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END OF LIFE

Discussion can be
compassionate, sound

Publication of:

Utah MEDIA
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Research Rundown

By Nala Rogers, Science and Wellness Correspondent

Seeking info on self-injury? Beware internet sources



If you use the internet to understand why some people cut or otherwise injure themselves, you are likely to be misinformed, according to a new study. The researchers examined the results of Google searches related to deliberate, non-suicidal self-injury, and found that most websites claiming to offer health information in fact spread myths about the behavior. Most of the sites were not created by medical professionals or endorsed by reputable institutions, and on average each one contained 1.4 falsehoods.

The most common myths were:

- Those who self-injure have a mental illness such as borderline personality disorder (in fact, self-injury may co-occur with mental illness but is not necessary or sufficient for any diagnosis)
- Those who self-injure have a history of abuse
- Women self-injure more than men (in fact, rates of self-injury are similar for men and women)

The researchers are concerned that the misinformation may mislead people who are trying to understand their own behaviors or provide care to others who self-injure. In addition, online sources didn't provide much information about treatment effectiveness, which could make people think that there is no point in seeking help.

The authors recommend these three credible websites: *sioutreach.org*, created by Self-Injury Outreach and Support; *selfinjury.com*, created by Self-Abuse Finally Ends; and *crpsib.com*, created by the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injurious Behavior in Adolescents and Young Adults.

The study was published online March 24 in "JAMA Pediatrics."

Lonely parrots get old before their time due to isolation

Social isolation may increase cellular processes linked to aging, according to a new study with African grey parrots. The researchers measured the lengths of parrots' telomeres, protective caps on the ends of DNA strands that shorten each time a cell divides, and found that birds who had lived their whole lives alone had shorter telomeres than birds of the same age who were housed with a companion. Similar effects have been found in humans who are under chronic stress, including stress caused by social deprivation in orphanages.

Short telomeres are associated with many age-related diseases, and are thought to be fundamental to the aging process. While telomeres always shorten with age, there is variation between individuals, either because the telomeres start out at different lengths or because they degrade at different rates. The new study found no differences in how quickly telomeres degraded over time, but the differences in length were dramatic: A 9-year-old solitary bird would have telomeres about the same length as a 23-year-old social bird. This suggests that early experiences may affect the telomeres a parrot will have for the rest of its life.

African grey parrots are highly social and intelligent birds, and they often exhibit stress and behavior problems when deprived of companions. It is illegal to keep African greys alone in Austria, where the study was conducted, but the law is rarely enforced. The birds in the study were pets brought to a veterinary clinic for routine checkups, and the owners reported that many of them lived in isolation.

The study was published April 4 in "PLOS One."



Mental Health

green neighborhoods ease depression



Neighborhoods with plenty of green vegetation have lower rates of depression, anxiety and stress, according to a new study. The researchers compared greenery on satellite images with mental health data from nearly 2,500 adults living in different parts of Wisconsin. Vegetation and tree cover were consistently associated with better mental health, even when factors such as wealth, race and age were held constant.

The new study is among the first to examine the relationship between greenery and mental health on the population level in the United States. It didn't examine why people in lush neighborhoods tend to be mentally healthy, but past research suggests a causal relationship. A variety of experiments have shown that people reap benefits from spending time in nature,

including reductions in anxiety, sadness, fatigue, and symptoms of ADHD.

People who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods often have worse mental and physical health than those in wealthy areas. The researchers believe that creating green space in poor neighborhoods could reduce health inequalities.

The study was published March 21 in the "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health."

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It's time to face the hard decisions

No one likes to face a hard decision. But part of life is dealing with those, hopefully in a successful way.

That's what the theme for this month's issue is: The Hard Decisions.

We all have to face hard decisions, but the ones dealt with in this issue are health-related. We'll tackle funeral planning, the importance of having dignity in a funeral, and the need for various health screenings.

Also, there's an article about hospice care sometimes leading to a patient being released from that situation to live a longer life, plus the reasoning behind encouraging everyone to create a living will.

In those cases where a family member is diagnosed with a condition that doctors have concluded will lead to certain death, a physician relates how he handles such situations.

Fortunately, we live in a day and age where these issues can often be dealt with in a relatively comfortable way.

For example, the worst part about a colonoscopy is the preparation the day before – and even that has improved over the past few years.

As painful as hospice is to think about, thank goodness we have such an option. It is a way to make a patient as comfortable as possible, potentially in their own home.

Medical care continues, and, as I said earlier, can sometimes lead to a patient being “released” to continue life, ultimately helped by the program beyond original hopes.

When someone does pass away, funerals or some sort of memorial must be considered by family and friends.

Two articles in this issue address that issue, one emphasizing the importance of a dignified funeral service, and the other going through the mechanics of preparing for a funeral.

**BY TOM
BUSSELBERG
EDITOR**

Tom enjoys long walks and is starting to re-enjoy the treadmill and working out with weights again. He has a passion for history, geography, and loves to read and write.

