



Ever been told you should write a book? Now's the time

The lights come up. Music from the orchestra swells and, as the curtain rises, an actor begins speaking as the epic Autobiography of You begins.

Why not?

Unlike journaling which is typically focused on the present, a memoir or an autobiography takes a sweeping look at one's life. A life with joy, undoubtedly struggle, surely pain, but maybe an end in triumph?

Will you be, as writer Charles Dickens once wrote, the hero of your own life?

You don't have to write your life's story for anyone but yourself but it could be written for family, friends, or even the world.

Writing for just yourself could help you clarify the events of your life, maybe admit wrongs, perhaps tell your side of a story. According to the Wall Street Journal, it could even be a catalyst for the rest of your life; a chronicle of how the past brought you to the present. It could be used to change the direction for the future.

Research has shown that the act of writing about past trauma or other stressful events can lessen depression, lower stress, improve mental function, and even help build the immune system. To recount an event, we have to break it down into smaller chunks and look at how one occasion led to another to produce the problems. This helps provide structure and organization to an otherwise frazzled memory. As many memories are just visuals, using words to describe what we are seeing can make our memories less abstract or confusing. Ultimately, the goal is to reveal those memories in a more positive light and let them be processed and laid to rest.

You do not need writing experience to create a narrative of your life. According to Psychology Today, the challenge is getting the story to reveal itself. Even if a person's life doesn't seem to be particularly exciting or thought-provoking, everyone remembers things differently and telling the story will let them know which part of the memory was most important to them. Finding meaning in the past is a great way to help believe in one's personal value, confess mistakes, and pass on lessons to children and future generations



Upcoming Meeting Speakers

January 16, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

*Our Speaker is Tony Macias, General Manager,
Gold's Gym*

February 20, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

*Our Speaker is Richard Gerber, MD
"Stress and Heart Disease"*

March 20, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

Our Speaker is TBA

**New Meeting
Location**

at

**New Meeting
Location**

Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System

Downing Resource Center

Conference Room B & C

450 East Romie Lane, Salinas, CA 93901

Good blood pressure equals good brain function

Controlling blood pressure is one of the most straightforward ways of preventing one form of cognitive decline.

According to Duke Medicine Health News, high blood pressure can lead to tiny strokes in the brain, a condition called vascular dementia.

These little strokes take a toll on memory, reasoning, judgment and a general decline in thought processes.

Controlling blood pressure also reduces the risk of major cardiovascular problems. So, it seems, what is good for the heart is good for the brain.

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Celebrating Survivors

Having the chance to celebrate a second chance at life is often a sentiment we hear from members after a heart event, procedure or surgery. If you have experienced a heart attack, you now have the opportunity to share your story in a newly-launched essay contest that focuses on survivorship after a heart attack.

To find out more about the essay contest you can visit the Mended Hearts homepage, or go to <http://www.survivorshaveheart.com/direct/astrazeneca>



Bob Harper, celebrity personal trainer, author and heart attack survivor, has teamed up with one of our corporate partners, AstraZeneca, to help people like him who have experienced a heart attack share their stories through an essay contest, to educate and inspire others. Those who have had a heart attack in the past three years may submit an essay of 500 words or less about their experience and recovery.

Please consider the questions provided in the contest criteria (found on the contest website) to guide you in writing your story. Five stories from heart attack survivors will be chosen; those selected, along with a caregiver of his/her choice, will travel to New York City in February to be inducted into a heart attack survivor's network. Essays must be submitted by January 15th and must not mention any specific medication or company name.

This essay contest is the kick-off of Mended Hearts' year-long heart attack awareness and educational program, including an educational session at the national conference in San Antonio. Celebrate survivorship throughout the year in your regular meetings and social gatherings.



Low blood pressure can be risky for the heart

Everyone knows that high blood pressure is dangerous for the heart, but so is low pressure. A recent study in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology focused on what happens as the systolic blood pressure (SBP), and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) change.

For instance, most experts agree that if these numbers should go above 140 mmHg or 90 mmHg (hypertension), respectively, then they should be treated with medication. On the other end of the spectrum, levels that are too low, less than 60 mmHg (hypotension) could result in the heart muscles not receiving enough oxygen and eventually becoming damaged. These levels indicate an increased risk for heart disease and even death. Taking medication for high blood pressure could lead to a situation in which pressure becomes too low as well as highlighting the fact that doctors must monitor these cases closely.

