



Choose Well

Member Newsletter

SUMMER ISSUE

JULY - AUGUST 2023



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Health | Technology Solutions

Summer Gloom & Sun Preparation for the Skin

The recent weather in San Diego has been one of the gloomiest as summer rolls in. It is important to know that sunlight still peaks through the gray clouds and can still cause damage to the skin if exposed for long periods of time. As San Diego gets back to its expected sunny weather, it is best to be well informed about the uses of the Sun Protection Factor (SPF) to protect your skin from the harmful rays. A local dermatologist, Dennis Coughlin, shares an article from 1997 that gives us an insight of how sunlight can be a friend and foe to us all.



Dennis Coughlin
Dermatologist

SUNLIGHT: Friend AND Foe

Most experts now indicate that sun tanning damages the skin and just as with X-ray exposure, sun exposure must be carefully controlled. In addition to the "sunburn" rays (UVB), other UV rays (UVA), which are present all day long, add to sun damage. Most recently, infrared rays have been implicated in sun damage.

Conversely, small amounts of sunlight seem to be necessary to activate vitamin D in our skin. Vitamin D by mouth does not seem to be quite as healthy.

In addition, our eyes apparently utilize 10-15 minutes of early morning sun to reset our biological time clock to improve our biorhythms. This is a useful treatment in "Winter depression" and some other depressive conditions. It also improves our sleep habits if we combine it with a lights-dimming technique one half hour before bedtime.

Another controversy is whether the newer sun blocks are increasing long term sun damage while preventing most sunburns. They may be encouraging us to spend more time in the sun, but cannot completely block UVB, and are poor against UVA and infrared.

Additionally, T-shirts (SPF 4) and much of our summerweight clothing are poor protection. Sun protective lightweight clothes are not readily available. Most sunblocks only last 90-100 minutes. More effective sunblocks are FDA-rated as WATER RESISTANT (120-180 minutes) or WATERPROOF (240-480 minutes). We must watch for irritation from sunblocks

BEWARE THE SUN

-Dennis Coughlin, MD

JUN 24 1997





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MEMBER COUNT

By HHSA region, this is how Choose Well membership is distributed countywide.

HHSA Region	Total in Region
Central	17
East	27
North Central	43
North Coastal	41
North Inland	69
South	22
County Total	219



EVENTS RECAP!

April Workshop (North County - San Marcos)

On April 26th, Choose Well San Diego hosted an in-person workshop at the San Marcos Activity Senior Center for consumers and members that were interested in learning more about assisted living homes. A free lunch was provided from the Kabob Shop for attendees. The workshop subtopics consisted of ways to pay for assisted living homes, words commonly used in an assisted living setting, and how Choose Well can be of help to find an assisted living home.



Spring Into Healthy Living

On May 10th, the Choose Well San Diego team attended a tabling event at the McGrath Family YMCA. The theme was Spring Into Healthy Living, a free senior health fair. Breakfast was provided for attendees and vendors. The event consisted of opportunity drawings, presentations, health screenings, and health & lifestyle resources. Choose Well had a booth at this event and connected with many attendees letting them know about the online resources to understand assisted living and long-term care options in San Diego County.



UPCOMING EVENTS!

San Diego Pride

The Choose Well team will be tabling during San Diego Pride, July 15 & 16. We will be informing the community members about how the Choose Well website promotes transparency through facility scores that highlight assisted living facilities. Soon the website will have a feature to help narrow the search for LGBTQ+ friendly facilities.

www.sdpride.org



San Diego Comic-Con

The San Diego Comic Convention is returning on July 20-23, 2023. Attendees will be able to experience all of the exhibits, programs, guests, events, and merchandise. Comic-Con isn't only for the younger folks, people aged 55 and up are also suiting up to join in on the action that the convention has to offer. Most of these older adult attendees are comic book fans, collectors, and enthusiasts. They also get to enjoy and pay the senior pricing on the badge sales when attending the convention.

www.comic-con.org/ci/open-registration



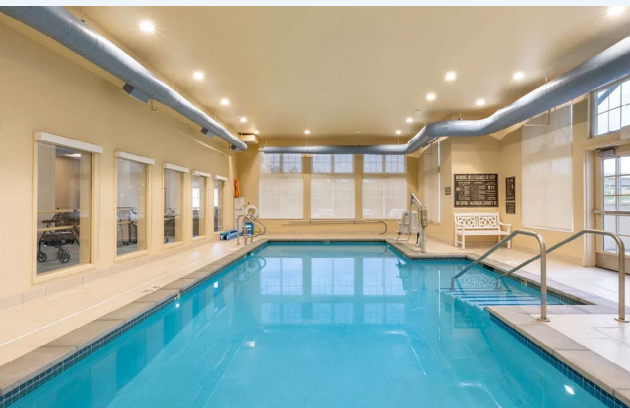
Facility Spotlight

Westmont of La Mesa

Isabel “Izzy” Lozano, Community Relations Director

Westmont of La Mesa opened its doors over three years ago. This boutique retirement home community is designed to create a wonderful lifestyle for its residents. The provided accommodations and amenities make the residents feel at home. The community is pet-friendly, which allows residents to keep and tend to small pets. With a robust schedule of activities, this community keeps its residents engaged and promotes healthy living. Residents enjoy the restaurant-style dining, which offers daily specials for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. During the evenings, one of the residents will play the piano and attract other residents to gather and enjoy the music being played. These experiences create an environment where residents make social relationships by doing activities, creating or joining an existing on-site club to help motivate social gatherings. Because of this comfortable lifestyle at Westmont of La Mesa, many of the residents have referred to it as “being on a cruise without the water.”