Prior to that eventuality, though, is the need to create a living will. That allows a person to designate who should have the power to make decisions for them should they become incapable of acting in their own behalf.

Better that option than having such decisions left to a potentially bickering family or others, with no one agreeing on what should be done. And whatever is decided may not be what the person directly impacted even

wanted.

Along with these articles are some that round out the issue from other sources. Check out the research update for the latest in medical happenings.

Although the theme of this issue may not be considered fun, we hope you'll peruse it, maybe even save it for future reference.

Enjoy the beauty that is May!



Davis Wellness

Our mission is to promote ideas and education about health, happiness and well-being to help our friends and neighbors in Davis County live longer, more-fulfilling lives.

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BY LOUISE R. SHAW

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Drinking alkaline water can help strengthen the body's defenses and improve overall quality of life.

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FUNERALS ARE MEMORIAL

Funeral services are a way for those remaining to memorialize and celebrate the lives of our loved ones.

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LIVING WILLS

Everyone over the age of 18 should consider creating a living will to make their most important wishes known.

BY MELINDA WILLIAMS

Making tough decisions: *Caring for the elderly at home*

- Trust provisions to provide at home care or compensation for family caregivers
- Caregiver agreements to cover live-in family or other caregivers
- Financial power of attorney to handle finances and make contracts with home health care agencies or care centers
- Medical power of attorney to make decisions about nursing home or hospital treatments



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AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION:

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BIG IMPACT

Many serious medical problems cause few to no symptoms, especially early on. Fortunately, there are several screening tests that can help us detect these conditions before they become advanced.

The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening for the following health conditions in adults:

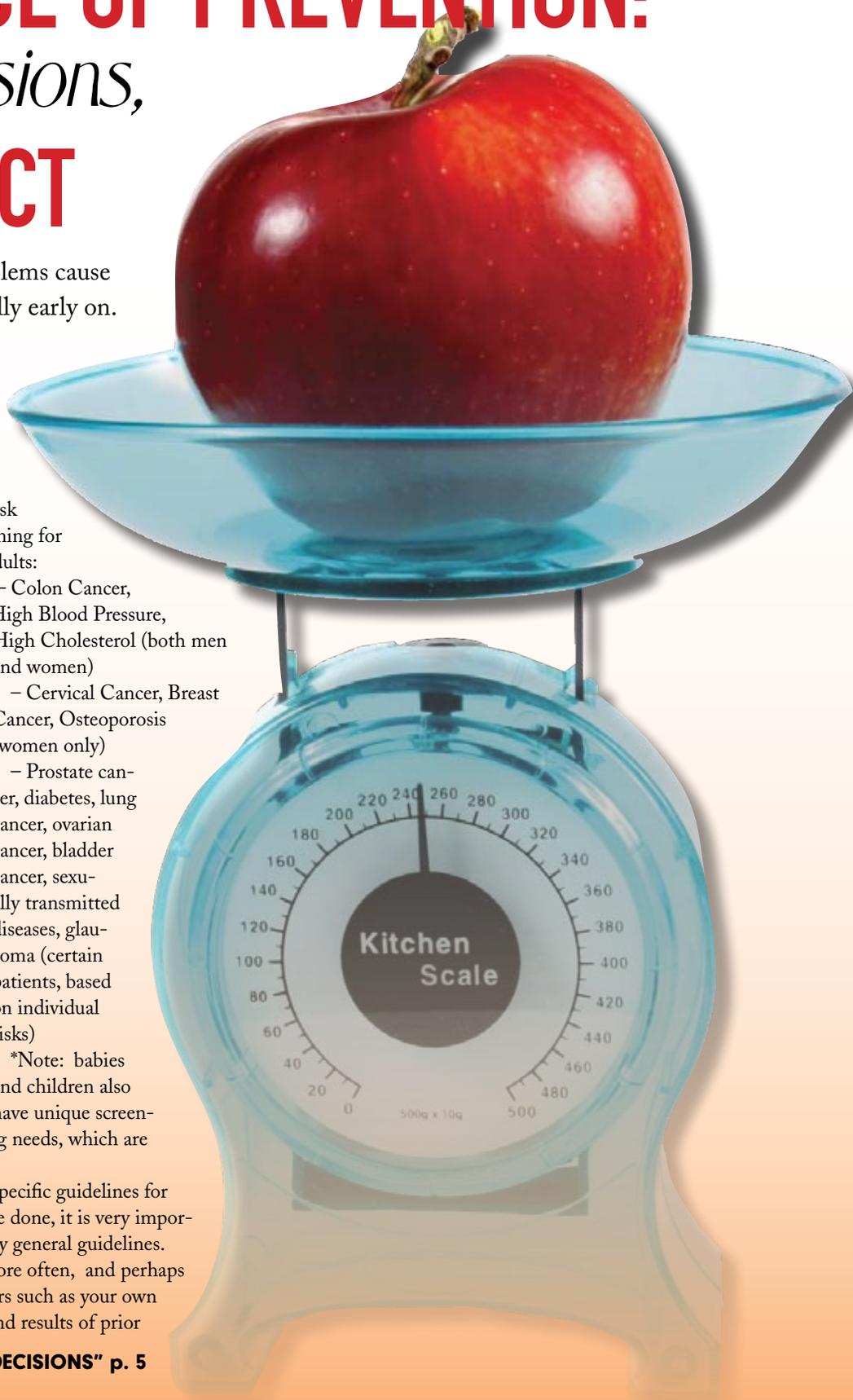
- Colon Cancer, High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol (both men and women)
- Cervical Cancer, Breast Cancer, Osteoporosis (women only)
- Prostate cancer, diabetes, lung cancer, ovarian cancer, bladder cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, glaucoma (certain patients, based on individual risks)

