks.



Steve Weinik for Mural Arts Philadelphia

**"Remembering a Forgotten Hero," a mural honoring the life of educator and civil rights activist Octavius V. Catto, by Willis "Nomo" Humphrey is located at Universal Charter School, 1427 Catharine St., in South Philadelphia.**

"I receive more than I give as a guide," Drazen said. "I learn from guests on our tours and from neighbors in communities where murals are located." For Drazen, it seems, Mural Arts Philadelphia keeps beauty in her life and helps her live it to the fullest.

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For more about Drazen's art, go to [CarollDrazen.com](http://CarollDrazen.com). To learn more about Phil-

adelphia Mural Arts or its public, private, virtual and guided tours, visit [MuralArts.org/public-tours/](http://MuralArts.org/public-tours/) or call 215-925-3633. Tours last about 90 minutes, cost \$24, and are limited to 10 participants. Walking tours, which require face masks and reservations, will continue through November.

*Native Philadelphian Constance Garcia-Barrio writes about many topics, including black history.*

## You can borrow an iPad for your telehealth appointment!

Pennsylvania seniors who need to participate in telehealth visits, see family and friends virtually, and/or keep up with important news can borrow an iPad, laptop or other device from TechOWL and Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library. The TechOWL Team from the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University will work with older adults in selecting the right device, uploading software and applications, and providing technical support. All devices can be borrowed for three weeks, with an option for longer. For more information, go to [techOWLpa.org/library](http://techOWLpa.org/library) or contact a TechOWL staff member at 1-800-204-7428 (1-866-268-0579 TTY).

## Telehealth

• continued from page 8

### The future of telehealth

Even after the pandemic is over, it is likely telehealth will continue to grow.

"I would imagine for doctors it is better for management," Isenhower says. "While expanding telehealth wouldn't prevent me from seeking [this type of] care in the future, I do believe elements of in-person care will need to be included somehow."

Many insurance companies have made improvements in telehealth care technology. The Humana Foundation has invested in the national nonprofit Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) since 2018,

and plans to expand that relationship to connect seniors to the technology needed for telehealth.

"We have a long way to go in assisting seniors in feeling comfortable with all the features of telehealth, and education and adoption go hand-in-hand," says Bruce Brossard, president and CEO of Humana. "As more seniors start to feel comfortable with smartphones and trust online services, telehealth is becoming an essential part of health care – one that can improve health outcomes through preventive measures and frequent check-ins."

*Mary Anna Rodabaugh is a writer, editor and writing coach.*



Health Brief



COVID-19 prevention is top priority for older adults, as we await vaccine

While scientists continue to work on creating an effective vaccine for the novel coronavirus, there is also a great deal of concern that historically these vaccines tend to be least effective for older adults, the people who need it most.

So, as many of the large pharmaceutical companies race for a vaccine, a contingent from the Harvard Institutes of Medicine (HIM) is working with doctors and scientists from Boston Children’s Hospital looking to create one that will be effective for all ages.

“Whatever we develop, we’ve got to make sure it works in the elderly. Otherwise, we don’t have our eye on the ball,” Ofer Levy, an infectious disease doctor who directs the Precision Vaccines Program at Boston Children’s Hospital told Scientific American. “Right now, the way vaccines are developed, the eye isn’t on the ball.”

What’s even more insightful from this work is that much of the data will determine if the vaccine should be designed to slow the spread of the virus or if the focus should be to protect the most vulnerable, given COVID-19 and its survival rate

among the young and able-bodied.

A vaccine is likely to arrive in multiple forms or strains, depending on who it’s created for, and that is something likely to take more time than many want to wait. Until then, doctors urge people – especially older adults and those with pre-existing conditions – to think about ways they can protect against COVID-19. Prevention is still the top priority, nine months later for a virus that has already cost so many so much.

Experts, including Levy and colleagues at HIM – are aiming to develop a vaccine that could conceivably work for all, in real-life settings. As more evolves with vaccines and their availability and effectiveness, it’ll be this work that will return us to some semblance of normalcy by way of a safe vaccine that protects an older adult population with many years remaining.

“[Of course], a vaccine that protects young people would slow the virus’ spread,” said Levy. “But one that protects the most vulnerable will directly save lives.”

Source: CDC.gov; Scientific American

Crossword

Story Time

Across

- 1 Pilgrimage to Mecca

5 Untied

10 Voting district

14 Dies \_\_\_\_

15 Poet Wylan Hugh

16 Hautboy

17 She wrote *The Women*

18 Paul Newman film, with *The*

19 Broadway light

20 1925 novel by 37 Across, with *An*

23 Smelting dross

24 LA team

25 Swab

28 Anger

29 Campus vine

30 Flapper hairdo

33 Greek market-place

35 Like Willie Winkie

36 Zaharias or Ruth

37 Indiana-born author: 1891-1945

41 Unaltered

42 CSA fighter

43 Loud

44 Japanese apricot

45 Incite to attack

46 Farmer’s subj.

48 Seasoning for Escoffier

49 R.C. dignitary

50 Street sign

52 Another work by 37 Across

59 Trademark

60 Does a carpentry job

61 Tardy

62 War of 1899-1902

63 Geography reference work

64 Delineated

65 Snow runner: *var.*

66 Suspicious

67 Supplements

Down

- 1 Seed scars

2 Jack-in-the-pulpit, *e.g.*

3 Carp cousin

4 Taunts

5 Oriental sailor

6 Electricity suspension

7 Norse god

8 Stood guard

9 Silver decorator

10 Actress Anna May, *et al.*

11 Busy as \_\_\_\_

12 Crucifix

13 Disown

21 Homer work

22 Irving or Carter

25 Taiwan Strait island

26 Old Irish alphabet

27 de Musset product

30 Foundation

31 Overweight

32 Emerald, *e.g.*

34 Caviar

35 *Charlotte’s* \_\_\_\_

36 C. V.

38 Earliest

39 Make anew

40 Sign up

45 WWII draft org.

46 Masonry stone

47 Model’s portfolio item

49 Victor or Grace

51 Dorian Gray’s creator

52 Mass vestments

53 Barrie pirate

54 *Cyma recta*

55 Annoy

56 Obscure

57 To \_\_\_\_

58 Evergreens

Solution  
The solution can be found on page 15.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
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59					60						61			
62					63						64			
65					66						67			





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*PA Health & Wellness exists to improve the health of its beneficiaries through focused, compassionate and coordinated care. Our approach is based on the core belief that quality healthcare is best delivered locally.*

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