Westmont of La Mesa encourages its residents to stay active with many offered physical activities and access to a fitness center. There are various exercise classes, such as indoor swimming, chair exercises, and Tai-Chi. The community welcomes third party physical and occupational therapists to treat the residents as additional services. The residents are also encouraged to walk around the community grounds and to Briercrest Park, located next door, to enjoy nature, especially for residents with pets.



Westmont of La Mesa offers amenities that enable residents to live as independently as they can. They offer scheduled transportation services within a 12-mile radius that can be used for doctor appointments, shopping, outings, or scenic rides. Additionally, what makes this community unique is the layout of their condominium-style apartments. Each unit offers full-sized kitchens in the 1-2 bedroom apartments and studios have substantial kitchenettes. All of the units have washers and dryers, while residents have access to housekeeping staff with weekly housekeeping and linen services.



The community offers three levels of living lifestyles: independent living, assisted living, and memory care. Those in assisted living and memory care have access to around-the-clock care staff. These care services include medication management with medical technologists and caregivers who assist with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). A newly admitted resident can move into the independent living section and age in place if more care is needed. Residents can transition to assisted living or memory care without the need to relocate out of the community. The residents who are diagnosed with cognitive impairment can move into the memory care section located on the main floor. The memory care is its own community and has its own tailored activities to keep those residents engaged and involved. Due to the nature of the residents with cognitive impairments, staff are trained to redirect and respond to behavior changes. Westmont of La Mesa's memory care is not a lockdown community, but there are security measures, such as staff having key code access for when residents and their family or loved ones come to enter and leave our facility. Family and friend visits are highly encouraged for all residents.



All the amenities that Westmont of La Mesa provides make living in the community a pleasant and comfortable experience. This community gives its residents the opportunity to create their own social relationships and a sense of fulfillment with an active and healthy lifestyle. Since the residents are engaged within the community, they welcome newcomers. The caring staff and services provided make life at Westmont of La Mesa as enjoyable as a cruise.



Alzheimer's Dementia Related Disease

Signs of Cognitive Decline

As we age, it is important to notice early signs of cognitive decline, which starts off as forgetfulness and, over time, develops into memory loss and a lack of ability to complete or perform everyday tasks. Here are 10 warning signs to look for with early-onset Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD)¹:

1. Persistent and worsening memory that disrupts daily life.
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems.
3. Difficulty in performing familiar tasks.
4. Confusion with time or location.
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
6. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
7. Lack of ability to make sensible decisions and judgments.
8. Decreased or poor thinking ability and judgment.
9. Withdrawal from work and social activities.
10. Changes in personality and behavior.



Types of Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term for the loss of memory and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Here are some types of dementia²:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Vascular Dementia
- Lewy body Dementia
- Frontotemporal Dementia
- Huntington's Disease
- Mixed Dementia

Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease progresses in stages. Each stage provides a range of symptoms, and some stages may overlap, which may make it difficult to know which stage a person is in. The stages are³:

- Asymptomatic - No cognitive symptoms; possible changes in the brain.
- Mild Cognitive Impairment due to Alzheimer's disease - Some symptoms of cognitive ability loss begin to appear.
- Early stage (mild) - Symptoms that tend to interfere with some daily activities of living.
- Middle stage (moderate) - More symptoms that interfere with many daily activities of living.
- Late stage (severe) - Symptoms interfere with most daily activities of living.

Getting the Diagnosis

If there are signs of ADRD, it is best to reach out to a doctor to express concern about a family member, loved one, or oneself for a full medical evaluation. Learning about or receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or dementia can be difficult for both the recipient and their loved ones to process. It is a life-changing event, and a range of emotions will be expressed. It is important to get accurate information, resources, and support in order to know what to expect and what to do next after receiving the diagnosis. The provided checklist can help with next steps after an Alzheimer's diagnosis⁴:

- Having a conversation about the best approach for care or treatment.
- Making sure that regular medical care and appointments are being scheduled with a primary or specialist.
- Finding local services and support in the local community.
- Coordinating legal, financial, and long-term care planning with all concerned parties
- Plan to get help as needed for activities of daily living or day-to-day tasks. This encompasses the safety and lifestyle of the person with an ADRD diagnosis.
- Staying healthy and maintaining active lifestyles for both the loved one and caregiver(s).

Caregiver Support

Family and friends take on the role of caregivers to help support this loved one who has received a diagnosis. It is important that, as a trusted caregiver, they navigate both the care of themselves and their loved one.

- Look at local resources and support groups for the role of care activities.
- Apply to programs that you or a loved one are eligible for.
- Take care of both your physical and mental wellbeing.
- Take part in any advocacy and research opportunities.



Insight Into the Future of Treatment for Alzheimer's Disease

With advances in both science and technology, research and drug advancements have been developed and approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to help lessen some symptoms temporarily or treat the underlying biology of the disease. Recently, a new Alzheimer's treatment called Leqembi has been approved for coverage for veterans in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease by the Department of Veteran Affairs.⁵ They are the first major US insurer to agree to pay for the medicine following its accelerated approval in January 2023. Another experimental Alzheimer's drug developed by Eli Lilly and Co. called donanemab has shown to slow cognitive decline by 35% in a late-stage trial compared to a placebo.⁶ The price of donanemab is expected to be in the same range as other similar therapies when it becomes available.⁶ While these developments in drugs and treatments for Alzheimer's disease are still underway, every breakthrough helps current and future people with the disease.



Sources:

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