*Note: babies and children also have unique screening needs, which are

reviewed at each well child visit.

Even though the USPSTF gives specific guidelines for how often these screenings should be done, it is very important to understand that these are only general guidelines. You may need some of these tests more often, and perhaps at an earlier age, depending on factors such as your own health history, your family history, and results of prior

■ See "DECISIONS" p. 5



BY HANNAH PORTER

She has her masters in physician assistant from Midwestern University. Porter sees patients in all areas of primary care, including preventative medicine, women's health, diabetes, heart disease, mental health and urgent care.

Screenings can be literal life savers

Screenings can be the difference between life and death.

The late Doug Miller's daughter testified to that in a passionate media campaign that pleaded for Utahns to get screened for colon cancer. That was what killed the Farmington resident and TV outdoors personality.

He never got screened.

"That was one of the single most important things, his daughter going on TV. A lot of guys saw one of their own in the worst case scenario," said Christopher C. Canale, M.D. of Gastroenterology. He is affiliated with Utah Gastroenterology, P.C., in Bountiful.

The percentage of those getting a colon screening has jumped from under 50 percent to about 70 percent of those aged 50 and over today, he said.

Most insurance companies will pay for that procedure, including Medicare. That's because the potential cost for treating the cancer could reach \$250,000, Canale said.

He emphasized the importance of that screening, including the dreaded preparation beforehand. "Most people say the

preps are getting much better on the tastes (of what people have to drink) and it's much easier for patients to tolerate than five years ago."

Canale advised people to get the traditional screening rather than the virtual variety. That's primarily because if polyps are found, the procedure would have to be done anyway.

In addition, insurance companies normally won't pay for the digital screening.

Although regular guidelines say it's not necessary to get a colon screening until age 50, it should be done earlier if there is someone in your immediate family who has had colon cancer at an earlier age.

There are at least two other screenings that Canale emphasized should be pursued at the appropriate time: breast cancer/mammograms and pap smears; prostate.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/screening, and then search the site for similar information on other screenings.

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Further, physicals often include routine blood tests, which can help us detect still more medical conditions, not listed above. Physicals are the best way to ensure you are kept up to date on your screenings, year after year.

Remember, when it comes to your health, an ounce of prevention and a dash of early detection are worth more than a whole pound of cure!

Decisions

Continued from p. 4

tests you've had done.

That's why one of the most important health care decisions you can make is to simply get a physical every year. Your primary care provider will perform a complete history and physical exam, and then help you decide which tests are right for you.

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Dr. Hanna, a Bountiful native, is board-certified in Family Medicine, and will be practicing outpatient family medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics.

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FUNERAL PRE-PLANNING:

Easing pain of those remaining

We may not be able to stop ourselves from dying, but we can ease the pain of those left behind.

Pre-planning and pre-paying for your funeral can save your loved ones from financial burden and spare them the need to deal with making decisions while they're grieving. Just as importantly, it gives people an opportunity to make sure their wishes are honored and everyone has time to think through decisions they'll live with for years after.

"The whole concept is to allow people to make the decision when they're calm and have time to think about it," said Brent Russon, owner of Russon Brothers Mortuary in Bountiful. "Otherwise, they haven't got the energy. They're not prepared, so they panic."

"They do a good job," he said, referring to the families. "But they have to make decisions in an hour when they could have had weeks to decide."

For those who want to start the pre-planning process, Russon suggests that the first step is to determine which cemetery in which they want to be buried. More than other funeral-related decisions, the choice of cemetery will affect the lives of surviving family members for years afterward.

"It's very difficult for families," said Russon "Within a day, they have to decide where they want to go for the rest of their lives."

BY JENNIFER
WARDELL
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Though purchasing a plot in advance will ensure family members won't run into availability issues later on, even just a conversation about the person's preferences can help make the process easier down the road.

"Even if it's just verbal, at least my wife knows and doesn't have to decide blindly what to do," he said.

After that, the three main elements most often decided in advance are the casket, vault and funeral services. During burial, the vault serves to protect the casket from the water, the weight of the earth and heavy maintenance equipment.

The funeral services, however, will likely require most of the decision-making. There are several elements to consider, from whether to hold a graveside service to what clothes the deceased will be buried in and what music to play at the funeral.

"You can do almost every single thing in advance," said Russon.