Symptoms of low blood pressure can come in many forms, and The American Heart Association highlights dizziness, nausea, fainting, dehydration, blurred vision, clammy skin, and fatigue as possibilities. There isn't a specific level of blood pressure that causes these symptoms and each person will measure slightly differently. Noticing any of these symptoms, regardless of whether or not they are related to blood pressure is an excellent time to seek the advice of a medical professional.

Pregnancy is one of the most common causes of low blood pressure as a woman's circulatory system expands for the growing child. Underlying heart problems, endocrine issues, diabetes, blood loss, anemia, and certain types of infections and allergies can also be the culprit.

Age, as well, can lead to one form of low blood pressure called orthostatic hypotension that causes big drops after standing or eating.

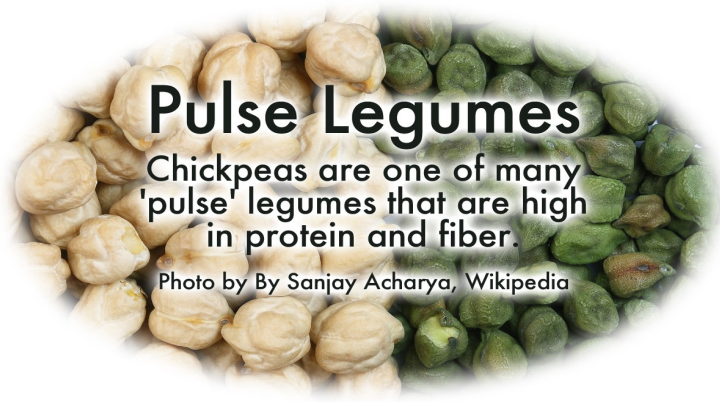
Don't delay surgery after hip fracture

Delaying surgery after a hip fracture can seriously delay recovery, according to Scientific American Consumer Health.

Most surgeries to reposition the hip bone after fracture should occur within 24 to 48 hours after injury. Doctors may delay up to 72 hours if other health conditions must be stabilized.

Delaying surgery means longer immobility, which has its own health consequences. Among them, blood clots in the legs or lungs, which are the leading cause of death post hip injury.

"Studies show that surgical repair performed in the first 24 to 48 hours after injury can reduce the risk of death within one year," according to the journal. "It's also associated with reduced pain and a shorter hospital stay."



Plant based proteins put the pulse in your diet

Pulses are in the nutritional spotlight, and we aren't talking heart beats.

Pulses ~ a branch of the legume or pea family ~ are harvested for their seeds. Pulses include chickpeas (also called garbanzo beans), lentils, and dried peas and beans like kidney, navy, black and lima. Some legumes are not pulses: soybeans, peanuts, peapods and green beans, for example.

What makes pulses important are their protein and fiber content, important qualities especially for those on meatless diets.

Besides being inexpensive, pulses also have a low glycemic index, so they raise blood sugar levels less than other carbohydrates, according to the Harvard Health Letter.

Pulses are easily added to salads and stews to increase the protein punch, but food makers are increasingly providing new products that make it easy to add pulses to the diet. Among the new products are flours used in mixes for brownies and pancakes. Pulse flour made from garbanzo beans or peas can be used as a coating for food you would typically dredge in white flour before sautéing.

Pulse pastas made from red lentil or black beans are also new, replacing semolina or durum wheat.

There are even new pulse-based snacks such as crackers and chips made with black beans, safflower oil and sea salt.

You can also add pulses to your diet through soups. White bean, lentil chili, and pea soup are just a few.

Mended Hearts meets Corporate Partners at American Heart Association

Mended Hearts volunteer leadership and staff met with corporate partners (cardiovascular medical device and pharmaceutical companies) while at AHA Scientific Sessions in Anaheim, California on November 12-13-14.

Donnette Smith, President; Marcia Baker, Director of Development & Corporate Partnerships; and Norm Linsky, Executive Director, coordinated 15 different meetings with our national company partners.

Meetings focused on current and potential Mended Hearts projects to enhance our advocacy and strategic goals. Several new partnerships are being developed as a result of our discussions.

Eye floaters: Annoying, but usually harmless

Many people, especially as they age, will notice what looks like something faint floating in their field of vision.

WebMD explains that these 'floaters' are quite common and they can appear as dots, squiggly lines, webs, and rings.

They develop over time as collagen in the gel-like fluid in the back of the eye clump together and cast shadows on the retina. This fluid is called the vitreous, and it creates these clumps as it shrinks during the aging process. They are not usually dangerous and can come and go over time, but severe cases can be quite frustrating if they affect vision.