Another element to pre-planning is paying for the different elements of the funeral in advance, which lessens the financial burden on surviving

loved ones.

"I don't want to have my kids have to pay for it, or my wife to worry about it," he said.

While he understands that some people may be reluctant to process the idea of their own funerals, Russon said that many people overcome that feeling when they see the benefits.

"I would guess that, for most people, the feeling that they

need to get it done outweighs the fear that if they do it, it'll happen," he said.

The process can even be a bonding experience for spouses and families.

"We rarely have people come in alone," he said. "Sometimes families come in, and in this area we have a lot of couples come in. They want to make decisions between them."

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Hospice care

benefits patients and their loved ones



BY LOUISE SHAW
STAFF WRITER

When a loved one is diagnosed with a terminal illness, everyone involved is faced with myriad emotions and many questions.

For both the individual and his or her family members, concerns about pain management, end of life directives, funeral arrangements and emotional or spiritual needs can be overwhelming.

Families hit with such a broadside can receive help from hospice services.

"A lot of families don't know how to administer medications, what to expect, or how to take

care of a terminal patient," said Danielle Empey, hospice director for South Davis Hospice. "We provide them with the teaching and the tools."

Hospice service is always covered by Medicare if a patient is given less than six months to live, said Empey. Most insurance plans also include hospice care.

When a doctor orders hospice based on prognosis of six months or less, an interdisciplinary team of a social worker, chaplain, aides, volunteers and hospice medical director reviews the case.

"We don't have a routine, standard order," said Empey. "Every case is different, depending on the diagnosis and any symptoms that need to be managed. It's also based on what the family wants." Some families want more frequent visits, some not.

Because most people want to remain at home and not die in a hospital, Empey and her staff will work to make that happen.

Special beds or other durable

equipment may be needed, plus medications and supplies.

"If they don't have any funeral planning, we'll help with that. If they need advance directives, we can help with that," she said.

Hospice is about helping someone "pass comfortably," by managing symptoms. It's also about educating and supporting the family, said Empey.

"A lot of people think hospice means imminence and if we sign this they'll die in two hours, which isn't the truth," said Empey. "There have been patients who have 'graduated' from hospice because of the care they've received.

"Nobody has a crystal ball. People can improve with extra help; we're very happy to take them off hospice because that's a good nursing success story," she said. "Everyone is going to pass," she said. "Hospice is contributing to quality of life, making sure they're comfortable and supported during the end of their life."

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Energy conservation as we grow older

As people age or contract certain health conditions, it can get harder to perform routine tasks.

That can mean getting tired easily.

The same also goes for people who are recovering from illness or injury.

Energy conservation and work simplification are ways people in these situations can better deal with various challenges of daily life, writes Kristy Wistisen. She is a student in the occupational therapy assistant program at Salt Lake Community College.

There are several ways to make life easier and get more done in a day, she said.

Here are 10 ways people can use to hold onto limited energy and organize your day to get the most out of it:

1. Analyze tasks from start to finish. Can any parts be eliminated or simplified?
2. Avoid over-fatigue by planning breaks into your routine. Even if you feel good, rest before you get tired.
3. Use good posture to prevent tired muscles and injuries.
4. Plan ahead. What can you prepare the night before to save energy in the morning?
5. Sit down while getting dressed, while preparing food, and while completing hygiene activities.
6. Use energy-conserving equipment, such as a shower chair, a roller cart in the kitchen, and lightweight tools and equipment that replace muscle movements such as electric knives and can openers.
7. Slide items when possible instead of lifting and carrying.
8. Gather everything you need before starting a task so you don't have to make several trips around the kitchen or house, and then sit down to complete the task.
9. Organize cabinets, closets, and drawers so you know right where things are and are able to easily and safely get to them.
10. Delegate when possible, and recognize when your schedule is too full. Some things can be done the next day or by other people.

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BY **CURTIS AND
TAMMY GOBLE**
OWNERS OF H2 AWESOME

Let's review ionized water health benefits.

First, our water has super hydration: The primary factor that determines the

utilization of drinking water is its water cluster size or, as we call it, large water. Ionized water, has a very low cluster size, normally around three-six molecules or small water. Smaller clusters of molecules can be absorbed more efficiently, hydrating each cell of the body.

Second, our water has alkalinity: We hear words like "acidosis," but most people don't really know what it is, why it's bad or what to do about it. Like our ideal body temperature, the body has an ideal pH level. When we fall below that level, it is known as acidosis. By drinking alkaline ionized water on a daily basis, we can bring the pH back into balance.

Third, our water is anti-oxidant: When



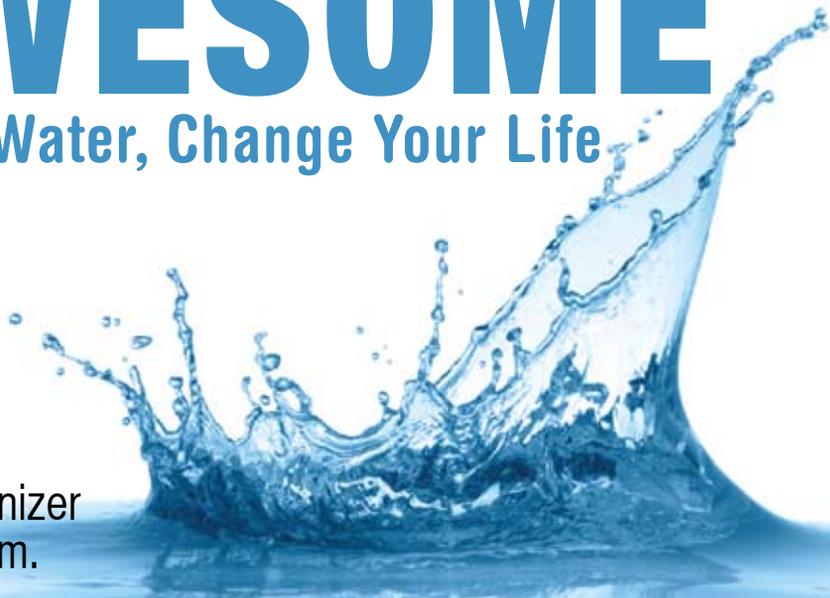
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Recognize, celebrate and memorialize

A funeral coach slowly drives past with a long stream of cars following. Onlookers stop and watch, some pull their cars over and stop in respect. Pedestrians stand in reverence, some putting their hands over their hearts,

one older man raising his arm to a salute to a fallen comrade. All silent exchanges,

yet an ever so powerful expression of respect from a reverent community.

William E. Gladstone, prime minister of Great Britain in the mid 1800s wrote, "Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead. I will measure exactly the sympathies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals." Gladstone describes, in many ways, the founding motivation for the funeral traditions of today.

Traditional funeral practices of today establish a medium to honor and memorialize. Funerals allow a grateful community to express their respect. Funerals also provide us with a moment of introspection into our own life's experience and remind us of how important our moment in mortality is. They make us better.

Each of us is diverse and beats to a different drum. What one may see as a befitting tribute, another would think otherwise. What's important is that a life is recognized, celebrated and memorialized. A profound example of a families' desire to provide a medium to recognize, celebrate and memorialize is a practice that has become a tradition, that of presenting a display with pictures and other items showing the life of their loved one.

I have seen motorcycles on display, saddles shown, even antique cars in our parking lot. This practice has become

a tradition and as subtle as it is, is a magnificent means for a family to share with the community the life of one they love.

Visit a local cemetery around Memorial Day and witness the profound example of love and

respect families have for their departed loved ones. The traditions of funeral services are meant to provide both the opportunity to express sympathy, be a grateful community and loving families to recognize, celebrate, and memorialize their beloved loved one.

Consider the opportunity available to recognize, celebrate, and memorialize. Remember: such an occasion only comes once.



**BY BRENT
RUSSON**

He is the owner of Russon Brothers Mortuary, which has provided funeral-related services to Davis County residents for many decades.

Last time we checked, there was no "someday" on the calendar

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Consequences of untreated hearing loss

May is Speech and hearing month

The inability to remain alert to everyday environmental sounds and maintain good communication with others can not only cause embarrassment but also, at times, create serious consequences.

Patients with a mild to moderate hearing loss may be at risk without knowing it. Research has confirmed a number of adverse effects of hearing loss on people's ability to function and on their quality of life.

Data from a number of studies indicate that hearing loss affects family relationships, enjoyment of social activities, performance in work settings and produces the danger of failing to hear warning signals or even their doctor's instruction on the proper use of medications.

These studies demonstrate that hearing-impaired individuals who are untreated for their hearing loss report significantly more feelings of depression, paranoia, anger and frustration than hearing aid users.

The good news is that people who do use hearing aids report significantly higher levels of involvement in social activities, fewer



BY HAROLD PERGLER

He is an audiologist who owns and manages Bountiful Hearing Center.

worries and more positive social and family experiences.

Unaided hearing loss can:

- Socially isolate
- Create fatigue
- Cause or aggravate emotional disorders
- Strain interpersonal relationships
- Mimic inattentiveness, poor memory or mental dullness
- Reduce earning power (because of impaired ability to understand speech)
- Lead to diminished physical health
- Significantly reduce quality of life
- Negatively impact self-esteem
- Exacerbate anxiety

Isn't it time to have your hearing checked?



Helen Keller called deafness "a worse misfortune" than being blind.

Everyone needs a living will

Accidents, heart attacks, strokes, cancer and myriad other health issues can leave you unable to speak for yourself.

Maybe your wishes for your care in those situations aren't clear, or have never been discussed with family or caregivers.

That's why it's important to have a living will, an advanced directive, that spells out what care you want — and don't want — if, say, you're in a coma.

A Bountiful attorney believes a living will is important, "because verbal wishes are not enough," said Robyn Walton, whose practice includes creating living wills.

Most people haven't created a living will, or even had the discussions of care with their family, physician or caregivers, but Walton believes a person should have a living will as young as 18.