In rare cases, these floaters can be a sign of a more serious condition such as eye disease, diabetic retinopathy, tumors, or injury. Harvard Medical School warns that as the vitreous shrinks it can begin to tug on the retina it is attached to as it pulls away. In some cases, this will tear the retina and can lead to retinal detachment and permanent vision loss. This situation will require immediate medical attention to avoid losing vision, but in most cases, the tear can be treated with laser or cold therapies.

Treating the floaters themselves is not always a realistic option, and over time, most people seem to notice them less often. For those severe cases, the Mayo Clinic explains that there are two main ways to eliminate eye floaters: lasers and surgery. Using lasers, an ophthalmologist can pinpoint specific floaters and try to break them up into less noticeable pieces. Unfortunately, results with this treatment are mixed, and there is some risk of retina damage. The other option, surgery, involves removing the vitreous and replacing it with a similar fluid. Like the laser treatment, results are mixed, and new floaters can develop later.

Gentle Yoga Sit and Stretch

Neck Roll

If you spend time sitting at a desk or just lounging, this warmup pose feels so good. (But don't do it if you have a neck or cervical spine injury.)

Sit straight in your chair. Look up to the ceiling and hold. Roll your head down to the ground and hold. Bring your left ear down to your left shoulder and hold. Then roll your head right and hold.





Edwards LifeSciences

We would like to thank Edwards LifeSciences for the 500 Bravery Bags that they recently donated to Mended Little Hearts! On November 8th, Edwards, a wonderful corporate partner to Mended Hearts and Mended Little Hearts, hosted their annual Women in Leadership Conference in Irvine, California.

MH Director of Patient Advocacy, Andrea Baer, shared her journey and spoke about how our organization works through service to others. Julie Marshall, Lead Coordinator of Mended Little Hearts of San Diego spoke as well. The event was attended by 200 women who work for Edwards. The attendees then packed 500 Bravery Bags to donate to Mended Little Hearts groups across the country.

More precious than diamonds: The rarest blood in the world

Suppose in one room we gathered Duffy, Kidd, Diego, Lutheran, Langereis, Vel, and Junior.

This would constitute a most extraordinary meeting because these are the names of the rarest blood types ever identified. Only 550 people in the world have Lutheran blood, for example.

But if in that meeting we included a man named Thomas from Switzerland, you would have the rarest meeting in the history of the earth.

There's no engaging name for Thomas' blood, except insofar as some have called it 'golden.' His blood is RH-null and it is so extraordinary that, of the 7.5 billion people in the world, only 43 have ever been identified as having it and only nine are active blood donors today.

Most people know there are eight blood types: A, B, AB, and O, positive or negative. But each of these blood types can be divided into distinct varieties depending on which antigens the blood contains or doesn't contain. AB blood has A and B antigens. O blood doesn't have either. Positive blood contains the Rh D antigen; negative blood lacks it. But there are hundreds of antigens coating the blood, making perhaps millions of combinations, according to Smithsonian.

It's important to know the antigen profile of blood because, if the wrong antigen combination is transfused, a patient can die. Even so, doctors do millions of transfusions every day with few complications.

But golden blood is unique, and that is an understatement. Rh-null has no antigens. It can be accepted by anyone with a rare blood type in the RH system and that makes it infinitely precious. It is so precious that it is never used except under the most extreme circumstances. The flip side is that a person with RH-null blood can only accept RH-null blood. That means Thomas of Switzerland should never find himself in the position of needing a blood transfusion. If he does, he should certainly not find himself in a remote part of the world. This rare blood can be provided if the tiny number of donors are available, but it requires an international mobilization of blood providers to do it. Much would depend on timing and Thomas' location.

In 2014, Thomas told Mosaic Science that he drives carefully, never speeds, and doesn't take vacations to exotic locales. But he does ski.

Cinnamon and blood sugar

Researchers are studying the spice cinnamon to see if it helps control blood sugar, as folk treatments suggest.

A review of 11 trials of cinnamon supplements in people with type 2 diabetes found that people using the supplements ~ while taking prescribed diabetes medications ~ showed some small improvement in blood sugar levels.

However, researchers stress the findings are not conclusive since other factors, such as exercise, cinnamon quality, and adherence to medications were often not accounted for.

The researchers concluded that the spice deserved more research but stressed that there is no evidence that cinnamon alone can control type 2 diabetes. Diabetes medications are essential.