BY MELINDA
WILLIAMS
STAFF WRITER

"Lots of people under 50 are faced with these decisions," Walton said, adding that hospitals ask if you have a living will upon admission.

A living will is a legal document that can be used to make a person's wishes known about life-prolonging medical treatments, according to Attorney Rebecca Berlin, writing on *alllaw.com*.

Living wills and other advance directives designate an individual to make decisions for you in the event you are unable to. That person may be a family member, but doesn't have to be.

"It should be someone who

agrees to do as you wish," Walton said.

Because a living will can't cover every possible situation, you should be able to trust the person to interpret your wishes in situations not covered in the living will, said information on the Mayo Clinic's website, *mayoclinic.org*.

In situations where you are incapacitated and cannot speak for yourself, but your health is not so dire that a living will is needed, someone may hold your medical power of attorney, Berlin wrote.

"A medical power of attorney also might be a good idea if your family is opposed to some of your wishes or is divided about them," the Mayo Clinic site said.



Medical directives should be in writing. Free forms are available at hospitals and senior centers, Walton said.

It may be useful to consult with an elder law attorney. Multiple copies should be made and the document reviewed regularly.

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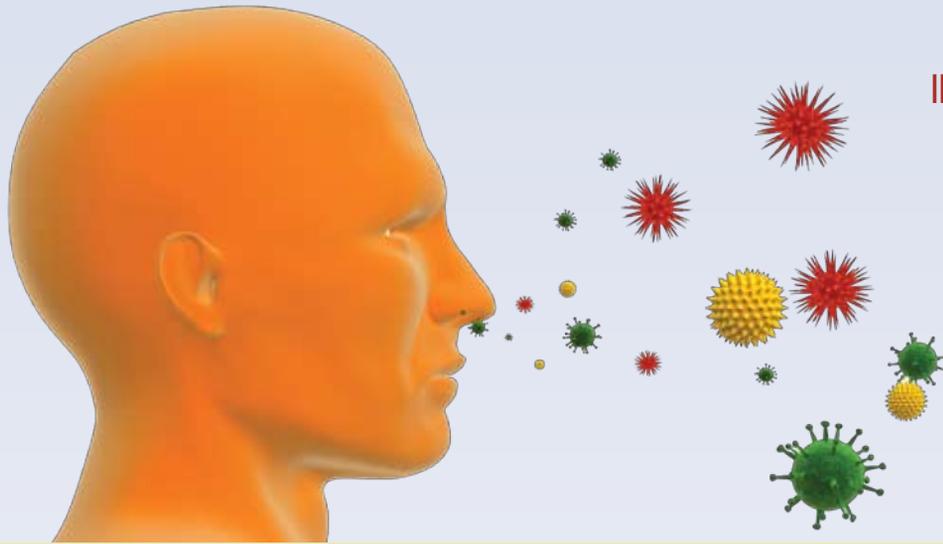
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MANY PEOPLE SEEK REFUGE INDOORS AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR, WHEN OUTDOOR AIR IS FULL OF POLLEN AND OTHER ALLERGENS. FOR ALLERGY SUFFERERS, HOWEVER, THE AIR INDOORS CAN PROVE TO BE JUST AS PROBLEMATIC.

TIPS TO REDUCE ALLERGENS IN YOUR HOME

Dust that collects in a home contains common household allergens such as dust mite particles and animal dander. If dust is disturbed from furniture, hard surfaces and carpet, those allergens can become airborne and reduce indoor air quality.

May is designated National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and it is an excellent time to make your home cleaner and healthier by removing common household allergens and improving your indoor air. Even if you don't have asthma or allergies, everyone can benefit from better indoor air quality.

"The way you clean your home is important. Most household cleaning routines only recirculate allergens throughout your home rather than removing them," says Justin Bates, president of Stanley Steemer, International, Inc. "If your cleaning routine doesn't specifically focus on dust and allergen removal, you may be only moving them around, sending allergens back into the air."

To maximize your cleaning efforts while reducing allergens, consider these simple tips:

- Dust hard surfaces regularly with moist cloths or special dry dusters designated to trap and

lock dust.

- Wash your bedding and linens often. Doing so can help you control dust mites in your home.

- Vacuum often. Although cleaning may trigger reactions by releasing dust into the air, vacuuming floors once or twice a week will reduce surface dust and allergens. Make sure your vacuum has a high efficiency air filter to capture dust.
- Use a certified professional carpet cleaning service to deep clean your carpets to remove the stains, spills and dust that regular vacuuming leaves behind. Be sure to use a service that's qualified to reduce allergens in the home.

Independent testing proved Stanley Steemer's proprietary cleaning process removed 94 percent of common household allergens, including 92.8 percent of cat dander, 97.8 percent of dog dander and 91.4 percent of dust mite allergens. The process also reduces exposure to bacteria and mold by 90 percent within 24 hours of cleaning. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America recommends a certified professional carpet cleaning every three to four months.

- Protect yourself when doing housework by wearing a mask. After cleaning, consider leaving for a few hours to avoid allergens

in the air.

- Reduce pet dander. If you have allergies, don't keep pets with feathers or fur, such as birds, dogs and cats in your home. If you already have a pet, keep it out of

the bedroom.

- Shut out pollen. Inspect your windows for a film of pollen on the frame or sill. For more visit StanleySteemer.com.

StatePoint

JUNE

Davis Wellness



Focus on Mens Health

COMING
May 29th


3 ways to get healthier, from inside out

Heart health should be a year-round consideration for anybody looking to lead a healthy life. While that may sound like a daunting task, better heart health can be possible with a few steps in the right direction. Iconic television, stage and screen actor, Tony Dan-

za, makes his health a top priority, even when facing a busy schedule. Danza, who knows the importance of diet, exercise and “doing good to feel good,” offers his go-to tips for fitting health and wellness into your daily lifestyle:

1



Turn Your Daily Habits Into Exercise. Most people know that exercise, in addition to a healthy diet, also plays a key role in bettering your overall health. However, many people have trouble fitting exercise into their busy schedule or think they have to look to costly private training options to see results. What most don't realize is fitting in exercise can be as easy and cost-efficient as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or going for a walk on your lunch break.

Encourage others, like your friends or family, to join you on these mini exercise sessions. Having a support system of people who are looking for ways to be healthier can help provide motivation to keep going on your journey to better health.

3



Do Good; Feel Good. Overall health and wellness also comes from how you feel about yourself as an individual. Danza makes giving back to the community a regular practice and lists it among his healthy habits.

“Giving back is good for the soul and really warms the heart. You will be amazed to see how much you do for yourself as a person, when you are helping and giving back to others,” says Danza.

StatePoint

2



Get Your Fiber Up. Fiber is a crucial component to our diet, but most Americans are not getting the recommended daily amount of 25 to 38 grams of fiber, according to the American Dietetic Association. Many people know that fiber can help promote digestive health, but few know that it can also promote heart health.

Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol that include seven grams of soluble fiber per day from psyllium husk, as in Metamucil, may reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol. One adult dose of Metamucil has at least 2.1 grams of this soluble fiber.

“Metamucil has been an important part of my health regimen for over 20 years. It's a simple way to get multiple health benefits and an extra fiber boost since it can be hard to get all the fiber you need from food alone,” says Danza.

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End of life talk tailored to patient

BY TOM BUSSELBERG
EDITOR

Patients have every right to be treated with respect, dignity and as they desire when those last moments in life arrive.

That's the firm conviction and practice of Dr. David Fedor at McKay-Dee Hospital. He is a critical care physical and medical director of the palliative care program at that Ogden facility.

He discussed the following points that deal with end-of-life care:

- How do you work through end of life, terminally ill decisions with the family of a patient?

"There is no hard and fast rule. Every situation is different, every diagnosis is different," Fedor said.

For example there are patients who are on a ventilator, suffering from a catastrophic illness, and not getting better.

"We need to talk about a patient's wishes. If he or she decides not to go further, we talk about how to withdraw care," he said. That compares with someone in early stages of colon cancer, who is awake and alert, and wants to go home.

"One thing we tell families is that everyone gets to have their own deaths," Fedor said. "I'm more of a conduit to make sure they have the best quality care as they exit this world. It's their way out."

- What techniques do you use to deliver the news?

"Before I speak to anyone, I like to get a sense from the nursing staff or patient themselves of what their values are. Some just want to hear it (straight out). Others want to be finessed, chat a little more," he said.

Situations vary from someone who was just told they have cancer and only a month to live, vs. someone in ICU where the family has been able to see their loved one visibly declining.

"I'm not in charge. I'm an advocate, agent for the patient," Fedor emphasized. "I want to clear up any questions, create a mutual understanding of where we are and where we can go."

- What is done for the patient to minimize the physical pain, etc.?

"It depends on where they are," he said. "If they're in ICU, comfort is always provided. If they're in their home, clinic or hospital, comfort is always the underlining part of every bit of care that we do."

A patient's spiritual needs are also considered and clergy involved, if a patient so desires, Fedor said. "Comfort isn't just physical. We look at the entire holistic picture of what the patient is going through."

- What are some of the protocols and goals around living wills, etc.?

"Every person down to the age of 18 should have a living will and an advance directive," he said. (See separate article on living wills in this issue.)