The review was published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Medication News

Important news regarding certain heart disease medications: Earlier this month letters were sent to some heart disease patients and providers from Aetna indicating that XARELTO® would not be a Preferred Brand in 2018. (A preferred brand-name drug is one that is listed on an insurance plan's formulary or preferred list of prescription drugs. Such drugs may cost plan participants less than non-preferred brands.)

This decision has been reversed, thus both XARELTO® and Eliquis® will be in a Preferred Brand position across all of Aetna's Part D formularies. Mended Hearts has confirmed that Aetna will list both XARELTO® and Eliquis® as Preferred Brands on the Aetna & Coventry First Health Medicare 2018 Formularies. We are aware that there has been some confusion about this, thus we are clarifying this issue via today's communication.

The Aetna Medicare online formulary will be updated shortly to reflect the 2018 formulary changes. (Note that Mended Hearts does not endorse any specific product, but rather provides this information to dispel any confusion that patients or providers may have.) Please talk with your health care provider if you have any additional questions or need clarification for your prescription.



2018 Mended Hearts/Mended Little Hearts Education & Training Conference

Join us next year in San Antonio, Texas for the Mended Hearts/Mended Little Hearts Education & Training Conference, July 14 - 18, 2018. The 66th Annual Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the famous San Antonio Riverwalk and across the street from the Alamo. Chapter members and officers won't want to miss this event. Details to be announced soon.

Resolutions: Try something new!

Everyone resolves to lose weight and stop procrastinating. Why stick with the obvious? Here are some resolutions that will make 2018 a little more interesting.

1 Master some jokes.

Try to find a selection of one-liners that will work in a variety of situations. Find a longish joke that will be suitable to tell at lunch with a friend.

2 Learn a useful phrase in three languages.

If you want laughs, learn something silly. With one resolution, you tick off 'learn something new.' Done.

3 Learn to juggle.

Instead of vowing to improve balance and get exercise, learn to juggle. You'll get both. And a party trick.

4 Give yourself a big win.

Only 8 percent of resolvers keep their resolutions. For the big win, resolve something that you have a good chance of accomplishing:

- Always drink beer during a football game. If you break this resolution, you've probably quit drinking. Win.
- Spend more money on fun. If you break this resolution, you are saving more money.
- Never buy another organizational basket. So, if you do break down, you are getting organized.
- Never become a circus acrobat. Unless you are one now, this is a resolution you can keep.

The link between sitting and poor health

We drive to work, sit at a desk, drive home and watch television ~ that's all sitting time and it's bad for health.

According to the American Heart Association, Americans spent about 38 hours per week sitting in 2009 compared to only 26 hours in 1965. This rise in sedentary behavior, along with a decrease in the amount of time spent performing a moderate-to-vigorous activity, has been linked to several health issues including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and back pain.

According to Time Magazine, the body needs energy to power individual cells, break down and digest food, and create "activity energy" which can be divided into active exercise and Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (NEAT). The last type, NEAT, includes all of the energy used for required movements throughout the day like walking or even typing at a desk.



Sitting for extended periods of time lowers the amount of NEAT energy needed throughout the day which starts to turn off processes that burn calories and turn on the ones that build fat. Inactivity, especially around meals, leads to muscles that aren't soaking up glucose from the food and become more insulin resistant. This resistance causes the body to release more and more insulin which can lead to diabetes over time.

As if problems with weight gain and heart disease weren't enough, the Washington Post also points out that sitting can lead to a whole host of other issues in the body related to pain and overall fitness because of the position of the body. The hips, for instance, remain unextended for long periods of time and can become tight with a limited range of motion along with weakened glutes. This decreased range is a primary reason why the elderly are prone to falling. Similarly, the position can cause poor circulation in many areas of the body such as legs, spinal discs, and the brain.



Salinas Valley Mended Hearts Chapter 370

Mended Hearts



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WHO IS . . . MENDED HEARTS. INC?



Mended Hearts

The Mended Hearts, Incorporated, is a National Voluntary Health, Education, Non-profit organization. Its purpose is to offer help, support and encouragement to heart disease patients and their families, by:

- ♥ Visiting patients with their physicians' approval.
- ♥ Distributing information of specific educational value to our membership and heart disease patients and their families.

- ♥ Cooperating with other organizations in education and research activities pertaining to heart disease.
- ♥ Establishing and assisting heart rehabilitation programs for our members.
- ♥ Planning and conducting suitable programs of social and educational interest for our members and for heart disease patients and their families.

THANKS TO:

SALINAS VALLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
FOR THEIR SPONSORSHIP