"People don't plan for a heart attack, where

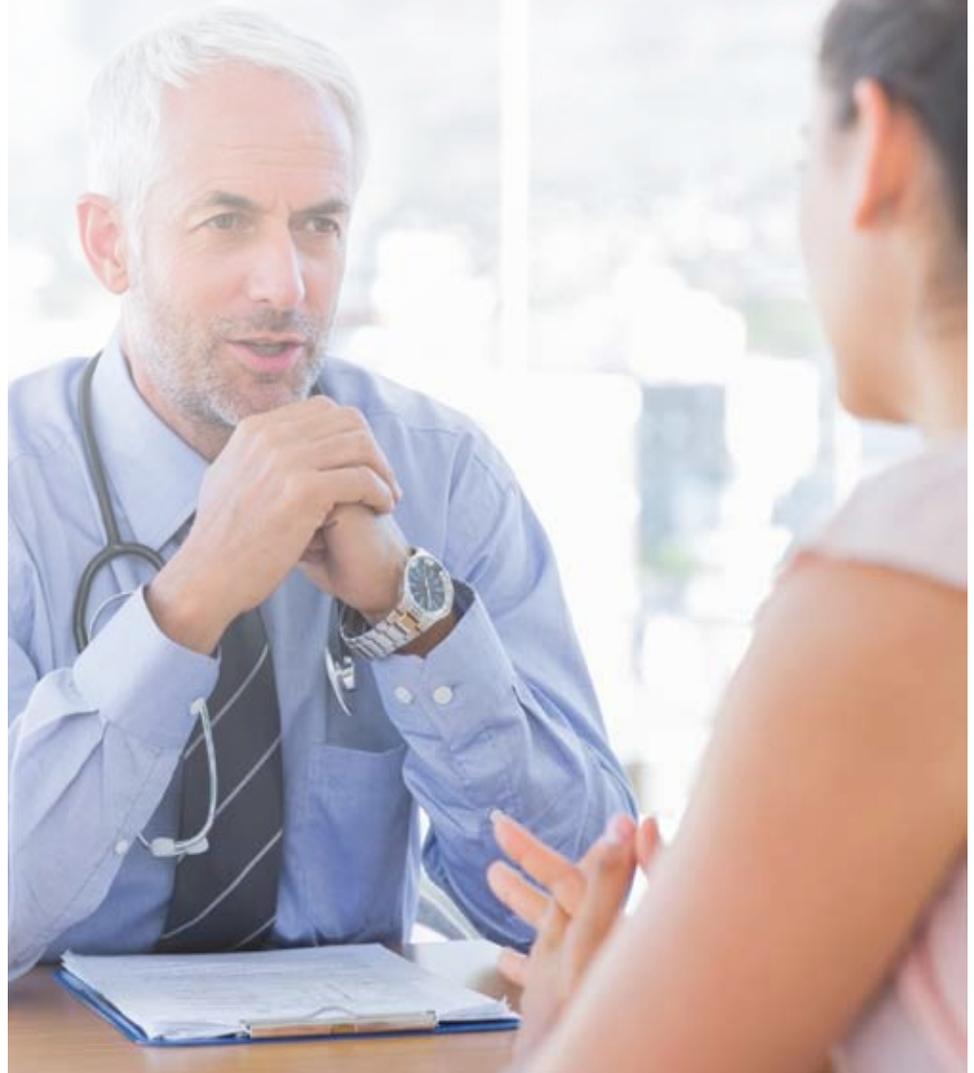
they're unconscious. A living will forces that conversation" with family and others important to the patient, he said.

A POLST (Physicians Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment) is also recommended for anyone over 60, Fedor said. Primary care physicians can provide assistance and information.

It adds a little more detail than a living will, and can provide information on whether the patient wants to be actively treated for pneumonia, for example.

Having such a document in place, signed last January by a patient recently admitted, proved invaluable to all involved, Fedor said.

"ICU was directly against what she wanted," for example, he said. "The last thing any of us want to do is something against what the patient wants. Someone who is dying should be able to make decisions, as well."



Tips to boost infant, toddler brain development

When babies are born, their minds are still a work in progress, and their brains will rapidly grow and develop based on their experience. That means the first few years are critical for healthy brain development.

“Parents play a daily role in promoting lifelong health by focusing on positive ways to nurture brain development, starting in infancy and extending through the toddler years,” says Dr. James M. Perrin, 2014 president of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

He offers these tips for fostering a happy, healthy home:

- Talk to your baby in a responsive way, starting at birth.

Watch how he responds to your face, focuses, and moves in time to your voice. As he grows, talk to him about everyday things, waiting for his coos and ahhs, and then respond with an encouraging word.

One study showed that the more words parents used when speaking to an eight-month-old infant, the more words that child used at age 3.

- Respond to distress with comfort. Even in infancy, it’s an important way to build a child’s confidence that the caregiver is there.

- Make eye contact with your child from day one. That could be during play, tummy time or even during necessary activities like diaper changes.

- When your baby starts to smile, smile back! If young children learn healthy, positive

ways to get your attention, they’ll be less likely to resort to fussing, crying or whining.

- Follow your infant’s gaze to get a sense of what is capturing his or her attention. When it’s appropriate, let your child explore that object.

- Be aware of what your face is “saying.” Temper negative feelings because your baby is “feeling” them as well.

- Infants let us know when they’ve had enough and it’s time for a nap by avoiding eye contact, becoming sleepy or fussy, coughing or rubbing his or her eyes.

- Reading to your child from infancy stimulates language and cognitive skills, builds motivation, curiosity and memory and stimulates language



development.

For more tips visit www.HealthyChildren.org.

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